

Prepared by



Purpose Institute



# THE BIG IDEA:

## Rebranding the I-10/I-12 Corridor

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BACKGROUND,  
PURPOSE,  
OBJECTIVES AND  
METHODOLOGY

# Background, Purpose, Objectives and Methodology

## *Background*

In August 2005, the State of Louisiana was hit by one of the largest hurricanes ever to reach landfall in the continental United States, Hurricane Katrina, followed quickly by a second blow, Hurricane Rita. Katrina decimated New Orleans, the state's most notable city and most significant economic driver. While New Orleans will inevitably remain an important asset to Louisiana, it has lost much of its business community and more than half of its pre-storm population. New Orleans can no longer be depended upon as the state's only economic driver.

While the storms did not create all of the problems in Louisiana, unless massive, positive change is made, Katrina will have sealed its fate. Today, Louisianans need to believe in the possibility of a bright future for Louisiana. They need to be reminded of what there is to love about Louisiana and shown substantive signs of progress in order to renew their sense of commitment to investing their time and talent in the state.

By leveraging the unique cultural and economic assets that exist along the I-10/I-12 Corridor, we have a unique opportunity to provide Louisianans with the hope that they long for and the economic engine they need.

This initiative will focus on the ways that communities across the state — Lake Charles, Lafayette, Jennings, Crowley, Baton Rouge, Hammond and the Northshore — are culturally and economically tied together, connecting its residents and businesses and giving them a shared future. The I-10/I-12 Corridor will invite opportunity to renew Louisiana's distinctive cultures and improve the whole state's vitality to better than before. With the right vision and proper support, the Corridor can build internal business, while attracting more people that share in Louisiana's hopes, values and vision.

## *Winning On Purpose*

At the Purpose Institute we believe that the first step to building a successful brand resides in discovering the Core Values and Core Purpose at the heart of the entity — in this case, a region defined by the I-10/I-12 Corridor. Jim Collins, a pioneer in the field of values and purpose, describes each in the following manner:

**CORE VALUES** are the essential and enduring tenets — a small set of timeless guiding principles that require no external justification; they have intrinsic value and importance to those who understand what makes the entity great.

**CORE PURPOSE** reflects the fundamental reason for being. An effective purpose reflects the importance people attach to the entity (or place) — it taps their idealistic motivations.<sup>1</sup> Simply put, your purpose is a definitive statement about the difference that you are trying to make in the world. When it's discovered it will become your guiding light, driving all the decisions that affect how you behave in the world.

<sup>1</sup> Core Values and Core Purpose as defined by Jim Collins in *Built to Last* and *Good to Great*.

As Louisiana sets itself on a course for progress by capitalizing on the momentum of the Corridor, it is more important than ever that leaders do so with a clear understanding of the Core Values that should never change and a sense of great Purpose. Southern Louisiana has a rich culture steeped in values that people hold dear to their hearts. Those values need to be clearly identified, articulated and written in stone so that in the midst of great change, people can be assured that the values will not get lost along the way. At the same time, there is much progress that needs to be made on many fronts. In order for Louisiana to become a truly great state, it must focus on and celebrate the genuine strengths and assets that the state could become the best in the world at. Louisianans need to find unity through shared values and inspiration through a compelling sense of purpose. With Core Values defined and a Core Purpose leading the way, a strong brand for the Corridor is certain to emerge — a brand that will attract and retain the best and brightest to commit their talent to revitalizing Louisiana.

### *The Goal*

The leadership along the Corridor feels a huge sense of urgency to create a regional vision that can accomplish what no one parish can do alone — revitalize the State of Louisiana. The benefits of a new, regional effort and image will be many: economic growth and development, attracting business and residents to the state, keeping younger residents, rebuilding pride, protecting and developing key assets, celebrating and revitalizing the image of Louisiana. The Corridor is seen as the state’s best hope to drive that growth and development — creating a model for the rest of the state.

### *Ultimate Purpose*

*To make southern Louisiana the best place in America for talented, high-energy people to live and work by capitalizing on the momentum and quality of life experienced along the I-10/I-12 Corridor.*

### *Objectives*

1. Discover Core Values that define the culture of southern Louisiana
2. Discover the Core Purpose/unified vision for the I-10/I-12 Corridor in Louisiana
3. Develop positioning strategy that will position southern Louisiana as the best place in America for talented, high-energy, values-driven people to live and work

### *Methodology*

#### **PHASE ONE: LOUISIANA LEADERSHIP KICK-OFF SESSION**

#### **I-10/I-12 Leadership Work Session using Ideation Lab Technology**

The Ideation Lab is a methodology that utilizes networked computers to simultaneously engage approximately 25-30 participants in facilitated exercises. A cross-section of business leaders, community foundation representatives, political figures, economic development specialists and other ‘influentials’ were assembled in Austin for an all-day work session designed to develop a foundational understanding of the challenge and opportunity facing Louisiana and the Corridor.

Fielded: Austin, TX | May 30, 2007

## **PHASE TWO: LOUISIANA IMMERSION**

Before designing a research plan to aide in the development of a unified vision for the I-10/I-12 Corridor region, we sought to immerse ourselves in all of the work that has already been done in order to build upon what's come before, collaborate where possible and avoid duplication of efforts going forward.

### **i. Data Dive/Literature Review**

#### **Louisiana Image & Attitudes Surveys:**

- Louisiana's National Agenda, The Public Policy Research Lab, LSU (May 25, 2007): a national survey to establish benchmarks and track changes in how the nation views Louisiana
- Spring 2007 Louisiana Survey Final Report: The Public Policy Research Lab, LSU (May 2007): A Louisiana statewide survey to establish benchmarks and track changes in the attitudes and priorities of Louisianans
- Louisiana Business Image Survey, The Public Policy Research Lab, LSU (January 24, 2005): A survey to help business recruitment efforts by collecting information from non-Louisiana businesses on location decisions; evaluations of Louisiana
- Results from the Louisiana Back to Business Workshops: Private Sector Office/Dept. of Homeland Security (September 2006): Workshops held in New Orleans among business owners and managers to discuss impact of and needs arising from Katrina

#### **Louisiana Redevelopment Plans:**

- Louisiana's Comprehensive Master Plan for a Sustainable Coast, CPRA (Issued April 2007): Master plan for the complete integration of coastal protection and restoration
- 2006 South Louisiana Recovery Survey: Citizen & Civic Leader Research; Louisiana Recovery Authority Support Foundation/Collective Strength: citizen input regarding the values and priorities that should guide the recovery plan (Louisiana Speaks)
- Louisiana Speaks Regional Plan: Vision and Strategies for Regional Growth in South Louisiana, Louisiana Speaks (May 2007): Presentation highlighting the strategies and priorities for rebuilding South Louisiana based on citizen input
- 2007 Regional Vision Poll: Summary of Findings, Collective Strength for LRA: Findings of the largest and most comprehensive community outreach initiative ever conducted to rebuild a region
- Charettes for Parishes

#### **Louisiana Economic Development Reports:**

- Comprehensive review of LED reports, powerpoints, marketing materials
- Invitation to Invest: Gulf Opportunity Zone, LED Powerpoint
- Southwest Louisiana Economic Indicators, College of Business, McNeese State University, Dr. Mitchell Adrian (May 21, 2007): Tracks sales and real estate trends in Calcasieu Parish since 1990
- Advancing in the Aftermath IV: Tracking the Recovery from Katrina & Rita: Loren C. Scott, Professor of Economics, LSU: Tracks 13 key indicators of the economic health of four regions including: New Orleans and Lake Charles, Biloxi-Gulfport and Pascagoula MSAs in Mississippi

#### **Syndicated Industry Sector Data, particularly Energy:**

- America's Energy Corridor: Louisiana Serving the Nation's Energy Needs, America's Wetland, Louisiana Dept. of Natural Resources: A report to educate the public on the importance of Coastal Louisiana to national energy security
- America's Love/Hate Relationship with Energy: Harris Report (May 2006); Discusses America's increasing demand for energy and correspondent distrust/dislike of traditional energy sources/providers (e.g., oil/gas, coal, etc.)
- Energy IQ: Harris Interactive (May 2006) Reveals the gap between perception and reality about the oil and natural gas industry among general public
- Alternative Energy Demystified, Stan Gibilisco

#### General Consumer Trend Data

- Getting to Next: Consumers in Go-Mode, Yankelovich Monitor/Annual Report for 2006/2007. The longest continuing study of attitudes and values in the United States
- The American Journey: A voyage to explore self, belonging and participation in the world; 2007 Annual Trend Presentation, Roper GfK; Study of consumer attitudes and values across a wide range of topics

#### Parish Reports (Marketing Materials, Economic Development, Tourism)

- Future Directions for St. Tammany Parish: A Strategic Plan for Economic Development, Tamerica Management Company: Sets forth the strategic goals and strategies for the economic development of St. Tammany parish
- St. Tammany Parish Economic Trends — Quarterly Reports

#### Louisiana Books

*Bad Bet on the Bayou, Tyler Bridges*  
*Bayou Farewell, Mike Tidwell*  
*Breach of Faith, Jed Horne*  
*Inside the Carnival: Unmasking Louisiana Politics, Wayne Parent*  
*Insider's Guide: Off the Beaten Path Louisiana, Gay Martin*  
*Louisiana 24/7, David Cohen*  
*Louisiana in Words, Edited by Joshua Clark*  
*Louisiana, A History Bennet H. Wall*  
*[DVD] Louisiana Story, Robert J. Flaherty*  
*Rising Tide, John Barry*  
*Roadside Geology of Louisiana, Darwin Spearing*  
*The Storm: What went wrong and why, Ivor Van Heerden*

## ii. Guided Field Trip

#### North Shore Area

Toured Mandeville, Covington, Madisonville, Hammond and Southeastern Louisiana University

#### Baton Rouge

Toured Shaw Center for the Arts, LSU, State Capitol, State Museum, Pennington Biomedical Research Center

#### Lafayette

Toured Stuller, Louisiana Immersive Technologies Enterprises (LITE), Leadership Lafayette Group, Louisiana Crossroads, River Ranch, University of Louisiana at Lafayette, Acadian Ambulance and Crowley community meeting

#### Lake Charles

Visit to the Southwest Louisiana CVB; toured historic district, lakefront living and tourist areas

## iii. Economic Assessment, Business Environment & Cultural Highlights/In-Depth Interviews

Finally, to understand the economic drivers, the business climate and the cultural highlights of the area, we included interviews with a variety of leaders across the length of the corridor.

1. Susan Bonnet, President & CEO Northshore Community Foundation
2. Mike Olivier, Secretary, Louisiana Economic Development
3. Fran Gladden, Deputy Secretary, Louisiana Economic Development
4. Mark Goodson, Community Planner, Center for Planning Excellence
5. Jay Dardenne, Secretary of State, State of Louisiana
6. Barry Erwin, President, Council for a Better Louisiana

7. Stephen Moret, President, Baton Rouge Area Chamber
8. T. Bradley Keith, State Director, Senator Mary Landrieu's Office
9. Lori Bertman, President, Bertman and Associates
10. Carole Dupre, Director of Communications and Marketing, Louisiana Department of Economic Development and Scott Couvillon from LED agency, Trumpet.
11. Raymond Hebert, Executive Director, Community Foundation of Acadiana
12. Elaine Abell, Chair, Community Foundation of Acadiana
13. Dr. Chuck Lein, President and COO, Stuller, Inc.
14. Erin Fitzgerald, Marketing, Louisiana Immersive Technologies Enterprises, Inc.
15. Jane Guidry, Marketing Director, Onebane Law Firm (Leadership Lafayette Roundtable)
16. Matt Roth, (Leadership Lafayette Roundtable)
17. Carlee Alm-LaBar, Development Director, Acadiana Youth Incorporated (Leadership Lafayette Roundtable)
18. Dr. Ramesh Kolluru, Director, University of Louisiana Lafayette Center for Business and Information Technologies (Leadership Lafayette Roundtable)
19. Todd Mouton, Director, Louisiana Crossroads (LEDA Louisiana Economic Development Authority)
20. Robert Daigle, Developer/River Ranch, Lafayette, LA
21. Dr. Ray Authement, President, University of Louisiana at Lafayette
22. Richard Suzschlag, President & CEO, Acadian Ambulance
23. Gregor N. Marcantel, CPA (Former Mayor of Jennings, LA)
24. Tico Soto, Sales Director, Southwest Louisiana Convention and Visitors Bureau
25. John Cardone, Administrator, City of Lake Charles
26. Adrian Wallace, Business Development Director, SWLA Alliance
27. Larry De Roussel, Executive Director, Lake Area Industry Alliance (Petrochemicals)
28. Rob Pruitt, Executive Director, Chennault International Airport Authority
29. Dan Loughney, Director of Marketing & Trade Development, Lake Charles Harbor and Terminal District
30. Ernie Broussard, Cameron Parish Revitalization Efforts
31. Loren Scott, Economist, LSU
32. Jean Statler, SVP, Public Affairs, Government and Youth Practice Research, Harris Interactive
33. Brenda Reines, St. Tammany Economic Development

### **PHASE THREE: CORE CONSTITUENT RESEARCH**

This final phase included the bulk of the primary research that was conducted in order to discover the values, strengths and opportunities of southern Louisiana.

#### **i. Leadership Interviews**

##### **Community Leaders and Activists, Business Leaders/Entrepreneurs, Influentials**

1. John Davies, President & CEO, BRAF
2. John Spain, Executive Vice President, BRAF
3. Jennifer Reilly, BRAF Board Member & Civic Engagement Committee
4. Lacey Tolodano, President & CEO, St. Tammany West Chamber
5. William Fenstermaker, CEO, Fenstermaker & Associates
6. Oliver "Rick" Richard, CEO, Clean Fuel
7. Lenny Lemoine, CEO, The Lemoine Group
8. Mike Polito, President, MAPP Construction
9. Tony Gordon, Board of Directors, Petro Quest Energy
10. Phillipe Gustin, International Trade Manager, Lafayette Consol. Gov.
11. Madhu Beriwal, CEO, IEM
12. Pete Stewart, CEO, Trace Securities
13. Richard Knight, Chairman of the Board, Resource Bank — Covington
14. Susan Parsons Stymiest, Director of Public Information Office, Department of Cultural and Government Affairs - Mandeville



15. Rolfe McCollister, Chairman/Publisher, Greater Baton Rouge Business Report
16. Lanny Keller, Journalist, The Advocate
17. Bill Stark, Museum Division Director, Louisiana State Museum-Baton Rouge

## ii. Ideation Labs

In order to collect input and insights from a broad range of constituents, the GSD&M Idea City Ideation Lab technology was used to convene people from all around the country and all across the Corridor to engage in a series of two-hour discussions about the opportunities and challenges that exist along the Corridor.

