

UPCOMING EVENTS

April 26 – Live at 5 on Westside in Addis

May 1 – WBR Chamber Membership Crawfish Boil

May 2 – On-line defense seminar, WBR Library

May 10 – Live at 5 on Westside in Addis

May 18 – Writing workshop, WBR Library

Thru May 19 – Ferries of WBR exhibit, WBR Museum

May 24 – Live at 5 on the Westside in Addis

Thru May 26 – Darkness to Light exhibit, WBR Museum

June 4 & 5 – Secret Agent Magic Show (see library, pg. 2)

June 6 – BR Youth Ballet performance (see library, pg. 2)

June 8-Aug. 18 – Scouting in WBR exhibit, WBR Museum

June 11 – Asian dance and theater (see library, pg. 2)

June 18 – Bindlestiff Family Circus (see library, pg. 2)

June 17-21, 24-28 – Blast from Past Camp, WBR Museum

June 25-26 – Singing Zoologist (see library, pg. 2)

Update from Parish President Berthelot to residents on La. 1/415 connector progress

Dear residents,

In the spring of 2001 the West Baton Rouge Parish Council launched an initiative to relieve traffic on LA 1 and provide additional capacity over the Intracoastal Waterway by constructing a connector route between LA 1 and Interstate 10 in West Baton Rouge Parish. Since that time, this proposed transportation project has been my number one priority.

With the help of the Parish Council, I have:

- sought help from Federal and State legislators,
- applied for Capital Outlay funds,
- produced informational documents and videos, and
- repeatedly stressed the importance of an alternate route over the Intracoastal Waterway for this region.

While parish residents are some of the most inconvenienced, this is not just a West Baton Rouge Parish issue. Approximately 50,000 vehicles cross the Intracoastal bridge daily - more than twice the total population of this parish. It's a regional issue and the need is critical!

Any disruption to the existing bridge over the Intracoastal, such as the need for emergency repairs we have recently experienced, only exasperates our daily traffic issues. As a former member of the Parish Council and as Parish President, I have had numerous conversations with private investment firms, financial consulting firms, State and Federal representatives and others only to hear that tolls alone would not be sufficient to support the construction of this \$145 million proposed project.

It has repeatedly been said that our State and Federal Government does not have funds for infrastructure. Nevertheless, I continue to push this project to the final plan/shovel ready stage by accomplishing a number of required pre-construction activities in hopes of somehow securing funding for construction. (See list at right). West Baton Rouge Parish aggressively fought to secure \$5.5



Traffic backed up into Port Allen during the recent emergency repair work on the Intracoastal Bridge.

LA. HWY. 1 CONNECTOR:

Required & completed pre-construction activities:

- 2009 - \$3 million in capital outlay funds awarded for preliminary plans
- 2010 - WBR Transportation Authority formed
- 2011 - Preliminary design begins
- 2012 - Toll forecast completed
- 2013 - Preliminary design completed
- 2014 - FHWA/DOTD awards \$270,000 for vessel survey and other items
- 2015 - Work on supplemental items begins; State, Federal oversight continues
- 2016 - Required value engineering report completed
- 2017 - Required vessel survey completed & bridge height alternatives considered
- 2018 - FHWA/DOTD awards \$5.5 million for final plans. Final completion of plans expected in 2020.

Continued on page 3

GOVERNMENT MEETINGS

WBR PARISH COUNCIL - Meets 2nd & 4th Thursday of month, 5:30 p.m., Parish Council Building, 225-383-4755, www.wbr council.org

WBR PARISH SCHOOL BOARD - Committee meetings - 2nd Tuesday of month, 5 p.m. School Board meetings - 3rd Wednesday of month, 5 p.m., School Board office 225-343-8309, www.wbrschools.net

WBR PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION - Meets 1st & 3rd Tuesdays of month, 5:30 p.m., Council meeting room, Parish Council Building.

WBR BOARD OF ADJUSTMENTS - Meets 3rd Tuesday of month. 5 p.m., Council meeting room in Parish Council Building.

TOWN OF ADDIS - Meets 1st Wednesday of month, 6 p.m., Addis Town Hall. Phone: 225-687-4844, www.addisla.org

CITY OF PORT ALLEN - Committee meetings - 1st Wednesday of month, 5:30 p.m. Council meetings - 2nd Wednesday of month, 5:30 p.m., Port Allen City Hall 225-346-5670, www.portallen.org

TOWN OF BRUSLY - Committee meetings on 1st Monday of each month at 6:30 p.m. Town Council meetings on 2nd Monday of each month at 6:30 p.m., Brusly Town Hall - 225-749-2909, www.bruslyla.com

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Upcoming activities at Museum

Through May 26 - EXHIBIT - Through Darkness to Light: Photographs Along the Underground Railroad. Photographer Jeanine Michna-Bales photos show freedom seekers and the ways they escaped enslavement.



