



MICHAEL S. YENNI
MAYOR

CITY OF KENNER

PRESS RELEASE

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MAYOR MICHAEL YENNI ATTENDS FINAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING

Kenner, LA. – For the members of Mayor Michael Yenni’s Economic Development Committee, Friday’s year-end review and look-ahead to 2016 and beyond was another in a series of important gatherings that began five years ago.

For Yenni, it was a bittersweet farewell to a group of nearly 40 business, civic leaders and elected officials that he credits with many critical improvements that have Kenner poised to become a destination location within the metropolitan area for young families and businesses.

“You know, Christmas is my favorite time of the year, but I find myself depressed,” he said Friday morning. “Just knowing that I’m leaving a job I enjoyed the past five years.”

Yenni takes over as Jefferson Parish President on Jan. 6.

He thanked EDC members for their creativity and hard work. The group helped the city put together the 2030 Plan to beautify and improve corridors throughout Kenner. And responding to research showing that residents and others considering moving to Kenner wanted a first-class public school within the city limits for 5th grade through high school, the Kenner Discovery Health Sciences Academy was opened in 2013.

The open enrollment charter school for pre-K through the 8th grade is the first charter school in the city and has been phenomenally successful. On Thursday, Head of School Dr. Patty Glaser proudly announced the school had received an A rating from the state.

“I am ecstatic to be able to say the school you all started is an A-rated school in just three short years,” he said.

Kenner’s Chief Administrative Officer Mike Quigley then provided an update on the different areas the EDC has been working to improve.

“The whole idea behind everything has been to create a community of choice with a strong sense of place,” said Quigley, who briefly touched on the following subjects:

- **2030 Plan** – Quigley said the first project should be completed by this summer and the second – improvements on the west side of Williams Boulevard at vintage Drive – likely will be the second of at least nine overall projects to begin.
- **Discovery school** – Quigley deferred to Discovery’s Head of School Dr. Patty Glaser, who said while the academics are going well and the school is retaining 98 percent of the students and 99 percent of the faculty, other issues remain. She urged Yenni and other elected officials and members of the group to show up for a Jan. 12 Jefferson Parish School Board meeting in which plans for a school system millage could be discussed. Glaser said the school needs new, permanent space and the land across from City Park in northwest Kenner would make a perfect site. However, Jefferson school officials are currently looking at that land for other purposes.
- **Airport** – Kenner residents will definitely notice work beginning on the new terminal for New Orleans Louis Armstrong International Airport. Quigley said a \$30 million pump station has been approved that will help with drainage that could affect portions of the city. In addition, work should begin early in 2016 and Kenner has been working to mitigate traffic and construction managers have been working closely with the city to minimize impacts of the 3-year project as much as possible.
- **Rivertown** – Since becoming the first Main Street Community in Jefferson Parish, the businesses in Rivertown have been working with a liaison from Kenner to emerge as an independent and vibrant shopping, entertainment and historic district.
- **Laketown** – Negotiations continue with a developer interested in creating a boardwalk-type development on the shores of Lake Pontchartrain. Yenni said he remains optimistic an agreement will eventually be reached.
- **Kenner and JEDCO** – Quigley praised officials with the Jefferson Economic Development Commission for their work to retain existing businesses in the city and to lure new companies to Kenner. Quigley helped to develop 13 new performance goals to include in JEDCO’s contract with the city, and said JEDCO has met each goal and exceeded most of them.

Yenni ended Friday’s meeting with a promise: “We will have a similar Economic Development Committee in Jefferson Parish,” he said. “I promise you, I will lead Jefferson Parish in the same way I have led the city of Kenner.”

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