### One Session with Out-of-State Business Leaders — September 20, 2007

This session included business owners and site locators representing a variety of industries from around the country that have considered launching a business in Louisiana. Topics included: *site location criteria, general perceptions of Louisiana, perceptions of business climate, exploration of strengths and messaging.*

### One Session with Louisiana “Brain Drain” — September 20, 2007

This session included highly educated Louisianans who were now working as professionals in Houston, Dallas, Atlanta, Chicago and New York. Topics included: *criteria for selecting a city and how Louisiana rated on those measures, general perceptions of Louisiana, perceptions of opportunity, exploration of strengths and messaging, drivers of consideration for returning.*

### One Session with Corridor Community Leaders — September 20, 2007

### One Session with Corridor Business Leader — September 21, 2007

### One Session with Young Professionals — September 21, 2007

These sessions included a wide range of individuals living and working along the I-10/I-12 Corridor. Topics included: *values that define the culture, prioritization of values, passions and strengths, opportunities and challenges, messaging.*

## iii. Corridor Citizen Journals

We created a Louisiana workbook/journal that included a variety of highly creative exercises designed to uncover the values, passions, strengths and challenges of life in southern Louisiana. Journals were completed by highly engaged citizens living along the I-10/I-12 Corridor. A total of 40 journals were completed during the month of September 2007.

## iv. Corridor Citizen Discussion Groups

We identified a variety of segments critical to the revitalization of the state and convened discussion groups to explore the opportunities and challenges along the Corridor in a lively, conversational format.

### Community Leader/Engaged Citizens — Northshore

Included: community leaders, engaged parents, professional women

### Professional/Community Advocates — Baton Rouge

Included: community advocates (highly engaged in community groups, nonprofit volunteers), symphony musician, restaurant owner/entrepreneur, real estate developer, commercial real estate sales, marketing and media consultant, financial services professional

**Young Professionals/Entrepreneurs — Baton Rouge**

Included: landscape architect/business owner, gis director, marketing professional, former president of Forum 35, construction firm entrepreneur, media professional, attorney, urban planning professional

**Academics/Business Leaders — Lafayette**

Included: director, Center for Business and Information Technologies (CBIT), marketing professor, nonprofit leader, business leader

**Cultural Leaders — Lafayette**

Included: director Downtown Development Authority, director of Festival Acadianne, director Le Centre Internationale de Louisiana

**Creative Professionals — Lafayette**

Included: musicians, songwriters, restaurant owners, Louisiana Crossroads & Louisiana Folk Roots entrepreneur, Cajun Culture & Literature Professor

**Business Leaders — Lake Charles**

Included: representatives of Southwest Louisiana Partnership for Economic Development, public health administrator, KPLC television executive, former oil executives, small business development expert, executive director of the Southwest Louisiana Convention and Visitors Bureau

**Rural Community Leaders/Business Owners — Crowley/Jennings**

Included: biomedical business owner, former Mayor of Jennings, chamber employees, retired business owner/philanthropist/historical preservationist

**v. “Brain Drain” Ethnographic Sessions In Houston**

Houston has the largest incidence of displaced Louisianans (both pre- and post-Katrina). We recruited three sessions of Louisiana natives now living and working in Houston in order to explore why they left, how Houston compares with Louisiana and what it would take to get them back.

**One in-home session with African American women**

A group of African American women born and raised in Louisiana that had come to Houston for opportunity; their professions included accounting professionals and medical billing.

**One session with medical professionals (physicians and nurses)**

A small group of medical professionals born and raised in Louisiana, educated at LSU, that had moved to Houston for the opportunity and quality of life

**One session with energy executives and their families**

Three couples who had previously lived in either Lafayette or Lake Charles that moved to Houston after the oil bust in order to pursue opportunities in the energy business

**vi. Vibrant City Citizen Intercepts**

Finally, we included a random sampling of 20-30 residents from two comparatively vibrant regions — Austin, TX and Boulder, CO — to explore the drivers of city preference and perceptions of Louisiana.

EXECUTIVE  
SUMMARY:  
VALUES, PURPOSE,  
POSITIONING

# Executive Summary: Values, Purpose, Positioning

## *Core Values*

The following list celebrates the Core Values that define the culture of southern Louisiana.

FAMILY | Is Everything

COMMUNITY | We're all in this together

CAMARADERIE | Hello Friend

JOY OF LIFE | Relish everything

TRADITION | Timeless Connections

FAITH | The sun will rise

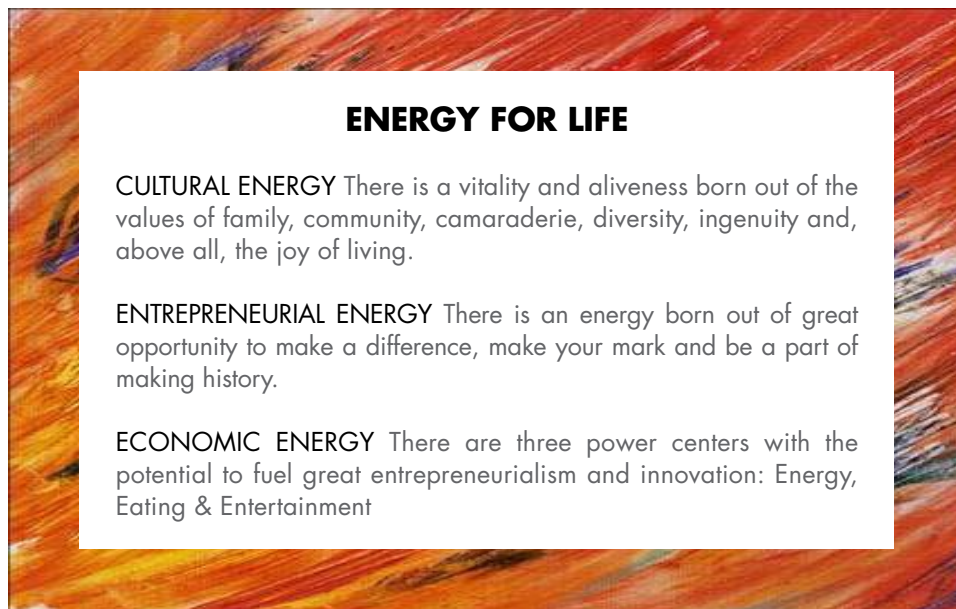
DIVERSITY | Our Creative Spark

INGENUITY | Wildcatters Welcome

## *Core Purpose*

The Core Purpose of the Corridor is: *To bring Energy to Life*

## *Positioning Beyond Defeat*



*Louisiana is a place you want to live.*

**ENERGY FOR LIFE** embodies a unique quality of life characterized by vibrant relationships, joyful living, energizing cultural activities (music, food, festivities)...that truly creates a sense of "being alive!" as one respondent put it, that is hard to find in other parts of the country where the pursuit of material wealth often comes at the expense of the pursuit of happiness.

*Louisiana is a place you want to work.*

ENERGY FOR LIFE is a call to action based on the amazing opportunity that exists in Louisiana today. It asks people to get fired up and contribute their talents to making their mark in Louisiana. The challenges that make people want to leave Louisiana (poverty, poor education rates, political corruption, environmental crisis, crime, infrastructure meltdown), are the very same challenges that create meaningful opportunities for talented people in Louisiana. There were three ‘opportunity avenues’ that got talented people fired up about working in Louisiana:

1. **Make a difference.** The ability to make a difference in creating the future of Louisiana. From an altruistic perspective, many idealists were drawn to south Louisiana in order to be part of fixing the problems and making Louisiana better for future generations. “I like the challenges, it makes me feel like I can make a difference in the lives of future Louisianans by staying here and trying to make it better.”

2. **Make your mark.** The ability to make a name for yourself in business. From a competitive perspective, a little talent, initiative and ingenuity will go a long way in building a successful business in Louisiana. Entrepreneurs have used many of the challenges to their advantage, quickly reaching success levels that would be hard to achieve in more highly competitive metropolitan cities elsewhere in the country.

3. **Make history.** The ability to be a part of or witness the unfolding of some of the most innovative revitalization efforts ever created. Hitting “rock bottom” has made innovation a necessity. The Coastal Recovery Plan, Blueprint Louisiana (Education Reform, Political Reform, Healthcare Reform), Louisiana Speaks (Smart Growth), Political Reform (Jindal) are all underway and give people hope in the possibility of a truly better Louisiana in the future.

*Louisiana is a place you can be proud of...a place you can brag about.*

ENERGY FOR LIFE can showcase the key industry sectors and sources of innovation that Louisiana has the potential to be great at and proud of.

<b>ENERGY</b> Traditional & Alternative	<b>EATING</b> Food-related industry and innovation (aquaculture, agriculture, biomedical/nutrition focus)	<b>ENTERTAINMENT</b> Music, Film & TV, Digital Media Festivals, Tourism, Gaming, Recreational Hunting/ Boating/ Fishing	<b>ENTREPRENEURIAL ENVIRONMENT</b> A supportive culture and environment for entrepreneurs	<b>EDUCATION</b> Research, technology, workforce training
<i>Energy for the way we live</i>	<i>Energy for life</i>	<i>Energy for a joyful life</i>	<i>Energy for new ideas</i>	<i>Renewable energy source</i>
<i>Plug in.</i>	<i>Eat well.</i>	<i>Have fun.</i>	<i>Go for it.</i>	<i>Think big.</i>

These are all forms of energy. These are all sources of innovation.

These are all enabled by technology. These generate high-growth, high-paying jobs.

They are all things people need and want more of in America.

# DETAILED FINDINGS

# Discovering Core Values

Every great brand has an understanding of the Core Values that reside at the heart of the organization, the values that drive the employees and define the culture within which they operate.

*“CORE VALUES are the essential and enduring tenets — a small set of timeless guiding principles that require no external justification; they have intrinsic value and importance to those who understand what makes [the culture] great.”*

*— Jim Collins & Jerry Porras, Built to Last*

In the case of identifying the Core Values that define the ‘brand’ of Louisiana, Core Values take on a very special significance in that they not only influence the environment in which one works, but also the very lifestyle to which one subscribes as a human being. As Louisiana sets out to tell its story to the world, it is imperative that it do so in a way that is authentic. Values tell the world who you really are and what you believe in. Values create a magnetic attraction — drawing other people to you who share those same values. And Values along the Corridor are far too rich and deep-rooted to not leverage in the service of cultivating an image of the Corridor as a wonderful place to live and work.

Core Values should be set in stone and not subject to change. By making them an irrefutable cornerstone of the culture, it actually creates an atmosphere that is more open to change. When citizens feel secure in the knowledge that the values they love are recognized and not up for debate, it gives them permission to make changes in other areas of life along the Corridor.

## *PRESERVE THE CORE & STIMULATE PROGRESS*

*“The most enduring and successful organizations distinguish their timeless core values and enduring core purpose (which should never change) from their operating practices and business strategies (which should be changing constantly in response to a changing world)...By being clear about what should never change, truly great companies are better able to stimulate change and progress in everything else.” — Jim Collins & Jerry Porras, Built to Last*

With this in mind, we set out to discover the values that define life along the Corridor and found an amazing amount of consensus and energy around a common set of core values. Whether we talked to business leaders, community leaders, citizens, academics, university students or even displaced Louisianans, there was a recurring set of values that emerged in almost every conversation.

## **CORRIDOR VALUES**

Family | Community | Camaraderie | Joy of Life | Tradition | Faith | Diversity | Ingenuity

Once a set of Core Values was developed, we asked people to identify which were most personally relevant and which were most relevant to the building a better Louisiana. The list remained the same, but the priority shifted from family, community, joy of life (personal relevance) to ingenuity and diversity (state relevance). Different values will require more or less emphasis depending on the circumstances Louisiana finds itself in. Today it is clear that a heavy dose of ingenuity is in order.

Whatever the priority, the following list celebrates the Core Values that emerged which define the culture of southern Louisiana.

### **FAMILY | Is Everything**



If you believe that a person's true wealth is measured by the number of friends that they have, Louisianans just may be the wealthiest people in America. The value of relationships that are cultivated in southern Louisiana are priceless. Whether we're talking about immediate, extended, multi-generational, traditional, alternative or the loose-knit affiliation of friends and neighbors, family comes first. Time is made for friends. And the idea of a life without a continuous flow of friends and family is hard to imagine.

The value of **Family** was also associated with the value of: **Friends**.

*"We grow up and older visiting with our families through religious activities, fish fries and crawfish boils. We go to our relatives' weddings, ballgames, dances and eventually, funerals. Family is what makes us whole." — Corridor Leader*

*"Family comes before work. When we first moved here, my wife called me from my six-year-old's swim meet at 4:00 p.m. on a Wednesday to tell me that I was the only Dad not in attendance. It was Wednesday at 4:00!" — Baton Rouge Community Leader*

*"If you value family — you won't want to ever leave. If you do, your family is what will probably draw you back." — Baton Rouge Young Professional*

*"What do we have that other states don't have? That's easy. The family ties that we have here are like no place on earth." — Jennings Philanthropist*

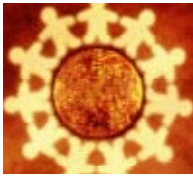
*"We could all live somewhere else and make a lot more money. But at what cost? There's more value in having my family around, in having connections with my friends. This is a lifestyle where you can have both." — Community Leader, Northshore*

*Many men can make a fortune, but very few can build a family.*

*— J.S. Bryan (Ambition: The Secret Passion)*



## COMMUNITY | We're all in this together.



Communities are the incubators of relationships. And life along the I-10/I-12 Corridor is populated with communities where residents know their neighbors, welcome newcomers and keep an eye out for one another. There is a disposition that draws people close and creates connections almost effortlessly. And once those communities are formed, there is a commitment to taking care of one another and having fun with one another. There is a great sense of comfort and security born out of the strength of the communities found along the corridor.

