Timber plays major role in Evangeline

The timber industry in Evangeline, Allen, Beauregard and Calcasieu Parishes plays a major role in the economy of Southwest Louisiana, according to Thomas C. Strawn, area forestry agent with the Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service.

"Trees are Louisiana's number one crop," he says, noting that 1987 revenues in the four-parish region accounted for $60 million.

Timber-growing is the dominant land use in the four parishes, says Strawn, with 48 percent of the total land mass in the parishes in timber. Allen and Beauregard Parishes are 77 percent covered with timber, while Evangeline and Calcasieu Parish have 34 percent covered with timber. Contrary to popular opinion, Strawn says about 40 percent of the forestland in Louisiana is owned by the forest industry.

About 2,000 jobs are credited to the forest industry in the four-parish regions. Accounting for a total of 25,000 jobs in Louisiana, industry ranks as the second largest employer in Louisiana behind chemicals and ahead of the oil industry.