

In The Matter Of:
Louisiana Military Advisory Council

Meeting Minutes
August 24, 2021

Associated Reporters, Inc.
201 St. Charles Ave.
Suite 2415
New Orleans, La.
www.aridepos.com

Original File 08-24-20 Military Advisory Council Meeting.txt

Min-U-Script® with Word Index

1 MEETING MINUTES FOR THE
2 LOUISIANA MILITARY ADVISORY COUNCIL
3 HELD VIA VIDEO CONFERENCE
4 IN ACCORDANCE WITH REVISED STATUTE 4217.1
5 ON THE 24TH DAY OF AUGUST
6 COMMENCING AT 10:03 A.M.

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9 LOUISIANA MILITARY ADVISORY COUNCIL

10 REPORTED BY: DOROTHY N. GROS, CCR
11 CERTIFIED COURT REPORTER
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1 SECRETARY PIERSON:

2 In just a moment, I'm going to
3 ask Robby Abboud, our executive
4 director, to go ahead and call the
5 meeting to order. Just prior to
6 that, I think the only new item
7 from the agenda was a request by
8 SEMA to move up on the reporting
9 schedule to facilitate an
10 opportunity Mr. Silbert has to go
11 on and do some other things. So
12 with that, I will ask Mr. Robby to
13 get us started with today's meeting
14 and call the meeting to order.

15 MR. ABOUD:

16 Thank you very much, Mr.
17 Secretary. Good morning, ladies,
18 and gentlemen. Of course, my name
19 is Robby Abboud, Executive Director
20 of the Louisiana Military Advisory
21 Council. It's certainly great to
22 see everyone this morning, and
23 thank you for all attending today's
24 meeting.

25 Again, we have all members, it
 looks like, have been let into the

1 meeting via Zoom, so we can go
2 ahead and proceed at this point in
3 time, which I'd like to go ahead
4 and call this meeting to order.

5 So we're going to follow along
6 with the agenda here this morning.
7 Since we typically begin our
8 meetings with the Pledge of
9 Allegiance, I will ask LeAnna
10 please to display the flag. Okay.
11 There we go.

12 Now if you'll all please rise
13 and join me in saying the Pledge of
14 Allegiance.

15 (PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE WAS CONDUCTED)

16 MR. ABOUD:

17 Thank you all very much again.
18 Before we kick off with the rest of
19 the agenda, I'll do a quick roll
20 call for the record. Please feel
21 free to correct me should I have
22 any mispronunciations, and a
23 reminder, please be sure to unmute
24 to respond.

25 So we'll begin with the roll

1 call here:

2 Mayor Clarence Beebe?

3 (No response.)

4 Representative Raymond Crews?

5 (No response.)

6 General Robert Elder?

7 GENERAL ELDER:

8 Present.

9 MR. ABBOUD:

10 Mr. Robert Gatti?

11 (No response.)

12 Mr. Brian Jakes?

13 (No response.)

14 Mr. Larry Jones?

15 (No response.)

16 MR. JAKES:

17 Jakes is present. I was

18 on muted. I'm sorry.

19 MR. ABBOUD:

20 Thank you, sir.

21 Secretary Don Pierson?

22 SECRETARY PIERSON:

23 Present.

24 MR. ABBOUD:

25 Ms. Deborah Randolph?

1 MS. RANDOLPH:

2 Present.

3 MR. ABBOUD:

4 Mayor Rick Allen?

5 MAYOR ALLEN:

6 Present.

7 MR. ABBOUD:

8 Major General Ronald Richard?

9 (No response.)

10 Mr. Gary Silbert?

11 MR. SILBERT:

12 Present.

13 MR. ABBOUD:

14 Mr. Ronnie Slone?

15 MR. SLONE:

16 Present.

17 MR. ABBOUD:

18 Senator Mike was unable to join

19 us, and he did send his regrets due

20 to attending a funeral today. He

21 will try to join us, possibly,

22 toward the end of today's meeting,

23 however, he did ask that I send his

24 regrets.

25 Secretary Joey Strickland?

1 SEC. STRICKLAND:

2 Present.

3 MR. ABOUD:

4 Mr. Murray Viser?

5 MR. VISER:

6 Present.

7 MR. ABOUD:

8 Major General Keith Waddell?

9 (No response.)

10 Rear Admiral Joel Whitehead?

11 REAR ADM. WHITEHEAD:

12 Present.

13 MR. ABOUD:

14 Okay. Thank you very much
15 everyone. And we'll proceed now to
16 the next agenda item, the
17 certification for a lack of quorum.
18 I'd like to note that in accordance
19 with the revised statute 4217.1 in
20 the current public health emergency
21 as declared by Governor John Bell
22 Edwards' executive orders, this
23 meeting is being held via video
24 conference in a manner that allows
25 for observation and input by

1 members of the public as set forth
2 in the public notice posted on
3 Friday afternoon, August 20th.
4 LMAC will provide for attendance at
5 its essential meeting today via
6 video conference because it is
7 unable to obtain a quorum.

8 Looking at approval of previous
9 meetings' minutes. Those minutes
10 should have been distributed to
11 members of the board in advance of
12 today's meeting. And since we're
13 unable to obtain a quorum at this
14 time, we won't be able to call for
15 that approval, however, at this
16 time, I'd like to ask any board
17 members if they have questions, any
18 comments or notes from the previous
19 meetings' minutes?

20 Okay. I'm hearing none, so we
21 will proceed but won't be able to
22 formally approve or adopt those
23 minutes due to a lack of quorum
24 today.

25 And with that, we'll go ahead

1 and move on to agenda item number
2 5. I'll go ahead and turn the
3 meeting over to LED Secretary Don
4 Pierson, LMAC Chairman for his
5 remarks.

6 Mr. Secretary, I'll turn it
7 over to you, sir.

8 SECRETARY PIERSON:

9 I'll be brief because of the
10 lengthy agenda today. History will
11 record this period of time as the
12 U.S. being in a massive withdrawal
13 from Afghanistan.

14 Secretary Strickland, I did
15 note your comments that were very
16 reassuring to our veterans that
17 have served in Afghanistan and
18 appreciate the way that you
19 effectively communicated to them
20 that we have, as a nation, paid a
21 price, but we've also seen a real
22 dividend in security and some of
23 the other areas that we operate in.
24 So again, thank you for that.

25 We didn't want to do this

1 meeting today by Zoom. We'd much
2 rather be in person. But as we
3 sought to locate it at Belle
4 Chasse, Department of Defense
5 regulations still require limited
6 engagement of crowded facilities.
7 And so with that, we were able to
8 just go ahead and with the legal
9 requirements necessary to be able
10 to meet by Zoom. But we do look
11 forward to our next meeting being
12 in person prior to the end of the
13 year, and we also look forward to
14 one of the centerpieces of that
15 meeting being the report coming
16 back to us relative to the economic
17 impact study that's in the field
18 right now.

19 Certainly, the governor wanted
20 to be with us today, but instead,
21 he's at Barksdale with Secretary
22 Shawn Wilson up there inspecting
23 grade work that's being done to
24 connect I-220 and I-20 to the base.
25 So a real milestone achievement

1 that's something we've worked on
2 for a long time and integrates into
3 the necessary weapons generation
4 facility and security gates to be
5 established as you will hear later
6 on, probably in Chris' reports
7 relative to that.

8 Been a lot of activity for all
9 things related to our military
10 activities across the state. Also,
11 the Association of Defense
12 Communities meeting that was
13 conducted in Washington, D.C.,
14 where again, we were able to
15 participate in some important
16 activities and information sessions
17 relative to our military
18 installations. So you'll hear more
19 about those activities across the
20 board as today's meeting continues.

21 And with that, I'll move the
22 gavel back to Robby so that we can
23 begin to call on those that are
24 going to report.

25 MR. ABBOUD:

1 Thank you very much, Secretary
2 Pierson.

3 And again, to echo the
4 Secretary's comments, I know you
5 are all very aware we are, of
6 course, operating in a number of
7 lanes here and our partners have a
8 number of robust updates that
9 they'll be reporting on as we
10 continue to lean forward on many of
11 these key initiatives.

12 So that's it. We'll move into
13 the reports and overviews section
14 of our agenda today. I did have a
15 slight modification as well to the
16 order in which we conduct these
17 reports. General Waddell had
18 signaled that he had an engagement
19 come up. I'm not sure that I see
20 General Waddell on the Zoom list
21 today yet. So I think we'll go
22 ahead and advance to Secretary
23 Strickland here. However, if
24 General Waddell is able to join us,
25 we'll go ahead and pivot to him

1 once he does come online here.

2 So Secretary Strickland with
3 Veterans Affairs, I'll go ahead and
4 turn it over to you for your
5 report, sir.

6 SECRETARY STRICKLAND:

7 Thank you, Robby.

8 Thank you, Secretary Pierson.

9 Good morning, teammates. My
10 remarks will be brief, but
11 hopefully meaningful.

12 First, the Louisiana Department
13 of Veterans Affairs' 840-person
14 staff is serving Louisiana's
15 277,000 veterans and their
16 families.

17 We like to say in the
18 department that for us, every day
19 is Veterans Day because every day,
20 we're taking care of almost over
21 500 veterans in our five veterans
22 homes. And for us, every day is
23 Memorial Day because every day,
24 we're burying our veterans and
25 their loved ones with honor and

1 with dignity.

2 So it's 365 days a year for me
3 and my 840-person staff.

4 I'll start with benefits first.
5 All of our benefits offices across
6 the state in every parish, all 74,
7 are open and taking care of
8 veterans, processing pension and
9 compensation benefits. Last year,
10 our service officers brought in,
11 and this is information that we get
12 from the Federal VA, our counselors
13 brought into the state of
14 Louisiana, \$1.5 billion statewide
15 in compensation and pension
16 benefits. This is money that goes
17 directly into the veteran's
18 pockets. It doesn't go to
19 government or anyplace else.

20 In fiscal year '21, our service
21 officers filed more than 83,000
22 claims on behalf of our state's
23 veterans. We also verified veteran
24 status of 768 businesses for LED's
25 Veterans First Business Initiative.

1 And in addition to that, we are
2 working 149 applications for the
3 Louisiana National Guard \$100,000
4 and \$50,000 benefit that was passed
5 by the legislature.

6 In fiscal year '21, 29
7 Louisiana Army National Guard
8 claims were approved and awarded.

9 Cemeteries: In July 2021, this
10 past July, we interred 113
11 veterans, spouses, or dependents in
12 our five state veteran cemeteries.
13 They were all interred with honor
14 and dignity. Our cemeteries are
15 open for ceremonies. And our
16 committal shelters and operations
17 are ongoing even though we are in
18 this pandemic.