*"There is even community in the workplace. At every other company I've worked in — no one ever went or wanted to go the company picnics. In Louisiana everyone goes and they take their friends and they stay all day long. So it translates in to a much more loyal and engaged workforce." — Lake Charles Business Leader*

*"In this town, everyone watches out for one another. If my neighbor saw my son speeding on I-10, she would call me and let me know. My son was always confounded when I would call him on his cell phone and tell him to slow down." — Baton Rouge Political Leader*

*"My wife and I were considering moving to Houston, a European city or Lafayette. And at the end of the day, we chose Lafayette because of the freedom it enabled us to give our children. We knew that in Lafayette they would have the freedom to play and to go out on their own — a freedom we wouldn't be able to give them in Houston because there's no community network that you would trust — at that level — for your kids." — Lafayette Business Leader*

*"People came out of the woodwork to give me blood. I mean literally people I didn't even know were down there giving blood for me... I had more units of blood given to save me than I think I ever would have in Boston. You know? It's that kind of thing. It was very transformative for me, I thought, how special this connection was with these people who really cared that much about me as a human being that they were going to make that effort. That's the kind of place this is." — Baton Rouge Community Leader*

*"It is social capital, the strong civic and economic relationships among diversified groups of people in a community, that strengthens communication and trust and leads to the sharing of information and creation of ideas. People who know each other...are more likely to trust each other, share ideas, and ensure that the community provides for the necessities and well-being of others.... The social capital helps to create the foundation for developing and strengthening resources that make our communities desirable places for knowledge economy companies to do business and their employees to live." — Louisiana: Vision 2020-2003 Update*

## CAMARADERIE | Hello Friend



Given the high priority of friends and family and the strong community networks in place, it's not surprising that camaraderie is high. No one is a stranger, and everyone is a potential new friend. The camaraderie that exists along the corridor seems to be heightened by a sense of shared values and common experiences that this largely native-born population shares with one another. This camaraderie stands in stark contrast to what people find outside of Louisiana — e.g., little eye contact, perfunctory exchanges and minimal heartfelt interactions between people.

The value of CAMARADERIE was also associated with the values of: Hospitality, Friendliness, Caring, Warmth, Genuineness.

*"The warmth, the genuineness of the people, the closer ties that are built here...it's a very strong camaraderie that drew us back here from Atlanta." — Lafayette Community Leader*

*"It's about being open and accessible. We're social beings. There's a richness and an emotional exchange that exists between people here. There's a social currency that you plug in to." — Baton Rouge Community Leader*

*"A Louisianan never met a stranger. They'll speak to anyone." — AA woman, native Louisianan now in Houston*

*"I've worked in Nashville, Dallas, DC, NYC and nowhere else do you connect with people on a soul level like you do in Louisiana." — Baton Rouge Young Professional*

*"If you didn't say hi to your neighbors, they'd think there's something wrong with you." — Baton Rouge Socialite*

*"Friendliness in south Louisiana is genuine, pervasive and not just your typical 'southern hospitality.' Where hospitality in Georgia or South Carolina might be about minding your manners, the warmth of south Louisiana comes from people who genuinely want to make you laugh and smile." — Northshore Community Leader*

*"Ma honey, Ma boo... it's the culture ... we're just raised that way." — Lafayette Business Leader*

*"You know you're from Louisiana when you meet someone at a festival port-a-john and they wind up on your Christmas card list." — Baton Rouge Young Professional*

## JOY OF LIFE | Relish everything



Fun in south Louisiana is not an activity, it's an outlook on life. It's about a joy of conversation, of eating, of anything one might do. It's celebrating everything — even death and disaster. It's measuring the seasons by festivals and celebrations. It's laughing at life even when it hurts. It makes everything an excuse to eat, drink and be merry — together.

The value of JOY OF LIFE was also associated with the values of: Passion, Energy, Fun.

*"Joie de vivre — encompasses all of the other values listed — tradition, charitable, hospitable — joie de vivre — the camaraderie when you look across the grass at a Louisiana festival and see not only your best of friends dancing, drinking, celebrating, but you also dance with strangers...cheers, toast, to the day — whether it be the sunshine, the rain, the music, the celebration of life itself." — Corridor Leader*

*Winning is important to me, but what brings me real joy is the experience of being fully engaged in whatever I'm doing.*  
— Phil Jackson  
(Sacred Hoops)

*Joy is not in things,  
it is in us.*  
— Richard Wagner

*"It's much less of a rat race here. You're close to your family. It's okay to take an afternoon off and go fishing. We're in a beautiful area that's really maintained its small town atmosphere. We live where we can hunt and fish AND be wildly successful." — Mandeville Young Professional*

*"Joie de vivre. In spite of losing everything in Katrina/Rita, our citizens were able to put their problems aside and thank God for their lives, dance and enjoy their neighbors." — Corridor Leader*

## TRADITION | Timeless Connections



Louisianans don't just talk about heritage, traditions and cultural roots — they live it, making it as fun for everyone as possible. From festivals to football tailgates to crawfish boils, traditions are ongoing and constantly refreshed with creativity and a touch of spice. This is not culture kept under a glass but rather a living, laughing, vibrant, smiling, ever-changing hotbed of homespun tradition. It's a place where you don't read about traditions — you enjoy them. They transcend time and place, troubles of the day and connect people to their roots and to one another.

The value of TRADITION was also associated with the values of: Heritage, Preservation, Religion.

*(On the subject of Louisiana traditions) What could be more out of place in a nation where meaningful community rituals have all but vanished thanks to television, the decline of rural America, the weakening of the church in community life and the generally obliterating sameness of mass culture?" — Mike Tidwell, Bayou Farewell*

*Tradition. People in Louisiana have a strong sense of place, which is driven by strong traditions related to family, religion and college experiences. LSU supporters revel in football game-day traditions that, while only occurring 6-7 days per year, represent cherished experiences in which certain activities are repeated with little change for decades (e.g., tailgating, pre-game show).*

*"Our state also has a disproportionate share of Catholics who have religious traditions based in part on mass rituals that have changed little for a long period of time. Finally, many families share traditions that have been passed down for generations. We are a place that deeply values tradition in many forms." — Corridor Leader*

*"We care deeply about preservation of the past." — Baton Rouge Classical Pianist and Philanthropist*

*Louisiana has ranked in the top five states nationally for money spent on restoration of historic properties over the past 10 years. — CABL, Fact Book 2007*

## **FAITH | The sun will rise**



While faith transcends place, southern Louisiana is a place that supports an active spiritual life. Faith in God is frequently cited as the ultimate priority in life, and many people want to raise their families in a place where that faith is respected. Faith is a value that is also called upon when people think about some of the challenges facing Louisiana — e.g., natural disasters, poverty, ineffective government. Faith is one of the values that people hold on to as they hope for things to get better.

*"There is common ground found in the faith of the people." — Corridor Entrepreneur*

*"With God, anything is possible. That holds true for Louisiana, too." — Lake Charles Citizen*

*The only limits to our realization of tomorrow will be our doubts of today. Let us move forward with strong and active faith.  
— Franklin D. Roosevelt*

*"Faith is a big part of our life here. Our Catholic roots, the storms we've lived through, the challenges we have ahead of us...faith is what will get us through it all."  
— Northshore Citizen*

*"Faith, Family, Community, Work — those are my priorities. I loved New York but ultimately, I didn't feel like it was very supportive of an active religious life...and we want to raise our kids in an environment that's supportive of our faith." — Baton Rouge Business Leader*

## **DIVERSITY | Our Creative Spark**



Whether you look into the history, the demographics, the environment or the culture, it's hard not to be struck by the rich diversity of southern Louisiana. There is a rare cultural gumbo that constitutes southern Louisiana. The combination of Cajun, Creole, Coastal and Continental (French and Spanish) cultures make southern Louisiana "culturally intoxicating" and different than anywhere else in the United States, perhaps the world. The diversity of life and the joy for life converge along the corridor to create some of the most creative and colorful cuisine, music, activities and festivals in America.

The value of **DIVERSITY** was also associated with the values of: Creativity, Authenticity, Anti-Homogeneity and Tolerance

Residents discussed how many different elements combine to create the true gumbo of south Louisiana:

- Cajun** Known for creating world-class music, cuisine, festivals, fun, joie de vivre and also a welcoming spirit, resilience and personal ingenuity
- Creole** Enjoys its own unique style of food, Zydeco music, and dancing (“two-step on steroids”)
- Coastal** Coast has a tremendous impact on south Louisiana food and lifestyle. It’s the lifeblood of Cajun culture, a sportsman’s paradise, an ecotourists dream.  
“A Louisiana Triathlon — hunting, fishing, birding.”
- Continental** Sophistication, symphonies, high culture to what otherwise might be considered a “backwater” region. The Corridor has more of a European sensibility — it is a lifestyle that values rest and play (as well as work) and appreciates what life has to offer.

Residents recognize that this combination of cultural elements gives them a creative spark that many other places do not have. The mixing and mingling of this culture has a creative power and energy captured in the following quotes:

*“Our culture is one of the few places where all of the aspects of the culture are integrated. The music sounds like the food smells like the people dance like the trees sway and the landscape lays.” — Lafayette Musician*

*“It’s a little bit **Cajun**, a little bit **Cowboy**, a little bit **French**, some **Native American**. The French made us passionate, hardheaded. The Native Americans made us resilient; we understand the land. The Europeans made us enterprising. Cowboys made us tough and a little lawless. It’s like the rodeo, the best horses are not pureblood. The best comes with evolution, insertion of different traits. It’s a cultural gumbo that makes us who we are. Diversification is key to our evolution and resilience. Take a beetle and introduce it to a forest with one type of tree and it will wipe it out. The more diversity you have — the more resilient you’ll be.” — Urban Planner/Community Leader*

*“...one of the last interesting regional cultures surviving in a nation once full of them, harking back to a time when ‘diversity’ was much more than just a hip slogan we mumbled on the way to the same melting-pot mall.” — Mike Tidwell, Bayou Farewell*

*“Creativity in general is enhanced by immigration and diversity.” — Robert Putnam*

*“South Louisiana is one of the few places in the country where visiting still feels like visiting a different country.” — Corridor Leader*

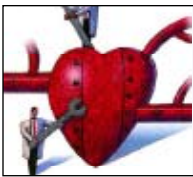
*“Last Saturday I woke up and made Gumbo, met an ex-president and then went to a seed-spitting contest with a Fortune 500 CEO. Now, you tell me, where else are you going to have a day like that?” — Baton Rouge Professional*

*"I think to their core, to their bones, people really appreciate the diversity, the different kinds of experiences and perspectives and backgrounds and ideas of the people. I think that's really going to be a signature of this next generation...because it's very important to who we are. If you look at anything about Louisiana history and where people have come from, it's just really one of the things that's magic about being here, which I love." — Baton Rouge Community Activist*

*"There's a richness in Louisiana — Creole, Cajun, it's a melting pot and people don't realize Creole is here — my mother was a very light-skinned woman with French, American Indian, and my father goes back to Jamaica. It shows up in the food, the music, the attitude of the people toward enjoying life. In Europe you experience very distinct cultures in close proximity and you speak multiple languages and Louisiana feels like that. Europe feels a lot safer, and I feel safe like that in Louisiana, more so than in Houston." — Lafayette Business & Community Leader*

*"Our communities are vibrant and unique — authentic...if we lose that, we might as well move to Kansas or Nebraska. It's that one-of-a-kind feeling that we need to cultivate even more." — Corridor Community Leader*

#### **INGENUITY | Wildcatters Welcome**



When southern Louisianans are at their best, they're looking at what's in front of them and figuring out how to make something out of it. Whether it's a hurricane, an ingredient or a business challenge, there's an industrious nature that rises to the occasion to work with what's available and add your own creative or entrepreneurial spark to make it better.

The value of **INGENUITY** was also associated with the values of: Creativity, Self-Reliance, Entrepreneurial, Industrious, Work Ethic.

*"Our culture is a response to the environment...when we create things, they tend to have a unique bent to them. Take the music scene — we were tutored by New Orleans, but I think we did it better because we weren't tied to a built-in infrastructure. We could create it from the ground-up." — Lafayette Cultural Creative*

*"There's a Cajun ingenuity that's rooted in being street-smart and able to get along in any condition. To negotiate as needed. The 'Cajun Navy' is when everyone got on their boats after the hurricane and headed out to help." — Lafayette Business Leader*

*"Cameron was under 16 feet of water and being pounded by 100 mph winds. Totally destroyed. But no one is leaving. We're going to come back "Bigger. Better. Safer." — Cameron Community Leader*

*"The values that we have that we really need to embrace are ingenuity, energy and creativity . Those are the same values that cause individuals to be successful in business...and they're a part of our cultural make-up." — Corridor Community Leader*

*"Ingenuity is Matt Stuller building one of the world's largest jewelry manufacturers in Lafayette from the trunk of his car." — Lafayette Community Leader*



By identifying, codifying and celebrating the Core Values that define the Louisiana way of life, leaders can preserve the sense of belonging and identity which Louisianans cherish so deeply while making progress everywhere else.

In Thomas Friedmans' book, *The Lexus and the Olive Tree*, he explains how, in a globalized world where innovation, technology and modernization are driving an increasingly flat world, a balance must be maintained between our aspiration for material prosperity and technological triumph (symbolized by a Lexus) and the forces of culture, values, tradition and community that give people a sense of belonging and unique personal identity (symbolized by the Olive Tree). The Lexus gives life aspirations and the Olive Tree gives life meaning.

# Positioning Beyond Defeat

## *The Challenge*

In *Louisiana: Vision 2020*, a master plan for economic development that sets out to make Louisiana a top ten state in which to live, work, visit and do business, it clearly states that “*The out-migration of too many young people is a serious threat to Louisiana’s future and the pattern must be reversed.*”<sup>2</sup>

As noted in *Louisiana: Vision 2020* and corroborated by Richard Florida’s work analyzing creative class economies, “...knowledge economy companies locate where skilled workers are located. Because these skilled workers now demand a high quality of life, states must focus attention on ensuring that they are attractive to these skilled workers. Skilled workers are the most important location factor.”

In Richard Florida’s<sup>3</sup> work, it is very clear that ‘creative class citizens’ hold the cards. Companies will locate where talented people are living. And talented people want to live in areas populated by other talented people. At the moment, talented people often feel like they have to leave the state in order to pursue great opportunities and a better quality of life and business is reticent to locate in Louisiana because the workforce is seen to be inadequate in today’s knowledge economy. The key then is going to be convincing talented individuals that Louisiana is a place where they want to live, they’re excited to work and they’re proud to call home.

While there are many factors that will contribute to retaining and attracting talented individuals, there are key areas highlighted in *Louisiana: Vision 2020* which our research further validated and this initiative will directly try to address: leveraging the social capital and quality of life that the creative class seeks and promoting an entrepreneurial culture rich with opportunity in order to create new, high wage jobs — both of which will improve the image of Louisiana in and out-of-state. We believe that the momentum along the I-10/I-12 Corridor will provide us with all that we need to tell a powerful story on these two fronts.

## *Which Brings Us To The Ultimate Purpose Of This Initiative*

To make Southern Louisiana the best place in America for talented, high-energy people to live and work by capitalizing on momentum and quality of life experienced along the I-10/I-12 corridor.

