

# St. Mary Parish Economic Development News

Volume 3, Issue 4

October 2015



St. Mary  
Parish

Heart  
of the Cajun Coast

## Frank's Message

**CAN IT GET ANY WORSE?? YES!!!** - The price of oil has certainly been on a roller coaster ride for all. In this past quarter we have seen prices reach \$65/bbl as optimism began to climb. Then the Iran deal was announced and oil dropped to below \$40/bbl as another 1-1.5 million bbl/day will be back on international markets. Now around \$50/bbl, who knows what will happen next. Most forecasters see some recovery 12 to 18 months away.

**St. Mary Parish Employment** has been somewhat of a surprise. The number of employed residents has grown from 22,105 jobs in January 2008 to 23,934 in August 2015. Yes, even though there was a loss of 254 jobs over the past year. Sales tax collections continue to decline in the industrial and transportation segments. A further impact of pricing is on royalty collections.

**Diversification:** St. Mary Parish has a diversified economy beyond the oil field with manufacturing the largest sector at 19%. See chart on second page. Carbon Black plants, shipyards with market specialization in military vessels and growing medical complexes in Morgan City and Franklin have been positive. Construction projects abound with the recent completion of the Wal-Mart Neighborhood Market and projects under construction including a new power plant and emergency operations center in Morgan City, junior high school and strip mall in Patterson and an industrial park in Baldwin. A major chemical plant in Donaldsonville is also providing jobs to St. Mary residents. Ground breaking for the new Marine campus at Young Memorial Technical College is scheduled for November of this year. The 10 acre property in Garden City was purchased by a developer planning a 168 unit gated community apartment complex.

**Merger News:** Schlumberger is purchasing Cameron International. A top executive with Cameron said they've been told "Steady as you go", with no immediate impact in St. Mary Parish. The good news is that Schlumberger and Cameron have complimentary product lines. One Subsea's \$34 million Berwick project is now off the table.

**On the Brighter Side:** The City of Morgan City was ranked 5<sup>th</sup> in the State of Louisiana as one of the most tax friendly places for retirees. This study was conducted by SmartAsset, a NY based financial technology company.

## Parish Economic Development Briefs

### Oil & Gas

Louisiana's Weekly Rotary Rig Count for the week ending October 2<sup>nd</sup> was 66, up 11 from one year ago. The NYMEX Henry Hub gas price (\$/MMBRU) was \$2.89 in August, up 12 cents from July but down 92 cents from a year ago. Economists expect the price to remain between \$40 and \$50 a barrel through the end of the year.

### Employment

Parish employment in August, the most recent available data, was 23,934, down 369 jobs compared to July and down 254 jobs from one year ago. Since the beginning of the Great Recession in January 2008, St. Mary Parish employment growth has been 8.27%. Of the south central Louisiana parishes, only Vermillion and Lafayette are outpacing St. Mary. Other surrounding parish results are shown in the chart on page 2.

The August unemployment rate for St. Mary Parish was 7.3%, down .2 points from last month and up .1 points from a year ago. The State unemployment rate in August was 6.3%, the nation's unemployment rate was 5.2%.

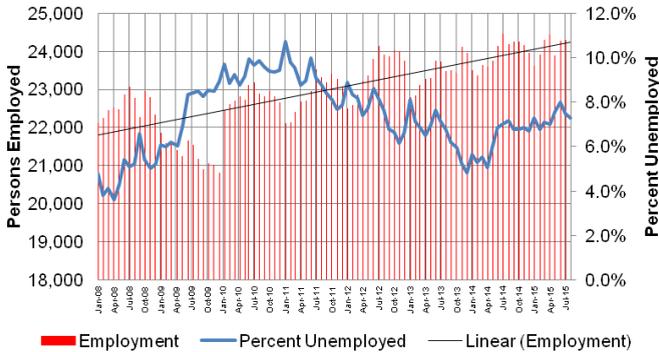
### Business Activity

The number of businesses visited by parish staff this past quarter was 23. The number of projects in the pipeline totaled 11 with the potential to create more than 500 new jobs and investments of \$140 million through 2016. Some projects have been delayed due to the uncertainty of oil prices.

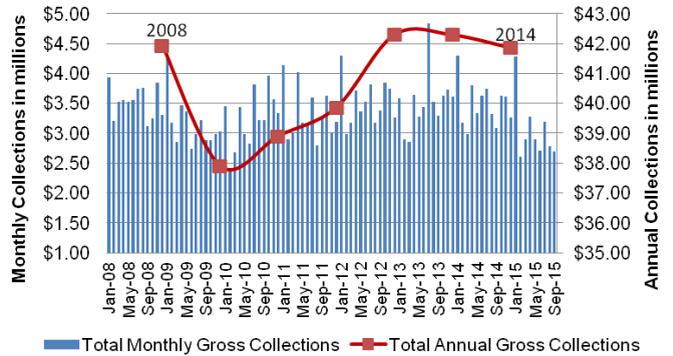
The **St. Mary Parish Office of Economic Development ranked high in a recently completed Community Competitiveness Assessment** conducted by Louisiana Economic Development and the State's Regional Economic Development Organizations. Of a possible 3.0, St. Mary achieved a score of 2.93, the top score among the Bayou Region Parishes.