19 In fiscal year '21, we interred
20 1,303 veterans and their spouses.
21 At the Northwest Louisiana Veterans
22 Cemetery in Keithville, which is
23 near Barksdale, we are preparing to
24 expand that cemetery with a new
25 burial ground, and we're also

1 adding additional columbarium
2 space. We've received a little
3 over a 2-million-dollar grant from
4 the Federal VA to start that
5 process. That process will start
6 this fall. Keithville is our first
7 and oldest state veterans cemetery.

8 All other cemeteries around the
9 state are doing fine. Last year,
10 we received the nation's top award
11 for cemetery operations in
12 Rayville. They usually give three
13 awards, and it's very tough to get
14 those awards for states, and we
15 beat every other state in the
16 nation and received the nation's
17 top award, and we were very honored
18 to get that.

19 Our homes, our state veterans
20 homes are doing well. I'm honored
21 and proud to tell you that 96
22 percent of our veterans residing in
23 our homes are now vaccinated. And
24 we're continuing to work on our
25 staff. We're at 63 percent staff

1 vaccinated and encouraging them
2 every day to take the shots. It's
3 a challenge for us, but we're going
4 to continue to do that.

5 From onset of the pandemic, we
6 have followed all protocols from
7 CDC, CIMS, the Louisiana Department
8 of Health, and the Office of Public
9 Health. We stay in very close
10 contact with the Louisiana
11 Department of Health and the Office
12 of Public Health to ensure that we
13 are providing the highest level of
14 protection to not only our veterans
15 residing in the homes but to our
16 staff.

17 We continue to require veterans
18 home employees to wear the proper
19 PPE at all times in our facilities
20 and to follow all required measures
21 regarding disinfecting and social
22 distancing.

23 We also require employees to
24 report any exposures to COVID
25 positive individuals, as well as

1 any new COVID positive test
2 results. It's not easy. It's one
3 of the biggest challenges in the 21
4 years that I've been the Secretary
5 of Veterans Affairs that I've ever
6 had to deal with. But it's
7 working, and we're doing well.

8 On entering the home at the
9 beginning of each shift, each
10 employee is individually screened
11 for specific, current COVID
12 symptoms and potential exposure
13 since they're last entry into the
14 building.

15 In terms of testing, we follow
16 all protocols from CDC and OPH in
17 addition to CMS. Whenever there's
18 an outbreak, in person visitation
19 at the homes are halted until we
20 arrive at a positive situation. It
21 creates a problem for us because
22 all of our veterans are vaccinated.
23 Some of our staff are not, and when
24 they come in, we have to shut the
25 home down for visitation, which of

1 course, upsets the family. But so
2 far, they've been understanding,
3 and we deal with it. They deal
4 with it. They understand that
5 we're in a pandemic, and we move
6 on.

7 So that's pretty much it as far
8 as the homes. They're all doing
9 well. Even though census is down,
10 we usually take care of about 750
11 veterans at all five homes. We're
12 down to about 500 now.

13 But the good news is that the
14 funding from the Federal VA has
15 remained the same all through the
16 pandemic. So we've not lost any
17 funding to run our homes and to
18 take care of our veterans.

19 I'd like to switch now to what
20 we call the VetCorps. Three years
21 ago, we created, along with the
22 governor and all college and
23 university presidents, student
24 veteran centers on every college
25 and university campus throughout

1 the state of Louisiana. Last week,
2 we completed our third pre-service
3 orientation and training for
4 student veterans. As of this past
5 Monday, 33 campuses across the
6 state are beginning their service
7 to student veterans. We have 9,000
8 student veterans, most of them are
9 combat veterans, attending college
10 and universities at our veterans
11 centers.

12 And again, we're in our third
13 year of receiving a yearly \$300,000
14 grant to work this program from the
15 AmeriCorps Foundation, and we're
16 honored to be able to provide this.
17 We're one of only two states in the
18 entire nation that has student
19 veterans centers on 33 college and
20 university campuses. The other
21 state is Washington State.

22 We've also worked with the
23 commissioner of higher education,
24 Dr. Kim Hunter Reed. We don't only
25 want our student veterans attending

1 college, but we want them to
2 graduate, and we want them to stay
3 in the state of Louisiana. And so
4 we decided that we would get with
5 the commissioner of higher
6 education, and we would get
7 legislation passed to require them
8 to track graduation rates for
9 veterans, their spouses, and their
10 dependents, but even more
11 importantly, to report those
12 graduation rates to the Department
13 of Veterans Affairs so that we will
14 know how many student veterans are
15 actually graduating throughout the
16 state.

17 Finally, I want to mention a
18 very important program to this
19 department. It's called the
20 Military Family Assistance Fund.
21 We keep a fund balance in that
22 program of just over \$550,000. And
23 the purpose of the Military Family
24 Assistance Fund is to assist
25 veterans and their families who are

1 experiencing economic distress. It
2 could be getting behind on their
3 mortgage payment. It could be
4 getting behind on a vehicle or car
5 or truck payment.

6 We can award, through this
7 program, up to \$10,000 to a
8 veteran's family to make them well,
9 and they don't have to pay it back.
10 It's a wonderful program. We're
11 one of the few states in the nation
12 that has a program, but even more
13 important, is that none of the
14 money for this program comes from
15 the legislature. It all comes
16 through donated funds.

17 And so the program is going
18 good. This past year, we assisted
19 19 veterans' families to the tune
20 of \$71,000 to make them whole.
21 We've helped, during the recent
22 hurricane, a tree fell through a
23 veteran's house. We were actually
24 working with the American Legion
25 and the VFW. We were able to award

1 that family the entire \$10,000.
2 The Legion and the VFW pitched in.
3 We bought him a brand-new trailer
4 over in Hammond.

5 A World War 2 veteran whose
6 house was leaking and had damage in
7 the bathroom, we also awarded that
8 World Ward 2 veteran \$10,000 to get
9 his house repaired and to make him
10 well. These are things that we do
11 through the Military Family Relief
12 Fund. We don't go around blowing
13 our horn or trying to make
14 ourselves look good. We just do
15 it. We take care of business.

16 So that concludes my briefing,
17 Mr. Secretary Pierson, and barring
18 any questions that you may have,
19 that's my briefing. Thank you very
20 much.

21 MR. ABOUD:

22 Thank you very much, Secretary
23 Strickland. And again, if anyone
24 has any questions, we're happy to
25 entertain those at this time. I

1 know we continue to work closely
2 with Secretary Strickland's office
3 regarding the LED's Veterans
4 Business Initiative with verifying
5 veteran status in business owners.
6 I know we have a few metrics we'll
7 provide as an update to those
8 programs a little later on in the
9 agenda, and pending any questions,
10 Secretary Strickland, we certainly
11 appreciate your great partnership.

12 SECRETARY STRICKLAND:

13 Well, we love working with you,
14 Don, and love working with our
15 teammates. I know a large number
16 of teammates on this committee that
17 I've worked with over the years. I
18 love this committee. All great
19 people. Thank you.

20 MR. ABOUD:

21 Thank you, sir.

22 I would also like to provide a
23 brief note that we have state
24 representative Charles Owen
25 listening in from District 30,

1 which includes Leesville and
2 DeRidder. So we're certainly happy
3 to have Representative Owen join us
4 for today's meeting.

5 I will now move forward to call
6 General Waddell for his update on
7 Guard activities.

8 General?

9 GENERAL WADDELL:

10 Robby, can you hear me?

11 MR. ABOUD:

12 Yes, we do have you now. Thank
13 you.

14 GENERAL WADDELL:

15 Okay. Well, good morning
16 fellow council members. I would
17 like to thank Secretary Pierson and
18 Mr. Robby for allowing me the
19 opportunity to give an update on
20 the Louisiana National Guard's
21 efforts in 2021.

22 We had three operational
23 constants that carried over from
24 2020, and they were federal
25 deployments, covid operations, and

1 cyber operations. Currently, we
2 have over 2,400 plus guardsmen
3 deployed either overseas or at the
4 southwest border.

5 It is worth noting that even
6 though these units had to deal with
7 COVID conditions, state
8 emergencies, pre-deployment
9 processing and training, and
10 quarantine at mobilization station,
11 their readiness levels never
12 dropped, and their federal service
13 has been incredible. This is a
14 true testament to their
15 perseverance, patience, management,
16 leadership, and resiliency.

17 Recently, Sgt. Major Ockman,
18 the state Sgt. Major, and I had the
19 privilege of visiting our troops in
20 Kuwait. The leadership from the
21 three-star level down praised our
22 guardsmen for their tremendous
23 service.

24 Earlier this year, we visited
25 the Southwest Border Mission also.

1 Major General Simmons and Sgt.
2 Major Dyer, the joint task force
3 north command team had nothing but
4 high praise for our soldiers and
5 troopers supporting this mission.

6 Since 9/11, Louisiana averages
7 about 1,000 guardsmen supporting
8 the war on terror per year, but
9 this year, we've doubled those
10 efforts. I couldn't be more proud
11 of what our guardsmen have
12 accomplished both here at home and
13 abroad.

14 Finally, we do have units
15 scheduled to deploy next year, but
16 not near the numbers we had this
17 year.

18 Now I'll talk about Task Force
19 Covid. Task Force Covid is going
20 on its 17th consecutive month of
21 operation and continues to do
22 tremendous work. The Louisiana
23 National Guard maintains nearly
24 1,000 guardsmen dedicated to the
25 COVID response.

1 We're currently working eight
2 lines of effort. They are testing,
3 vaccinations, food banks, Louisiana
4 Department of Health Emergency
5 Operations Center support, Cyber,
6 Title 10 support, logistics, and
7 medical facility assessments. To
8 date, our team has administered
9 424,000 plus tests, packaged more
10 than 33.7 million pounds of food,
11 administered nearly 100,000
12 vaccines, and completed more than
13 4,600 plus emergency delivery
14 missions. Truly remarkable work by
15 our guardsmen with operations
16 currently planned through 30
17 December 2021.

18 Additionally, the
19 responsiveness outreach
20 collaboration with other state and
21 local agencies and the technical
22 support have been keys to our
23 success with our response to the
24 global pandemic.

25 We did activate the dual status

1 command concept twice in 2021 for
2 COVID operations, once, with the
3 1st Marine Expeditionary Forces out
4 of Camp Pendleton in support of the
5 vaccination efforts in East Baton
6 Rouge. This 140 plus group of
7 marines and sailors at the Bon
8 Carre Mall in Baton Rouge,
9 augmented by our guardsmen,
10 operated throughout East Baton
11 Rouge Parish doing tremendous work.
12 This mission is complete, and under
13 Brig. General Cindy Haygood's
14 leadership, made a huge difference
15 in the lives of many individuals
16 and their families.

