

A quarterly publication for West Baton Rouge residents by your public agencies

UPCOMING EVENTS

See inside for more information on coming events

Jan. 27 – WBR Library craft + fun program, 2 pm

Feb. 1-May 6 – Creole culture exhibit, WBR Museum

Thru Feb. 25 – Mardi Gras beads exhibit, WBR Museum

Feb. 3 – Addis Mardi Gras Parade, 1 pm

Feb. 3 – Mask-making workshop, WBR Museum

Feb. 6 – WBR Chamber Annual Banquet,

Feb. 11 – Krewe of Good Friends of Oaks Mardi Gras Parade, Port Allen, 1 pm

Feb. 13 – Mardi Gras Day

Feb. 24 – LEGO Club at WBR Library, 1:30 pm

March 3-Aug. 5 – Acadian handicraft exhibit, WBR Museum

March 8-1 – Dulcimer Fete, WBR Museum

April 6 – Juke Joint blues event, WBR Museum

April 7 & 8 – Kite Fest Louisiana, WBR Soccer Complex



Parish gets \$4.4 million grant for connector plan

The parish has received a \$4.4 million Surface Transportation Block Grant for completion of the final construction plans for the La. Hwy. 1/ La. Hwy. 415 connector route from the Capital Region Planning Commission.

The plans will make the project “shovel ready.” The connector route is expected to cost \$160 million to build. The parish will fund \$1.1 million of the total \$5.5 million cost for the plans, and continues to pursue state and federal funding for the construction.

The state is scheduled to rebuild the Intracoastal Bridge in 2020, increasing it from a four-lane bridge to a six-lane bridge. Parish President Riley “PeeWee” Berthelot is hopeful that the connector can be built before the Intracoastal Bridge work begins to provide an alternate route as lanes of the bridge are closed for the construction.

\$3 million in road improvements coming

The parish will begin a \$3 million road improvement program this Spring. The \$3 million project will be completed in two phases, overlay of roads in the Lobdell area being the first phase. This work is needed because roads were greatly impacted by the parish’s just completed \$3.9 million sewer project in that area.

The massive sewer project added 155 homes into the parish sewer system, eliminating septic tanks. The work included 3 miles of gravity sewer lines, 67 manholes, and 2.7 miles of 8-inch force main to the Westport wastewater treatment plant.

Phase two of the road improvement project includes other streets, along with the \$2 million construction of the Sid Richardson connector route. This road will connect Sid Richardson Road to La. Hwy. 1148, and is needed as an evacuation route. Below are the streets in the overlay program:

PHASE 1 OF ROAD IMPROVEMENT PROJECT (Lobdell area)
Lydia St.
Plantation Loop
Plantation
Kauhn’s Road
Ted’s Lane

PHASE 2 OF ROAD IMPROVEMENT PROJECT
Famco Road
Louise Drive
Bertha Drive
Cherrywood Street
Guiding Star Street
Parkway
West Parkway
Commercial/La. 415 Extension/
Southwest Port
Sid Richardson Connector
La. Hwy. 415 Connector
Service road Addis to Lukeville Lane

Free smoke detectors installed

Residents can have FREE smoke detectors installed in their homes by West Baton Rouge firefighters through the Operation Save A Life program. There are no age, income or other requirements to get the free detectors. Simply complete the form on the Louisiana Office of State Fire Marshal’s office at:
<https://dpsweb.dps.louisiana.gov/operation.nsf?OpenDatabase>
or call a local fire station.

GOVERNMENT MEETINGS

WBR PARISH COUNCIL - Meets 2nd & 4th Thursday of month, 6:30 p.m., Parish Council Building, 225-383-4755, www.wbrcouncil.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 in 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 February 25: Mardi Gras Indians: Photography exhibit By J. Nash Porter: features color photographs documenting the rich tradition of New Orleans' Mardi Gras Indians and second line groups.

Through February 25 - 3-D Beads: A Mardi Gras Art Celebration exhibit: features a wide variety of works by Marcus Ciko using twisting methods of Mardi Gras beads.

February 1 - May 6: Creoles du Monde exhibit, includes costumes, paintings, rare books, videos and photography from south Louisiana, the Caribbean, Central and South America.

February 1: 6 p.m.: Rum Revelry exhibit opening for Creoles du Monde: Revelers ages 21 and over will enjoy a masquerade gala (see article at right). Free.

February 3: Mask-making workshop, make wearable masterpieces to keep after a scavenger hunt stocked with surprise activities through the museum's 3-D Beads: A Mardi Gras Art Celebration and Creoles du Monde exhibits, Noon – 2 p.m.