Through May 19 - EXHIBIT - The Ferries of West Baton Rouge. This exhibit highlights the rich history of the ferries of West Baton Rouge through artifacts and images from the West Baton Rouge Historical Association.



May 9 - Noon - Lunchtime Lecture on the Freedom on the Move Project. Freedom on the Move (FOTM) is an online project with Cornell University devoted to "fugitives/self-liberators" from slavery in North America. It is a database for tens of thousands of advertisements placed by enslavers seeking the recapture self-liberating Africans and African Americans. Professor Mary Molly Mitchell will talk about the project.

May 15 - Noon - Lunchtime lecture and book signing with Catherine Savage Brosman and Olivia McNeely Pass, authors of Louisiana Poets: A Literary Guide, an inspiring survey and assessment of 40 poets. Participants are welcome to bring a brown bag lunch. FREE

May 22 - Noon - Lunchtime lecture and book signing with Dr. Bryan Wagner, author of The Life and Legend of Bras Coupé: The Fugitive Slave Who Fought the Law, Ruled the Swamp, Danced at Congo Square, Invented Jazz, and Died for Love. Wagner examines the life and lore of Squire, and how this legendary figure evolved in literature and culture through the decades. FREE. Participants are welcome to bring a lunch.

June 8 - August 18 - EXHIBIT - Prepared for Life: Scouting in WBR.

June 8 - Scouting Exhibit Opening Reception and Scouting Reunion

June 15, 10 am - noon - Tricks of the Trade - Introduction to blacksmithing, woodworking and metal working, where participants will see demonstrations at the forge inside the West Baton Rouge Museum's blacksmith shop, learn how to use antique hand tools, and participate in a hands-on activity. Participants will be able to schedule workshops on one of these specific trades on a future date. Register by calling (225)336-2422 Ext. 200. FREE.

June 17-21 & 24-28 - Blast from the Past Summer History Camp

July 13, 10 am - noon - Spinning Tales with Juliette Gordon Low - Enjoy a theater performance featuring a portrayal of the founder of Girl Scouts of the USA. Hear about her adventurous life and amazing accomplishments in a first person presentation. Sign up (225)336-2422 Ext. 200. FREE.

July 17, Noon - Prepared for Life Lunchtime Lecture featuring Geoffrey Tyler -This pilot and poet shares how his training and military experience prepared him for an emergency landing in south-central Africa and survival for over 22 months in communist POW prisons. This presentation is suitable for adults and students ages 12 and up. FREE. Participants are welcome to bring a brown bag lunch.

Busy summer of activities hosted by the Library

May 2 - Online Defense

Learn the basics of online safety: how to create a strong password, avoid hacking, and use your smart phone safely. Register in advance.

May 18 - Writing Workshop

Do you want to be a writer? Are you a writer looking for inspiration and support? Join the new WBR Library Writing Workshop on the third Saturday of every month from 1 to 2 pm.

May 25 - The Truth About Fad Diets

Join our Area Nutrition Agent to learn the difference between fact and fiction when it comes to fad diets.

June 4 & 5- The Secret Agent Magic Show

Tuesday, June 4, at 10 am at the Addis VFW Hall and Wednesday, June 5, at the Port Allen Community Center. The show features exciting magic and hilarious tales of top-secret adventures.

June 6 - BR Ballet Theatre's Youth Ballet

presents Adventures in Neverland at 1 pm. The performance is based on Sir J. M. Barrie's Peter Pan.

June 11 - Asian Dance and Theatre

Tuesday, June 11, at 10 am at the Addis VFW Hall and Wednesday, June 12, at the Port Allen Community Center. Surapsari performs traditional stories, dance and songs from India in stunning costumes and masks.

June 13 - The School House Safari

visits the Library at 6:30 pm with a collection of exotic animals, including reptiles, mammals, and birds. After the safari the audience will be invited to pet a few of the unusual animals.

June 18 - Bindlestiff Family Circus

Tuesday, June 18, at 10 am at the Port Allen Community Center and Wednesday, June 19, at

the Addis VFW Hall. Bindlestiff performs a unique array of circus, vaudeville, and sideshow arts in the grand tradition of the American Circus.

June 25 & 26 - the Singing Zoologist

Tuesday, June 25, at 10 am at the Port Allen Community Center and Wednesday, June 26, at the Addis VFW Hall. Miller reveals the wonders of the wetlands through silly songs and accurate science.

July 9 & 10 - Didgeridoo Down Under

Tuesday, July 9, at 10 am at the Port Allen Community Center and Wednesday, July 10, at the Erwinville Recreation Center. Didgeridoo is a fun show to introduce West Baton Rouge youth to the music, humor, culture, art, and science of Australia.

