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## Business

### 12/14/2003 Nacogdoches officials praise ETI

By GARY BASS, *The Lufkin Daily News*

Nacogdoches government and business officials offered nothing but praise for Effective Teleservices Inc., which plans to open a new call center in Lufkin next year.

Citing the company's high level of community involvement, leaders on Friday said Nacogdoches-based ETI is an outstanding corporate neighbor.

"They're absolutely wonderful to work with," said Nacogdoches Deputy City Manager Victoria LaFollett. "They are very good about keeping us informed about what is going on, and they're very receptive and responsive to the city's needs.

"Effective Teleservices Inc. is a very good corporate neighbor."

ETI's announcement Friday was a bright spot in a week marred by news that Abitibi Consolidated's Lufkin paper mill will be closing, effective today. At a press conference, ETI, which once did business as BerryDirect, said the Lufkin call center will initially employ about 150 people, and indicated there is a possibility of the number growing to 300 within a few months.

The call center will be located in the old Safeway building at the northeast intersection of Loop 287 and Frank Avenue. ETI plans to renovate the building and convert it into a call center within the next two months.

"They're wonderful. I can't sing their praises enough," said Linda Flores, executive vice president of the Nacogdoches County Chamber of Commerce. "They came in committed to being involved in the community, and they definitely followed through on their promise."

Judy McDonald, president of the Nacogdoches County Economic Development Corp. echoed Flores' comment, saying the company, which started doing business there in 1998, is very active in the community, and assists organizations like the United Way, the Boys and Girls Club and the Women's Shelter of East Texas. Plus, ETI is an active member of the local chamber and NEDCO, she said.

"I have absolutely zero complaints about ETI," McDonald said. "Their people are very positive, and when they came to town, they said they were going to be very

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involved in the community. They kept their promise."

Flores said with bonuses, workers at the Nacogdoches call center make up to \$13 an hour. In addition, the company is willing to work around employees' school schedules, and will reimburse them for their education expenses. Both full and part-time workers receive competitive benefits, she said.

Whenever the chamber of commerce has needed help with a project, the management at ETI has been more than willing to help, Flores said.

Last year, ETI was instrumental in setting and meeting the largest United Way goal ever for Nacogdoches County, McDonald said. Effective Teleservices was also a "pacesetter" in the United Way's 2003 fund-raising campaign.

Earlier this year, ETI received the Large Business of the Year Award from the Nacogdoches County Chamber of Commerce.

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