February 7: Lunchtime Lecture by Jeremy K. Simien on Collecting Creole, Noon

February 21: Lunchtime Lecture by Author and historian Brian Costello on "Sold into Enslavement: The tribulation and vindication of the Olivo Family of False River," Noon

March 3 - August 5: The Acadian Handicraft Project exhibit: showcases hand-made crafts that were marketed, and how local artisans are keeping Acadian craft traditions alive today.

March 3 – Greater Baton Rouge Regional National History Day Contest – For more information visit www.louisianahistoryday.org

March 8-10 – Dulcimer Fête

April 6 – Juke Joint Grand Opening & Volunteer Appreciation Party - Friday Night Fish Fry and special musical tribute to our very own blues legend, Slim Harpo.

Rum Revelry offers unique carnival fun

Rum Revelry, a masquerade gala set for the opening night of the Créoles du Monde exhibit at the West Baton Rouge Museum, kicks off Thursday, February 1 at 6 p.m. Carnival costumes are optional but encouraged.

Rum Revelry will enchant revelers ages 21 and over with a stunning live performance by Casa Samba, New Orleans leader in Brazilian entertainment featuring an authentic Brazilian Carnival and folk arts experience, a tignon salon featuring head dress tying demonstrations by Dianne Honore, a cigar station with hand-made cigar demonstrations from Cigar Factory New Orleans, and rum tastings made from Louisiana sugar cane hosted by Cane Land Distilling Company, Louisiana's original estate distilled rum.

The crown jewel of the evening, the Créoles du Monde exhibit, promises to be a breathtaking display on the Creole culture.



3-D bead exhibit features work of nationally noted

The West Baton Rouge Museum presents a new exhibition entitled 3-D Beads: A Mardi Gras Art Celebration featuring the creations of Baton Rouge artist Marcus Ciko. The exhibit, which runs through February 25, 2018, features a selection of three dimensional creations made from Mardi Gras beads. Using unique twisting methods, Ciko has created flags, football jerseys and even entire costumes from the traditional Mardi Gras throw.

Marcus Ciko began creating art from Mardi Gras beads in 1986, when he discovered he could create numerous designs simply from twisting the necklaces. His work has been featured on the CBS national news and his designs can be found as throws in several New Orleans carnival parades.

WBR LIBRARY

New magazines, book club, event

New digital magazines! WBR Library now offers patrons access to 30 top magazines from the Flipster database such as: Better Homes & Gardens, Consumer Reports, Cosmopolitan, Ebony, O, The Oprah Magazine, People, and others for free online reading or download. Look for a link soon under "Resources" on our website at www.wbrpl.com.

Celebrate Mardi Gras and Valentine's Day together! The Library will host a "craft plus fun" program for patrons and families. Dress in your favorite Mardi Gras or Valentine's Day costume, and decorate a "bead-holding bag" or a mask for Mardi Gras and a mask or paper heart for Valentine's Day. Light refreshments provided. Saturday, January 27 from 2 - 3:30 PM.

New Book Club! Your new WBR Library Book Club will hold the first three meetings this month: Thursday evening, February 1 from 6 – 7:30 PM; Friday, February 2 from 10 – 11:30 AM; and Saturday, February 3 from 10 - 11:30 AM. Come vote for the first book you will read and discuss. Must be present to vote for your favorite fiction or non-fiction character. Open to any adult over 18-years-old.

Continuing classes in computers, internet, and software skills - Drop in on any Tuesday from 6 - 7:30 PM and/or any Wednesday from 11 AM - 12:30 PM, or call for an appointment: Adult Services Librarian Luis Interiano ("Lou") at 225-342-7920 ext. 230. No experience necessary.

LEGO Club will meet at the library, Saturday, February 24, 1:30 – 3:00 p.m.

The Brusly After School Stops at Alexander Park in Brusly are scheduled for February 1 & 15, March 1, 15, & 29, and April 12 and 26 from 2:30 until 3:45 p.m.

Get local emergency alerts



Register your cell phone number to receive emergency alerts from the WBR public alert system. Go to: www.wbrlepc.net and click on the cell phone registration link, or call 225-346-1577.