## *The Way*

In order to fulfill the purpose of this initiative, we must be able to position the I-10/I-12 Corridor in a way that will be irresistible to talented, creative individuals. To do that, we set out to find the answer to the simple question:

*What do we have that people want that the competition can’t deliver?*

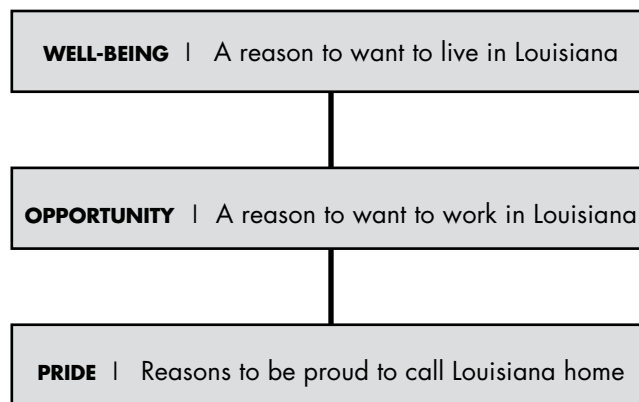
<sup>2</sup> Louisiana: Vision 2020, 2003 Update (p.III)

<sup>3</sup> The Rise of the Creative Class, Richard Florida (2002)



## Ourselfes: What does the I-10/I-12 Corridor have to offer?

Spend any time in southern Louisiana and you will quickly develop an appreciation for the genuineness and vitality of the culture which creates a love of the region that belies anything one might read on a "Report Card" of traditional quality of life measures. Look a little further and you will then be struck with awe at the opportunity emerging along the I-10/I-12 Corridor. Examine the economic assets and you will soon begin to feel hopeful about the future of the state. In order to attract and retain talented individuals to the area, all sides of the story must be told.



Let's now take an in-depth look at each.

### **WELL-BEING** | BRINGING JOY TO LIFE

The greatest natural source of magnetism for the Corridor is the quality of life made possible by the Core Values present in the cultural DNA. It is the manifestation of all of the Core Values:

Family | Community | Camaraderie | Joy of Life | Tradition | Faith | Diversity | Ingenuity

that creates the sense of a life well lived on very different terms than those established elsewhere. These values draw people to the area and foster a level of energy and vitality often sacrificed in other parts of the country.

While 'quality of life' is often measured in neoclassical economic measures like household income, infant mortality and Gross Domestic Product (GDP), along the Corridor, quality of life is defined as a life of quality experiences that are incalculable: rich relationships, well-rounded personal lives, stimulating activities for all of the senses and a real sense of community engagement rarely found elsewhere.

**IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT WE MOVE FROM:**  
*A place that has a 'poor quality of life' compared with the rest of the country.*

**TO:** *A place that cultivates a life of quality made possible by the values of the community.*

Testimony to the authenticity and appeal of the culture was abundant. The following represents a very small sampling of some of the cultural magnetism of the region:

*"My friends back in Ashville, they said, "Why do you like it there?" And I said, 'Well, let me put it this way. If Ashville is a chocolate chip cookie, Baton Rouge is a double dutch brownie.' I mean, it is so much richer, the colors are brighter, the music is more emotional, it's just a really rich place to live." -Baton Rouge Community Leader*

*"When I recruit people, I tell them, 'I'm going to teach you quality of life because I know what it's like to sell your soul while you're climbing the ladder...that's not going to happen here.'" — Baton Rouge Business Owner*

*"It's food, family and friends. I mean, that's what it boils down to. You have the best food in the country. You have the greatest, nicest people...I mean, it all goes back to that quality of life issue, being happy. Provides your three basic needs: your mental, your physical and your social. Your mental comes from your family. Your physical, the food makes you happy. I mean, when you get a good meal down here, you're feeling good. And then you have that social network because people are just genuinely hospitable." — Baton Rouge Young Professional*

*"People very rarely start a conversation with "Where'd you go to school?" or "What's your job?" You know? It's more, "How are you? What's up? Who's your momma?" or in my case, "Whose momma are you?" — Baton Rouge Community Activist*

*"Every weekend is still a vacation. You grab a 6-pack and a pickup truck, and you've got a festival. Life is good." — Lafayette Business Leader*

*"We call it the Louisiana Effect. People are reluctant to move here. But when they come, they gain 30 pounds and never want to leave." — Lafayette Citizen*

*"We understand that there's more to life than work. By Friday at 3:00 p.m., we start wrapping things up and getting ready for time with family and time to celebrate something. It's very European in that regard. There's a time to work and a time to rest and enjoy life." — Northshore Community Leader*

The importance of the quality of life found in Louisiana also came to the surface when we asked Business Leaders, Community Leaders and citizens of the Corridor to tell us what they were most passionate about — something that must be understood in order to motivate and inspire the citizenry.

What are people along the I-10/I-12 Corridor passionate about?<sup>4</sup>

- 8.9 Faith and Family
- 8.5 Relishing Music, Arts, Entertainment, Culture & Cuisines
- 8.5 Bringing the joy of life to all areas of life
- 8.4 Upholding traditions, preserving cultural heritage
- 8.1 Welcoming strangers and showing everyone a good time
- 7.8 Epitomizing southern hospitality/being the friendliest people
- 7.8 Sportsmanship; hunting, fishing, and enjoying outdoors
- 7.5 Working hard and enjoying life to its fullest

The enthusiasm people have for the quality of life along the Corridor stands in stark contrast to what the national ‘Report Cards’ would suggest life is like in Louisiana. This gives us a unique opportunity to re-frame the dialogue by celebrating the Louisiana Way of Life versus the ‘supposed’ higher quality of life found elsewhere. Louisiana can create its own ‘Quality of Life’ ladder and position itself at the very top. Rather than live by the ‘quality of life’ norms established in America, Louisiana has its own norms that create an energy and magnetism to the state that no one else can replicate.

We need to leverage the **CORE VALUES** in order to reframe what it means to have real quality of life and create a magnetic pull attracting talented individuals who share those values to the Corridor.

While the first instinct of many Louisianans was to conduct a ‘Perception/Reality’ campaign in order to disrupt alligator/bayou stereotypes and replace them with scenes of high-tech, modern lifestyles, the real position of strength is to not only disrupt the stereotypes but also to establish new criteria born out of genuine Louisiana values that turns the quality of life experienced elsewhere on its head and positions Louisiana as the ultimate in delivering a true life of quality that people yearn for. For example:

<b>CONVENTIONAL DEFINITION OF “THE GOOD LIFE”</b>	<b>SOUTHERN LOUISIANA DEFINITION OF “THE GOOD LIFE”</b>
Luxury in America = Prada bags	Luxury along the Corridor = Time with people you love
Culture in America = something to appreciate on a wall in a quiet museum	Culture along the Corridor = something to experience/relish Shaw Center: sushi, music, art, gallery Blue Dog Zydeco jam sessions
Community = \$10,000 membership in a country club so you can participate in holiday brunches	Community = a naturally occurring phenomenon when more than two people are gathered together
Diversity = A class you take at work to understand how to act appropriately should you come across someone different than yourself	Diversity = Protestants, Catholics, African Americans, French, American Indians, Creole, Cajuns, Hispanics all mixing up their food, music and architecture at every turn
Relationships = Something penciled in a day planner twice a month	Relationships = Woven into the fabric of life 24/7.
Celebrations happen a handful of times throughout the year: Halloween, Thanksgiving, Christmas & New Year’s.	Celebrations are happening somewhere along the Corridor almost every weekend throughout the year.

<sup>4</sup> Respondents participating in the Idea City Ideation Labs generated an unaided list of ‘passions’ associated with southern Louisiana living and were then asked to rate their level of passion about each area using a 10-point scale. This provides a glimpse of the ingredients that can be used to inspire and motivate Louisianans to action.

Play Dates = scheduled, regimented times at a Gymboree	Play Dates = safe and secure neighborhoods where children can still play at will
People aspire to live in "gated communities."	The Corridor is pioneering smart communities that facilitate relationships and foster engaging activities (River Ranch in Lafayette).
<i>Family</i> is something you want to get away from.	Family is something you want to keep close to you.
Friends is a syndicated show you watch from 10:00-10:30 p.m. every night.	Friends are at your house every evening.
Every man for himself.	Everyone looks out for one another.
Security is something you get with a home alarm system.	Security is something you get by knowing that your neighbors will be watching out for you and your children.
Hard to maintain trust in an increasingly mobile/transient and anonymous society	Easy to establish trust because families have been in Louisiana for generations
Measure success by the amount of money in your bank account.	Measure success by the amount of friends in your life.
Happiness is based on what life brings to you.	Happiness is based on what you bring to life. (joy, enthusiasm, creativity)
Meeting people happens through a profile on MySpace.	Meeting people happens at a party at my place.
The average American spends 25 hours a week watching TV.	The average Louisianan spends 25 hours a week hunting, fishing, eating, socializing with friends.
Louisiana is not a good place to live—it has a low GDP relative to the rest of the country.	The Corridor might have the highest GDH: Gross Domestic Happiness in the country

It is time for Louisiana to embrace the unique culture that exists along the Corridor and communicate it in a compelling way that will give talented, creative individuals the quality of life that they are seeking. By allowing people to believe that Mardi Gras and Bourbon Street are the sum total of culture in Louisiana, you are ensuring that the Corridor cities will not make the 'consideration set' of the creative class, and you will be depriving those individuals of the opportunity to experience the joy of life.

The quality of life that exists along the Corridor is so distinctive and compelling that we developed and explored a concept that was exclusively focused on "The Good Life" available along the Corridor. While it was absolutely accurate and compelling, it was insufficient as a stand-alone concept. As one native Louisiana physician now practicing in Houston told us, "This is what I already know and love about Louisiana, but it's not progressive enough to win me back." So we must couple the quality of life with the very real need for opportunity. Which brings us to our next asset.

As much as people have a fondness for life in Louisiana and want to see it preserved, they are also eager to see progress made when it comes to many issues affecting the economy. As stated in one prominent report:

*“The highest hopes that citizens hold for the recovery process is that it will go beyond just rebuilding what existed on the ground before the hurricanes and will produce a next generation society and a 21st century economy.” — Collective Strength, 2006 South Louisiana Recovery Survey Executive Summary*

When we talked with talented, entrepreneurial individuals living along the Corridor (who have and could live anywhere in the world that they want), we discovered a group of highly motivated individuals intent on producing the next generation society along the Corridor. They looked at the same set of circumstances as other people and saw something completely different: opportunity.

There were three ‘opportunity avenues’ that had talented people fired up about working in Louisiana:

#### **The ability to MAKE A DIFFERENCE in creating the future state of Louisiana**

From an altruistic perspective, many talented individuals were drawn to Louisiana in order to be a part of fixing the problems and making Louisiana better for future generations. They looked at the same set of circumstances that might make some people want to flee the state and saw something completely different: opportunity.

*“I like the challenges; it makes me feel like I can make a difference in the lives of future Louisianans by staying here and trying to make it better.” — Baton Rouge Economic Development Specialist*

*“So I slowly moved down the eastern seaboard and made Louisiana home in the mid ‘90s and have really been engaged in what I believe are creative and entrepreneurial projects linking the public and private sectors to create a stronger and more excellent place to live — primarily for my children and hopefully for the other children who live in this community. So that’s what drives me.” — Baton Rouge Community Activist*

*“What really attracted me was social ills, because I thought I could make an impact, and I think a lot of people that came for Teach for America or City Year come here and tutor and work with at-risk kids and feel really good about the work that they’re doing. It’s not solely a detriment to have social ills or causes.” — Baton Rouge Young Professional*

*“We have so much upside. And for someone who loves to take on challenges and loves to tackle possibility, it’s a great place to be.” — Baton Rouge Community Activist*

*"I made a conscious decision to stay here because I wanted to make a difference, and if you can't make a difference in your own hometown, you're not going to do it anywhere." — Baton Rouge Community Leader (AA)*

### **The ability to make a name for yourself and make money while you do it (entrepreneurial culture)**

From a competitive perspective, a little talent, initiative and ingenuity will go a long way in building a successful business in Louisiana. Entrepreneurs have used many of the challenges to their advantage — quickly reaching success levels that would be hard to achieve in more highly competitive metropolitan cities elsewhere in the country. They describe a 'wildcatting' mentality that harkens back to the early oil days but is finding new life along the corridor in response to the unique challenges of the area and the high growth rates that require a massive amount of investment and construction.

*"There is so much work to be done here. If you can finagle work-arounds to some of the challenges, there is a lot of money to be made. It's like the Wild West here." — Lake Charles Business Owner*

*"You can be a really big fish in a relatively small pond. In L.A. and NY, I had success but I didn't register in the grand scheme of things. Here I'm a rock star." — Lafayette Business Owner*

*"If you have the talent and the will, doors will fly open for you here. They're desperate for new ideas and will bend over backwards to help you. It's amazing who you can get on the phone — mayors, governors...and they're happy to help you with whatever you need." — Baton Rouge Community Leader*

*"You have people here who have grown up with the oil and gas industry, so it creates risk-taking culture...that's taken root everywhere, even healthcare. People know how to manage risk — and have the guts to try things. Our Mayor, Joey Durell, is taking fiber optic to every home in Louisiana. There's good bank funding for start-ups. Oil and gas industry has spawned a lot of the entrepreneurial DNA and innovation. So that heritage has created a really entrepreneurial culture to play in." — Lafayette Business Leader*

*"Here there's room to start your own business. There's room to say, okay, what are you interested in? I'm interested in music. All right, well, look at all the music venues we have here, you know? I'm interested in art. The expanding movie industry is a perfect example of that. You get down here and they realize, man, everybody down here is excited about something. And it gets other people excited too." — Lafayette Musician and Entrepreneur*

The ability to make history: to be a part of or witness the unfolding of some of the most innovative revitalization efforts ever created

Hitting rock bottom has made innovation a necessity. The Coastal Recovery Plan, Blueprint Louisiana (Education Reform, Ethical Standards, Healthcare Reform), Louisiana Speaks (Smart Growth), Political Reform (Jindal) are all underway and give people hope in the possibility of a truly better Louisiana in the future.

*“Everywhere else you go, our parents’ or grandparents’ generation did all the expanding, right? So the city is as big as it’s going to get, and what difference are you going to make? People there just want to get their paycheck and go home. But we’re in an area that up until three or four years ago was half the size that it is right now. We’re a part of making this into something.”*  
— Baton Rouge Young Professional

*“There is a significant critical mass of forward-thinking leaders emerging at the moment. There’s so much upside to be realized. Everyone is asking: how can things be better?”* — Baton Rouge Community Leader

*“We’re making progress — born out of resiliency. We’ve been beaten down so badly that we’re all saying, we’re going to take back control and step up and do something about it. And we can rebuild it better than it’s ever been. We can do better! We’re all fed up with the tolerance for mediocrity, the tolerance for corrupt politicians. We need people in office for the right reasons that will create an atmosphere of success.”* — Jay Dardenne, Secretary of State

Just as we described the need to overturn conventional wisdom about the quality of life in Louisiana, we need to overturn the perceptions of the opportunity available in Louisiana.

