



## **Emerald Bayou Studios--Proof of Concept**

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Yesterday's Advertiser carried [a short article](#) on Emerald Studios plans to move into the LITE center. It was presented as good news, but the story is, on reflection, potentially enormous. The studio will have to make good on its plans and survive for Lafayette to reap the full benefit but if that happens some of the community's fondest dreams will be within reach.

[Emerald Studios](#) is a new film production company with a studio in an old cottonseed mill in New Roads. Emerald Studio's addition to the [growing stable](#) at LITE has long been hinted at. They were featured at LITE's opening. There they complained of having to courier massive amounts of film data on disks (those shiny physical things- ick!) to postproduction sites in California and the disadvantage that the process put them at competitively. Their solution: They reported on their test transfer of digital film data using LONI and the LambdaRail network from LITE's LONI connection to a LambdaRail node in Georgia. Zippy. Flexible. Works. --Needless to say, they liked it.

Beyond the connectivity another thing that will be available at LITE is raw processing power, lots and lots of it. It is the combination of fat pipes and phat computation that makes LITE attractive. (Recall [those](#) parallel, clustered, supercomputers running the show there.) No doubt day-to-day the studio will roll its own computation...but when they need the horsepower it will be easy to get--and will rival anything available anywhere.

What this move by Emerald Studios means is that they are planning to do their post-production work not in California but here. And, with a planned hire of 77 people at an average of \$71,000 apiece, they are anticipating working on more than their own few films. 77 people is a lot of people for this sort of enterprise.

What's more 77 people is too many people to fit in the 3000 square feet of office space at LITE. They must be planning on leasing more space. 77 people times a pretty measly 20x10 space for each works out to about 15,400 square feet. (200 sq ft per person is a fairly standard way to estimate office space requirements.) So 3000 sq ft is about 1/5 of the total minimum required office space. This means two things: 1) Billeaud Properties and other large office space owners want to send their sales people over to New Roads to talk to these women. 2) The unspoken plan is to have satellite offices and

Lafayette's secret weapon is its fiber to the home (and office) network. That, on top of connectivity and processing power, is final piece of the puzzle that makes this deal make sense.

This is where the intranet bandwidth Huval [discussed at the fiber forum](#) shows its development potential. If all Emerald's nodes are located on LUS' network they will get intranet speeds of up to 100 megs or better between their locations--that is comparable to the 100 megs of ethernet connectivity that you have inside most offices these days. Emerald Studios (and other bandwidth-devouring businesses) can rent cheap office space and still get huge LAN-like (Local Area Network) bandwidth between their locations. A little VPN (virtual private network) and a location literally anywhere in Lafayette and you can have secure connectivity between your employees that in most cities would require you to lease a lot of space in an inordinately expensive, highly fibered up, specialty tech office park.

Doing business in Lafayette is gonna be a great deal for a whole class of new, high-paying, tech-oriented enterprises.

Emerald Bayou, with LITE, could easily be the core for the development of Lafayette as a regional rendering/3D powerhouse. These provide locations for interns from our high school and university programs. It is a sizable pool of jobs in itself and means animators and digital artists of all kinds can hope to find work here at home. Interested in parallel computing or next gen networking? There'll be work for you too. No doubt there'll be part-time work when the pressure is on. Once a specialized employee pool is available other companies will come here to try and poach -- and if they discover local folks don't want to leave the only way to take advantage of the personnel resource will be to establish a branch office. (And, since we're located on high speed fiber, communications with the home office won't be a problem.) There's a potential [virtuous circle](#) coming and we should do everything in our power to encourage it.

Emerald Bayou Studios is proof-of-concept for the high-end development dreams of the city fathers and local fiber supporters just as NuComm was proof that fiber could bring many much needed entry-level jobs to the city's north side. It will bring clean, high tech, high wage jobs to the city and develop a local pool of talent to fuel further, similar, development.

It's big news. With potentially enormous consequences for Lafayette.

It's working in Lafayette.