July 16 & 17 - Performance of "The Jungle Book"

Tuesday, July 16, at 10 am at the Port Allen Community Center and Wednesday, July 17, at the Erwinville Recreation Center. The Hampstead Stage Company is a national touring company focused on bringing classic literature to life!



is published quarterly as a cooperative endeavor of West Baton Rouge Parish government agencies to educate residents about projects, activities and services in the parish. It is produced by Peacock Communications, LLC. Comments can be sent to: ellie@peacockcommunications.com, or call 225-929-9661.

Parish gets \$238,900 grant for drainage improvements

West Baton Rouge Parish has been awarded \$238,900 for drainage improvements in the Stumpy Bayou area in the northern part of the parish. General areas in which drainage will be improved include Rougon Road, Section Road between Rougon and Bayou Poydras, the Elm Grove / Pecan Grove area, U.S. 190 area around Maxine Street and Higdon Lane, Bayou Poydras between Hwy. 190 and Rosedale Road, and Rosedale Road.

The Phase I grant is for engineering, surveying and design, and the parish will match the grant with \$59,275 in local funds. Phase II is construction. Based on past experience with Hazard Mitigation Grants and current discussions with FEMA and GOHSEP, the Parish feels very confident that a grant for Phase II construction will also be approved.

ANOTHER NORTH END DRAINAGE PROJECT... In a separate drainage project, work is beginning on borings for installation of 36-inch drainage pipes under La. Hwy. 190 and La. Hwy. 415. The new culverts will provide better drainage in the Debenedetto Lane, Benedetto and Plantation Lane areas. In addition, the outfall ditches to the canal at La. Hwy. 415 will be cleaned out to improve drainage in this \$223,000 project.

Road overlay project begins

The parish's \$1.1 million road overlay program for 2019 is underway. Roads included are Commercial Drive service road extension, Emily Drive, the following streets: Ella, Emile, Eva, Beula, Julia, Melvin, Marcy, Ryan, Ewing, Sharon, and Ashley, Alexander Park Road, Willow Ridge, and these streets in the Lobdell area: Main, Nicholas, Ross, and Rosario. Alexander Park Road is being converted from a gravel road to a blacktopped road because



Blacktop complete on Sid Richardson Road connector

it is also a major school bus stop for Brusly Elementary School. The cost of that project is being shared with the WBR School Board.

Meanwhile the Sid Richardson Road extension, a project started last year, is almost complete.

Improvements at community centers

Work on improving the community centers in the parish is continuing. The latest improvements include:

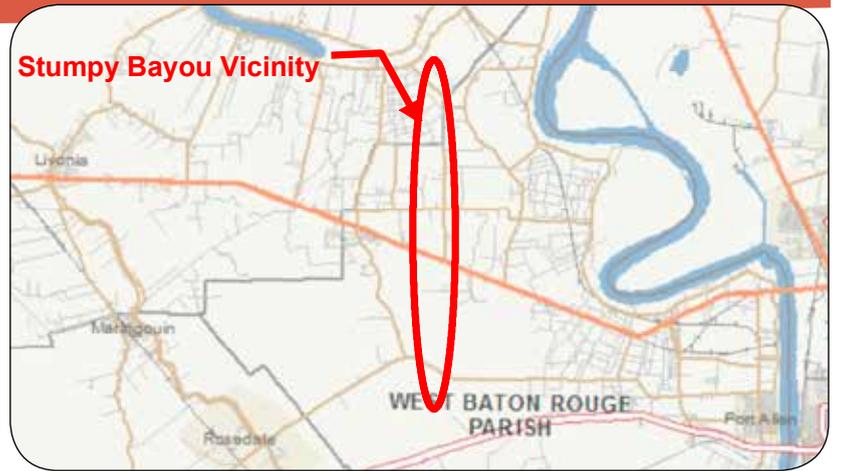
- A bridal dressing room at the Addis Community Center
- Improvements at the Addis VFW Hall including painting, new air conditioning/heating units, and other enhancements
- Adding covered picnic areas and repainting the exterior of the Erwinville Community Center has been completed
- The slab has been poured for the new \$149,000 community center at William and Lee Park, and the parish is awaiting metal building sections. It is expected to open in the fall.

Residents can now reserve functions to be held between July and December of this year at the community centers. The next book opening will be on October 7 to reserve functions between January and June of 2020. For more information, call the Parks and Recreation Department at 225.336.2423.

Rights-of-way obtained for water line

Test drilling for the parish's new water well, located near the Louis Mouch Multipurpose Arena was delayed, but is expected to begin in May, and the parish will know before the summer if the well will provide the quantity and quality of water the parish needs.

Meanwhile, work on obtaining rights-of-way for the installation of a larger water line from the well site to Addis is now complete. These projects are major aspects of a parish plan to increase water volume and pressure in the southern part of the parish. The project is expected to take at least two years.



Location map of Stumpy Bayou drainage improvements.

Summer Camp Info

Registration for summer camps is now open at the WBR Community Center in Port Allen. Camps are open to WBR residents age 4-10. Fee is \$10 per week. Meals and snacks will be provided, along with games, educational activities and more.