17 Currently, General Haygood is
18 also leading a group of 23 sailors
19 working at the Lafayette General,
20 23 airmen, who will be operating at
21 the Lady of the Lake in Baton
22 Rouge, and hopefully by next week,
23 another group of 23 airmen
24 supporting the Rapides General
25 Hospital in Alexandria. This

1 iteration of the dual status
2 command involves mainly clinicians
3 supporting these three hospitals.

4 Next, on the cyber front, we
5 had joint cyber teams of different
6 sizes working open-source and
7 nondisclosure response and recovery
8 operations in multiple parishes
9 throughout this year most recently
10 supporting a private company in St.
11 Mary Parish. Many cyber teams have
12 spent a lot of time away from their
13 civilian job responding to attacks
14 at local and state levels.

15 Louisiana National Guard
16 remains a vital member of Emergency
17 Support Function 17 along with the
18 Louisiana State Police and
19 Louisiana Office of Technology
20 Services. We have collectively
21 engaged in nearly 100 incidents
22 over a two-year period. I continue
23 to work to bring in more cyber
24 force structure and remain
25 optimistic we will get more given

1 our overall cyber strength numbers
2 and the demand signal for support
3 missions across the state.

4 Finally, our own 178th Cyber
5 Protection Team is scheduled to
6 deploy later this year. I
7 anticipate another successful
8 deployment from this outstanding
9 unit.

10 In January, the Louisiana
11 National Guard augmented the DC
12 National Guard for President
13 Biden's Inauguration with 174
14 guardsmen providing communications
15 and security support for two weeks.
16 We, along with guardsmen from every
17 state and territory, and our
18 federal partners, ensured a safe
19 transition of power.

20 In February, Louisiana National
21 Guard responded immediately to the
22 state's call for assistance during
23 a rare snow and ice event mainly in
24 northwest and central Louisiana.
25 We activated 1,270 plus guardsmen

1 and distributed more than 3 million
2 liters of water and 43,000 meals to
3 citizens in the affected parishes.

4 We were able to assist the
5 waning water supply in hospitals
6 and dialysis centers and other key
7 areas by distributing 2.1 million
8 gallons of bulk water. Our
9 maintenance recovery teams and
10 engineer work teams worked around
11 the clock to clear 260 commercial
12 vehicles and several hundred
13 smaller vehicles from highways and
14 secondary roads throughout north
15 Louisiana, as well as assessing 223
16 miles of roads, while clearing 147
17 miles with our engineer teams. And
18 we in-placed 14 generators during
19 that time period.

20 In May, Louisiana National
21 Guard responded to a series of
22 heavy rainfall that resulted in
23 flooding in South Central and
24 Southwest Louisiana. More than 390
25 guardsmen were activated to support

1 this event rescuing 25 people and
2 two pets and installing 3,350 feet
3 of Tiger Dam to prevent flooding.

4 On the readiness front,
5 Louisiana National Guard's current
6 in strength is 108 plus percent,
7 and Louisiana Air National Guard
8 stands at 103 percent. From a
9 personnel readiness standpoint,
10 Louisiana National Guard is the
11 number one national guard in the
12 country according to all personnel
13 metrics tracked by the National
14 Guard Bureau.

15 The Louisiana National Guard
16 broke a 20-year record in retention
17 last year with 82 percent, and
18 we're on track to do even better
19 this year. The Louisiana Air
20 National Guard achieved a 95
21 percent retention rate and
22 maintains high morale throughout
23 the wing. These accomplishments
24 are quite amazing considering the
25 operational tempo we've had in 2020

1 and in 2021.

2 This past annual training
3 period was highly productive for
4 our guardsmen and their units. Our
5 forces worked extremely hard on
6 improving readiness and significant
7 gains were made by our units to
8 remain in alignment with the
9 requirements of the sustainable
10 readiness model.

11 We did have a few unique AT
12 opportunities this year I would
13 like to share. First, JRTC at Fort
14 Polk. We remain supportive of both
15 our state and federal missions.
16 This year, we provided nearly 500
17 guardsmen that supported both the
18 Ohio National Guard's 37th Infantry
19 Brigade Combat Team, and the
20 Arkansas National Guard's 39th
21 Infantry Brigade Combat Team as
22 they rotated through the challenge
23 and training at JRTC and prepared
24 for their future deployments.

25 Next, the 159th Fighter Wing

1 had the opportunity to participate
2 in the annual training at the Air
3 Dominance Center in Savannah,
4 Georgia, in early June. The Wing's
5 last training opportunity at the
6 center was five years ago, and this
7 experience showcased the
8 collaboration between the Louisiana
9 and Georgia Air National Guardsmen.
10 Key training focused on joint war
11 fighting capabilities and
12 communication with other units and
13 states to further readiness and
14 development of our airmen.

15 Finally, the 225th Engineer
16 Brigade worked innovative readiness
17 training projects at Beekman
18 Charter School, Chennault
19 International Airport, and the
20 Louisiana School of Agricultural
21 Studies executing horizontal
22 construction work at all three
23 sites. We also completed several
24 vertical construction sites at the
25 Louisiana Purchase Gardens and Zoo.

1 And for the 25th time, our
2 state aviation units participated
3 in the Annual Christmas Tree Drop
4 at Bayou Sauvage. These units had
5 the opportunity to serve and
6 support several communities
7 throughout Louisiana, leveraging
8 the IRT program. Valuable training
9 and improved readiness were
10 achieved for every mission, and our
11 customers reaped the benefits of
12 our hard work. Additionally, our
13 civilian customers lauded our
14 soldiers great work, thanked us for
15 their financial savings, and in
16 many cases, were happy to action a
17 project that had been delayed or
18 dead ended for many years.

19 Our guardsmen and programs
20 received multiple awards throughout
21 2020 and 2021. In particular, we
22 had nationally recognized engineer
23 and aviation leaders along with a
24 counter-drug standout. For the
25 first time ever, we had three of

1 our soldiers selected to attend the
2 United States Military Academy at
3 West Point. Our construction
4 facility's management office
5 consistently wins national awards
6 for environmental quality and
7 management, and we had an award-
8 winning medic training program and
9 family program office.

10 On the military construction
11 MilCon, Louisiana National Guard
12 continues work on improving its
13 facilities. Our construction
14 facilities management office and
15 our congressional delegation
16 supported a number of facility
17 improvements throughout fiscal year
18 '22. Our major projects are the
19 159th Fighter Wing Alert Complex
20 and Apron at Belle Chasse, the Lake
21 Charles Readiness Center at the
22 Chennault Airport complex, and the
23 Camp Beauregard Readiness Center.
24 The Fighter Wing's Alert Complex
25 project is already underway, and

1 contractors are set to begin work
2 on the two readiness centers in the
3 fall of this year.

4 Youth Challenge Program: Our
5 Youth Challenge Program continues
6 to be the premier YCP in the
7 country. During our recent Capitol
8 Hill virtual meetings, Retired
9 General Craig McKinley, former
10 chief of the National Guard Bureau
11 and board member of NGB's Youth
12 Foundation, told Louisiana's
13 Congressional Delegation members
14 participating that Louisiana had
15 the best YCP in the country bar
16 none.

17 The incredible efforts by the
18 Louisiana Military Department,
19 Youth Challenge Program, and our
20 Task Force COVID during the COVID
21 pandemic, were and are remarkable.
22 Their proactive approach and
23 mitigation measures resulted in our
24 YCP being the first in the country
25 to bring classes back and graduate

1 on time.

2 Even with the reduced
3 enrollment, processes and
4 procedures were established which
5 enabled a safe return for our
6 cadets. While enrollment is not
7 yet at 100 percent, we continue to
8 operate within CDC guidelines and
9 best medical recommendations.

10 Our state partnership programs
11 celebrated two milestones this year
12 with both Haiti and Belize. The
13 tenth-year anniversary of the
14 Belize partnership was in April,
15 and the 25th Anniversary of our
16 partnership with Belize was also in
17 April, and we celebrated both of
18 those via virtual exchanges.

19 Throughout COVID, many of our
20 regular exchanges we enjoy with
21 these countries were limited to
22 virtual interactions. However, we
23 were able to recently conduct key
24 leader exchanges with both
25 countries at Jackson Barracks.

1 The Belize Defense Force,
2 additionally, sent personnel to our
3 state to exchange on security
4 engineering, we had an candidate in
5 officer candidate school who
6 graduated last month and was the
7 eighth commissionee to come through
8 the program.

9 Finally, we are continuing to
10 actively work with General Dan
11 Hokanson, the chief of the National
12 Guard Bureau, Lt. General Mike Loh,
13 director of the Air National Guard,
14 our Congressional Delegation, and
15 the Louisiana Department of
16 Economic Development on life after
17 our Legacy F-15 Aircraft. We are
18 optimistic that we are going to get
19 F-35s, but we may get F-15 E/Xs.
20 Either way, we continue to make our
21 case to have replacement aircraft
22 in Louisiana as soon as possible.
23 We have our fingers crossed for F-
24 35s.

25 I remain proud and appreciative

1 of the men and women I have the
2 privilege to serve alongside and
3 thank everyone for their enduring
4 support of the Louisiana National
5 Guard.

6 In closing, I would like to
7 thank Governor Edwards for his
8 leadership and our local, state,
9 and federal partners for their
10 service and support to our team and
11 the state of Louisiana. Thanks for
12 your time today, and I will open up
13 for any questions or comments at
14 this time.

15 MR. ABOUD:

16 Thank you very much, General.
17 Certainly appreciate that
18 comprehensive report, and we do
19 appreciate your continued
20 leadership as well as the service
21 of so many men and women who are
22 assisting in a number of these
23 critical initiatives.

24 So again, if anyone has any
25 questions, we're happy to entertain

1 those now.

2 SECRETARY PIERSON:

3 Just one comment for you,
4 General. I noticed that the more
5 increased the tempo is, the harder
6 you're driving the great service of
7 these guardsmen. There's a
8 corresponding increase in your
9 re-enlistment rate. So I thought
10 that was amazing.

11 GENERAL WADDELL:

12 Yes, sir. We've got a
13 phenomenal team, and you know, I
14 say it every day, I'm proud to
15 serve with so many great citizens
16 of Louisiana and citizens of
17 America.

18 SECRETARY STRICKLAND:

19 I want to congratulate you,
20 General Waddell, for getting your
21 promotion to Major General and for
22 your professionalism and
23 collaboration with the Department
24 of Veterans Affairs. Thank you,
25 sir.