# Economic Facts and Figures

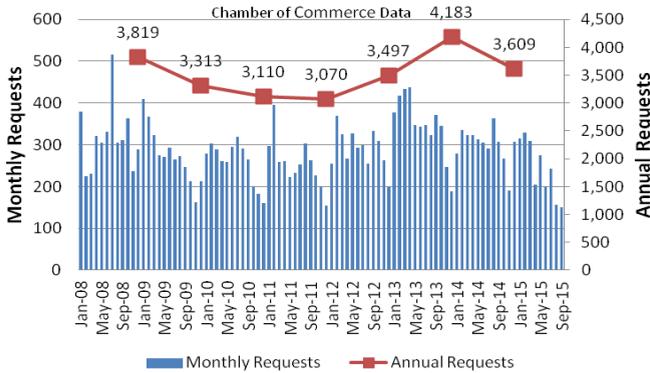
## Resident Employment/Unemployment January 2008 to August 2015 US Bureau of Labor Statistics



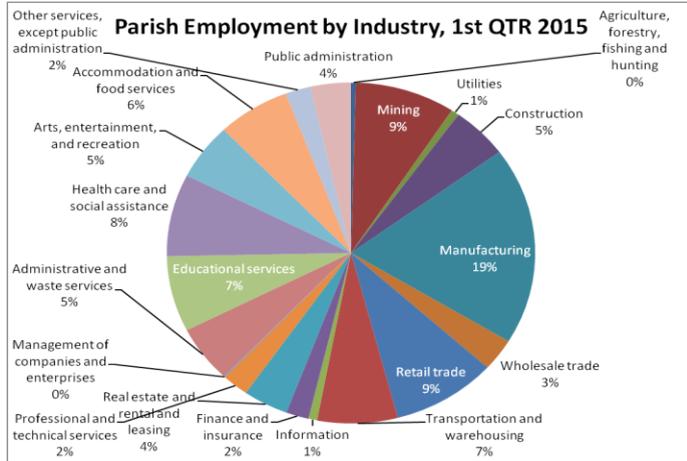
## Parish Gross Tax Collections 2008 - Sept 2015 Parish Sales & Use Department



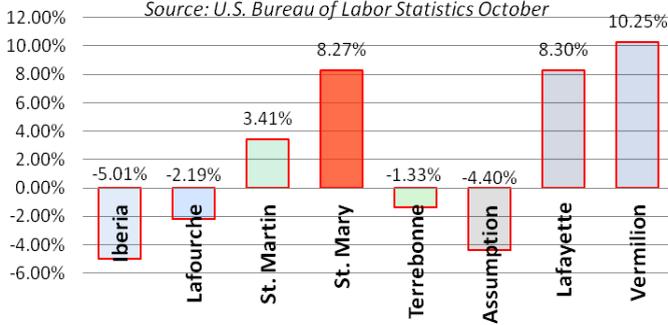
## Requests for Rental Housing Listings January 2008 through September 2015 Chamber of Commerce Data



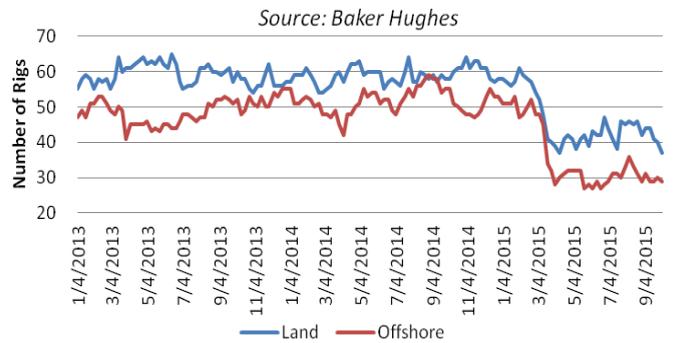
## Parish Employment by Industry, 1st QTR 2015



## Percent Change in Employment Growth January 2008 to August 2015 Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics October



## Louisiana Weekly Rotary Rig Count Land & Offshore 1/4/13 to 10/2/15 Source: Baker Hughes



**Got a comment, send us an email or call:**

Frank G. Fink, Director  
337-828-4100, Ext: 340  
[ffink@stmaryparishla.gov](mailto:ffink@stmaryparishla.gov)

Ramona Landry, Administrative Manager  
337-828-4100, Ext: 342  
[rlandry@stmaryparishla.gov](mailto:rlandry@stmaryparishla.gov)

To sign up and receive a digital copy of this newsletter in the future, send an email to the Office of Economic Development at:  
[rlandry@stmaryparishla.gov](mailto:rlandry@stmaryparishla.gov).

## Available Buildings and Sites at:

<http://www.louisianasiteselection.com/bayouregion/Buildings-And-Sites.aspx>