Summer camp sessions are 8:30 am-3:30 pm daily at these locations and dates:

WBR Community Center in Port Allen - June 4-6 & June 11-3

Addis VFW Hall - June 18-20 and June 25-27

Erwinville Community Center - July 9-11 and July 16-18

Camp for special needs children will be June-July

Call 225.336.2423 for more information.

Drama Camp being considered: The parish is gauging interest in providing a drama camp for youths. If interested, call 225.336.2423.

Pick Up Game Camp - A new camp for ages 10-14 playing semi-organized pick-up games like baseball, football, kickball or basketball is being offered as follows: Addis VFW and Myhand Park - June 11-13, Port Allen - June 25-27, and Erwinville - July 9-11. Hours are 9 am - 3 pm daily, and meals and snacks will be provided. Fee is \$10 per week. Call 225.336.2423 for more information.

Letter to residents

Continued from page 1

million in state and federal funds for the final plans, and has also used local dollars for the required 20% match for completion of final plans. We remain actively engaged in moving this project forward. While the constant reminder of a lack of funds for infrastructure remains extremely frustrating, it has fueled my resolve to find a way to make it happen, hopefully with the support of our local legislators and those I have built relationships with throughout the state.

Help may be on the way as legislators across the state will introduce House Bill No. 578 during this legislative session. This bill would dedicate \$25 million per year from 2020-2026 from the Deep Water Horizon Litigation proceeds to fund projects, including the construction of the LA 1/ La 415 Connector. I will continue to work with our local legislative delegation and the Governor to gain support for this legislation. Senator Rick Ward will be carrying this bill on the Senate floor, and Rep. Edmond Jordan, who has been a staunch supporter of the connector, is backing the bill. For the first time a viable funding source has been identified and we are prepared to take the fight to the State Capital.

Sincerely,

Parish President Riley "PeeWee" Berthelot

Arrest in WBR solves murder case

A man who is suspected of murdering a woman in St. Landry Parish was apprehended by West Baton Rouge deputies. Authorities say Robert McPhearson, 33, was arrested in West Baton Rouge March 27 on charges unrelated to the disappearance of his girlfriend, Alana Zuccaro, who went missing from Pineville March 20.

McPhearson provided information about his girlfriend's death to West Baton Rouge investigators, and he allegedly gave more information about her murder to Pointe Coupee sheriff's deputies, who questioned him about an unrelated robbery case.

With that information, investigators from the West Baton Rouge and Pointe Coupee Sheriff's Departments were able to help locate Zuccaro's body in a wooded area off LA 103 in Washington, Louisiana.

St. Landry Sheriff Bobby Guidroz thanked both departments in a statement, and commended the collaboration by the St. Landry Sheriff's Office, West Baton Rouge Sheriff's Office, Pointe Coupee Sheriff's Office, Louisiana State Police Gaming, and the 18th Judicial District Attorney's Office in breaking the case.

Deputies make \$350,000 drug bust

West Baton Rouge Sheriff's Office deputies confiscated more than 61 pounds of marijuana, valued at approximately \$350,000, concealed inside furniture in a U-Haul van on March 27, after pulling the van driver over for a traffic violation on Interstate 10. While conducting an interview of the driver, Jonathan Hakeem Miller of Prairieville, deputies detected a strong odor of marijuana. The passenger was identified as Tyroyde Edward Brown of Gonzales.

A Louisiana State Police K9 was called to the scene and gave a positive alert to the presence of narcotics in the vehicle. Deputies located approximately 61 pounds of marijuana concealed inside furniture, and both suspects were booked for possession with intent to distribute marijuana.

Several training programs underway

West Baton Rouge deputies are required to log more than 40 hours a year of training, and a part of that training is underway now, with weapons, waterway search and rescue, and active shooter drills being conducted. In addition, all new employees, and auxiliary deputies for the Sheriff's Flotilla and Sheriff's Posse must complete 40 hours of basic law enforcement training.



Shown are scenes from training activities. In the photo at left, Sheriff Mike Cazes checks bullet holes from shots in the weapons training.



The Sheriff's Posse is an auxiliary organization that assists the Sheriff's Office by providing security at numerous events, such as festivals, ball games, and parades. It also assists with search and rescue when needed.

TOWN OF ADDIS

Road projects underway

TURN LANES ON LA. HWY. 1... The project to patch the road and add new turn lanes on La. Hwy. 1 North between East Nic Drive and Bird Heights will continue until about May 1. The work is being performed at night, from 7 pm until 6 am. The La. Department of Transportation and Development has closed one lane of traffic on the highway as needed for the project. New turn lanes are being added because of construction of the new Racetrac convenience store presently underway in Addis.

SUGAR MILL PARKWAY REBUILD... A portion of Sugar Mill Parkway will be totally reconstructed under the town's 2019 road repair program. Work on the road will begin by May on the area between Clarkland Boulevard and Denby Drive. In addition, a portion of Denby Drive will be repaired in this project.