1 GENERAL WADDELL:

2 Thank you. Thank you,
3 Secretary Strickland. Appreciate
4 that, sir.

5 GENERAL ELDER:

6 This is Bob Elder. General
7 Waddell, if I could just make a
8 comment, that was a really
9 impressive report, and I thought I
10 knew a lot of the things that the
11 National Guard was doing here in
12 the state. I had no idea just how
13 expansive the efforts of the Guard
14 has been here and all the success
15 that you've had. I certainly am
16 going to do what I can to spread
17 the word. But I hope that my
18 fellow members of the LMAC will do
19 the same thing. This is really
20 impressive. Thanks.

21 GENERAL WADDELL:

22 I appreciate those comments.
23 Thank you so much, and I'll pass
24 that along to our team.

25 MR. ABOUD:

1 Very good.

2 Okay. We'll go ahead and
3 proceed here. Just one brief note,
4 we did have Mayor Clarence Beebe
5 arrive and join us for this
6 meeting, so I wanted to make that
7 note for the record.

8 And as Secretary Pierson had
9 previously indicated, we will make
10 one minor adjustment to the order
11 in which we conduct the reports.
12 So at this time, we'll move on to
13 the Southeast Louisiana Military
14 Alliance with Mr. Gary Silbert.

15 So Gary, I'll turn it over to
16 you now.

17 MR. SILBERT:

18 Yes, thank you Secretary
19 Pierson and Robby for accommodating
20 my schedule this morning. Much
21 appreciated for letting me go out
22 of order just for today.

23 Just a couple of quick
24 comments. I have to join in
25 congratulating Secretary Strickland

1 and Major General Waddell for their
2 accomplishments. It's certainly a
3 privilege to be associated with
4 this council.

5 I'd also like to just quickly
6 recognize here in South Louisiana,
7 my fellow council member, Ronnie
8 Slone, who is a marine veteran and
9 much-admired and a well-respected
10 leader in the local community.

11 And I'd also like to join in
12 thanking LED and you, Robby, and
13 the Roosevelt Group for all the
14 support you provide throughout the
15 year. It's much appreciated.

16 So for my update, I guess, the
17 next slide please, the primary
18 activities or focus for us, as
19 Major General Waddell pointed out,
20 we are keeping our fingers crossed,
21 and doubling down, and doing
22 everything we can to support the
23 Guard's efforts with our
24 Congressional Delegation, with LED,
25 and with our lobbyists at GNOA to

1 try to influence a decision to get
2 the F-35 based here.

3 From what I'm told, we are in
4 the enviable position of having
5 either the F-35 or the F-15 E/X
6 fighter at the Naval Air Station
7 Joint Reserve Base here at Belle
8 Chasse. So we're very hopeful, and
9 we look to support all the
10 infrastructure efforts or other
11 work that needs to be done in
12 securing the necessary support here
13 locally and in Washington.

14 Also, the Navy has made a
15 decision around the existing
16 fighters that are at the 204, the
17 Joint Reserve Base here. The F-15s
18 are no longer going to be the
19 aircraft there. And so we will be
20 working closely with Naval
21 leadership to ensure that the
22 decisions they've made are acted
23 upon and we upgrade and plan for an
24 appropriate future.

25 So as was discussed with the

1 Air National Guard fighter basing,
2 the recent chief of staff at the
3 Air Force met with the Adjutant
4 Generals on August 11, suggest no
5 change to the basing decisions and
6 timelines for the aircraft we've
7 discussed.

8 Base visits and assessments
9 have been completed. Secretary
10 Kendall, newly confirmed as
11 Secretary of the Air Force, is
12 clearing the way for a decision
13 this fall which we'll be tracking
14 closely.

15 And as Major General Waddell
16 has pointed out, we continue to be
17 mentioned as a strong possibility
18 here for the F-35 basings. What's
19 driving that is the excellent range
20 space out over the Gulf, our track
21 record both in safety and
22 retention. And by all measures
23 that Major General Waddell was
24 reporting upon, and both in the
25 MilCon projects, the funding that's

1 been secured, and the work that's
2 being done.

3 Also, relative to the Navy's
4 decision around the F-18, the
5 Navy's fiscal year '22 requests
6 complete retirement of the F-18 C/D
7 fleet, and those are the fixed-wing
8 aircraft that we have now at the
9 204.

10 The Navy is completing the
11 production of a F-18 E/F. With the
12 exception of a small amount,
13 there's no further request by the
14 Navy. They continue to plan to
15 replace the F-18 with T-38s to
16 continue the adversary mission
17 until a longer-term solution, which
18 we believe will be the Boeing T-7,
19 enters the fleet.

20 The Navy has stressed Belle
21 Chasse as an ideal location to
22 continue the adversary activities
23 that take place at the base, and we
24 are lucky and fortunate in that. I
25 believe we have Kuwait's and

1 potential other future
2 opportunities in terms of foreign
3 F-18 training requirements over the
4 coming years.

5 So those are the items that I
6 wanted to report on today to update
7 the council. I'm happy to take any
8 questions.

9 MR. ABOUD:

10 Thank you very much, Gary, for
11 that report. We certainly
12 appreciate that. A lot of great
13 work. And again, I'd like to pause
14 here for any comments or questions
15 from the board.

16 SECRETARY PIERSON:

17 It sounded like a fairly
18 straightforward and easy operation,
19 but we all know that behind the
20 scenes there's a great deal of
21 challenges associated with this.
22 So just greatly appreciate the
23 focus of the Roosevelt Group and
24 the folks on the ground there in
25 the Greater New Orleans area who

1 continue to work hard and
2 diligently against this. This is
3 an area that we feel like we are at
4 risk and so we are very mindful of
5 it and want the full contingent
6 here to know that a lot of focus on
7 this particular issue. And during
8 his remarks, I imagine Chris will
9 make some further comment.

10 GENERAL WADDELL:

11 Gary, it's Keith Waddell. Can
12 you hear me, Gary?

13 MR. SILBERT:

14 Loud and clear. Go ahead, sir.

15 GENERAL WADDELL:

16 I just want to thank you for
17 all the help with the F-35. I know
18 talking to some of the reps from
19 the Roosevelt Group, you know,
20 couldn't ask for a better set of
21 partners to help us with that
22 program. So if there's anything
23 else we can do from the Louisiana
24 National Guard's end, please let me
25 know. Thank you.

1 MR. SILBERT:

2 Thank you, General.

3 MR. ABOUD:

4 Okay. And with that, we'll go
5 ahead and move forward with our
6 agenda. Next, we will call on
7 Murray Viser reporting from
8 Barksdale Forward.

9 Murray?

10 MR. VISER:

11 Thank you, sir, Secretary
12 Pierson, Secretary Strickland,
13 members of the committee, I
14 appreciate the opportunity to tell
15 you a little bit about what's going
16 on at Barksdale. The biggest
17 thing, and the governor is here to
18 see this, and we're very grateful
19 for his time, is the funding, or
20 the rest of the funding, I should
21 say, for the new gate to connect up
22 with Interstate 220 into Barksdale.
23 That has been an ongoing effort for
24 at least ten years, probably a
25 little bit more than that, and I

1 think Chris and Kathleen, and
2 others that have been involved with
3 it would agree it's been quite a
4 road show. And we're just thankful
5 that we're not going to have a road
6 to nowhere or a gate to nowhere.

7 And thanks to our Congressional
8 Delegation for all their help and
9 Chris and his team for everything
10 that they have done to make this a
11 reality because I've got to tell
12 you, there were a lot of very
13 nervous people here for a while
14 with trying to get the gate taken
15 care of.

16 Along with that is the new
17 weapons generation facility.
18 That's been quite another
19 monumental task to get that funded,
20 to get it programmed the way it
21 should be. And it is something
22 that's existential for Barksdale
23 Air Force Base moving forward.

24 Forty-million-dollars, has been
25 appropriated for the beginning of

1 that project. Totally, it's a 272-
2 million-dollar project. So again,
3 that is critical for the future of
4 Barksdale Air Force Base.

5 Along with that B-52 re-
6 engining, is again, finally looks
7 like it's coming to become a
8 reality. And that's good because
9 that airplane is supposed to be
10 around for another 40 years or so,
11 so we'll see. It will be close to
12 100 years old by the time they
13 finally retire it.

14 So having said all that again,
15 we appreciate all the help from
16 Chris and Kathleen, and Matt, and
17 their team, and also our
18 Congressional Delegation. We,
19 obviously, couldn't do these
20 things, have these things happen
21 without congressional support.

22 Very interesting month at
23 Barksdale right now. We have had
24 two promotion ceremonies and a
25 change of command up until now. We

1 had the 8th Air Force change of
2 command, Major General
3 Weatherington changed over to Major
4 General Andy Gebara. Good news for
5 8th Air Force and good news for
6 General Gebara.

7 General Weatherington has
8 gotten his third star. He will
9 become, at the end of this week,
10 the deputy commander for Air Force
11 Global Strike Command, and the
12 Deputy Commander, now Lt. General,
13 soon to be General Anthony Cotton,
14 will change out with General
15 Timothy Ray, who is going to
16 retire. So a lot of things going
17 on up in northwest Louisiana.

18 A couple of things that I will
19 touch on. Spousal licensing
20 continues to be a big issue for the
21 Air Force. And I feel comfortable
22 that the state legislators will
23 continue to pursue having
24 reciprocity in Louisiana for folks
25 to transfer in with their

1 dependants so that we can give them
2 a warm welcome here and an
3 incentive to stay here. That's a
4 big deal for the folks.

5 The Air Force is going to look
6 at basic allowance for housing.
7 Housing rental rates and property
8 values have gone up fairly
9 significantly in some cases due to
10 COVID-19, and that, obviously,
11 impacts young families when they
12 come in. So the Air Force is going
13 to look at potentially increasing
14 the basic allowance for housing.

15 Other than that, that's pretty
16 much the things we're working on.
17 I'll be happy to answer any
18 questions if I can. Thank you very
19 much.

20 MR. ABOUD:

21 Thank you, Murray.

22 And at this time, we'll be
23 happy to entertain comments or
24 questions following Murray's
25 report.

1 REAR ADM. WHITEHEAD:

2 This is Joel Whitehead.

3 MR. VISER:

4 Yes, sir?

5 MR. ABOUD:

6 Yes, sir?

7 REAR ADM. WHITEHEAD:

8 I just wanted to mention, on
9 the licensing comments that you
10 made, Murray, that the state
11 legislature passed House Bill
12 Number 613, and the governor signed
13 that into law. It's Act Number
14 200, and that is relating to
15 occupational licenses for military
16 families.