ABOUT THIS PUBLICATION:

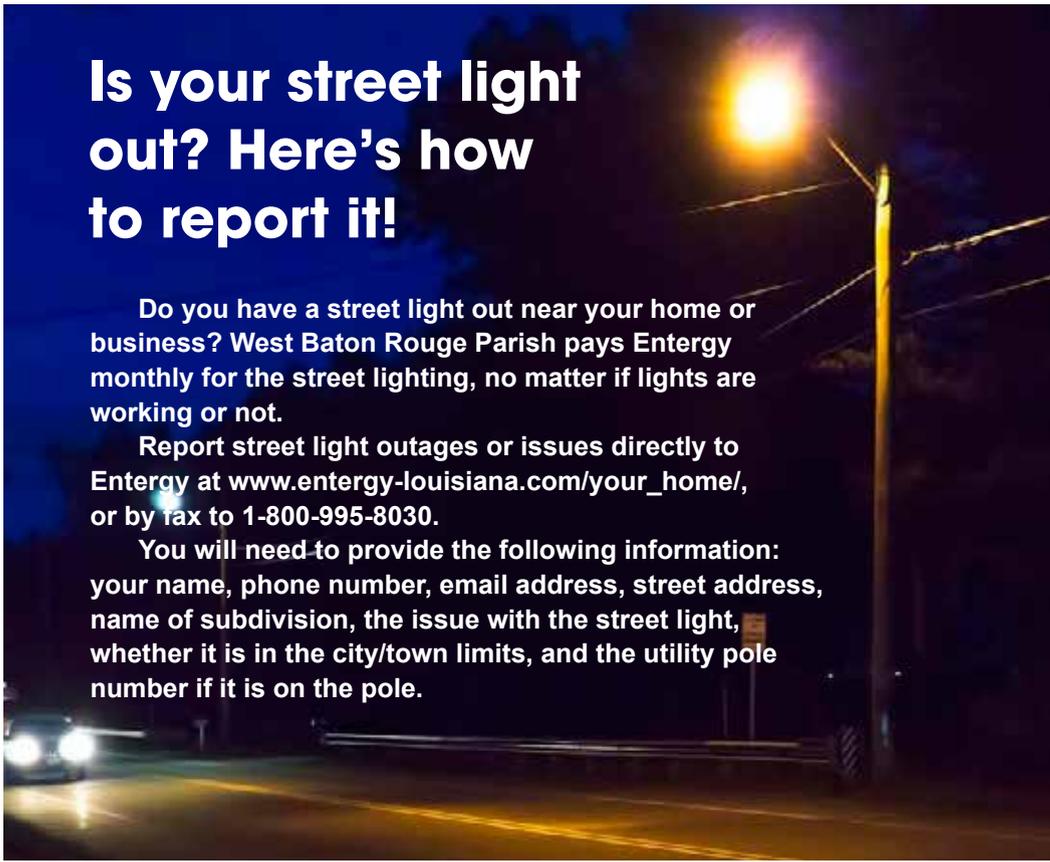
VISION WEST is published quarterly as a cooperative endeavor of West Baton Rouge Parish government agencies to educate residents about projects, activities and services in the parish. It is produced by Peacock Communications, LLC. Comments can be sent to: ellie@peacockcommunications.com, or call 225-929-9661.

Is your street light out? Here's how to report it!

Do you have a street light out near your home or business? West Baton Rouge Parish pays Entergy monthly for the street lighting, no matter if lights are working or not.

Report street light outages or issues directly to Entergy at www.entergy-louisiana.com/your_home/, or by fax to 1-800-995-8030.

You will need to provide the following information: your name, phone number, email address, street address, name of subdivision, the issue with the street light, whether it is in the city/town limits, and the utility pole number if it is on the pole.



Addis walking/biking path to be completed this year

The Acadian Trail biking and walking path on First Street in Addis is complete, and work will continue this year to extend the trail to Myhand Park and also to the Mississippi River levee. The parish has received a state grant for the project, which provides accommodations for walkable communities. The parish will also hire a traffic engineering firm to install pedestrian walking signs at intersections and at the crossing with La. Hwy. 1. The trail will extend from Myhand Park to First Street to the Addis Railroad Park, to Harris Street to La. Hwy. 1, and will continue down Addis Lane to the levee.



Shown above is a portion of the trail that is complete on First Street. The street was also overlaid and turned over to the town.



UTILITIES UPDATES:

Permits required for home projects

Permits are needed from the West Baton Rouge Community Planning and Development Office for the following before ANY work is done!

- Power turn on (Entergy & Pointe Coupee Electric)
- New commercial buildings
- New mobile homes (before moving into parish)
- Accessory buildings
- Home/commercial improvements
- Plumbing work
- Electrical work
- Mechanical work
- Generators
- Swimming pools
- Solar panels

The office is located in the Governmental Building, 880 N. Alexander Avenue, Port Allen. Phone: 225.336.2434.