SUGAR MILL TURN LANE GETS GO AHEAD... The road widening project on Sugar Mill Boulevard at La. Hwy. 1 has finally received state approval, and is expected to begin within the month. A dedicated right turn lane is being added at the red light. It will extend 150 feet long, and should significantly reduce the traffic backup at the red light.

Addis named #5 safest city

Addis has been ranked the #5 safest city in Louisiana, according to a report by SafeWise Corp. Addis reported zero incidents of property crime. In fact, Addis reported only nine total crimes, and had a 1.76 violent crime rate, as compared to the State of Louisiana overall, which had a 8.49 violent crime rate for 2017.

Addis' zero property crime rate compared to the Louisiana overall rate of 46.77, which is almost 20 points higher than the national rate of 27.11. SafeWise uses FBI crime data to develop the Safest City lists.

LIVE AT FIVE
on the westside
RAILROAD PARK • 4343 HARRIS ST.
FRIDAYS • 5-8 PM

APRIL 26 THE BAND LOUISIANA
MAY 10 DON RICH
MAY 24 MOJEAUX

BRING YOUR CHAIRS OR BLANKET

face painting & balloon artist
FOOD TRUCKS
MUSIC IN THE PARK
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ADDISLA.ORG

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Brusly first in region to begin bike share

The Town of Brusly will be the first municipality in this region to begin a bike share program, thanks to a \$23,000 kick-start from the Dow Chemical Co.

Mayor Scot Rhodes envisioned the bike share program before taking office, and is thrilled to see it starting by May. "Dow approached us about being involved in an environmentally friendly project, and this immediately came to mind," he said. "It provides an outdoor recreational activity for residents, and is also an environmentally friendly transportation option." With the grant from Dow, the town will purchase 14 heavy duty bikes with GPS/bluetooth monitoring features, along with two bike racks called docks.

The bike docks, which are computerized racks that lock the bikes and release them through an app, will be located at the Mississippi River levee trail head at the corner of S. Kirkland Dr. and East Main Street, and at Alexander Park near East St. Francis Street. Those riding the bikes will be required to download the Koloni Share app on their smart phones and will be required to load a credit card on the app to pay the bike usage fee. The credit card provided also serves as insurance that the bike will be returned to a town bike dock.

The bikes will be programmed so that the town knows where each bike is at all times, and will be notified if the bike leaves a specified area outside of the town limits. The town will also install security cameras to deter vandalism of the bikes and docks.

"We have not established the fee for using the bikes, but it will be low because we want to encourage their use," said Mayor Rhodes. "The fee



The trailhead shown in the photo above will be one of the locations of the bike docks, where bikes can be rented for use in the Brusly area. Shown in the photo is one of the 14 bikes available for use.

is simply to help us maintain the bike program over the long-term." If the program is successful, town officials hope to expand it to Addis.

The bikes can be used throughout the town, and on the extensive levee top trail system, called the West Baton Rouge Heritage Trailway. "We have received a lot of positive feedback from residents about the bike share program, and we are excited to offer it at no cost to taxpayers," Mayor Rhodes said. He is hopeful that the program will begin in early May. It will kick off with a bike safety course being conducted by Dow, but the date for that has not been set yet.

City moving forward with annexation of 200 acres off Court Street

The City of Port Allen has received a petition from Nolan McKay, LLC to annex a tract of land on the north side of Court Street, and is moving forward with that annexation, said Mayor Richard Lee.

The company plans to construct a residential development at the approximately 200 acre site. The petition has met landowner and voter qualifications because it is basically an empty site at this time, however, it must also have approval of the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development because Court Street (La. Hwy. 76) is a state highway and the state must approve the access corridor.

The city has hired attorney Dana Larpenteur to provide the legal documentation necessary to review and approve the annexation. Once the city receives a letter of no objection from the La. DOTD it will introduce an ordinance to annex the property, which would then require approval of the City Council.

City ramps up enforcement of abandoned vehicle/property laws

The City of Port Allen is getting tough on property owners who are not properly maintaining their properties. Those with overgrown yards, inoperative vehicles, junk, trash, and structures in poor condition will be notified that the properties must be cleaned up and come into compliance, or they will face penalties.

Any vehicle that is not operable and licensed is considered abandoned and must be removed from private property. In addition, the city is in the process of condemning two houses that are in poor condition.

"We are actively enforcing these ordinances to get our city cleaned up, and we ask property owners to help us by cleaning up their properties, maintaining their yards and getting all structures in good condition," said Mayor Lee. "We want everyone to take pride in their property and city."



Area to be annexed into the City of Port Allen.

Road project underway in May

The city's annual road improvement project begins in May with repairs and overlaying on North 14th Street, California Street, Johnson Street, North 12th Street and North 13th Street. The city allocated \$350,000 for the improvements.