17 That's been an issue we've
18 discussed before. And the bill
19 just passed in June though it's
20 effective as of January of this
21 year. But I want to keep an eye on
22 that and see whether that is
23 helping our military spouses as
24 they come into the state.

25 MR. VISER:

1 Excellent. Thank you, sir.

2 Much appreciated.

3 MR. ABBOUD:

4 Thank you for that, sir, as
5 well, and I know later on in the
6 agenda, we will have a brief update
7 on those topics within the other
8 business section of the agenda.

9 REAR ADM. WHITEHEAD:

10 Right.

11 MR. ABBOUD:

12 So that said, we'll go ahead
13 and move forward to Fort Polk
14 progress and Mayor Rick Allen.

15 Over to you, Mayor.

16 MAYOR ALLEN:

17 Good morning. First, I'd like
18 to say thank you, Robby for getting
19 us back on track this morning. We
20 appreciate your assistance.

21 I'll get right to work. Our
22 leadership engagement with Fort
23 Polk, we had the general down in
24 Baton Rouge on May 19 and 20, Brig.
25 General Doyle, a great man, and a

1 great leader. The Roosevelt Group
2 was also in attendance. Full
3 participation from the governor and
4 his staff, Secretary Pierson,
5 Secretary Wilson, and Senator Mike
6 Reese did a great job making our
7 general feel right at home.

8 Excellent discussion on
9 defense, access road program, the
10 DAR program, and ongoing DCIP
11 awards and education efforts. So
12 thank you to the governor for
13 taking time, Senator Mike Reese for
14 being present, and Don Pierson.

15 The visit was phenomenal and
16 much needed to get our new
17 Brigadier General comfortable in
18 his seat and get to work with them.

19 We also attended the ADC in
20 Washington, D.C., and I was able to
21 spend a little bit of time with
22 Secretary Pierson and Robby up
23 there as well. Thanks to the
24 Roosevelt Group, we got to engage
25 Lt. General Evans at that ADC

1 conference in which I got to
2 discuss something that's near to my
3 heart, the water park. And I wish
4 it was near to a lot of other
5 folks' heart as well. But I will
6 continue that fight.

7 Significant talk about the Base
8 Ops Contract on Fort Polk coming up
9 for bid again. And for those of
10 you who don't know, our first stab
11 at that contract saved the military
12 100 million dollars over a five-
13 year period. And we believe that
14 there's still some savings there to
15 be had. So we're looking forward
16 to rolling our sleeves up and
17 sharpening our pencils and
18 presenting another proposal on the
19 base ops at Fort Polk.

20 The future of intergovernmental
21 service agreements at Fort Polk is
22 bright. General Gabram at IMCOM is
23 for these IGSA's, and he is pushing
24 those out there, and we're glad to
25 see it. It benefits our small

1 community tremendously. And I
2 encourage anyone that has an
3 opportunity to go after these to do
4 so.

5 Our fiscal year '22 MILCON at
6 Fort Polk, the Joint Operations
7 Center is fully funded. A big win
8 for Fort Polk. 55 million dollars
9 in new construction, and this comes
10 on the heels of a 25-million-dollar
11 information system that was funded
12 in fiscal year '21. So a huge win
13 for Fort Polk and the community
14 here. And our Louisiana Delegation
15 just knocked it out of the park
16 making sure that this project
17 wasn't forgotten.

18 The Army budget big picture for
19 fiscal year '22 in Fort Polk, 172
20 billion requested for the Army, a
21 1.6 percent increase, which will
22 barely cover or won't cover
23 inflation so essentially, left us
24 with a pretty flat budget. The
25 size of the active-duty Army is

1 going to remain unchanged.

2 Number of rotations at JRTC, we
3 were told, were going to remain the
4 same, but due to the last rotation,
5 we had a significant spike in COVID
6 cases, and so they put three of
7 those rotations on hold at Fort
8 Polk. And we just learned that
9 last night in a briefing with the
10 general late last night. Senator
11 Reese and myself attended.

12 So a little bit of a change in
13 our rotations at Fort Polk, and the
14 question of where do we go here
15 from mandatory COVID vaccinations
16 and how it will affect contractors
17 that deal with the military daily
18 is our next topic of discussion.

19 So I want to thank Chris Goode
20 and Roosevelt Group for all they
21 did to help us get those meetings
22 at ADC. It was a great conference,
23 and I'm looking forward to San
24 Antonio again. I remain Fort Polk
25 strong and fighting for my

1 community that sacrifices daily for
2 our military family.

3 And that concludes my report,
4 Mr. Secretary.

5 MR. ABOUD:

6 Thank you, Mayor. We certainly
7 appreciate your continued
8 engagement and great leadership.

9 At this time, are there any
10 questions for Mayor Allen following
11 his report?

12 SECRETARY PIERSON:

13 Just a note: Thank you for the
14 update real time it feels like
15 since you just learned of it last
16 night, the loss of three rotations,
17 which I think we were also being
18 programmed to be off a few just as
19 they are sort of starting to look
20 at other theaters and so the net
21 effect there seems to be maybe with
22 the needle moving toward
23 significant. We'll just watch
24 that. Hopefully, as we see DOD
25 move toward mandatory vaccinations,

1 they can get these rotations back
2 on track rather quickly. And that
3 seemed to be what the FDA approval
4 today in the works maybe sooner
5 than later. So we'll keep our
6 fingers crossed.

7 SEC. STRICKLAND:

8 This is Colonel Strickland. I
9 want to thank Mayor Rick Allen for
10 taking good care of Leesville. My
11 wife is from there. So it helps me
12 out a lot, Mayor.

13 MAYOR ALLEN:

14 We'll take her back, sir.

15 SEC. STRICKLAND:

16 I'm going to keep her for a
17 while longer.

18 MAYOR ALLEN:

19 So one more comment on the
20 vaccination thing. The direct
21 question was asked to Brig. General
22 Doyle last night if the contractors
23 at Fort Polk would be made
24 mandatory as well. His statement
25 was simply, I cannot force them to

1 get vaccinated, but I do, however,
2 control who goes into the box with
3 our soldiers. So it was very
4 clear.

5 MR. ABBOUD:

6 Thank you, very much for that,
7 Mayor.

8 So at this time, we'll move
9 forward to the Roosevelt Group's
10 presentation. And at this time,
11 I'll call on Chris Goode.

12 MR. GOODE:

13 Thanks everybody. I'm Chris
14 Goode. I'm the managing partner of
15 the Roosevelt Group. I'm happy to
16 have Kathleen Ferguson and Matt
17 Herman on the line as well who do a
18 lot of support to the Louisiana
19 defense communities.

20 I just wanted to stress four
21 points following up on the other
22 defense community briefs. In terms
23 of the big picture defense funding,
24 you know, FY22 is the year we're
25 working in right now. The

1 president's budget, as Mayor Allen
2 indicated, is fairly flat at 715
3 billion dollars. It does include a
4 2.7 percent pay raise for service
5 members.

6 Essentially, the big take away,
7 you know, the budget was increased
8 about five percent for RDT&E,
9 research, development, testing, and
10 evaluation. It took about a five
11 percent decrease in procurement,
12 which is already being chipped away
13 at by Congress that has made their
14 intentions quite clear they are
15 going to increase the overall
16 defense budget.

17 Significantly, no BRAC base
18 closure requests was made by this
19 administration this year. You
20 know, first year for the
21 administration. Obviously, that
22 could change going forward.

23 So in terms of the budget
24 itself, it was not a bad budget,
25 and it will certainly be increased.

1 The justification for the budget,
2 the big names, the China challenge,
3 Russia, pandemics, counter
4 terrorism, climate change, they're
5 all baked into that request.

6 From our own initiatives, I
7 just want to skip to Number 2, and
8 the Recap of Accomplishments. I do
9 want to emphasize the gate was a
10 big success. It took a lot of
11 effort. It's nice to work in a
12 delegation that is very cohesive,
13 that cooperates. It cooperates
14 well in the state House as well,
15 whether it's the governor, or Don
16 and Sean, Senator Reese, you name
17 it. But that effort took a lot of
18 work, including the governor
19 talking directly to the Secretary
20 of the Air Force at the Pentagon.
21 There was a White House meeting
22 that ended up in the situation
23 room. Senator Kennedy's staff was
24 very aggressive in terms of
25 potential confirmations.

1 And at the end of the day, that
2 project was put in the unfunded
3 firing list, which the Air Force
4 did not want to do this year, and
5 it was added into the MILCON bills
6 of both the House and Senate side.
7 I will add that Representative
8 Johnson, who is new to the
9 committee, the House and Armed
10 Services Committee, and we have
11 this new phenomenon of I want to
12 call them ear marks. They're
13 community project funding. Mike
14 only submitted two projects, one
15 for Barksdale, one for Fort Polk,
16 and that was it, and that Barksdale
17 project was approved.

18 So altogether, we hit everybody
19 from all sides, and in the end,
20 that gate is funded this year in
21 FY22.

22 You know, if we get the bill
23 signed by the president, the WGF,
24 the weapons generation facility,
25 it's done. It is only -- you know,

1 they can only spend so much of that
2 over 200-million-dollar project per
3 year, but you know, if it gets
4 signed, it's a huge win, and we can
5 take that off the to do list and
6 same with Fort Polk. Fort Polk has
7 80 million dollars going into it
8 over the last two years.

9 In terms of Belle Chasse, as
10 Gary indicated, we'll wait and see
11 how the Navy delivers on this
12 interim fix. But the Navy has made
13 it very clear, we had the head of
14 Navy aviation in our office three
15 months ago, he said, listen, we
16 want Belle Chasse. We want to stay
17 at Belle Chasse. It's a great
18 base, and a great place to train.
19 So you have to work with us. You
20 don't have F-18S. The F-18s that
21 are flying at Belle Chasse, as Gary
22 indicated, they have been
23 terminated. They are no longer
24 funded.

25 So it is kind of a give and

1 take there. And we're watching
2 that very carefully.

3 So the last point going
4 forward, for the future, there's a
5 lot of things happening at these
6 bases. And finally, I think we're
7 getting back on the offensive. For
8 Barksdale, Senator Kennedy's staff
9 made it very clear. He said,
10 Senator wants new ideas for the
11 future. So that's even post
12 weapons generation facility.

13 We put in requests for planning
14 and design money for a new child
15 development center, a new dining
16 hall, a new gym. That's going to
17 help us guide an initiative for
18 FY23 to start pecking away at these
19 quality-of-life initiatives at
20 Barksdale.

