



# Lafayette Democrats

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## Democrats Support Fiber Optics

### February 18, 2005

Politics should not determine core principles. A core principle of the **Lafayette Democratic Party** is to improve local businesses and the lives of local citizens. That principle drives the Lafayette Democratic Party to endorse the Lafayette Consolidated Government's plan for fiber optics.

Lafayette has embarked on a progressive plan to bring fiber optics to the homes and businesses of its citizens. With fiber optics, the Lafayette Utilities System will have the capacity to provide businesses and consumers with high-speed, low cost Internet, telephone, and cable television service.

We, the members of the Lafayette Democratic Parish Executive Committee, believe the project will enhance businesses, enrich our lives, and prepare our children for the future. With proper planning, future generations will see profits generated by this project stay in this community and improve businesses and lives for generations to come.

Improving local communities has been the traditional purpose of the Democratic Party. With that in mind, we commend City-Parish President Joey Durel for his bold initiative to make this plan a success.

Durel's initiative conflicts with some long-held dogma of the Republican Party that government should never compete with corporate interests. But in cases where government can improve local businesses and enhance the lives of our citizens, we ask, "why not?"

Why not allow all citizens of this community to benefit from a successful project? A government elected by the people has always endeavored to spread the gains of success or the cost of failure. If we, as citizens and owners of the project, object to any aspect of the operation, we can simply vote out of office those with whom we disagree.

All citizens stand to gain if money generated by a successful project stays in this community. All businesses, and all individuals brought here by this project, will live here, work here, and spend their lives and money here.

Those who believe that government should never compete with profit-seeking corporate interests have been instrumental in privatizing everything from the city's garbage collection service to the state's juvenile prisons. We should ask ourselves what our community has gained by these sometimes reckless acts of privatization.

At one time, the City of Lafayette provided garbage collection service to all its citizens and paid livable wages to those who collected our garbage. The city provided a needed service and the jobs held by those workers allowed them to support their families, and, by keeping families together, reduced the incidents of high school dropouts, crime, family abuse, and neglect.

Many years ago, we privatized garbage collection and gave one large out-of-state company an exclusive contract. The company makes money, much of which leaves the community, and the employees picking up our garbage work at low wages, many part-time, and most with no benefits. We pay the price in higher welfare and food stamp benefits, and in higher incidents of crime, family neglect, and abuse.

We saw the same result when the state privatized juvenile prisons. If not for the courage of dedicated attorneys and state legislators leading the effort to take back state ownership and control of the private juvenile prison in Jena, Louisiana, we would still be reading the horror stories of low paid guards abusing the young offenders.

We have the chance to promote Lafayette as a vibrant, progressive community that encourages the success of its citizens, its businesses, and its employees. We must seize this opportunity and give credit to those who make its success possible.

The Lafayette Democratic Party will not hesitate to give credit to those who promote these worthwhile goals. We will not hesitate to stand for the enduring principles which have made the Democratic Party the oldest political institution in the world. We stand for strong, local businesses, and strong, local families. We believe the fiber optic plan will achieve both. We ask that all businesses and family-oriented local citizens support this worthwhile plan.

Sincerely,

Lafayette Democratic Parish Executive Committee

By Its Members

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