**FROM:**  
*A place without any opportunity — a place you have to leave in order to find work*

**TO:**  
*A place where you can make a difference, make your mark and make history*

PERCEPTION: What people think...	REALITY: What's really happening...
<p>If I want to make my mark in the world — I have to leave Louisiana.</p>	<p>You can make a difference here. The world has already been marked up — Louisiana provides a clean slate and a variety of options to 'mark it up'</p> <p>If you want to make a difference — Louisiana is the place to do it. Be a part of creating solutions to some of the most pressing issues facing not only Louisiana but the country and world at large (healthcare, environmental degradation, political reform, education reform...)</p>
<p>There are no opportunities for talented people in Louisiana.</p>	<p>Wildcatters welcome! You can write your own ticket if you're talented and have some entrepreneurial energy.</p>
<p>Things will never change in Louisiana.</p>	<p>Witness or take part in one of the greatest turnaround stories ever.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Political change: Bobby Jindal, new legislative body (60% term limited out)</li> <li>Blueprint Louisiana (ethics reform, healthcare reform, education reform)</li> <li>Louisiana Speaks: Smart Growth planning happening all along the corridor</li> <li>Louisiana's Comprehensive Master Plan for a Sustainable Coast (massive environmental initiative)</li> </ul>
<p>All the talented people are leaving Louisiana — it's one big outmigrating, brain drain.</p>	<p>Be a part of the momentum.</p> <p>The I-10/I-12 Corridor is booming.</p> <p>Lafayette will leverage an expanding energy economy and hospital and retail growth to create 6,300 new jobs over the next two years, making it one of the state's hottest metro areas. (LED)</p> <p>Lake Charles is fully recovered, from a job standpoint, from the effects of Hurricane Rita and will gain 2,800 jobs during the next two years. A \$1.4 billion synthetic gas manufacturing plant could become the city's largest single capital investment. (LED)</p>



*All social disturbances and upheavals have their roots in crises of individual self-esteem, and the great endeavor in which the masses most readily unite is basically a search for pride.*  
 — Eric Hoffer (*The Passionate State of Mind*)

National statistics that dominate headlines would have one believe that there is nothing good or significant coming out of Louisiana. Louisianans often find themselves in the position of having to defend their decision to live in Louisiana.

At worst, Louisianans contribute to the negative imagery by corroborating the perception that the state has nothing going on. One Convention and Visitors Bureau staff member winced as he overheard a hotel desk clerk tell a visitor, “If you’re looking for something to do, don’t bother. There’s nothing going on here.” At best, Louisianans will fall back on the culture and hope that’s enough to create a compelling case for Louisiana. There is clearly a need to educate and inform Louisianans, as well as the rest of the world, about the legitimate claims that can be made about the strengths and contributions of Louisiana in order to instill pride and create a substantive confidence in the state when talking about it to others.

We need to make Louisiana a place where talented people are proud to live by shifting it:

**FROM:**  
*A place you have to justify and defend to friends and colleagues outside of Louisiana*

**TO:**  
*A place you can brag about*

We believe the greatest and most natural sources of bragging rights reside in three well-established industries (energy, eating and entertainment) and two sources of innovation (entrepreneurialism and education). All of these represent areas that people in Louisiana are passionate about and have the potential to be truly great at.

<p><b>ENERGY</b>                  Traditional &amp; Alternative</p>	<p><b>EATING</b>                  Food-related industry and innovation                  (aquaculture, agriculture, biomedical/nutrition focus)</p>	<p><b>ENTERTAINMENT</b>                  Music, Film &amp; TV, Digital Media Festivals, Tourism, Gaming, Recreational Hunting/ Boating/ Fishing</p>	<p><b>ENTREPRENEURIAL ENVIRONMENT</b>                  A supportive culture and environment for entrepreneurs</p>	<p><b>EDUCATION</b>                  Research, technology, work force training</p>
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Again, we can take existing perceptions about Louisiana and turn them on their head by highlighting the genuine sources of strength and potential acclaim that exist along the Corridor. We can use this format to showcase new initiatives, awards, success stories and signs of progress as they emerge. The following represents a sampling of legitimate, noteworthy claims that southern Louisiana can make today that were viewed as remarkable and important to residents.

<b>ENERGY INDUSTRY PERCEPTION</b>	<b>REALITY</b>
The energy industry is over.	Louisiana is the nation's energy hub serving an ever-increasing demand for energy in the U.S. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ranked first in crude oil production</li> <li>• Ranked second in natural gas production</li> <li>• Ranked second in petroleum refining in the U.S.</li> <li>• Produce 17 billion gallons of gas a year</li> <li>• LA natural resources = 11% of U.S. petroleum reserves and 19% of natural gas reserves</li> <li>• LA accounted for 16% of the U.S. Oil &amp; Gas GDP</li> </ul>
Progressive states are investing in alternative energy — creating solutions for the future — not Louisiana.	Louisiana is an energy state — maximizing the old while helping create the new. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Five LNG facilities operational or under construction and four more proposed initiatives in Lignite, Biofuel, Wind and Greenfield Refineries</li> <li>• Turning waste products into highly valuable products (petroleum Coke-&gt; synthetic gas)</li> <li>• The Lake Charles Co-Generation Project is the biggest in the United States creating a whole slate of products from a waste product.</li> <li>• Bio-fuel: giving farmers a whole new economic model based on turning their corn and sugarcane crops into renewable energy sources</li> </ul>

<b>ENTERTAINMENT PERCEPTION</b>	<b>REALITY</b>
All they want to do is have fun — music, festivals.	Entertainment is an economic engine. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• #3 in the country for film production and entertainment projects</li> <li>• Employment growth rate of 23% a year with annual wage increases of 20% a year</li> <li>• \$400 million in economic stimulus since 2002</li> <li>• The Louisiana entertainment industry supported 5,437 jobs in 2003. By 2005 an additional 13,445 jobs were created.</li> <li>• Wages for entertainment industry jobs have increased more than 31% each year.</li> <li>• More than 30 movies released in 2006 were filmed in New Orleans and the surrounding areas.</li> </ul>
All they do is play outdoors and hunt in Louisiana.	Eco-Tourism is an economic engine <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recreational hunting, boating and fishing has a \$4.9 billion total economic effect.</li> <li>• Creates 52,000 jobs</li> <li>• Generates \$201 million in tax revenue</li> </ul>

<b>EATING PERCEPTION</b>	<b>REALITY</b>
All they do is eat and drink in Louisiana.	Food is a part of our economic engine. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Second largest fishing/seafood industry in the U.S.</li> <li>• 26% of all seafood in the country comes from Louisiana.</li> <li>• 40 million lbs. of crab come from Louisiana.</li> <li>• 90% of crawfish in the U.S. come from LA.</li> <li>• Generates \$1.9 billion economic effect</li> <li>• Generates over 22,000 jobs</li> <li>• Generates about \$99 million in tax revenues</li> <li>• Image asset: the country rates LA a 9 out of 10 for having great food.</li> </ul>
They have an unhealthy obsession with food.	Pennington Biomedical Research <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Figuring out how food can save your life</li> <li>• 85 Research Entrepreneurs — preventing common diseases such as heart disease, diabetes, hypertension, and cancer so that people can live healthier, fuller lives</li> </ul>

<b>EDUCATION PERCEPTION</b>	<b>REALITY</b>
There aren't any smart people coming out of Louisiana schools.	Louisiana ranks #10 in the country for percent of bachelor's degrees in science and engineering.
Louisiana is backwards.	Louisiana is home to some of the most pioneering high-tech investments in the country: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LA Optical Network Initiative (LONI): connects at least Five supercomputers at major research universities around the state</li> <li>• LA Immersive Technology Enterprise (LITE) One of the world's most advanced 3D immersive visualization and supercomputing — enabling small businesses to innovative and develop economic opportunities previously only available to the largest companies.</li> <li>• Fiber to every home initiative in Lafayette</li> </ul>
The schools are awful.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education Week's Quality Counts 2006 report ranked Louisiana first in the nation in Improving Teacher Quality category and first for its initiative to improve school and student performance (Standards &amp; Accountability).</li> <li>• Louisiana ranks ninth in the country for the number of teachers receiving national certification in 2005 and 14th for overall number of nationally certified teachers.</li> </ul>
They're not providing relevant training for tomorrow's work force.	The Academic community is helping to train one of America's most productive (4th highest GSP/per capita) work forces focused on the energy business. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oilfield Academy sponsored by LSU and Shell Oil Company; LSU School of Energy Studies; UNO School of Energy Conservation &amp; Management; ULL Energy Institute</li> </ul>

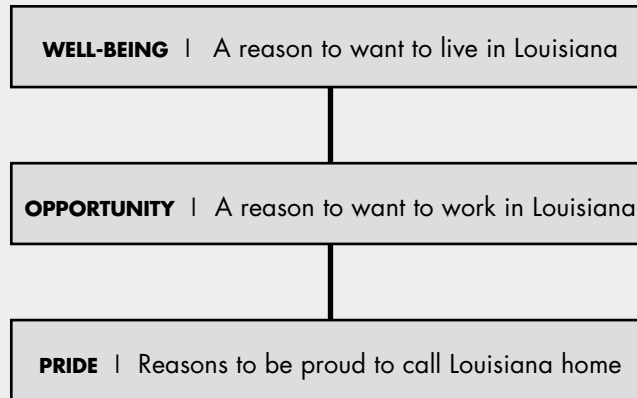
ENTREPRENEURIAL CULTURE PERCEPTION	REALITY
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Louisiana is all about big industry.	Join the family of entrepreneurs. In Louisiana alone, nearly 140,000 firms employ fewer than 20 people, and more than 250,000 self-employed businesses generate \$10 billion in annual revenues.
There's no support for small businesses.	The Louisiana Small Business Development Center network (LSBDC) recently received the award of excellence from the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) for its superiority in small business service delivery. <i>LSBDC is a partnership among the SBA, Louisiana Economic Development and participating host universities. The network consists of nine centers across the state that help entrepreneurs and existing businesses start, develop and grow through counseling, business education classes, information resources and specialized services.</i>
It's not a good environment for small business.	[Highlight new tax incentives and tax structure which are currently sited as major deterrents to launching/running a business in Louisiana]

*"We need to move from natural resources to human resources. There is a human energy we need to focus on to develop the economy. We need to involve more people in cultural and eco-tourism. Cajun and Zydeco music is an example — if we can help people exploit the cultural skills they have—playing music, cooking, knowledge of marshes and swamps — to make money while preserving the culture and environment — then economic will be more broad-based and lasting."*  
— Lafayette Citizen Journal

*"Louisiana's #1 source of energy is our culture. Lots of people want to experience our music — cajun, zydeco, jazz, as well as our cuisine. Our water sports and fishing draw people from all over the country. What we love should also become what use to diversify the economy beyond oil and gas."* — Northshore Citizen Journal

## Summary



### **WELL-BEING** | WE BRING JOY TO LIFE.

The greatest natural source of magnetism for the Corridor is the quality of life made possible by the Core Values present in the cultural DNA. It is the manifestation of all of the Core Values —

Family | Community | Camaraderie | Joy of Life | Tradition | Faith | Diversity | Ingenuity

— that creates the sense of a life well lived on very different terms than those established elsewhere. These values draw people to the area and foster a level of energy and vitality often sacrificed in other parts of the country.

### **OPPORTUNITY** | MAKE YOUR MARK. MAKE A DIFFERENCE. MAKE HISTORY.

Rather than trying to sugarcoat problems that plague Louisiana or pretend that they aren't there, we use them as a catalyst to attract the modern day 'wildcatters' — those talented and creative individuals who are looking to make their mark, make a difference and be a part of making history.

### **PRIDE** | MOMENTUM IN ENERGY, EATING, ENTERTAINMENT, ENTREPRENEURIALISM AND EDUCATION

There is a need to educate and inform Louisianans, as well as the rest of the world, about the legitimate claims that can be made about the strengths and contributions of Louisiana in order to instill pride and create a substantive confidence in the state when talking about it to others. The greatest and most natural sources of bragging rights reside in three well-established industries (energy, eating and entertainment) and two sources of innovation (entrepreneurialism and education).

# The Constituents: What do people want?

As Aristotle said, *'where your strengths and the needs of the world meet, there lies your calling.'* Now that we've identified the strengths of the Corridor, it's time to take a look at the needs of the world—particularly the needs of the audience we are trying to attract. What do young, educated, talented individuals want out of life that southern Louisiana might be able to offer them?

To answer this question, we interviewed university students, young professionals, industry leaders and successful entrepreneurs about what they wanted out of where they live and reviewed the literature to identify the trends at work behind their responses. Whether they were living along the Corridor or living in other vibrant cities known for their high quality of life, like Austin, TX and Boulder, CO, the desires were remarkably similar and could be boiled down to two basic needs:

**WELL-BEING**

**OPPORTUNITY**

**WELL-BEING** | DEFINED BY JOYFUL LIVING, WORK TO LIVE MENTALITY AND COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

## The Pursuit of Joyful Living

Joyful living may be the defining desire of our new age. In the Roper Trend Report for 2006,<sup>5</sup> the 'big idea' for the coming years is the pursuit of the "Joy Factor." The 90s was largely characterized by a workaholicism that left many people feeling exhausted and bankrupt in their personal lives. The pursuit of productivity and material gains often comes at the expense of social capital and joyful activities. Books like *The Progress Paradox: How Life Gets Better While People Feel Worse* indicate that Americans are better off in terms of material goods and amount of free time available but surveys show that they are not happier than before.

As a result, today we see record-high priority levels for leisure over work ethic, record-high focus on enjoyment and pleasure when it comes to leisure priorities, and a major shift to not let work get in the way of leisure time. There is a slate of best-selling books on the subject of happiness that have emerged in tandem with Americans' desire to discover the true secrets to happiness beyond material gains.<sup>6</sup> And another half dozen books on the subject of joy, including the *Joy Diet* and *Joy at Work*. If America was founded on the principle of "Life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness" — it would appear that the pursuit of happiness is in high gear.

62% Want to spend more leisure time on FUN (record high — up 16 pts since 1996).