Protecting pipes from freezing

Wrap exposed outdoor pipes with cloth or foam insulators.

Open kitchen and bathroom cabinet doors so warmer air inside the house can circulate around the plumbing.

Run only the faucet farthest from the property's main stop valve. Most homes' stop valves are near the front of the property.

The stream should be no more than 1/16 of an inch wide, which is about as thin as the lead in a pencil.

Residents should also turn off their water as soon as outside temperatures reach above the freezing point: 32 degrees Fahrenheit.



Pilot program for disconnects

The WBR Natural Gas & Water Department is starting a pilot program in which residents can receive notification if their natural gas or water is about to be disconnected for failure to pay monthly bills. Residents can call the Department at 225.336.2406 and provide their name, account and phone number. They will receive a call or text the day before their service is to be disconnected, and given the opportunity to make payment. "If the pilot program works and is beneficial to customers, we will continue it," said Utilities Office Supervisor Pam Keowen.

Family friendly zone set at Krewe of Good Friends Parade

Several agencies are combining forces to provide a family friendly zone for the Krewe of Good Friends of the Oaks Parade on February 11.

The West Baton Rouge Parks & Recreation Department and West Baton Rouge Museum is working in partnership with the West Baton Rouge Healthy Community Coalition to set up the family friendly zone along the parade route.

The two blocks around the West Baton Rouge Museum and Community Center will be designated as an alcohol and tobacco free zone. This includes the area between Oregon Street, 6th Street, Louisiana Avenue and Jefferson Street.

RECREATION UPDATES:

Westside Baseball/Softball

Registration for the Westside Baseball and Softball program is underway. While this is not a program of the WBR Parks & Recreation Department, it is assisting with registration through the end of February. Sign-up by going to Westsidebaseballandsoftball.com, or go to the WBR Parks & Recreation office in the Port Allen Community Center.

Custodians being hired

Custodians are being sought for work at the West Baton Rouge community centers in Addis, Port Allen and Erwinville. Working on nights and weekends is required. For more information, contact the WBR Parks & Recreation Department at 225.336.2423.

NEW PROGRAM

Residents who have video surveillance asked to help

A new program has been established by the West Baton Rouge Sheriff's Office to help law enforcement officers solve crimes, and the help of local residents and businesses with exterior video surveillance equipment is needed.

The program, called Citizens Active Against Crime, is a database of those who have video surveillance equipment. Those with the equipment are asked to call Mindy at the Sheriff's Office to be added to a secure and confidential database that includes their names, addresses and phone number.

"If a crime occurs in their area, we will notify them to check their video to see if they have any evidence to help solve the crime, such as a specific vehicle or person," said Major Dale Simoneaux. "The Sheriff's Office will not have access to a resident's video system, but if we think they can help us solve a crime, we can call them. If they find something on their video, we'll have a deputy go look at it, and may possibly use the video to help make an arrest. This is one way our citizens can actively help us keep our community safe."

He gave the example of a recent rash of vehicle break-ins throughout the parish. "Someone may have had something on their video that could have helped us make arrests, but they didn't know to look. Once they are on the database, we can advise them of a time period to check for us. This can be a very beneficial tool if residents with video surveillance will help out," Simoneaux said.

To be added to the Citizens Active Against Crime database, call Mindy with Sheriff's Office at 225.382-5200.

2017 IN REVIEW

Calls, crime-fighting stats

The West Baton Rouge Sheriff's Office is a very busy law enforcement agency, as these 2017 statistics show:

- **Patrol units responded to 11,040 calls for assistance**, including everything from traffic related incidents to crimes to calls of suspicious activities and more.
- **The River West Narcotics Task Force handled more than 200 investigations** in 2017. It includes full-time detectives of the WBR Sheriff's Office and Port Allen Police Department. "Our NTF is very aggressive and proactive in working to keep drug dealers out of West Baton Rouge," said Sheriff Mike Cazes. "We will continue to be aggressive in this area."

- **WBR jail deputies processed 3,200 inmates** in 2017, including those arrested for crimes, parole violators, federal detainees, and La. Department of Corrections offenders.

Crimes in West Baton Rouge in 2017 included the following:

- 1 homicide**
- 4 rape/sexual assault cases**
- 49 burglaries**
- 154 batteries/assaults**
- 434 thefts** (includes shoplifting, vehicle break-ins, property, etc)

Sheriff does not set property taxes

Residents are advised that the Sheriff's Office has no authority or role in setting property owners property taxes. The office is required by state law to mail property tax bills and to collect and disburse tax revenues to the proper local agencies. All property taxes are passed by a vote of the residents, and two new taxes approved by voters were added to the 2017 tax bills, causing tax bills to increase. The WBR Sheriff's Office cannot change or take any action regarding tax bills.