Storm water plan updated

The City of Port Allen recently updated its MS4 Storm Water Management Program (SWMP) Plan to meet the requirements and conditions of its Louisiana Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit.

The La. Department of Environmental Quality has mandated this plan for municipal permits because urban storm water runoff is a leading source of impairment in our rivers, lakes and estuaries. "Residents will not see any big changes in the city's drainage system, but it does include some long-term improvements that will be implemented over time," said Mayor Richard Lee.

Kite Fest one of the best ever; big tourism events coming

Kite Fest was a huge success this year, thanks in part to good weather on Friday and Saturday. "We had one of our best years ever, with 1,000 kids on Friday. We had packed field on Saturday and a huge crowd staying for the fireworks display Saturday night," said West Baton Rouge Convention and Visitors Bureau (WBRCVB) Director Kathy Gautreau.

This year's event was dedicated to Gayle Woodul, who was instrumental in helping establish the festival, and was a volunteer each year. She also operated the Go Big or Go Home Kite Team. The team was out in force this year in her honor.

TOURISM BOOSTS COMING

RURAL TOURISM CONFERENCE: The parish has three events coming up that will boost tourism and promote West Baton Rouge. "We are honored to be hosting the Rural Tourism Conference that is sponsored by the Lt. Governor and the La. Office of Tourism," said Gautreau. "This two-day conference will bring about 80 tourism directors from across the state here, and they will have a reception at the WBR Museum during their stay." In addition, Lt. Gov. William Nungesser will be the featured speaker.

YOUTH SOCCER TOURNAMENT: Baton Rouge is hosting the US Youth Soccer Tournament June 18-28, and several hotels in West Baton Rouge are host hotels for the teams. "We will be welcoming these visitors and introducing them to everything we have to offer in West Baton Rouge," said Gautreau. "They will fill our local hotels during that time."

TOURISM WEEK: Tourism Week is May 5-11 in Louisiana, and tourists stopping by the West Baton Rouge Convention and Visitors Center will get a little lagniappe for their visit. "It's just an extra little thank you to visitors for visiting our state and parish," she said.



Scenes from Kite Fest. At left, the Go Big or Go Home Kite Team. The late Gayle Woodul was a tremendous support to getting Kite Fest established.



Membership Appreciation

CRAWFISH BOIL!

West Baton Rouge Chamber of Commerce

Wednesday
May 1, 2019
5:00 p.m. — 7:00 p.m.

Port Allen Community Center Pavilion
749 North Jefferson Avenue
Port Allen, Louisiana

Thanks to our event sponsor!

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Come and Enjoy
Complimentary Boiled Crawfish, Jambalaya, Dessert, Beer and Soft Drinks!

Y'ALL COMIN? LET US KNOW!

Email info@wbrchamber.org
Or call 225-383-3140 by
Thursday, April 25, 2019
RSVP REQUIRED

Limited to the first 200 guests.
Max four employees per company please.
ADULTS ONLY!

SAVE THE DATE

TASTE OF WEST BATON ROUGE TAILGATE

Thursday, July 25

5 - 8 pm

All restaurants, caterers, food vendors are welcome to attend.
Contact Anias for more information at:
Anias@wbrchamber.org



Meet your Assessor's Office staff

Many people don't know what the Assessor's Office does, but its staff is responsible for establishing fair and equitable values of property in the parish for property tax purposes.

The West Baton Rouge Assessor's Office has been very stable for many years, with a staff of long-term employees maintaining a very efficient operation. Here's a look at the West Baton Rouge Assessor's Office Staff:

Assessor Barney "Frog" Altazan first went to work in the Assessor's Office in 1985. He was elected as assessor and took office in January of 2001. He was never opposed in subsequent elections and is now serving his 18th year as Assessor.

Altazan has been active both with the Louisiana Assessors Association and with numerous local organizations. He served as Legislative Chairman and Co-Chairman of the Assessors Association for 14 years and also served as the organization's treasurer and vice president. Locally, he is a past president of the St. Vincent de Paul Society, and served with the Holy Family Board of Education, the Knights of Columbus, and the Jaycees. He and his wife, Connie, have three sons and six granddaughters.

Chief Deputy Chris Guerin first joined the Assessor's Office in 2001 as a Deputy Assessor and became the Chief Deputy Assessor in January of 2011. A Certified Public Accountant (CPA), Chris

handles all office accounting and financial matters, oversees all technology matters from specialized software to maintaining the office website, is involved with residential and personal property valuations and general administrative matters of the office.

A resident of Port Allen, he and his wife, Mary, have two children, three grandchildren with a fourth grandchild on the way. Chris is an avid LSU sports fan and enjoys cycling and playing golf.

Deputy Assessor Lisa Tate is the longest serving employee of the office, joining the staff in 1995. She handles personal property, residential and public service valuations and coordinates millage packages for the taxing jurisdictions in the parish. A resident of Brusly, she and her husband, Terry Tate, have two daughters, one grandson with a second grandchild on the way.