53% Agree leisure is the most important thing and the point of work is to create leisure. (record high)

*"I want to live in a place where the meaning of life isn't defined by your material wealth. Where time enjoying everything God gave us is valued as much as making money." — LSU Student*

<sup>5</sup> GfK Group, Roper Reports 2006 Annual Presentation, 'Bringing it home-breaking away'

<sup>6</sup> Examples: Authentic Happiness, Stumbling on Happiness, Happiness Hypothesis, Happiness: Lessons from a new science, Happiness: The secrets to developing life's most important skill

*"I saw my parents work 70 hours a week, and we never really had time to do anything fun together — except maybe once a year on our official vacation. I'm not going to live like that. I want to weave fun into everything I do—my work, my time with my husband, my evenings..."*  
— Austin Millennial

**Implicit in joyful living is a "work to live" mentality.**

The next generation entering the work force does so with a very clear sense of priorities. They want to "live first, work second." This has profound implications on where they choose to live and the cultural values they want to surround themselves with. Communities have to offer more than jobs to attract and retain young people — they have to offer amenities that fit the lifestyle of the new generation of workers, says American author and consultant Rebecca Ryan.<sup>7</sup>

*Three out of four Americans under the age of 28 said a cool city is more important than a good job.*  
— Live First, Work Second.

*"So for those of you who run businesses and are looking at how to attract and retain candidates for your businesses, you're going to have offer them a community, not just find them a job." — Rebecca Ryan*

*"I had a really great job offer in Dallas making almost twice what I make right now — but, it's Dallas...no way am I moving to that big mecca of cement." — Austin Millennial*

### The Desire for Community

Another casualty of the modern era is social capital and meaningful community engagement. In Robert Putnam's book, *Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital*, one of the forces driving an increasing sense of isolation and disengagement is an over-reliance on technology to communicate and experience others in the world. Putnam draws on evidence including nearly 500,000 interviews over the last quarter century to show that we sign fewer petitions, belong to fewer organizations that meet, know our neighbors less, meet with friends less frequently and even socialize with our families less often. Family dinners have declined by 43% and having friends over has declined by 35%. We're even bowling alone.

*"Americans are right that the bonds of our communities have withered, and we are right to fear that this transformation has very real costs."*  
— Robert Putnam

People crave the intimacy and authenticity of real, human, one-on-one connections. They're tired of living in communities where they don't know their neighbors. They feel empty when they drive straight home after work where they spend an evening in front of a computer or watching television in their bedroom while their family members watch television in their bedrooms.

<sup>7</sup> Live First. Work Second, Rebecca Ryan (April 2007)

Beyond the isolation there is a fear that emerges as a result of a breakdown in community life. A recent *New York Times* article reported that, “Nearly half the nation’s children live in places where their parents fear that neighbors may be a bad influence, and one-third or more of black and Hispanic children are generally kept inside their homes because their neighborhoods are considered too dangerous. ... Over all, more than one in five children are kept indoors because they live in dangerous neighborhoods, according to the survey. That proportion rises to 34 percent among blacks and 37 percent among Hispanics surveyed.”<sup>8</sup>

“...the greatest suffering is being lonely, feeling unloved, having no one. I have come more and more to realize that it is being unwanted that is the worst disease that any human being can ever experience.”  
— Mother Teresa of Calcutta

People are looking for authentic connections. They want to live in neighborhoods that play together, watch out for one another and that can be relied upon during times of crisis. Communities are held together by traditions, rituals and other opportunities for meaningful engagement with others.

This has led to a hunger for New Urbanism — where community is literally built right into the design of a community — from front porches to gathering places. More than 1,000 new urban projects started last year — converting old malls into new, mixed-use town centers. Starbucks has become a worldwide success more so for the space that they provide for people to gather in than for the coffee that they serve.

*“I want to live in a place where I feel like I’m a part of a community. I lived in the Northeast for 5 years and never once met my neighbor. That’s not how I want to live.” — Baton Rouge Business Leader*

*“There are economic opportunities to be had in many great cities around the world. For me what it ultimately comes down to is the closeness of the community...the ability to plug in to a support network for myself and my family.” — Lafayette Business Leader*

*“I hate suburban sprawl — I want to live somewhere that I can walk to work and find lots of places to meet up with my friends.” — Austin Millennial*

<sup>8</sup> Census Reveals Fear Over Neighborhoods, *New York Times* (November 1, 2007)



### Ability to Have a Good Job

The Gallup Organization just completed the first-ever Global Well-Being Poll representative of the entire global population. While they tracked all of the usual suspects affiliated with well-being and life satisfaction (law & order, food & shelter, political climate, health, work, etc.), the single most important driver of life satisfaction is: a good job.

*“What the whole world wants is a good job. This is one of the single biggest discoveries Gallup has ever made. If you and I were walking down the street in Khartoum, Tehran, Berlin, Lima, Los Angeles, Baghdad, Kolkata or [Baton Rouge], we would discover that on most days the single most dominant thought carried around in the heads of most people you and I see is, “I want a good job.” — Jim Clifton, CEO, Gallup<sup>9</sup>*

While a good job usually entails a good income, that is not the only defining criteria for one. People want to work in fields where their talents can be fully utilized. They want to engage in work that feels meaningful. And they want to work in environments with other talented people that support and help generate great outputs. This is a recent evolution in man’s requirements for work. As Jim Clifton notes,

*“Until rather recently in human evolution, the explorers were looking for new hunting grounds, cropland, territories, passageways and natural resources. But now the explorers are seeking something else. Today’s explorers migrate to the cities that are most likely to maximize innovation and entrepreneurial talents and skills...When they choose your city, you attain the new Holy Grail of global leadership — Brain Gain. Brain gain is the big bang theory of economic development.”<sup>10</sup>*

Talented people are moving to regions that they feel support and cultivate the talents that they have to offer. Oftentimes their assessment of an area is based less on the facts of the matter and more on a general sense of the place. Austin is known for its creativity, live music, green environment and university center which creates the impression of a vibrant, stimulating city in which to live. The diversity of an area also contributes to a sense of possibility, which is a big factor for many Louisianans now living in Houston.

*“I moved to Austin just trusting that something interesting would emerge and it has.” — Independent Film Producer, Austin, TX*

*“Houston is bigger than the entire state of Louisiana. I just felt like my family would have a lot more opportunities, and I would have more possibilities to grow my practice.” — LSU Grad, Physician in Houston*

<sup>9</sup> Global Migration Patterns and Job Creation, Jim Clifton, Chairman and CEO of Gallup (2007)

<sup>10</sup> Global Migration Patterns and Job Creation, Jim Clifton, Chairman and CEO of Gallup (2007)

*"The only job for me in Lake Charles was working at a Wal-Mart. I moved here and got a job in medical billing and the company paid for me to get a two-year degree and now I'm a manager. That never would have happened back home." — African American woman, Houston (Lake Charles native)*

*"All of the thought leader type jobs moved to Houston. There was nothing left in Lafayette but the downstream, dirty jobs. If I wanted to stay in a job that I loved, I had to move." — Energy Executive, Houston (Lafayette native)*

### **Ability to Move Forward and Make a Difference**

People are optimistic about their own situation (68%) but not optimistic about the state of the United States. Seventy-three percent are dissatisfied with the way things are going in this country. They are growing less optimistic about the future every year — be it the system of government, economic system, public education, moral and ethical issues, foreign relationship or healthcare. But rather than throwing in the towel, every major polling organization has found signs of a population eager for change and ready to be a part of creating the solutions. The youngest Americans are particularly expressive of this view — "We're not going to accept our parents' way of life." While many have given up on institutions, they have not given up on the individual — individuals and community groups are viewed as the way to move ahead.

On a personal level, we heard young talented individuals making a conscientious choice to pursue purpose over profit. The Millennials are an idealistic, civic-minded generation that is eager to make things better. And on the other end of the spectrum, you have retiring boomers who have made their money and are now eager to give back and rekindle some of their revolutionary roots that they're famous for.

*"I want the opportunity to give back. I wanted to live somewhere that wouldn't be difficult to get involved with meaningful projects that would make a measurable difference in the community. That's actually harder than you think it might be in a lot of places." — Lafayette Community Leader*

*"America is messed up right now. But in some ways, there's a real charge in that. I feel like it gives me a purpose in life. I want to use my talent to make progress on some of the things that really matter to me." — Austin Environmentalist*

*"Government is not going to fix anything. Big business isn't going to fix anything. So if we don't get involved and create the kind of companies we want or demand that things get better, who will?!" — Baton Rouge Community Leader*

*"This is the true joy in life, the being used for a purpose recognized by yourself as a mighty one; the being a force of nature instead of a feverish selfish close of ailments and grievances complaining that the world will not devote itself to making you happy. I am of the opinion that my life belongs to the whole community and as long as I live it is my privilege to do for it whatever I can. I want to be thoroughly used up when I die, for the harder I work, the more I live."*  
— George Bernard Shaw

## Summary

*Constituents: What do our constituents want and need?*



**WELL-BEING** | DEFINED BY JOYFUL LIVING, WORK-TO-LIVE MENTALITY AND COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Louisianans may well be the experts in a lifestyle that is, in many ways, now actively sought after by the next generation of talented, creative, high-energy individuals. National trends report a significant reprioritization from pure productivity and material gains to a more balanced life filled with joyful experiences, well-rounded activities and renewed connection to community.

**OPPORTUNITY** | DEFINED BY PERSONAL ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY AND ABILITY TO MOVE FORWARD AND MAKE A DIFFERENCE

While a good job usually entails a good income, that is not the only defining criteria for a good job. People want to work in fields where their talents can be fully utilized. They want to engage in work that feels meaningful. And they want to work in environments with other talented people that support and help generate great outputs.

## The Competition: What's the competitive situation?

Well-being and opportunity are what people want and ultimately determine where they choose to work and live. Talented and successful Louisianans that return to Louisiana reported a yearning for the unique sense of well-being found in southern Louisiana and an excitement for the particular kind of opportunity that's emerged amidst the challenges.

So let's take a look at the competition to determine the primary roadblocks to success. Competition is essentially anything that we're up against: other regions trying to attract the same talented and creative individuals, real problems that hold Louisiana back and perceptual or attitudinal threats to moving forward. What follows is an examination of each.

### *Other Cities/Regions Of The Country*

Today roughly one-third of the work force can be considered "Creative Class" citizens.<sup>11</sup> Nearly half of all wage and salary income in the U.S. is the result of creative work: \$1.7 trillion dollars (as much as that of the service and manufacturing sectors combined), earning average salaries of \$48,752. So, where do they live and why do they live there?

According to Florida, *"People today expect more from the places [where] they live...In the course of my research I have come across many people who moved somewhere for the lifestyle and only then set out to look for employment."*

Creative Class members flock to certain cities because they are thriving creative centers. Creative centers are defined by a work-hard play-hard quality of life, abundance of amenities and experiences, on-demand entertainment options, tolerance for strangers and intolerance for mediocrity. They seek proximity to a variety of cultural scenes (music, art, outdoors), physical activities (hike-and-bike trails), good public transportation and good public space where people can just hang out and chat and enjoy good company. They also are drawn to university towns given the culture of creativity and innovation that they tend to produce. Places are also valued for their authenticity (e.g., historic buildings, architecturally appropriate design) and uniqueness (music scene, local culture, food). At the end of the day, they want to be a part of a diverse, vibrant and tolerant community filled with other talented individuals with which to develop relationships.

According to Richard Florida, the cities with the highest Creativity Index include:

- |                                   |                                 |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. Austin, TX                     | 6. Raleigh-Durham, NC           |
| 2. San Francisco, CA              | 7. Portland, OR                 |
| 3. Seattle, WA                    | 8. Madison, WI (250-500,000)    |
| 4. Burlington, VT (under 250,000) | 9. Boise City, ID (250-500,000) |
| 5. Boston, MA                     | 10. Minneapolis, MN             |

<sup>11</sup> *The Rise of the Creative Class*, Richard Florida (2002)

What's striking in this Creative Class concept is the significance of quality of life in determining the appeal of a city or region. People want to live in places where they can truly enjoy their lives and find the stimulation they need to create new ideas and new economic value. It is, in fact, about personal well-being as much as it is about economic opportunity. One without the other is insufficient, but the point is to include a vibrant portrait of the quality of life available in a region when trying to attract or retain talented, creative individuals.

### *Louisiana*

If people are looking for a sense of well-being (cultivated by a culture that embraces joyful living, a work to live mentality and genuine community connections) and opportunity (personal, economic and significant), how well does the competition (e.g., other regions) deliver on this and what is in Louisiana's way of claiming that territory for itself?

To answer this question, we interviewed the talented individuals that could live and have lived all over the world (in several of the Creative Class cities mentioned) and now choose to live along the I-10/I-12 Corridor. While the entrepreneurs, professionals, industry leaders and retirees that we interviewed all enjoyed many things about the other areas they had lived, they all shared similar sources of dissatisfaction with the quality of life in other areas of the country and similar excitement over the possibilities and opportunities that Louisiana presents to those up for an interesting challenge.

### *Other places have deficits delivering Louisiana-style well-being.*

#### **DISSATISFACTION WITH WORK/LIFE BALANCE**

Many successful Louisianans approached their time outside the state as a time dedicated explicitly to career-building with a conscious decision to set aside personal pleasures and civic engagement while money is made, knowledge is gained and the professional 'ladder' is climbed. It's a time of great intellectual stimulation and personal challenge, but there comes a time when priorities shift and a desire emerges for a more well-rounded life that has time for relationships, personal pursuits and community life — the promise of which never actually materializes in other cities (at least not to the extent that it does in Louisiana).

*"I was tired of working 70 hours a week and never seeing my kids. It was all about the career. I work hard here. I really do. But I have a life now. And it's a really good life." — Community Leader, Northshore*

*"It comes down to what do you value — money or life? Believe me, I could make a lot more money if I moved to New York and those job offers are hard to justify turning down. But what's more valuable to me is the family that I have here and the community that I'm a part of." — Baton Rouge Professional*

*"I have offices in other cities and most of the employees are W-2 driven. Money is all they care about, and so they're pretty easy to manage. Here people want quality of life. It's a different priority about what matters. And that's why I live here instead of San Francisco or anywhere else I could live." — Business Owner, Baton Rouge*

*"There are other cities that are truly beautiful — I mean just gorgeous. La Jolla, the Bay Area — we've thought about living in both those places. The problem is, you get so wrapped up in work that you don't enjoy it nearly as much as you should." — Baton Rouge Business Leader*

#### **DISSATISFACTION WITH QUALITY OF COMMUNITY LIFE**

The reason for a breakdown in community life and relationships varied based on the region people had lived. Some regions are incredibly hard to 'break into' without the right level of affluence and connections. Some are 'introverted' by nature. Some are all work and no play — too busy for any meaningful time to be allocated to personal pursuits or friendships. Whatever the reason, there was a huge desire to return to Louisiana to cultivate relationships and rejoin a vibrant community.

