Acadiana Gets Excellent Return On Investment

Who wouldn't be delighted to get a return of 20 to 1 for their investment dollars? And in just two years, at that.

That is the kind of return Acadiana is getting from its investment in the Evangeline Economic Development District, according to Patrick Killeen, executive director of the organization which serves Acadiana, Evangeline, Iberia, Lafayette, St. Landry, St. Martin, St. Mary and Vermilion parishes.

Killeen said the Economic Development Administration (EDA) has awarded federal grants totaling $200,000 in the eight-parish area during the two-year period from June 1970 to June of this year.

During that same two-year period, police jurisdictions and municipalities in the eight parishes will have provided approximately $21,000 for partial financing of the administrative costs of the organization.

"It's not a precise formula, but my arithmetic is correct," Killeen emphasized. "This has been a return on every $1 in investment made in the eight-parish area by the EDA in the past two years."

Only EDA funds

He pointed out that the $200,000 is for funds from EDA and does not include grants from the Small Business Administration or other federal agencies. It also does not include state matching funds. Killeen said the projects were sponsored by the Louisiana Tourist Development Board.

EDA is a long-range economic development organization whose staff members are working to build a stronger, more diversified economy in this area. The organization helps city governments, industries and even individuals to get federal funds for worthwhile projects - projects which will bring more money and additional jobs to Acadiana.

Examples of some "profitable foundations" projects Killeen said the staff is working on include a 75-room motel which may be funded by federal agencies.

Indian Reservation

$50,000 for facilities at the Chitimacha Indian Reservation near Carencro in St. Mary Parish. The funds would provide a 100-foot display and sales area on the reservation. It would also pay for two passenger classrooms for teaching Indian handicrafts, a tribal council meeting room, and a halfway bridge leading the way for visitors to the reservation.

"$33,000 from EDA which would be added to local funds to pay for a $60,000 economic demand study for the Lafayette Hobe Terminal as an Industrial Development Commission. The study would include plans for an industrial park.

-Funds for sewer facilities in Jeanerette, Broussard Bridge and Basile.

-Funds for establishment of Industrial parks in Abbeville and Opelousas.

-Funds for a new hospital in Ville Platte.

-$415,000 for development of a civic center in St. Landry Parish.

-$125,000 for a new municipal building in Opelousas in St. Landry Parish.

Not Approved

Killeen emphasized that these projects have not been approved, but, he said, approval for any or all of them could come between now and the end of June this year.

He said perhaps the biggest disappointment made by EDA during the last year and a half has been in the area of tourist development.

EDA was instrumental in the establishment of the Acadiana Council for Tourism (ACT), an organization being set up by the Louisiana and practically Acadiana, to help organize among the tourist areas of the state.

"We saw a need for a regional effort in the area of tourism," Killeen said. And EDA was the answer.

EDA has not only provided leadership and direction, he said, but has been responsible for obtaining state and federal funds for all tourist projects throughout the state.

Tourist Projects

Among tourist projects funded during the last two years were:

-New Orleans - $4,490 for a tourist information center which opened in the last year and has had thousands of visitors.

-Lafayette - $1,600 for a park and camping facility.


-Breaux Bridge - $341 for recreational development and a camper trailer facility be located adjacent to Bayou Teche.

-Franklin - $3,000 for a museum.

-Morgan City - $2,000 for brochures illustrating tourist attractions in that area.

-Abbeville - $1,187 for a camper trailer park adjacent to the city's A.A. Courville Park.

"Camping trailer facilities are real big right now," Killeen said. "People are demanding more and some camping facilities like those to be built in Breaux Bridge, Abbeville and Lafayette.

State Funds

These funds were allocated by the state legislature to Acadiana Tourist Development Commission by the state Legislative. They are state funds and the only requirement that local governments match that amount. This is matching dollar for dollar and thus doubling local funds.

However, these two dollars can in turn be doubled again into four dollars for tourist projects. The matching agency can go on after two more dollars from federal sources. Thus, $1,000 in local funds can be stretched into $3,000 for tourist project with help from the staff of experts at EDA.

"That's expanding your investment dollar so as it will go and it's the best investment a group can make," Killeen said about tourist projects.

EDA is currently participating in Gene tourist protection programs to bring more money into the economy.

One of these is ACT which is mentioned above. ACT is the American River Tourist Association and the American Recreational celebration.

Showcase Exhibits

The Showcase contains a Louisiana exhibit and is being displayed all across the country. Already nearly 2,000 people in the northeastern city where the Showcase has been seen have been attracted to the Louisiana exhibit and have written letters expressing interest about the bayou state.

"And we can expect another 10,000 inquiries before the end of the year," Killeen said.

Besides helping promote in...