TOWN OF ADDIS

Addis Mardi Gras Parade rolls Saturday, Feb. 3, festivities follow

The Addis Volunteer Fire Department Ladies Auxiliary's annual Mardi Gras Parade has been moved to Saturday, February 3 this year because of the Super Bowl on Sunday.



Grand Marshal of this year's parade is Rhonda Kelly. The theme for the 56th annual parade is Blast from the Past (1950s, 60s, 70s and 80s). There is no entry fee for floats in the parade, and a float decorating contest will be held. Floats will be judged on the parade theme, originality and construction, with winners receiving ribbons at the

pavilion behind the judges stand after the parade.

Other activities include an antique car show and music by the band Penalty Box after the parade.

Profane language and music is not allowed during lineup for the parade or on the parade route.

The Auxiliary's annual Mardi Gras Ball will be held on Saturday, January 27, from 8 pm until midnight at the Addis Community Center. Formal attire is encouraged, but not required. Jeans are not allowed. For a parade entry form or tickets to the ball contact:

- Ashley Marino - 225.241.1709
- Mary Tullier - 225.362.4028
- Celeste Mckell - 225.776.0580
- Anais Anzaldua - 225.385.1634
- Bridget Sampere - 225.413.3746

Live At 5 on the Westside

SAVE THESE DATES:

Friday, April 6	October 19
Friday, April 20	November 2
Friday, May 4	November 16

Town of Addis Railroad Museum & Park
4343 Harris Ave. - 5-8 pm

Food & drinks, balloon artists, face painting, kids' movies in the park!

Sponsorship opportunities available!
Contact the Town of Addis - 225.687.4844

Meetings:

- Addis Mayor & Town Council** - 1st Wednesday of each month - Town Hall - 6:00 P.M.
- Addis Planning & Zoning** - 3rd Tuesday of each month - Town Hall - 6:00 P.M.
- Addis Historical Society** - 2nd Tuesday of each month - Addis Museum - 5:30 P.M.



Holiday decorations a hit!

The new town Christmas decorations put up across East Main Street, along with a number of other holiday decorations on La. Hwy. 1 and Town Hall were a big hit with residents. "We received a lot of positive feedback, and hope everyone enjoyed them," said Mayor Scot Rhodes. Shown above are two of the decorations.

Town to purchase land for parking/green space at trail

The Town of Brusly has signed a purchase agreement to buy three small lots at the corner of East Main Street and the levee, across from the new levee-top trail head. Officials will develop the property into a parking area and green space. "We have no parking at the area of the trail head, so this is needed," explained Mayor Scot Rhodes. The town will also look into options for a bike rental facility on the property so those wanting to bike along the levee top can rent bikes there.

Be on the lookout for vehicle burglaries



Vehicle burglaries are common crimes. The Brusly Police Department urges you to decrease your chances of becoming a victim of this crime by taking the following safety precautions:

- Lock and secure all windows and doors when leaving your vehicle.
- Do not leave items of value in your vehicles, such as GPS, laptops, newly-purchased items, cell phones, cameras, tools, purses, briefcases, etc.
- Do not leave personal identification documents in your vehicle, such as the title to your vehicle, bank statements, social security cards, pay stubs, etc.
- Park in well lit areas at night.
- Use anti-theft devices.
- Install motion lights in front of your residence.
- NEVER leave your keys in your car.

Hwy. 1 named in honor of Dr. King

The City of Port Allen has become the first municipality in the parish to name a roadway in honor of the Dr. Martin Luther King. The dedication ceremony to name La. Hwy. 1 through Port Allen as the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Highway was held on January 15, the Martin Luther King holiday. "It took a big effort with a lot of people involved in this," said Mayor Richard Lee at the ceremony outside the Port Allen Depot.

The name change required the approval of the state Legislature, made possible through a bill authored by State Rep. Edmond Jordan of Brusly, supported by State Senator Ed Price and signed by Gov. John Bell Edwards. State Rep. Jordan presented the proclamation for the highway's renaming at the ceremony. The sign on the highway is shown at right.



Roche re-appointed to national cities committee

Rose Roche', Director of Community and Economic Development for the City of Port Allen, has been reappointed to the National League of Cities (NLC) 2018 Community and Economic Development (CED) Federal Advocacy Committee. This is Roche's second term.