*"I lived in the Midwest and if you could get anyone to say more than one syllable to you that was a breakthrough." — Lake Charles Business Leader*

*"I moved to Florida and thought it was going to be great. But if you don't drive the right car or live in the right neighborhood, you're a nobody. I was there about a year." — Baton Rouge Young Professional*

*"I lived in Connecticut in a very exclusive neighborhood, and I never met any of my neighbors...I lived in Colorado and it was beautiful, but you're really only out and about for about seven months of the year and then you're a shut-in. Here I know everyone, and I'm active in the community year-round." — Baton Rouge Business Executive*

#### **DISSATISFACTION WITH THE ALL-AROUND LEVEL OF JOY**

And finally, for true born and bred Louisianans, they missed the sheer joy of life in Louisiana. The food, the music, the festivals, the all-around camaraderie was something rarely found with such intensity or frequency in other areas of the country.

*"You kind of just go through the motions. You might have a holiday party here or there. But the level of fun that we have here is just not out there. I'm talking about genuine fun. The kind of fun that doesn't cost you \$300 for a dinner at some hot new restaurant in LA that you have to wait a month to get a table at." — Lake Charles Business Leader*

The quality of life so beloved by Louisianans can create quite an epiphany or cause for re-evaluation for visitors to the state. Once they experience the richness and vitality of life along the Corridor, a deep sense of dissatisfaction with their own lifestyle can emerge. As one Louisianan expressed it quite poetically, a visitor from the East Coast felt that his life was "numb" and "a struggle" compared with the vitality and sense of being alive experienced along the Corridor.

*"In January I had these two guys come from Massachusetts to visit for a whole week...He said, 'You know, life in Massachusetts is numb. I'm numb...the weather's bad. I have to shovel snow constantly. If I have to shovel snow one more time, I'm going to lose it...for me every day is a fight.*

*Every day is a struggle. I have to go to work, and I have to put on gloves just to make it through because people around me are numb. People around me don't care about the people that extend past their personal boundaries, meaning like their wife and their kids. You know, they don't even care about their brother once they get to a certain age and they're married and have children. They worry about their immediate family...you know, I'm numb. I'm down here for a week. I'm hanging out with you. We're meeting all these different people, different guys. ... it's night and day." I think our thing is that we're alive. We're the area that is alive! We're not going through the motions any more. We want to be on the cutting edge of being alive. And to me, that's what it's about. — Baton Rouge Business Owner*

### ***Other places don't present the unique opportunities made possible by the state of Louisiana***

There was much agreement on the fact that other areas of the country provide much greater economic opportunity for talented individuals who want to make money and build their résumés. Louisiana's per capita personal income is only 82.4% of that of the U.S., with average annual wages of \$30,115 vs. the national average of \$36,764.<sup>12</sup> This is the chief reason why those who leave Louisiana often don't return. And why those graduating from Louisiana universities contemplate leaving Louisiana — at least for a stint.

What brought talented individuals back to Louisiana wasn't the money, it was the ability to make your mark in a meaningful and/or significant way. While this was already noted in the assessment of strengths along the Corridor, it bears repeating in a competitive context because it really does differentiate the Corridor from other regions in the country.

#### **HARD TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN "PERFECT CITIES"**

*In other parts of the country, as one person put it, "The work has already been done. You are reaping the benefits of the fruits of those that came before you. In Louisiana we have the opportunity to do work that's never been done before and really make our mark." — Community Activities, Baton Rouge*

*"I'm an idealist. I want to change the world. If I moved to Austin, what am I going to do?! Clean up a hike & bike trail?! There's a lot of work to be done in Louisiana that's really exciting to think about." — LSU Graduate, Young Professional, Baton Rouge*

#### **HARD TO BE A BIG FISH IN BIG SEAS**

In other parts of the country, competition is fierce. There are talented, well-funded, experienced competitors at every turn. Individual employees find that they are one of thousands of people trying to get ahead with similar talents and similar education levels. Entrepreneurs trying to break into the top cities in America face high costs, relentless competition and market share battles with well-entrenched incumbent businesses. At the end of the day, many of the best and brightest living in Louisiana found that Louisiana presented a unique opportunity to make a difference and break out of the pack.

<sup>12</sup> Louisiana Vision 2020: Action Plan 2006, Louisiana Economic Development Council

*"I worked in one of the top construction companies in Atlanta and learned everything that I could possibly learn from them, but when I was ready to launch my own construction company, I knew that it would be incredibly difficult to break into Atlanta. There were great, high quality, well-entrenched competitors. But when I came back to Louisiana — one of the best firms out of New Orleans was still using methods that the industry stopped using a decade ago. I launched the company and reached incredible success that I don't think I would have been able to reach elsewhere." — Business Owner, Lafayette*

### *So what's in our way?*

If people are increasingly looking for cities that can deliver a sense of well-being and opportunity for meaningful, engaging work and the I-10/I-12 Corridor seems to have an opportunity to capitalize on the quality of life and opportunity that people aren't always finding elsewhere, what's in our way?

While we wish all people could be as enlightened about the true quality of life and opportunity that exists along the Corridor as our "Prodigal" Louisianans, the truth is most people aren't. When they think of Louisiana, we found three primary obstacles exist that negatively impact consideration.

#### **I. CULTURAL IMAGE OUT OF ALIGNMENT WITH REALITY**

*Louisiana: Vision 2020* noted that a key weakness is: *an image internally and externally that portrays the state as backwards, politically corrupt, accepting of mediocrity and a 20th century holdout.*<sup>13</sup> People can't consider Louisiana as a place to live and work as long as they have no awareness of the true nature of the culture and/or the economic vitality that exists along the I-10/I-12 Corridor. Far from the stimulating and creative lifestyles that talented people seek, Louisiana imagery is often plagued with a very superficial and/or myopic view of the region.

Image barriers include:

**Louisiana = New Orleans and Hurricane Katrina**

*New Orleans* (26%) and *Hurricane Katrina* (23%) are far and away the dominant associations for the state.<sup>14</sup> Unfortunately, many people around the country assume all of southern Louisiana is still reeling from the storms in some form or fashion.

*"I get about three calls every day from people saying, 'Now tell me the truth...are you all still under water?'" — Baton Rouge Economic Development Specialist*

*"It used to be, 'Oh, you're from Louisiana — Mardi Gras, New Orleans, Woooopee!' Now everyone gets really quiet, and they want to hear your Katrina story. We're stuck in this victimhood. People seem really disappointed if you tell them you're doing great." — LA Young Professional, Mandeville*

<sup>13</sup> Louisiana: Vision 2020, 2003 Update (p26)

<sup>14</sup> "Louisiana's National Agenda" LSU Public Policy Research Lab (May 25, 2007)



### **Bayous and alligators**

Exotic images of a bygone era and bayou life have been actively promoted to drive tourism for the region. Those images have taken root to the exclusion of almost any other meaningful depictions of the area.

*"I had someone ask me, 'How do you get to your mailbox with all of the alligators running through the yard?!'" — Baton Rouge Young Professional*

*"Tourism has been a major industry for us, so we actively promote bayous, alligators and good times to drive that part of our economy. It's purposely promoted. So we can't turn around and say, 'No, no, that's not really Louisiana.' But we have to let people know that there's more to it than that." — Baton Rouge Young Professional*

### **Mardi Gras, Party State, one continuous party**

Louisiana is known for throwing the biggest party in America — Mardi Gras. While people may love college memories of their Mardi Gras experience, it often gives the impression of a state overly committed to 'the party life' to the exclusion of meaningful investment in anything else.

*"We need to move from a very superficial party image driven almost entirely by Mardi Gras to a much more real and substantive image driven by our rich cultural heritage: bayous, Mississippi River marshes, intelligent people, economic energy, homegrown talent, entrepreneurial culture, beautiful and unique environment...not mass produced." — LA Business Owner*

*"It paints any claim to 'the good life' with a really nasty brush. People immediately think that the good life, Mardi Gras style, means getting drunk and going wild. That's not at all what we mean by 'the good life' along the Corridor but not sure if it's possible to break that association." — Baton Rouge Community Leader*

### **Ignorant/uneducated, poor, simple, unproductive people**

Educational rankings coupled with pop media portrayals of crazy Cajuns (think Adam Sandler in Waterboy) can leave many people with a less-than-stellar impression of Louisianans.

*"When my Louisiana husband told me we were moving from DC to Louisiana, I immediately thought: less educated, less progressive...a negative conservatism." — LA Community Leader*

*"It has a backwards, Appalachian, insular feel to it. Like the only people left are the people who have no motivation. They're okay with substandard living. It really comes down to a lack of exposure to alternatives and a poor education system" — Lafayette Native, Houston Business Owner*

### **Victimhood/victim mentality**

Americans can become cynical very quickly if they feel like a victim is taking advantage of a situation. Unfortunately, images broadcast from Katrina gave many people the impression that Louisianans like playing the victim and aren't making the right efforts to turn things around.

*"People think that we're all just sitting around here waiting for other people to bail us out. I absolutely hate that. We have a lot going on here. We've given more to America than they've given to us if you want to know the truth." — Corridor Leader*

⇒ In order to make the Corridor a place where talented people want to live, we will have to improve the perception of the quality of life in Louisiana and leverage the core values that create a truly unique and differentiating way of life.

## **II. ALL PROBLEMS – NO OPPORTUNITIES OR SUCCESS STORIES**

The number one reason people move away is due to economic opportunity; other regions/cities are seen to deliver economic opportunity in spades compared with Louisiana. Part of this stems from the real problems that plague the state: poverty, poor education rates, political corruption, environmental crisis, crime, infrastructure meltdown. What became very evident, however, is that the challenges that make people want to leave Louisiana are the very same challenges that create meaningful opportunities in Louisiana — to innovate, to break out of the pack, to make a difference, to make history.

At the moment, all most people see are the problems. And the problems are real and considerable. But so are the success stories. There is a void in messaging about the solutions and successes happening along the Corridor in response to or in spite of those problems.

Compounding the problem is the lack of awareness that people have of the economic drivers in Louisiana. When asked to name a product made in Louisiana, 55% of people said they 'didn't know of any,' followed by Tabasco sauce at 14%.<sup>15</sup> People grossly underestimate the stature of Louisiana in many critical industries:

Crude Oil Production	Perceptual Rank: 14	Actual Rank: 1
Gasoline Production	Perceptual Rank: 14	Actual Rank: 2
Seafood Harvesting	Perceptual Rank: 13	Actual Rank: 2
Movie Production	Perceptual Rank: 2	Actual Rank: 3

Louisianans repeatedly voiced their desire to know more about notable business activity in their state. Louisiana residents often have no hope because they have no awareness of positive developments happening in Louisiana. The media perpetuates everything that is wrong with Louisiana and Louisianans have, like the rest of the world, begun to believe that's the entire story.

However, when we reveal basic information about the "player" that Louisiana is and highlight the real strengths of the economy, the lights come on and hope begins to bubble up. They want to arm themselves with information they can use to spread the word about the economic vitality that exists in Louisiana and feel more confident about their decision to stay or recommend Louisiana to others.

⇒ In order to attract talented individuals to the corridor, we will need to reframe the reality of Louisiana from something you should run away from to something you should be fired up to find opportunity in.

<sup>15</sup> "Louisiana's National Agenda" LSU Public Policy Research Lab (May 25, 2007)

### III. THE WILL TO CHANGE

Finally, there was an enormous level of concern that the residents of Louisiana will never be able to disrupt the status quo and summon the will to make meaningful change. Louisiana: Vision 2020 cites the threat of ‘a tradition of opposition to change. A new Louisiana requires the active engagement of every citizen.’

In order to summon the will necessary for change, you have to understand the beliefs that are preventing people from embracing change. We found a range of attitudes, many of which can be addressed by reinforcing what will be preserved at all costs (the cultural values and way of life) while necessary progress is made everywhere else.

#### Why change? Life is good.

*“Life is good. People are comfortable for the most part. There is a huge sense of loyalty to the way things are. It’s really a different country with its own set of norms.” — New Iberia Business Owner*

*“They have to break through the status quo. They have to want to do better. That’s the trick because everyone is happy with what they have. They don’t have a mentality of wanting to progress in any way. It’s like a curse.” — AA woman, Houston*

#### Change means losing our way of life.

*“People love Louisiana so much that they’re desperately scared of anything that might threaten the way of life here...there’s a fear that even small change will change everything.” — Lafayette Creative Class member*

*“The only thing a lot of people know about big city life is what they see on TV. They think the world is a wicked place, and they don’t want it intruding on their safety zone.” — AA woman, Houston*

#### Change is uncomfortable because the upside is unknown.

*“People have never traveled, so they’re view of the world is largely influenced by what they see on TV. So take something as seemingly innocuous as a park. Well, their view of parks is based on CNN reports that people get raped in parks and gay people do things in the bushes — so no one wants a park. They don’t think Zilker Park in Austin or Central Park in New York...” — Baton Rouge Influential*

*“You have to see it to want it. You don’t know what to want when you don’t know what exists. They need someone to put a dream in their hearts and to feel like it’s possible.” — AA Professional, Houston (former Lake Charles resident)*

*“Mediocre minds usually dismiss anything which reaches beyond their own understanding.”  
—La Rochefoucauld*

*“There’s a ‘possibility’ blind spot. Aspirations are limited because people don’t know what’s possible... you can’t expect people to expect more than what they know exists.” — Baton Rouge Business Leader*

Change might mean the government won't take care of me anymore.

*"This is an entitlement culture. When you have such a large percentage of the population on government assistance, that constituency doesn't want to see that change." — Baton Rouge Citizen*

Change isn't possible — why bother? (unethical/corrupt government)

*"We've seen all of these promises before, and nothing ever comes of it. What's the point of trying or hoping anymore? Nothing is ever going to change." — Lafayette Business Owner*

*"The government here is so corrupt...all the money that's supposed to help is just going to end up in someone's freezer." — Lake Charles Citizen*

Change is too painful and hard.

*"Have to get people to accept and work through the pain — not bail when it gets hard and decisions need to be made that are hard for some people/institutions." — Baton Rouge Influential*

*"The change that we need is a system where instead of giving everyone everything — because that feels good in the moment — we make some people upset so that the proper investments can be made. Everyone wants their piece but what we wind up with is a whole lot of mediocre efforts." — Baton Rouge Community Leader*

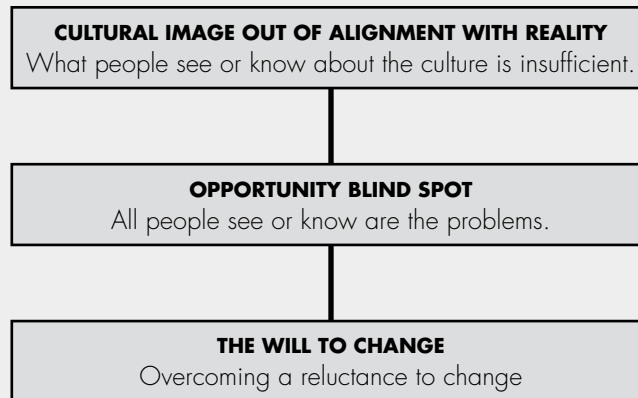
In order for residents to trust that change will be good, we have to assure them that what they love about life in Louisiana will not be lost along the way. Research has shown that when it comes to change, people care much more about what they might lose than what they might gain.