21 I was just down there a couple
22 of months ago with Matt Herman, and
23 it is a broad consensus across the
24 leadership. They said, yeah, we
25 need those projects, you know, that

1 they'd be very helpful to the
2 quality of life for airmen.

3 Second thing is, the Office of
4 Energy Assurance just on August 4th
5 released their updated briefing.
6 Barksdale is now basically anointed
7 with a natural gas emergency power
8 project at Barksdale under a new
9 guise. It's called an EAL with an
10 energy assurance lease. So the
11 next time Murray and LMAC are up in
12 D.C., we're going to get on the
13 schedule with Dan Soto, who is the
14 director of the Office of Energy
15 Assurance.

16 And the third piece, and I
17 don't want to take anything from
18 Bob Elder, but you know, Bob is
19 leading a very exciting initiative
20 at Barksdale to expand 5G
21 experimentation at Barksdale, and
22 as we can help Bob, we will.

23 Fort Polk, going forward,
24 certainly there is a lot to do in
25 terms of follow up on the defense

1 access road program. In Belle
2 Chasse as we indicated, we track
3 the F-35 help with the red teaming
4 the F-35 team.

5 I will say, if that licensure
6 law has been signed by the
7 governor, we need to get a letter
8 from the governor into the new
9 Secretary of the Air Force and
10 Chief of Staff emphasizing that
11 because licensure and education do
12 count. You know, Louisiana did not
13 do very good on either of those
14 scores. So that's new information.
15 It ought to be well known to the
16 Secretary and the Chief that the
17 governor signed that bill where we
18 can make that happen.

19 The F-35, F-15 piece, every
20 indication we have is the Air Force
21 active duty really wants to put the
22 F-35 at Belle Chasse. That's good
23 news based on the criteria that
24 Gary indicated. There is no
25 indication that this award is going

1 to be slowed down. That is Ops 10.
2 Anything after Ops 10 is fair game,
3 and I think the active is going to
4 assert themselves real handedly and
5 push aside the guard and reserve.
6 So I think we have kind of squeaked
7 under the fence line to get those
8 aircraft modernized just in time.
9 And for other communities, the
10 guard and reserves going forward,
11 they may not have that benefit. So
12 whether you get the F-15 or the F-
13 35, I would say take it and run
14 because those opportunities, when
15 you look at the force structure in
16 places like Misawa and Kadena, the
17 active duty are really hurting.
18 And I think they're going to prey
19 upon the reserve and guard
20 component going forward. We'll
21 see. That's just a thought.

22 Closing thought: Like I said,
23 there is no BRAC, but it's
24 interesting, Secretary Kendall made
25 a comment just last week saying

1 Congress has constrained the Air
2 Force's ability to do things by
3 plussing up weapons systems that
4 the DOD has not asked for, you
5 know, buying up a couple dozen or a
6 dozen additional F-18s this year.
7 The Navy, the C&O came out and said
8 we don't need them. We don't want
9 them. And shame on you for pushing
10 your members to do that.

11 Kendall basically said BRAC has
12 not been allowed. So it's sort of
13 an indication to me that BRAC could
14 be on the table going forward.

15 That is a bad thing for
16 Louisiana. It would be a good
17 thing for my firm. We'd probably
18 get more clients. I don't like the
19 process. I served on a BRAC
20 commission in 1995. I think we've
21 gone past BRAC, and I think there
22 are better ways to realign and
23 close bases. That said, BRAC
24 brings problems. It could easily
25 bring problems to the Marine Corp

1 presence in New Orleans into that
2 small NIWC information organization
3 in New Orleans. It could certainly
4 cause havoc at Barksdale with the
5 way Air Force Global Strike Command
6 is configured. And it could easily
7 realign a BCT, out of Fort Polk.

8 So for all the goodness that
9 BRAC claims, BRAC is expensive, and
10 it's problematic, and we will
11 continue carrying that message to
12 the delegation.

13 So that's all I have unless
14 there are any questions.

15 I also want to congratulate
16 Deborah on the phone call for her
17 win on the Gulf Coast Strategic
18 Highway. She's only been toiling
19 away at that for many years and
20 getting that done into law is a
21 huge win. So congratulations to
22 Deborah Randolph.

23 MS. RANDOLPH:

24 Well, thanks. Thanks, Chris.
25 We have a ways to go as the bill is

1 considered on the House side, but
2 we were able to get the
3 Congressional designation of the
4 route for the five states including
5 Louisiana into the bipartisan
6 infrastructure bill.

7 MR. ABOUD:

8 Okay. Any other comments here
9 before we move forward?

10 Okay. Thank you, Chris, and
11 the Roosevelt Group team. We
12 certainly appreciate your knowledge
13 and capabilities in continuing to
14 provide guidance for our
15 installation partners.

16 At this time, we'll go ahead
17 and move forward to the next item
18 on the agenda, which is other
19 business. And we did receive a
20 request for an update related to
21 reciprocity and occupational
22 licensure for military and military
23 spouses. So we have LED Assistant
24 Secretary Mandi Mitchell, who is
25 kind enough to join us for today's

1 meeting. I know we continue to
2 track and collect information in
3 this area.

4 So at this time, I would like
5 to call on Mandi for a few remarks
6 regarding these topics.

7 MS. MITCHELL:

8 Good morning, everyone. I hope
9 you all can hear me okay. It's
10 good to be here with you enjoying
11 the updates from everyone that
12 reported out today. Great work
13 being done in our state to support
14 members of the military and our
15 military installations.

16 I just wanted to give you an
17 update regarding reciprocity. It's
18 been mentioned on today's call a
19 number of times, and just happy to
20 report that Representative Charles
21 Owen, who I believe is monitoring
22 this meeting today, passed what I
23 would call one of the most
24 comprehensive efforts to directly
25 address reciprocity for members of

1 the military and their spouses and
2 dependants.

3 But I want to take a couple of
4 steps back for everyone just to
5 give you some context and the lead
6 up to the 2020 session and House
7 Bill 613, which is Act 200 as
8 having been signed into law by
9 Governor Edwards.

10 So I also want to say this that
11 Governor Edwards recognizes the
12 sacrifice made, not only by members
13 of the military who follow their
14 deployments across the country and
15 across the globe, but the
16 sacrifices made by their spouses
17 and by their dependants. And not
18 only members of the military, but
19 DOD civilian employees as well.

20 So in working with Senator
21 Barrow Peacock, going back to 2018,
22 there was a package of bills that
23 were passed to ease the process for
24 trailing spouses or family members
25 in certain high-profile

1 professions. So back in 2018,
2 Senator Peacock passed three pieces
3 of legislation -- well, yeah,
4 three. He proposed four, but three
5 of them got through the process
6 authorizing Louisiana to enter into
7 a multi-state licensure compact,
8 one for nursing, another for
9 physical therapy, and what that
10 does is it allows us to participate
11 in multi-state compact easing the
12 process and decreasing redundancies
13 in the consideration and issuance
14 of licensure for these professions.

15 Additionally, just to ease the
16 pain for military members moving
17 around, Senator Peacock passed the
18 legislation, which was signed into
19 law by the governor that allows
20 members of the military to suspend
21 certain contracts before the end of
22 those contractual terms. Think
23 about internet services, telephone
24 services, utility services, other
25 things of that nature, if you have

1 to move, you are sometimes stuck
2 into those contracts. So that
3 legislation was passed as well.

4 Additionally, Senator Bernard
5 Lavalley, working with Governor
6 Edwards, authorized the Board of
7 Pharmacy to waive any license and
8 certification renewal fees for
9 military spouses.

10 So fast forward to 2020. Rep
11 Charles Owens, who is a House
12 member, District 30 from Rosepine
13 went into the statute pertaining to
14 licensure reciprocity and expanded
15 that statute tremendously, not only
16 to impact members of the military,
17 but also DOD civilian employees
18 assigned to duty in Louisiana and
19 also applicants to licensure boards
20 who are married to active-duty
21 military or DOD civilian employees.

22 And I'll just share with you
23 some of the provisions in this law
24 that allows the applicant to meet
25 Louisiana licensure requirements.

1 If they hold a current, valid
2 occupational license in another
3 state, if they've held that
4 occupational license for at least
5 one year, if they are in good
6 standing in that other state, if
7 they don't have a criminal record,
8 if their license was not revoked
9 due to negligence or misconduct,
10 and if they don't have any
11 complaints or allegations or
12 pending investigations. Of course,
13 they have to pay all the applicable
14 fees and can simultaneously apply
15 for a permanent license when they
16 are in the process of seeking
17 licensure in Louisiana.

18 A couple other criteria apply.
19 The applicant worked in a state
20 that does not use an occupational
21 license as Louisiana does, and I'll
22 say this, as copilot for the
23 Louisiana Small Business and
24 Entrepreneurial Council, we are
25 taking a look at all of the

1 occupational licenses that are
2 required in Louisiana and we exceed
3 many other states by far for some
4 occupations. So it is not unheard
5 of that a professional could be
6 coming over from another state that
7 does not require licensure.

8 So there are some provisions in
9 this law that address those issues.
10 We look at how long the applicant
11 worked in the lawful occupation and
12 that they satisfy other provisions
13 of this new law. So I'm not going
14 to go in depth. I'm not going to
15 go much further into detail. Robby
16 and I are going to work together
17 and send a full summary of the
18 statute and the provisions so that
19 we are all fully aware of what
20 occupational licensing boards in
21 our state are supposed to be doing
22 when it pertains to spouses and
23 dependants of the military and DOD
24 civilian employees.

25 Also, I had a conversation with

1 the Occupational Licensing Review
2 Commission. That is a body created
3 by the direction of the Governor to
4 oversee licensure requirements and
5 changes to licensure requirements,
6 et cetera and to make sure that
7 those boards are complying. The
8 Occupational Licensure Review
9 Commission has agreed to collect
10 any complaints about boards and
11 commissions that may not be
12 complying with this new law. And
13 it has already been mentioned on
14 the call today, it was signed into
15 law in 2020, but the effectiveness
16 of it began January 1, 2021.

17 And there are, I lost count,
18 but I'll just call out, under Title
19 46, all of the boards and
20 commissions, those are the entities
21 subject to overview by the
22 occupational licensing review
23 commission: practical nurses,
24 registered nurses, architects,
25 behavioral analysts, CPAs, barbers

1 and cosmetologists, the list goes
2 on.