The CED Federal Advocacy Committee has the lead responsibility for developing NLC's federal policy positions on issues involving housing, community and economic development, land use, recreation and parks, historic preservation and international competitiveness.

"I am honored to have been selected to serve as a member of CED the Federal Advocacy Committee for 2018. Federal issues are important as they shape the legislation on the state and local levels. The voice of Louisiana must be heard and our issues must be recognized in an effort to promote positive results for our citizenry."

As a committee member, Roche' will play a key role in shaping NLC's policy positions and advocate on behalf of America's cities and towns before Congress, the White House and at home.



Work underway on Centennial Park

Phase one of the construction of Centennial Park is underway, and the concrete pad and pavilion have been installed (see photo at left). The park is adjacent to Port Allen City Hall and across the street from the Old Ferry Landing Park. Phase one of the park includes a sidewalk, lamp posts for lighting and the gazebo. Phase two will include benches and the city and Dow Chemical Co. logos, since Dow donated \$100,000 for the project.

Long-time tourism director retiring

Long-time Executive Director of the West Baton Rouge Convention & Visitors Bureau (CVB), Sharon Stam Moran, will retire from her position effective March 1. She was hired as the Executive Director of the West Baton Rouge CVB 19 years ago.

"When I was hired, the Board of Directors had a vision for the Tourist Commission to become recognized as a viable player in the tourism industry in Louisiana. It has been a pleasure and an honor to make their vision come true," said Moran.

"The West Baton Rouge Convention & Visitors Bureau is a recognized, award winning organization," said Garry Hubble, board Chairman. "Under Sharon's leadership, the bureau has grown from a budget of \$250,000 in

1999 to a budget in 2018 that will exceed \$1.6 million. The West Baton Rouge CVB is now recognized as one of the top tourist bureaus in Louisiana. Thousands of visitors have attended one or more of our three premier festivals, Kite Fest Louisiane, Oldies but Goodies Fest & BBQ Cook-off and Reflections of the Season, all the brain child of Sharon."



CVB Director
Sharon Stam Moran

Moran organized and led the award-winning tourism marketing organization, Southeast Louisiana Gumbo, which was specifically created to promote tourism in West Baton Rouge and 12 other parishes. The creation and establishment of the West Baton Rouge Tourist Information & Conference Center, recognized as one of the best meeting facilities in the region, has been the highlight of her career.

"The Board of Directors, past and present, have always supported me in my endeavors for growth and marketing efforts for West Baton Rouge. The support of parish officials, parish organizations and the people have meant a great deal to me," commented Moran.

"Most importantly, I hired a tourism team that shared my vision for tourism in West Baton Rouge. Their loyalty, passion, hard work and enthusiasm for this industry and this parish are second to none. The employees of the West Baton Rouge CVB, most of who have been with me for 10 or more years, are not just employees, but we are a family. I feel blessed to have had the honor to work with them for so many years," she added.

Hubble announced that Kathy Gautreau, Director of Special Projects and Events, has been appointed by the Board of Directors to be Sharon's replacement as the Executive Director, effective on March 1, 2018. Gautreau has been an employee of the Bureau for the past 17 years as Executive Assistant, Conference Center Director, and presently, the Director of Special Projects and Events.



WBR CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Chamber list 2018 board

The West Baton Rouge Chamber of Commerce proudly announces its 2018 Board of Directors:

EXECUTIVE OFFICERS:

- Mary Arrasmith:** Chair of the Board, West Baton Rouge Parish School System
- Glen Daigle:** Chair-Elect, Business First Bank
- Sandra Hughes,** Treasurer: Lofton Staffing & Security Services
- Hampton Obier:** Chairman Ex-Officio, Salus Facilities
- Patrick Hobbins:** Member-At-Large, Placid Refining Company,

BOARD MEMBERS

- Abby Cook Barden,** The Dow Chemical Company
- Branden Barker,** Barker Real Estate & Management Services, LLC
- Kim Blanchard,** CJ Brown Realty

- Scott D'Agostino,** Tipton Associates
- Scott Gaudin,** The First, A National Banking Association
- Ben Graham,** Graham, Langlois & Legendre
- Jason Hammock,** Court Street Café
- Gary LaBauve,** Neighbors Federal Credit Union
- B.J. Militello,** Better Business Bureau of South Central Louisiana
- Toni Myer,** Baton Rouge Community College
- Rawlston Phillips, III,** Sun*Plus, Inc. / Beau-lieu Plantation
- Arron Pierre,** A. Wilberts' Sons
- Chris Reeves,** Edward Jones
- LeAnn Stelly,** Cox Business
- Brittany Weaver,** State Farm Agent
- Devin Zito,** General Informatics and Zito Law, LLC