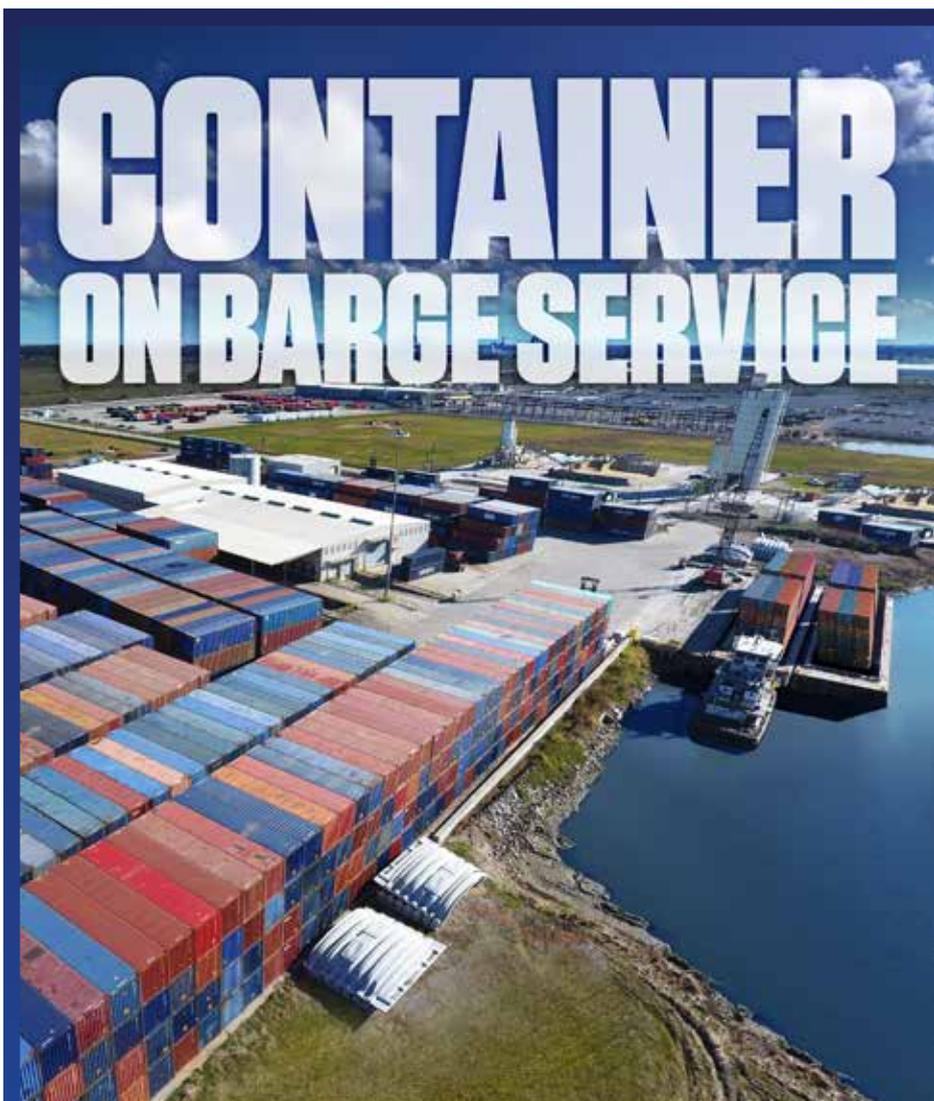


Shown is the WBR Assessor's Office staff: from left, Deputy Assessor Megan Fair, Assessor Barney "Frog" Altazan, Chief Deputy Chris Guerin, and Deputy Assessor Lisa Tate.

Deputy Assessor Megan Fair has been with the Assessor's Office since 2010, and handles property transfers and sales, personal property and residential valuations and customer service. She and her two children live in Addis.

Part-time Deputy Assessors Barry Brewer and Jimmy Altazan make up the Assessor's field crew. Their gathering of dimensions and other important attributes on all new construction and remodels greatly assists the office staff in its valuation process. Barry is retired from the City of Port Allen and Jimmy is retired from the State.

PORT OF GREATER BATON ROUGE



In 2016, container-on-barge services returned to the Port. Today, operator SEACOR moves up to 400 containers per voyage downriver to the Port of New Orleans for export, loaded with a variety of products from nearby industries.

Growing local industry acceptance is ensuring confidence in the service. SEACOR has increased the number of runs to New Orleans per week, and volume has more than quadrupled.



Equipment to improve efficiencies on the container dock is currently being manufactured and will be purchased with the assistance of a \$1.75 million Maritime Administration grant. A \$5 million expansion of the container storage yards is being partially funded through Louisiana's Port Priority Program.

