Company moving into Tech Park, will create 230 jobs

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Advocate staff file photo by RICHARD ALAN HANNON -- Stixis **TECHNOLOGIES** will be located in the Louisiana Technology Park at the Bon Carre Business Center on Florida Boulevard in Baton Rouge.

Company joins Technology Park

By bill lodge

blodge@theadvocate.com

Stixis **TECHNOLOGIES** Inc. opened its first U.S. development center Thursday at Louisiana **TECHNOLOGY** Park, a move expected to create 230 new **JOBS** in Baton Rouge over the next five years and one that adds to a growing list of tech companies in the state.

Louisiana's economic development department said those **JOBS** will carry an

average annual salary of $59,500 — an annual payroll of nearly $13.7 million.

"As exciting as Louisiana's historic manufacturing investment boom is, the reality is that the fastest-growing industry in Louisiana today is **SOFTWARE DEVELOPMENT**," Stephen Moret, the state's secretary for economic development, said after a news conference. "We've cultivated the **SOFTWARE** development and digital media sectors."

He noted that several companies, including Stixis, "recently have announced major projects that collectively will create more than 5,000 new, direct tech **JOBS** in our state — most of which will be filled in the next three years."

Based in Bangalore, India, Stixis engineers software, coupled with application management, maintenance and support for customers across a range of sectors. Those sectors include oil and gas, health care, digital media and entertainment, education, retail and government.

"This is a global company," Gov. Bobby Jindal noted at the technology park at 7117 Florida Blvd. in the Bon Carré Business Center. "They didn't have to build this site in Louisiana. They decided this was the best place."

Stixis chose Louisiana for its project after considering several other states, including Virginia, Florida, Texas, Pennsylvania and Wyoming.

Founded in 2009, Stixis operates a development center in Johannesburg, South Africa, and a U.S. sales office in the Dallas area.

In addition to the 230 direct jobs, the Louisiana Department of Economic Development estimates the Baton Rouge project will result in an additional 233 indirect jobs.

"The Stixis AMIGOs Development Center will focus on innovation, which we think will be well-supported by highly skilled manpower available locally — scientists, engineers, university professors and research students," said Rayudu Dhananjaya, president and chief executive officer of Stixis.

He cited state incentives, such as the state's FastStart job training program and its Digital Interactive Media and **SOFTWARE DEVELOPMENT** Incentive, as reasons for selecting Louisiana.

FastStart provides free employee recruitment, screening and training for new or expanding companies.

The DIMSD incentive provides a 35 percent tax credit on payroll for in-state labor. It also provides a 25 percent tax credit for qualified production expenses in Louisiana.

"In addition, we will be able to partner with major Louisiana universities, and we have received excellent support from (the Baton Rouge Area Chamber) as we operationalize our center to accomplish our long-term goals in Baton Rouge," Dhananjaya said.

F. King Alexander, LSU's president and chancellor, said the school now has twice as many **COMPUTER SCIENCE** students as two years ago.

"We pledge our support as a partner in this great endeavor," Alexander said.

"They (Stixis) will also be doing some things at Southern University," Mayor-President Kip Holden said.

Holden said IBM and an influx of other **TECHNOLOGY** companies are changing Baton Rouge residents' lives in positive ways.

"Now, Stixis is joining that growing number of people who are going to change lives forever," Holden said. "They're making a major investment in our state and our city."

Jindal rattled off a string of **SOFTWARE DEVELOPMENT**, digital media and information technology providers that have come to Louisiana — EA, Gameloft and GE Capital to CGI, CSC and IBM. "We're also adding key emerging players, such as Perficient, Enquero, 4th Source, Performance **SOFTWARE** and, now, Stixis."

Moret noted that state government has "committed $37.5 million over 10 years to at least triple the annual number of bachelor's graduates in **COMPUTER SCIENCE** at LSU, Louisiana Tech University, the University of Louisiana at Lafayette and the University of New Orleans.

"All of these universities will benefit from the engagement of top **IT COMPANIES** in the modernization of their curricula, ensuring their graduates are prepared with cutting-edge knowledge to be successful in the marketplace."

The tech companies coming to Louisiana are responding to those efforts, Moret said.

"Indeed, in our state's history, there has never been a better time than today for our college graduates to secure high-tech **JOBS** right here at home," he said.

"The capital region is fast becoming a hub for **SOFTWARE DEVELOPMENT**, with the talent, quality of life and infrastructure to set companies up for success," said Adam Knapp, BRAC's president and chief executive officer.

Knapp said BRAC has worked to attract **SOFTWARE** ↗ and other **TECHNOLOGICAL** ↗ companies because "we see wages are higher in this sector," adding, "if you want to grow your regional economy, software is the way to go."

Stixis' leader said he wants his firm to be a big factor in that growth.

"This center is expected to accelerate solutions development, streamline software product delivery and give rise to new business models that help enterprises run more efficiently and stay competitive," Dhananjaya said.

In Baton Rouge, Stixis also will mentor students in an incubator boot camp through software development practices that cover, among other things, big data analytics, **CLOUD COMPUTING** ↗ and social media applications.

"These are the kinds of **JOBS** ↗ we want for our kids," Jindal said.