PARISH GOVERNMENT REP
Kevin Durbin, West Baton Rouge Parish Government

You are cordially invited to the
Chamber Annual Membership Banquet
Installation of Officers & Board of Directors
Presentation of 2017 Business of the Year Awards
Tuesday, February 6, 2018
Addis Community Center - 7520 Hwy. 1 South, Addis
6 pm - Social & Silent Auction 7 pm - Dinner
Tickets: 225.383.3140 or email bonnie@wbrchamber.org

Welcome to our new 2017 members:

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| Sarwall Mall, LLC | KDK Capital Region Realty – Jeremy Landry | SVN Graham, Langlois & Legendre, LLC |
| DEEVINE Events | Build SOS, LLC | Franciscan Missionaries of Our Lady of the Lake |
| Olinde & Mercer, LLC | Commerce Title | Peace of Mind Rentals |
| LaTech Security + Security | All Outdoor Store | Corelogix |
| General Informatics | E. Fenton Photography, LLC | C.J. Brown Realtors – Scarlet Callicoatte |
| CC's Coffee House | Evolve Skin Care | DancExpression |
| The Village at Hun's Grove | Edward Jones Investment - Chris Reeves | McCormick Law Firm, LLC |
| Bella Grace Paper & Gifts | Blizzard on the Bayou | LaQuinta Inn & Suites – Port Allen |
| Exit Realty Group – Dixie Brister Daigle | Burger King – Port Allen | Geaux Postal FedEx |
| Hollier Real Estate – Karen Hillyard | Vantage Health Care Plan, LLC | Packaging & Shipping |
| JAMS Wash, Dry & Fold | Kern Consulting, LLC | Barker Real Estate & Management Services |
| Re/Max First – Sabrina Delapasse | Creative Employee Benefit Services, LLC | |
| Rotolo's Pizzeria | Bridgeview Gun Club | |
| Sundaes Spray Tan, LLC | Certified Pest Management, LLC | |
| Tigerland Properties, LLC | Port Allen Tire & Service, LLC | |

New exemptions added for some property owners

Louisiana residents have several property tax exemptions for property owners who qualify, and two more exemptions were added in 2018 and 2017, said Assessor Barney "Frog" Altazan. The exemptions are listed below.

EXEMPTION FOR UNMARRIED SURVIVING SPOUSES OF MILITARY, LAW ENFORCEMENT & FIRE PROTECTION OFFICERS:

Act 678, which was approved by state voters, became effective December 1, 2016. It establishes a total ad valorem property tax exemption for the unmarried surviving spouse of a member of the U.S. Armed Services, the Louisiana National Guard, the Louisiana State Police, or a law enforcement or fire protection officer killed in the line of duty.

EXEMPTION FOR UNMARRIED SURVIVING SPOUSE OF FIRST RESPONDER:

Act 427 became effective January 1, 2018. It provides for a property tax exemption for the total assessed value of the homestead of an unmarried surviving spouse of a person who died while performing their duties as an emergency medical responder, technician, paramedic, volunteer fire fighter or law enforcement or fire protection officer.

SPECIAL ASSESSMENT FOR ELDERLY AND DISABLED:

The Louisiana Special Assessment Level program allows for residents who are:

- those 65 years old or older
- disabled, or
- disabled veterans with 50% disability

to have the assessed value of their homes frozen for tax purposes. This means their homes would not be subject to revaluation and the assessed value of their homes would remain the same no matter if property values increase.

To be eligible property owners must:

- live in the home,
- be disabled,
- be a disabled veteran,
- be 65 years or older,
- have a combined adjusted gross income of \$73,851 or less in 2018.

EXEMPTION FOR VETERANS DISABLED IN SERVICE:

Veterans with a service-connected 100 percent disability are exempt from additional property taxes, an exemption approved by West Baton Rouge voters in 2011. This exemption provides an additional \$75,000 exemption to property owned and occupied by veterans with a service-connected, 100 percent disability. It also extends to their surviving spouse. This is in addition to the \$75,000 homestead exemption, increasing the total exemption for these veterans to \$150,000.

West Baton Rouge Assessor Barney "Frog" Altazan urges any property owners who qualify to complete the application for this program at the WBR Assessor's Office in the West Baton Rouge Parish Courthouse in Port Allen. Bring proof of income and personal identification.

Need more info? Call the Assessor's Office at 225.244.6777.



