EEPDServes
Acadiana Area

For most folks, the number 13 stirs superstitions of bad luck. But not for the Evangeline Economic and Planning District (EEP), which enters its 13th year of assistance in planning for the eight-parish Acadiana area.

"It's a matter of hard work and cooperative contacts making things go better than ever," says Executive Director B.J. Landry.

The district covers Lafayette, Vermilion, Iberia, St. Martin, Evangeline, St. Landry, Acadia and St. Mary parishes.

All work at the EEPD — other than through Landry himself — is channeled through either the Comprehensive Planning Division, which has a larger staff, or the Economic Development Division.

During the year, two major projects of the development division were funded: a multipurpose fire station for Ville Platte which will also house the Evangeline Parish Council on Aging, and additional industrial park improvements for the Opelousas Industrial Park.

Other development projects worked on included: applications for additional industrial park improvements for the Acadiana Regional Airport outside of New Iberia; a Farmers' Market with an antecedent design for the Opelousas vicinity; multipurpose buildings for Mamou and Grand Coteau; feasibility studies that should prove projects are needed for an additional port for the district; and a tourist information center to serve all of central Acadiana.

Additionally, says Landry, "We are looking at other areas in all of the eight parishes where we can recommend and justify a variety of projects, including port and industrial park improvements."

"When it can be proven that substantial jobs will result from project investments, we are in a good position to provide assistance to towns and parishes interested in going after projects," adds the director.

Most of the activities of the planning division are concerned with HUD Areawide Planning and HUD Local Assistance Planning programs.

The division also administers the Community Development Block Grant Program which has brought back more than $18 million to the district. The program is funded through HUD.

Since the calendar year straddles two fiscal year work programs, at the beginning of 1979 the division was finishing one contractual year's work and by mid-1979 was starting the next fiscal year's program.

For fiscal year 1978-79, the major planning grant funded by HUD was $85,680 for the Areawide Planning.

Studies produced were the Areawide Land Use Strategy (an in-house document), and the preliminary Areawide Housing Opportunity Plan.

Areas funded with the Local Assistance Planning grant of $45,900 were: Church Point, Crowley, Gueydan, Iota, Jeanerette, New Iberia and St. Landry Parish. The studies developed for these areas included existing land use, housing, drainage, subdivision regulations, utilities and community development plans.

The Areawide Planning grant for the 1979-80 fiscal year totalled $85,680 for the eight-parish area.

Work included the Areawide Environmental Management Plan and the Areawide Housing Opportunity Plan.

Communities included in this planning were Church Point, Crowley, Gueydan, Iota and New Iberia. Financial assistance for the local planning totalled $20,400, and studies prepared involved zoning, transportation, recreation and public facilities.

Other activities of the planning division include running the Acadiana Regional Clearinghouse which reviews and comments on project applications.

The EEPD has also worked with the Evangeline Parish Coastal Zone Management Program in plan development, undertaken the 208 water quality management program, and undertaken the promotion of car-and-van-pooling.