



## STEDF fosters Hungarian interest in Mandeville wetland assimilation

The St. Tammany Economic Development Foundation (STEDF) arranged for a delegation of Hungarian business leaders to tour the Mandeville Wetland Assimilation Project Monday.

“Economic development reaches into global markets,” said Brenda Bertus, CEO of STEDF. “We are pleased to participate in international partnerships and share interests with far-reaching communities.” She said the Wetland Assimilation draws international attention to St. Tammany Parish as an innovative choice for water treatment.

“It’s a simple and practical solution to a global problem that can be applied to any community,” said David DeGeneres, director of public works for the City of Mandeville, who led the Hungarians’ tour.

The biological wastewater treatment system pumps and discharges sewage treated once by existing facilities into the wetlands, where the natural ecosystem further cleans the water before reincorporating it into other systems. Assimilating wetlands with sewage effluent is a less expensive alternative to secondary chemical treatment and grows wetland areas quickly and effectively.



While in New Orleans for the Water Environment Federation Technical Exhibition and Conference (WEFTEC), the Hungarian CEOs asked to tour local water treatment facilities. The group visited the Mandeville Wetland Assimilation Project thanks to an MOA between STEDF and the U.S. Department of Commerce Export Assistance Center in New Orleans.

Brittany Banta, commercial officer for the New Orleans U.S. Export Assistance Center, said her organization “enjoys a strong partnership with STEDF, and their ability to organize such an informative and entertaining tour for the visiting Hungarian delegation is the most recent example of why we enjoy collaborating with them to help local business organizations.”

Michael Tomlinson, economic development specialist for STEDF, facilitated the event. He said the U.S. Department of Commerce “is an integral economic development ally relative to all things having to do with exporting. More than 70 percent of the world’s purchasing power is located outside of the United States, and the partnership results from an effort to connect more Northshore businesses with ever-increasing export opportunities.”

STEDF leads economic development in St. Tammany Parish, attracting new businesses and employment opportunities to the area. The organization seeks to improve parish residents’ quality of life by strengthening and supporting the business climate. For more information, call STEDF at (985) 809-7874 or visit [www.stedf.org](http://www.stedf.org).