3 So we will include the list of
4 occupations covered by the
5 oversight of the Occupational
6 Licensing Review Commission, but if
7 you are aware of an issue where
8 someone is affected by a board or
9 commission, a licensing board or
10 commission not complying with this
11 state law, please bring that to our
12 attention or you can raise the
13 issue directly with the
14 occupational licensing review
15 commission. They are a public
16 entity. Their next meeting is
17 September 15th. And we'll make
18 sure and get you all the
19 information about their next
20 meeting. It will likely be via
21 Zoom. And we'll get you the
22 contact information for that group
23 as well.

24 So I want you to know that
25 Governor Edwards and the

1 legislature have been listening,
2 and they have done their level best
3 to try and address this issue. And
4 if there are loopholes or other
5 areas that we can bring to their
6 attention that still need to be
7 addressed, please let us know, and
8 we'll follow up with the summary
9 that I just provided with a whole
10 lot more detail.

11 Thank you, Robby.

12 MR. ABOUD:

13 Thank you for that, Mandi. We
14 certainly appreciate that update.
15 And again, to your point, I will
16 follow up after the meeting with
17 some additional notes and kind of a
18 reciprocity repository of
19 information related to these topics
20 as we continue to look for ways to
21 help overcome any challenges
22 whether that be through policy or
23 legislation.

24 MS. MITCHELL:

25 And real quick, Chris mentioned

1 a really good point. We are going
2 to work with Governor Edwards to
3 issue a letter of communication to
4 the right federal officials to
5 raise awareness of this environment
6 that we'd like to believe and like
7 to make it a reality as friendly to
8 members of the military and their
9 families that are moving into our
10 state.

11 MR. GOODE:

12 Yeah, I would phrase it
13 specifically to F-35 as well. I
14 mean, you have a yellow/amber
15 scoring on licensure and a red
16 score on education. So any little
17 bit helps right now as they're
18 going through this final phase.
19 They want to put the F-35 in New
20 Orleans, I'm convinced. So giving
21 them a little bit more of a
22 justification to say hey, you know,
23 Louisiana's really working on this,
24 would be great.

25 MS. MITCHELL:

1 Thank you, Chris.

2 MR. ABBOUD:

3 Thank you for that, Chris.

4 Just continuing to move forward
5 here. If anyone does have any
6 additional questions, please do let
7 me know.

8 We have a number of items here
9 within the other business section
10 of the agenda. So at this time,
11 I'll go ahead and move forward. We
12 received a request for an update on
13 the Veterans Initiative Programs.
14 So I'd like to take a moment just
15 to provide a brief highlight for a
16 few of these programs, the first of
17 which is the Veterans Initiative.

18 This program's a certification
19 program designed to help eligible
20 Louisiana veteran owned and
21 service-connected disabled
22 veteran-owned small businesses gain
23 greater access to purchasing and
24 contracting opportunities that are
25 available at the state government

1 level. And so these certifications
2 allow for veterans to earn an
3 additional 12 points at any time
4 they bid on procurement
5 opportunities within the state.
6 And at this time, we currently have
7 353 veteran initiative certified
8 companies in Louisiana.

9 And again, following this
10 request, a few notes on the impact
11 data for this program for last
12 fiscal year, FY20: The total of
13 state reported expenditures with
14 certified veteran initiative
15 entrepreneurships was around 7.5
16 million dollars, and that was with
17 a report of 418 certified veteran
18 initiative small businesses for
19 that period.

20 And then looking back to FY19,
21 that period saw state expenditures
22 of just under 14 million, about
23 13.9 million dollars.

24 So we do expect the report for
25 FY21 to be available toward the end

1 of this year or early next.

2 And with that, I'd like to just
3 jump ahead to two other veteran
4 initiative programs here. The
5 second is the Veterans First
6 Business Initiative. This program
7 allows for veterans, active duty,
8 or reserve military, or gold-star
9 spouses who have 51 percent
10 ownership in a business to apply
11 for and gain certification and
12 recognize and promote their
13 businesses. So the businesses can
14 be searched within the Louisiana
15 Veterans First Business database by
16 any individuals or companies
17 looking to do business with
18 veterans, active duty, or reserve
19 military, or gold-star spouse owned
20 businesses.

21 It's searchable by business
22 type, industry sector, region, or
23 products or services offered.
24 These participants also do receive
25 digital marketing materials that

1 can be displayed, kind of,
2 recognizing their business as
3 veteran owned or gold-star-spouse
4 owned business. We currently have
5 684 businesses certified through
6 this program.

7 And finally, just to highlight
8 a final program here, the Pathway
9 to Assist Veteran Entrepreneurs
10 Program, also known as PAVE. This
11 program offers Louisiana veterans
12 the opportunity to gain knowledge
13 and skills that are necessary to
14 effectively start or manage a
15 business. So this is accomplished
16 through on demand online training,
17 virtual entrepreneurship bootcamps,
18 and access to ongoing business
19 programs and resources.

20 Some of the partners that are
21 engaged within this paid program
22 include: Louisiana Small Business
23 Development Centers, Louisiana
24 Department of Veterans Affairs, and
25 Louisiana National Guard. And

1 there are currently, 42 business
2 participants going through the PAVE
3 program.

4 So just a request again, for a
5 brief on these programs. I just
6 wanted to highlight those and of
7 course, speak to how the
8 partnerships are so important as we
9 continue to execute programs like
10 these.

11 SECRETARY PIERSON:

12 Thank you for those highlights,
13 Robby, on those promotions. We
14 will be highlighting and continuing
15 to promote these programs. We have
16 had a robust promotion program
17 aligned, but as you can imagine
18 with COVID and the sort of
19 emergency status across the state,
20 some of this was disrupted.

21 But at the earliest possible
22 period of time which we can begin
23 to engage in, we're making sure,
24 through partners like Deborah
25 Randolph's Chamber of Commerce

1 where we have an entire Chamber of
2 Commerce network out there that
3 passes all of this information on
4 down to their members, we want to
5 continue to make sure we reach out
6 to those businesses that can
7 qualify and benefit from this
8 program. And it's been very
9 helpful and thoughtfully put
10 together, so we want to make sure
11 we're getting full utilization.

12 MR. ABBOUD:

13 Excellent. Thank you, sir.

14 Next, I would like to call on
15 General Bob Elder. He indicated
16 that he would like to provide a
17 short update related to the Bomber
18 Task Force operations, which may be
19 relevant for board members
20 throughout their course of normal
21 business here.

22 So General Elder, I'll turn it
23 over to you for brief comments.

24 GENERAL ELDER:

25 Okay. Thanks, Robby.

1 I'll do it quickly. A couple
2 things I think that people may not
3 be well aware of is the Air Force
4 in general has really moved what
5 they call Agile Combat Deployment
6 Operations, and it's in support of
7 a notion they call Dynamic Force
8 Deployment, which relates to the
9 fact that we're dealing with
10 multiple different adversaries now,
11 and we have to be able to
12 basically, counter their threats in
13 various different parts of the
14 world and then do it quickly. And
15 it turns out, one of the best
16 platforms to do that does turn out
17 to be the bomber force.

18 So you may hear about bomber
19 task forces as been in the press.
20 But there's really, there's three
21 different types that they have.
22 One, is a small footprint rapid
23 deployment that they've set up the
24 capability to do, which is to be
25 able to go somewhere quickly, set

1 up an operations in another
2 location, Europe, or the Pacific,
3 but it could be in other places as
4 well, and conduct operations
5 primarily to basically show a
6 commitment on the part of the
7 United States for something that's
8 going on.

9 The Agile Combat Deployment
10 piece of this thing where they
11 refer to it from a Bomber Task
12 Force standpoint, they might go to
13 one large base that's in, say
14 Europe or the Pacific and then
15 deploy a smaller force to a small
16 forward operating location, once
17 again, just to show that they can
18 be somewhere quickly.

19 But then, the one that's the
20 most popular, by the way, is what
21 they call the CONUS to CONUS. So
22 flights that start in the
23 continental United States fly over
24 to some other part of the world, do
25 an activity that's there, and then

1 they turn around and fly all the
2 way back. These like typically 30-
3 hour missions. They're very good
4 at it.

5 It's become very popular
6 because it can be put together
7 pretty quickly. But it's being
8 used in concert with other
9 instruments of national power to
10 assure our friends and allies and
11 to deter our adversaries, quite
12 frankly, and in some cases, to
13 compete with our adversaries for
14 what you might call the hearts and
15 minds of some of the other third-
16 party actors that might exist
17 around the world.

18 These are all planned out of
19 Barksdale Air Force Base. They're
20 all flown out of Barksdale Air
21 Force Base, but all the bomber
22 bases participate.

23 I thought that it would be
24 useful for people who might be
25 dealing with the other parts of an

1 OSD, Air Force, and Hill to have
2 that as background when you might
3 hear that discussed. It wouldn't
4 have been familiar to you.

5 And Robby, if it's all right,
6 one other thing that I thought that
7 I might bring up is some people may
8 have heard that the Air Force
9 Nuclear Command Control
10 Communications center that was at
11 Barksdale was disbanded, or I guess
12 I should say disaggregated. But I
13 thought it might be worthwhile to
14 pass on to people that this is not
15 a bad thing.

16 It was disaggregated because
17 the way it was configured, it was
18 basically, led by a Colonel. And
19 General Ray and General Cotton
20 together both believed that it
21 needed higher-level oversight.

22 So basically, they brought it
23 back into the overall headquarters
24 and so whereas the senior person
25 before was a Colonel, now they've

1 split it up to where you have Ops
2 is being done by a one-star. You
3 heard Murray Viser talking before
4 about the Joint Gold Strike
5 Operations Center. Some of the
6 work is done out of there, which is
7 led by a two-star. The plans and
8 programs are being done by a two-
9 star. And then the sustainment is
10 being done by a one-star.

11 So you can see significantly
12 greater emphasis being placed,
13 although it no longer exists as a
14 single functional entity, but for
15 all intents and purposes, it is
16 still there at Barksdale. And I
17 thought it would be worthwhile for
18 people to know it didn't really
19 move, just reorganized.

20 That's all that I really have.

21 MR. ABOUD:

22 Thank you very much, General.

23 Pending any questions or
24 comments from the board at this
25 time, we'll go ahead and move

1 forward. I'd now like to call on
2 Mr. Larry Jones for a moment to
3 make a brief introduction of Mr.
4 John Manion who has joined us
5 today. And this is an update
6 related to the Louisiana Committee
7 for the Import or Support of the
8 Guard and Reserve.

9 So I will send it over to you,
10 Larry.

11 You're muted, sir.

12 MR. JONES:

13 Okay. I think I'm on the air
14 now.

15 Mr. Secretary Strickland and
16 Pierson, General and Flag Officers,
17 friends, I have a lot of
18 acquaintances on this committee, so
19 I'm happy to have a minute with you
20 this morning.