*"People are also deeply attached to the status quo. They hate loss of any kind, and they care less about gains than about losses. Researchers typically find that an income loss of \$100 hurts twice as much as an income gain of \$100 helps. This is not an inconvenience to be ignored but a fact to be respected. Yet rationalizers happily reorganize things without weighing properly the cost to happiness from breaking up a settled order."<sup>16</sup>*

⇒ In order for talented individuals to want to live and work along the Corridor, they need to believe in the possibility of change. They need to have hope that new ideas will be supported and that success is truly possible. Talented individuals have intolerance for mediocrity. That intolerance for the status quo is often what drives them to launch entrepreneurial businesses in the first place. While problems may present opportunities which they relish, those problems can't be so severe that status quo thinking prevents new ideas from taking root.

<sup>16</sup> Happiness: Lessons from a New Science, Richard Layard (2005)

## *COMPETITION. What's in our way?*



**IMAGE** | THE QUALITY OF LIFE IS LARGELY MISUNDERSTOOD AND/OR UNDERAPPRECIATED.

People can't consider Louisiana as a place to live and work as long as they have no awareness of the true nature of the culture that exists along the I-10/I-12 Corridor. Far from the stimulating and creative lifestyles that talented people seek, Louisiana imagery is often plagued with a superficial and/or myopic view of the region driven largely by negative headlines and/or dominant images associated with New Orleans, Mardi Gras and Katrina. In order to make the Corridor a place where talented people want to live, we will have to improve the perception of the quality of life by leveraging the core values that create a truly unique and differentiating way of life.

**OPPORTUNITY BLIND SPOT** | ALL PEOPLE SEE ARE THE PROBLEMS.

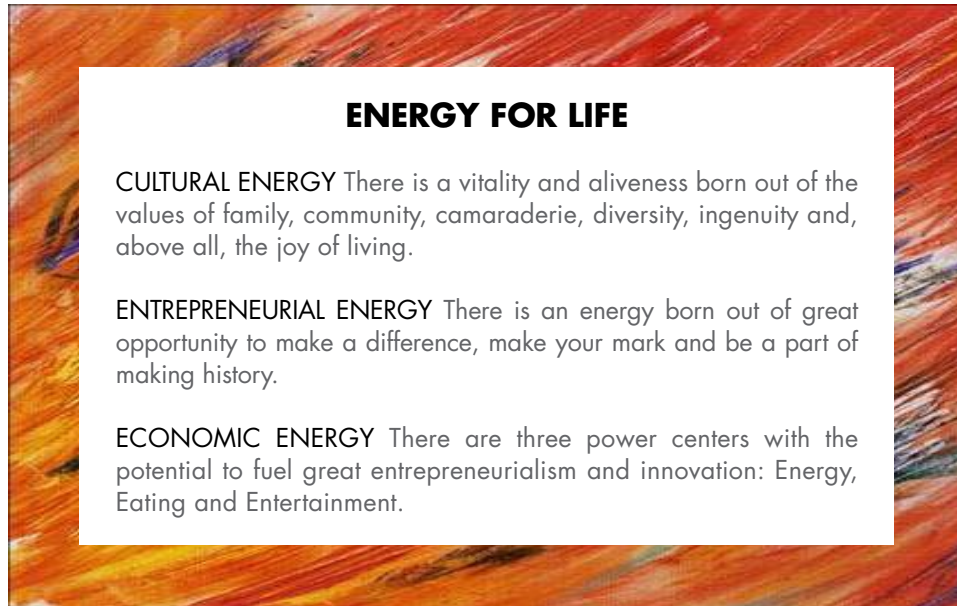
At the moment, all most people see are the problems holding Louisiana back. But the problems that make people want to leave Louisiana also create meaningful opportunities in Louisiana — to innovate, to break out of the pack, to engage in work that matters. In order to attract talented individuals to the corridor, we will need to reframe the reality of Louisiana from something you should run away from to something you should be fired up about finding opportunity in.

**WILL TO CHANGE** | DISRUPTING THE STATUS QUO

Talented individuals have intolerance for mediocrity. In order for talented individuals to want to live and work along the Corridor, they need to believe in the possibility of change. They need to have hope that new ideas will be supported and that success is truly possible.

## Putting It All Together

*What do we have that people want that the competition can't deliver?*



Of all of the concepts that were developed, this was by far the favorite concept. It was seen as accurate — rooted in genuine and authentic strengths of the Corridor. It was seen as inspiring — reminding people of what they love about Louisiana and getting them fired up to commit to the future. And it was seen as persuasive — reframing the assets that exist along the Corridor in a way that made talented individuals excited about living there.

*"I like it because of the word "energy." I think everybody needs energy here....it's like, 'Yes! We have energy. We need energy.' We're using our energy; we're tapping energy...we have the energy to build a different kind of future for Louisiana. We do. ...it will help people recognize, you can do it. You have the energy. We all do collectively, and you do personally, to rebuild your life, to rebuild our community together and to make this state a more progressive, forward-thinking, energetic state for the next century. And I think that that's very groovy. I think there's a lot of hope. There's a lot of vibe there. So people light up. You know, the word energy, it's like a light word. Your whole brain just kind of goes, Yeah! like this, when you think of the word energy. The light goes on: Hello! Lights on. Plug in." — Baton Rouge Business Owner*

*"Creatively using the energy that we have about food, music and culture to produce the energy technology capital of the world. Oil and water don't mix unless it is in Louisiana."*  
— Corridor Leader

*"The energy boiling up in Louisiana is limitless. We are converting all of our resources — the people, the culture, the economy into a bright future for our citizens. The I-10/I-12 Corridor can be presented as the lifeline — sort of like veins distributing lifeblood to the body, the Corridor distribution network."* — Corridor Community Leader

*"This is a great way to brand ourselves based on something we stand a chance at actually being good at. We're known for having a really vibrant, fun culture — let's make a business out of that. We're known for being an energy state. Let's lead the way on that. Lord knows we're known for eating and last I checked, everyone loves to eat...great way to talk about our strengths."*  
— Lafayette Business Leader

*"Address the nations (world's) needs for energy at all levels. ... make the business of energy user-friendly by welcoming ethanol development and alternative energy. Build training centers for the energy industry. It's our greatest asset so we should build off of it. America needs energy."*  
— Corridor Leader

*"Our universities are a new renewable energy source, supplying new and young thinking in our work force...that's a key source of the momentum happening along the Corridor."* — Corridor Business Leader

*"There is a creative spark in each of us, and if it finds no outlet, we feel half dead. This will give people a sense that there is an outlet for their creativity in Louisiana. A big one."* — Lafayette Creative Professional

# Core Purpose of Louisiana

CORE PURPOSE is your fundamental reason for being. An effective purpose reflects the importance people attach to the institution's work [in this case a region] — it taps their idealistic motivations — and gets at the deeper reasons for existence beyond just making money.<sup>17</sup>

While clearly one of the primary purposes of this initiative is to leverage the strengths of the Corridor in order to create a new economic engine for the state of the Louisiana, a Core Purpose for the Corridor should go beyond pure economic gains — for that alone would fall short of capturing the hearts and imaginations of the talented citizens that live and work there and be a disservice to the incalculable value of the quality of life that exists there.

*"GNP measures neither our wit nor our courage, neither our wisdom nor our learning, neither our compassion nor our devotion to our country. It measures everything, in short, except that which makes life worthwhile." — Senator Robert Kennedy, 1968*

To focus on the economy to the exclusion of the quality of life or the quality of the environment in which citizens live, mistakenly elevates income as a proxy for happiness and the ultimate goal of progress.

*"We have failed to see how our economy, our environment and our society are all one. And that delivering the best quality of life for us all means more than concentrating solely on economic growth. — Tony Blair, 1999 <sup>18</sup>*

Conversely, a region whose values create rich social capital but neglects to provide meaningful work and opportunity is also insufficient. A society cannot flourish without meaningful work and challenges to engage in. The goal for the Corridor is to hold both the well-being fostered by the values AND the economic opportunities created by the current environment to create a purpose that will inspire both the head and the heart of talented, Creative Class individuals.

*"So happiness comes from outside and from within. The two are not in contradiction. The true pilgrim fights the evils in the world out there and cultivates the spirit within. As Jeremy Bentham once said, 'Create all the happiness you are able to create: remove all the misery you are able to remove. Every day will allow you to add something to the pleasure of others, or to diminish something of their pains.'" <sup>19</sup>*

<sup>17</sup> Core Purpose defined by Jim Collins and Jerry Porras in Built to Last

<sup>18</sup> Quoted in an article by Ron Colman. Global Justice Movement.org

<sup>19</sup> Happiness: Lessons from a New Science, Richard Layard (2005)



Louisiana creates much happiness for the citizens who live there — a happiness that people want to preserve at all costs. A happiness born out of deep-rooted family and community ties rarely experienced elsewhere. Louisiana also suffers much misery which must be removed: misery from social ills like poverty, crime, environmental degradation, educational deficiencies which must be addressed, misery from lack of opportunity to engage in meaningful work and provide adequately for a family, and the most debilitating form of misery — a loss of hope.

Fortunately, when we focused our attention on the I-10/I-12 Corridor we found cultural and economic assets that cultivate the happiness and vitality people want out of life as well as the opportunity they need to engage in meaningful work that makes a difference and enables them to make a living set against a backdrop of meaningful progress being made along key drivers of the economy.

**WHAT WE FOUND WAS:**

A place that cultivates a life of quality made possible by the values of the community	<b>AND</b>	A place where you can make a difference, make history and make money
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The passion and energy emanating from both the well-being and the opportunity found along the Corridor suggest a powerful and inspiring purpose for the region:



The Corridor brings an energy and vitality to life that should be celebrated and cultivated and has the potential to attract the next generation of Creative Class thinkers to the area.

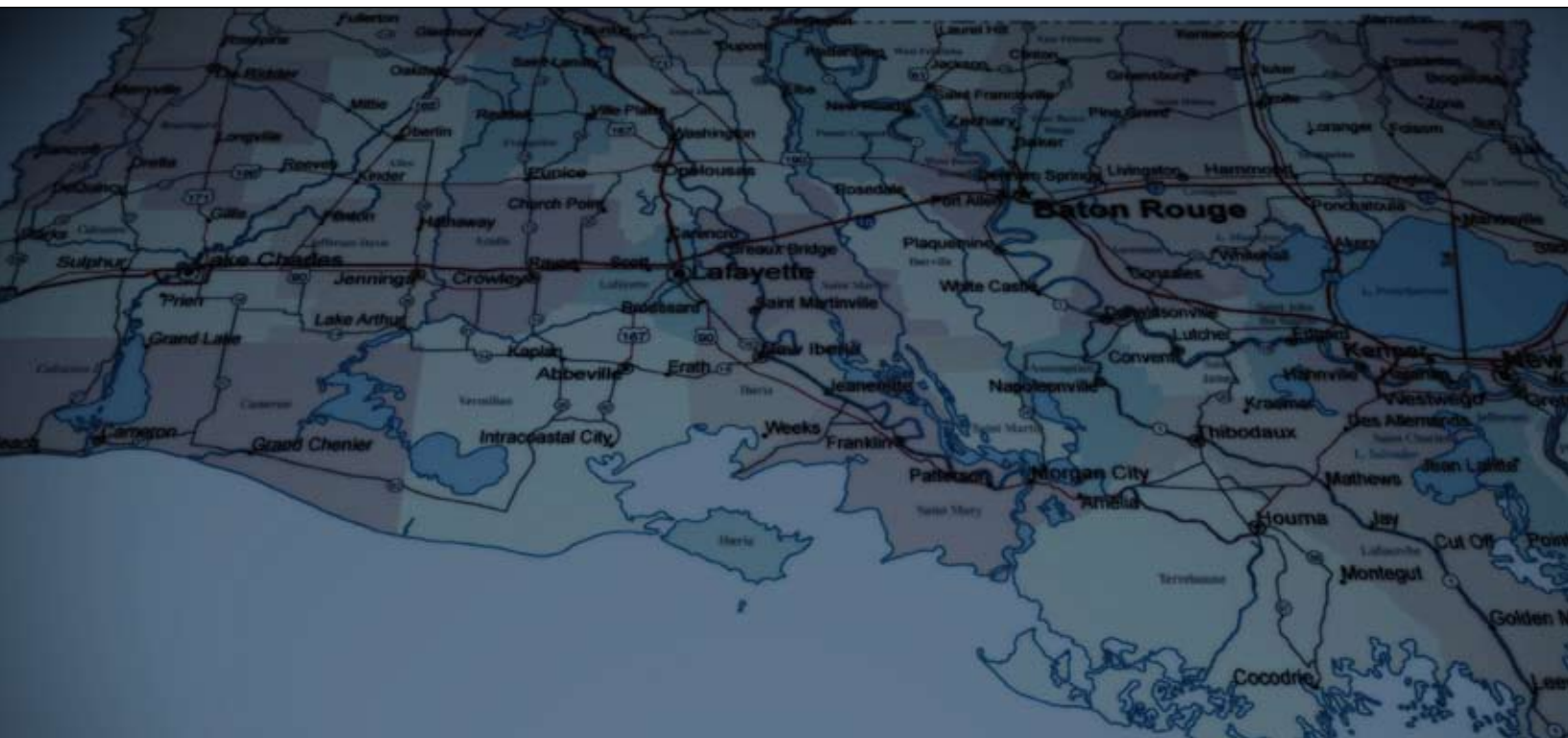
*“I think we’re on the cutting edge of being alive! This captures that passion and vitality.”*  
— Baton Rouge Business Owner

The Corridor brings an energy and vitality to life that can only be experienced when one’s talents are truly engaged in a worthy endeavor—an endeavor that enables talents to shine, impact to be made and, quite possibly, a contribution to the way history will unfold.

*“I mean, I love Louisiana because I love the excitement...as mad as I get, I love the challenge of making a difference. There’s always a new challenge on some front and it’s exciting.”*  
— Baton Rouge Community Leader

The Corridor brings an energy to the entire state of Louisiana by housing the next generation of economic power centers that will create new jobs and drive innovation.

*“The momentum and energy that’s happening along the Corridor will drive Louisiana in the future. The livelihood of Louisianans depends on it.”* — Lafayette Business Leader



**AGENCY CONTACT**