**PRESS RELEASE**

 The Jefferson Business Council, an organization consisting of 56 business owners and chief executive officers of major Jefferson Parish based businesses, has adopted a Local Election Platform and a Statewide Election Platform which it will advocate to candidates in the 2015 election cycle. JBC Chairman Robert Weinmann, stated “This results of this coming election will have a major effect on the future of both our parish and state. The issues are clear and we are at a point in time where vision and commitment are necessary to resolve problems and strive for and reach stated goals. Our organization believes that a stated platform will clearly set benchmarks to assist our members and the general public to evaluate which candidates are best suited to lead our parish and state to reaching the greatest potential.”

**Local Election Platform**

1. **Regional Cooperation and Coordination.** Strengthen avenues of communication and cooperation between neighboring Parishes and Cities to foster regional growth and enhanced quality of life.
2. **Internal government communication.** Internal communication and cooperation between Parish administration, parish council and municipal governments should be prioritized.
3. **Access and Connectivity:** Evaluate the existing assets of the region and areas being considered for future development and consider ways to better connect them through prioritized transportation projects to improve commerce and access.
4. **BP settlement and hospital lease proceeds:** The proceeds received from the BP settlement for loss of sales tax should be leveraged and invested in priority based projects of parish wide importance according to a well thought out and vetted master plan for infrastructure improvements. The proceeds of the hospital lease should be placed in trust in the event of a lease termination while interest revenue derived therefrom should be invested to promote the general health of the community in accordance with the purpose of hospital districts as provided for by state law. The use of the settlement and lease proceeds should be transparent with full disclosure and tracking.
5. **Infrastructure:** Continuous upgrading of infrastructure should be prioritized in the budgetary process.
6. **Economic development.** Support implementation of the Jefferson Edge 2020 long term strategic economic development plan identifying major industry clusters with high growth potential and address issues such as permitting, building stock, workforce development, the development of Churchill Park and Fairfield and the reinvigoration of Fat City and the Avondale site
7. **Public Education:** All elected officials should be vocal advocates for the importance of public education and insist upon continuous improvement.
8. **Budget.** Parish expenditures should be based on reoccurring revenue. Non reoccurring revenue should never serve as a basis for growing the Parish budget. All Parish bonded indebtedness should be periodically analyzed for purposes of insuring that the lowest possible rates of repayment are in place and maximum savings obtained. At all times, reserves should be maintained at such a level that will insure the highest bond rating for the Parish. Analyze and prioritize infrastructure needs and economic development projects in view of current low borrowing rates as a hedge against future inflation effecting cost.

**Statewide Election Platform**

1. **Coastal restoration and protection.** Ensure funding for coastal restoration is given priority status and that available funds are used as intended with full transparency and accountability. Leverage available funds, encourage private sector investment and philanthropic involvement to facilitate progress.
2. **TOPS.** Reform TOPS scholarship program to insure its budgetary sustainability with predictable cost for the state.
3. **Support of 2016 CASE AGENDA.**
* **Accelerate growth in the private sector**  Prioritize private sector job creation and diversification of the state’s economy through proactive recruitment and retention activities that include data-driven, competitive incentives with reasonable and appropriate sunset provisions. Reduce regulations on the private sector favoring limited government and a free market approach.
* **Adopt a pro-growth tax code** Tax code should be nationally competitive and drive economic growth.

Tax structure and administration should be simple and efficient for businesses and citizens alike.

Local reliance on state support should be rightsized in line with best-practices states.

* **Transform state budgeting to allow for prioritization of spending**

Statutory limitations that prohibit the prioritization of state spending should be reviewed, reformed, reduced or eliminated where appropriate.

The cost drivers in the state budget must be addressed, reducing the need for more tax dollars year after year. This includes long-term changes to the state retirement plans, laws that are smart on crime, risk management reforms and others.

* **Develop Lousiana’s workforce to promote individual prosperity and a healthy economy for the future**

All students in preK-12 schools should be provided with the foundation for success through high standards, accountability and choice.

Demand and performance should drive an innovative, responsive education system from pre-K through higher education.

Institutions of higher education should be efficient and empowered to be market-responsive.

Federal, state and local workforce training efforts should be aligned, coordinated and leveraged to meet the needs of workers and industry alike.

* **Prioritize infrastructure to sustain economic growth**

Taxpayer funds intended for state transportation and infrastructure should be invested accordingly.

Areas of economic growth should be prioritized with strategic investments for urgent improvements, including large scale capacity projects.

Infrastructure should be defined comprehensively with appropriate emphasis on multi-modal solutions.

* **Improve Louisiana’s legal climate to be fair, efficient and accountable**

Frivolous lawsuits-including such litigation by public bodies-should be discouraged, preserving a fair and efficient system for real claims and real victims.

Transparency and citizen access should be hallmarks of the legal system.