



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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LEDA Breaks Ground on Small Business Success Center at Historic Holy Rosary Site

One-stop center will help Main Street businesses, solopreneurs and aspiring entrepreneurs start, grow and sustain their businesses

LAFAYETTE, La. – The Lafayette Economic Development Authority (LEDA) will break ground on its Small Business Success Center on Tuesday, October 13, with a program at 9:30 a.m. at the corner of Louisiana Avenue and Carmel Drive. Community leaders, business owners, small business service providers, elected officials, and civic partners are invited to attend.

The Center will be built on the historic Holy Rosary grounds, where Holy Rosary Redevelopment is working to bring new life to the campus. It will bring together the partners and resources that Main Street businesses, microenterprises and solo entrepreneurs need to start, finance and grow a business, all in one place.

“Small businesses are the backbone of Lafayette’s economy, but too many entrepreneurs don’t know where to turn when they’re ready to start or grow,” said Mandi Mitchell, LEDA’s President and CEO. “The Small Business Success Center changes that by putting training, one-on-one counseling and access to capital under one roof. We’re building on the work we’ve been doing with our ecosystem partners since 2022, and this Center will make those resources easier to find and use for current and aspiring small business owners across the city, the parish and the Acadiana region. Whether you’re a Main Street shop owner or someone seeking to turn your craft and skill set into self-employment, this is a place where you’ll find the connections and the path forward.”

What the Center will offer

The Center will build on the small business programs and services LEDA provides in Lafayette Parish. The center will include LEDA small business staff offices, training rooms, and one-on-one counseling offices. The Center will also be home to the community’s non-profit access to capital partner — upLFT Capital Access.

About the project

The 8,600-square-foot Center is a \$5.9 million investment funded through LEDA and state capital outlay funds. It will include offices for LEDA’s small business team, training rooms, and private counseling offices. Construction is expected to be completed in January 2028.

A milestone for Holy Rosary

The Holy Rosary campus has been central to Lafayette’s history for more than a century. The Holy Rosary Institute, built in 1913 and listed on the National Register of Historic Places, is one of the few remaining historic Black Catholic high school buildings in the country. It was founded to provide vocational and technical education, so a center devoted to practical skills and self-employment is a fitting return to its original mission.

Holy Rosary Redevelopment has led the effort to stabilize and restore the Institute and attract new investment to the roughly 40-acre campus. The Small Business Success Center is the first major new construction project to break ground there. LEDA and its partners expect it to bring daily activity, visitors and investor confidence to the site and spur further development on campus and in surrounding North Lafayette neighborhoods.



“When you create access and opportunity, you begin to transform a community,” said Dustin Cravins, Board President, Holy Rosary Redevelopment. “This center brings that vision to life at Holy Rosary by putting tools and resources within reach of entrepreneurs and aspiring business owners in a community that has too often been underserved.”

“Holy Rosary’s legacy is rooted in education, service and a belief in the potential of every person,” said Sister Alicia Costa, SSF, Ph.D., Congregational Leader, Sisters of the Holy Family. “This center carries that mission forward, opening new doors for entrepreneurs and helping another generation build a brighter future.”

Celebrating partnership

The groundbreaking also highlights LEDA’s role as the community’s Redevelopment Authority, working to expand economic opportunity while revitalizing important places. The event will celebrate the collaboration among small business owners, service providers and entrepreneurial support organizations, elected officials and civic leaders who collectively support Lafayette’s entrepreneurial spirit.

“Securing the funding to make this Center a reality took years of persistence and partnership, and I’m proud to see it become a reality today,” said Louisiana State Senator Gerald Boudreaux. “I have every confidence in LEDA, which has consistently delivered on their commitments and built the relationships needed to make this Center succeed. Above all, we are profoundly grateful to the Sisters of the Holy Family for their enduring dedication, spiritual leadership, and careful stewardship of this historic property. This investment will pay dividends for our local small business owners, for North Lafayette and for our entire region.”

Event details

- **When:** Tuesday, October 13, 9:30 a.m.
- **Where:** Corner of Louisiana Avenue and Carmel Drive, Lafayette
- **Parking:** Galleries Lafayette Shopping Center, 107 Carmel Drive

About LEDA

The Lafayette Economic Development Authority catalyzes job growth and capital investment to build a strong, diversified economy, ensure equitable access to economic opportunity and enhance quality of life in Lafayette Parish. LEDA is an Accredited Economic Development Organization (AEDO) designated by the International Economic Development Council. Learn more at lafayette.org.

About Holy Rosary Redevelopment

The Holy Rosary Redevelopment Board is dedicated to restoring and revitalizing the historic Holy Rosary Institute campus in Lafayette. Rooted in a proud legacy of educating African American students since 1913, the organization carries that commitment to education and opportunity forward to serve the entire community. Its work is transforming the 40-acre campus into a center for educational, economic, social, cultural and spiritual development, preserving its history while expanding access to resources for North Lafayette and the broader region. Learn more at HolyRosaryLA.org.