Port Executive Director Jay Hardman said, "We are excited about acquiring new equipment and adding infrastructure. Every container that goes down to New Orleans for export is one less 18-wheel truck on our roads and bridges."

For more information, contact Greg Johnson:
225-342-1660.



2425 Ernest Wilson Drive • P.O. Box 380 • Port Allen, LA 70767-0380
PH: (225) 342.1660 • FAX: (225) 342.1666 www.portgbr.com

Thinkabit builds STEM program

The Thinkabit Lab at Cohn Elementary School opened in January, offering a unique hands-on engineering experience that exposes students to STEM-related careers they didn't know existed right down the road. The lab is powered by a Dow Chemical Co. contribution and inspired by the concepts of the Qualcomm World of Work activities.

Students work in small groups as "start-up companies" and use the design process to create Robocraft projects. "We don't want our students to just be consumers of technology, we want them in the forefront, creating! Through our wonderful partnerships with Dow, Qualcomm, and Project Lead the Way, we are able to make that happen in the Thinkabit Lab!" said Hollie Williams,



Thinkabit Lab projects

Lab director. "Our goal is to inspire the next generation of inventors and grow a workforce of that."

"Five years ago Dow made a commitment to help us develop a STEM Academy, and Dow has more than fulfilled that commitment," said Wes Watts, Superintendent West Baton Rouge Parish Schools. "This Thinkabit Lab is the next phase building upon the engineering, robotics, process technology, skilled craft, and Project Lead the Way courses already in place."

"At Dow, we know that education is the driver for innovation, manufacturing, and economic prosperity in our communities," said Abby Barden, Dow Public Affairs Manager. "Through our commitment to building the workforce of tomorrow we hope to spark excitement around STEM for young people."

Girl powerlifters win state

The Port Allen High girls powerlifting team defended its state title at the LHSAA Powerlifting meet in March. The girls won the school's seventh state championship since 2006 in District 2-A.

"Last year we won by 30 points, and this year we had a lot of adversity because we had to replace five lifters with young and inexperienced lifters," said Coach Brian Bizette. "We were supposed to lose, but we won by 1 point!"



Port Allen High girls powerlifting team with their state championship plaque.

PA basketball team is state runner-up

The Port Allen High boys basketball team finished the season as the LHSAA Class 2-A State runner up, losing to #1 seed Rayville High in the state championship game. Erwinville native Derrick Jones was hired a Head Coach in the beginning of the 2017-18 school year and with the help of Port Allen alumnus Earnest Porter as Assistant Coach, the team improved from 8-25 in 2016-17, to 15-18 in 2017-18, and went 25-13 this season, defeating highly ranked teams en route to the state runner-up finish.

"What happened this season was a manifestation of the hard work and dedication, on and off the floor, that these young men put in over the last two years," said Coach Jones.



The Port Allen High boys basketball team.

UPDATE:

School improvement/construction report

BRUSLY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL: Construction is complete on the Head Start facility with a multi-purpose area.

BRUSLY MIDDLE SCHOOL: Brusly Middle will become Brusly Elementary when the new Brusly High School opens. At this facility, the administration offices are being moved to the 6th grade building, new CAT 6A wiring and intercom system, lighting, playground and fencing are being added. This project will bid out in early 2020 and will be complete in August 2020.

BRUSLY HIGH SCHOOL: The existing Brusly High will become Brusly Middle School when the new high school is complete for the 2020-2021 school year. Work at this school will include removing T-buildings, changing classroom spaces and other upgrades. Meanwhile, structured steel work begins soon for the new high school, and it will open in for the 2020-2021 school year.

COHN ELEMENTARY: All construction is complete, including the new 8,975 square feet multipurpose building and new administrative space, CAT 6A wiring in all buildings, renovated student restrooms, new bus drive and renovated carpool area.

CANEVIEW SCHOOL: Despite high Mississippi River waters slowing construction, it is still on track to open for the 2019-2020 school year. The school is for grades Headstart

to 8th grade. The US Corps of Engineers prohibits some construction and digging in times of high river water.

LUKEVILLE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL: Construction is underway on the new administration building and media center and it will be ready for the 2019-2020 school year. Other improvements include new intercom system, CAT 6A wiring and conversion of the old media center into two classrooms.

PORT ALLEN ELEMENTARY: Construction is underway on the new Headstart and Pre-K building, along with installation of CAT 6A wiring, and new intercom system. The new building is expected to be ready for the 2019-2020 school year.

PORT ALLEN MIDDLE SCHOOL: The interior renovations of the main building, new roof, and installation of CAT 6A wiring and intercom system will be bid in December of 2019 and will open for the 2020-2021 school year.

PORT ALLEN HIGH SCHOOL: Interior work is complete, an improved bus entrance and better traffic flow. The new front canopy and improved bus entrance will be completed this summer. Renovation of the school lab has been added, and a new theater building and gym should be complete by August 2019.



Caneview School



Port Allen High theater building



Lukeville Elementary School