21 Employer support of Guard and
22 Reserve has been very active in
23 Louisiana for the past couple or
24 many, many years, so a lot of us
25 have had the opportunity to chair

1 the Louisiana commission. And my
2 term is up. I'm going back as a
3 regular volunteer. And I'm happy
4 to introduce a gentleman who has
5 been the Vice Commander for me in
6 my tour, and also our Ombudsman
7 Director who is taking over on
8 October 1st, and it's Mr. John
9 Manion. So I'd like to just give
10 him an opportunity to say hello.

11 MR. MANION:

12 Thank you, Larry.

13 I appreciate, Robby, your kind
14 invitation to attend today's
15 meeting. I have attended one
16 previous meeting at Larry's
17 invitation, and also at the
18 suggestion of Mr. Brian Jakes, who
19 I believe is also with us this
20 morning, and also a former chair of
21 Louisiana Employer Support of the
22 Guard and Reserve.

23 Looking very forward to working
24 with all of you and with others to
25 enhance the ability of our service

1 members to remain gainfully
2 employed as they, in their capacity
3 as members of the military, either
4 in connection with their guard
5 affiliation or their reserve
6 affiliation, engage in military
7 service and return to the civilian
8 employment world. We are very
9 happy to assist in any way possible
10 in ensuring that that transition is
11 as smooth as it could possibly be,
12 and that as many benefits and
13 privileges as can possibly be
14 retained by those service members
15 are, in fact, retained in
16 connection with their civilian
17 employment.

18 So once again, thank you very
19 much for inviting me. I look
20 forward to working with you in the
21 coming several years.

22 MR. ABOUD:

23 Thank you very much, sir.

24 Moving along, I've got a note
25 here from Mr. Ronnie Slone would

1 like to have a moment, so with
2 that, Mr. Slone.

3 MR. SLONE:

4 A couple of things, but first
5 off, I know everybody has been
6 getting the pings on their phones
7 and in their emails that the FDA
8 did grant the full authorization of
9 the Pfizer, so I know that came up
10 a little bit earlier in someone's
11 comments.

12 And I want to thank my friend
13 Gary Silbert for the shout out. I
14 could not reach the unmute button
15 fast enough to do "Aarugh" to make
16 sure folks know where I was coming
17 from. But thank you, Gary for the
18 shout out.

19 But I just wanted to raise
20 something here, and that is the
21 fact that the Diversity, Equity,
22 and Inclusion Conversation has
23 permeated pretty much every aspect
24 of the American society, whether
25 it's corporate, education,

1 nonprofit, and I saw Sunday on 60
2 Minutes, a report on the results of
3 an Air Force survey on race. And
4 then they did end the segment by
5 saying that the other branches of
6 the military are going to follow
7 suit and do some surveys to address
8 some challenges and things like
9 that.

10 So when reflecting back, and
11 thanks to Secretary Pierson when I
12 was doing some work with and
13 volunteering with the Resilient
14 Louisiana Commission, some of our
15 priorities were diversity and
16 equity. So it just kind of came to
17 mind that maybe our council should
18 look at some sort of briefing on
19 what it looks like for the state of
20 Louisiana for all the different
21 types of military establishments we
22 have here. But in a way, getting a
23 little bit proactive about it
24 instead of being reactive in the
25 future if you will.

1 So the conversation is out
2 there, and I know we represent the
3 military in Louisiana, so I just
4 thought I would put it on the
5 radar. I'm not sure where that
6 goes or who needs to be involved.
7 But it might be a good idea if we
8 could get some sort of regular
9 briefing on that during our
10 meetings and kind of monitor what's
11 going on with reference to that
12 particular conversation.

13 So I just wanted to throw it
14 out there and thank you for your
15 time. I really, really enjoy our
16 meetings because yeah, I get
17 updates and I stay connected,
18 whereas in my day to day, I'm not
19 as connected as I would like to be.
20 So thanks.

21 SECRETARY PIERSON:

22 Ronnie, thank you for that. I
23 think you raise an important issue
24 to us, certainly. And as you
25 recognized with the report that we

1 put together for building a
2 comprehensive game plan for
3 Louisiana, certainly, diversity and
4 equity played a significant role in
5 that.

6 Robby and I will continue to,
7 along with other LED staff, folks
8 like Mandi Mitchell who is on the
9 call today, to data catch and try
10 to assimilate some information that
11 we can keep the board current on,
12 and if there's certain notes of
13 information that you get, please
14 pass those along to us so that we
15 can continue to build in some
16 reports along that line item at
17 future meetings.

18 MR. SLONE:

19 Than you.

20 MR. ABOUD:

21 Very good.

22 Okay. So moving forward here,
23 I would like to make just one quick
24 note that Robbie Gatti has joined
25 the meeting. So we can count him

1 as present for the record for
2 today's meeting.

3 At this time, I would like to
4 ask members if there are any other
5 items to come before the council
6 today before we move on?

7 Okay. I am hearing none.

8 I would now like to go ahead
9 and read any questions and comments
10 from the public at this time. It
11 looks like we had two comments come
12 in.

13 The first, of course,
14 Representative Charles Owen
15 indicating that he did author the
16 law two years ago related in
17 reference to our discussion on
18 licensure and reciprocity. That
19 was supposed to clear up a lot of
20 what we discussed. And I believe
21 Mandi Mitchell will follow up with
22 Representative Owen immediately
23 after this meeting.

24 And secondly, for the record,
25 Colonel Phil Jones, United States

1 Air Force Retired is on the call
2 for the Air Force Association Baton
3 Rouge Chamber. So I wanted to be
4 sure to provide those two notes
5 here for the record.

6 And that looks like it covers
7 everything for today on my end.

8 Mr. Secretary, I'd like to go
9 ahead and pass it back over to you,
10 of course, as LMAC chairman, for
11 any closing remarks or comments.

12 SECRETARY PIERSON:

13 So if there are any comments or
14 late alibis, please send them via
15 chat, and we'll try to clear them
16 before the end of this meeting as
17 we wind it down. And I know these
18 comments that I'm about to make are
19 certainly something that are well
20 known to council members but
21 keeping in mind that this is a
22 public meeting and that we can get
23 the opportunity to get word out to
24 the media through this portal as
25 well.

1 I continue to feel like we've
2 got a very effective team. It's
3 effectiveness is made possible
4 because of the dedication of a
5 number of the members that are on
6 this call today.

7 Certainly, it's important.
8 It's important to the tune of about
9 7.7 billion dollars of annual
10 economic impact in our state, and
11 77,000 direct and indirect jobs as
12 verified by our last economic
13 impact statement. Our next version
14 of that's in the field, so we'll
15 come back and report to you on
16 that.

17 But you know and I know that
18 this is not only a very substantial
19 economic driver for Louisiana, but
20 that we're also on the front lines
21 for all the defense of our nation,
22 and readiness and training of the
23 forces that we project across the
24 globe.

25 Again, this is all made

1 possible by an effective team, and
2 I want to point out that this team
3 is supported and managed to a large
4 degree here in Louisiana, but
5 there's a lot more that goes on,
6 and that goes on with the strong
7 support of our Congressional
8 Delegation.

9 So as you interact with them,
10 please continue to applaud their
11 efforts to support the military
12 fabric and that part of the defense
13 fabric in Louisiana. I'm certainly
14 pleased with Representative
15 Johnson's assistance to Barksdale
16 and Polk. Absolutely critical.

17 Great to hear that Senator
18 Kennedy is asking us to be forward
19 looking around Barksdale Air Force
20 Base. Senator Cassidy has been
21 stalwart in his support of every
22 request that we've made along the
23 way to try to effect the things
24 that we need to, not only in the
25 halls of Congress, but over in the

1 Halls at the Pentagon where the
2 rubber really meets the road and
3 where decision makers make
4 decisions and recommendations and
5 put together the budgets that drive
6 all of this.

7 And so again, powered by the
8 strong local support, the grass-
9 root support that's represented
10 here with the very talented
11 congressional staff supporting the
12 Congressional Delegation and the
13 assistance of the Roosevelt Group
14 where we're making real progress
15 here and so important that we
16 continue to do that.

17 Sidebar to General Elder and
18 Murray Viser, that we do feel like
19 we've got some important forward
20 movement in this 5G support for the
21 Department of Defense Nuclear
22 Command and Control elements that
23 are important to us, and we'll
24 speak more about that going
25 forward. But we're mindful of the

1 priorities at each of our military
2 installations and with Robby and
3 the governor's office and the
4 entire really delegation here, the
5 Louisiana legislature is supportive
6 of all these efforts as well.

7 So thank you all for your
8 contributions and time today and
9 ongoing in the roles that you play
10 in the support of our military
11 installations in the Department of
12 Defense operations in Louisiana.

13 And essentially, that's all I
14 have. I don't see anything further
15 in the chat board. So I'll report
16 to you that all of these lanes seem
17 to be clear for now. And again,
18 thank you for your time, attention,
19 and support along the way.

20 Have a great day. Be safe.

21 (Whereupon, the meeting was adjourned at
22 11:46 a.m.)

23

24

25

1 REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE

2
3 This certification is valid only
4 for a transcript accompanied by my original
5 signature and original required seal on
6 this page.

7 I, Dorothy N. Gros, CSR
8 (Certificate #90049) in and for the State
9 of Louisiana, do hereby certify that on
10 August 24, 2021, the above entitled meeting
11 was reported by me in the voice writer
12 reporting method, prepared and transcribed
13 under my personal direction and
14 supervision, and is a true and correct
15 transcript to the best of my ability and
16 understanding; that after having been duly
17 sworn by me upon authority of R.S.37:2554,
18 the named witness did testify as
19 hereinbefore set forth in the foregoing 108
20 pages; and that the transcript has been
21 prepared in compliance with transcript
22 format guidelines required by statute or by
23 Rules of the Board;

24 That I am informed about the
25 complete arrangement, financial or

1 otherwise, with the person or entity making
2 arrangements for deposition services and I
3 have acted in compliance with the
4 prohibition of contractual relationships,
5 as defined by Louisiana Code of Civil
6 Procedure Article 1434 and in the Rules and
7 Advisory Opinions of the Board; and that I
8 have no contractual relationship, direct or
9 indirect, between a court reporting firm
10 and any party litigant in this matter, nor
11 is there any such relationship between
12 myself and a party litigant in this matter;

13 That I am not related to counsel or
14 to the parties herein, nor am I otherwise
15 interested in the outcome of this matter.

16
17 SIGNED THIS THE ____ DAY

18 OF _____, 2021.

19

20

21

22

23

24

DOROTHY N. GROS, CCR

25

License No. 90049

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