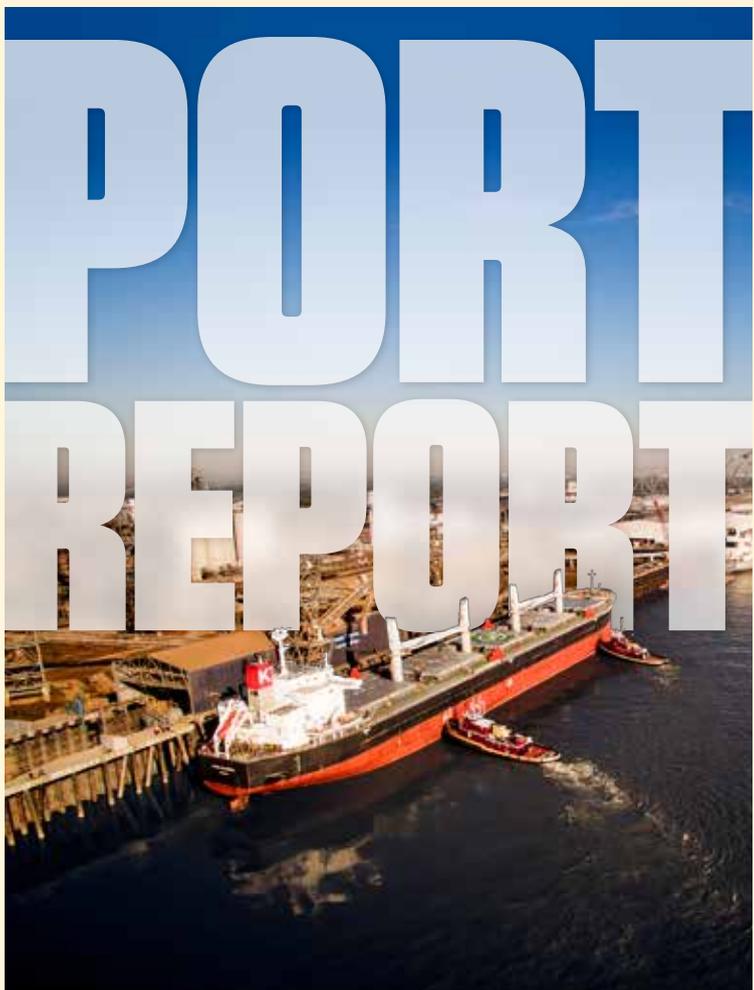
VIEW YOUR PROPERTY ASSESSMENT

See your property on digital aerial maps!

Learn about tax exemptions, Download forms and more!

www.wbrassessor.org

PORT OF GREATER BATON ROUGE



More projects. More ship calls. Recent, multi-million dollar projects at the Port have resulted in more ship calls, diversification of operations, and increased efficiencies.



Louis Dreyfus Commodities' (LDC) modernization of the grain elevator has made it the most efficient deep draft export grain elevator on the Mississippi River. Today the company has increased annual ship calls at the grain dock from 15 to about 120.



While supporting area timber farmers, **Drax Biomass** has invested about \$150 million in each of its pellet mills and \$50 million at the Port. Both mills produce about half a million tons of wood pellets, resulting in an additional 15-20 ship calls a year at the Port.



Houston-based **Genesis Energy L.P.**, which constructed a \$150 million oil storage and import/export terminal on 91 acres at the Port, has plans to expand its docking capacity. An estimated thirty-three million barrels of crude oil or other petroleum products are run annually through Genesis's Port terminal each year, which has added significantly to the increased ship calls at the Port's Mississippi River docks.



**PORT OF GREATER
BATON ROUGE**

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Teachers, Students of Year announced



Kacy Patin
Chamberlin Elem.



Lisa Battle
Devall Middle



Amber Holaway
Port Allen High



Arin Primus
Lukeville Elem.



Alayah Gedward
Brusly Middle



Dara Badon
Brusly High School

Congratulations to the West Baton Rouge School System Teachers and Students of the Year (shown above). Their selections were announced in January. They now go on to state competition. They are also honored at a WBR School Board meeting and at other events at their schools. "Their selection recognizes that they are among the best of the best teachers and students in our district," said Superintendent Wes Watts. "I commend them for their hard work and dedication."

WBR maintains B score in state school performance ranking

The West Baton Rouge School System maintained its B grade overall in the Louisiana school district performance in ratings for 2016-17, which were released in November. "We dropped slightly from a 95.9 in 2016 to a 93.3 in 2017," said Superintendent Wes Watts. "While this was a little disappointing, the year before we jumped 9 points, and it's very difficult to maintain that huge growth. In addition, the state made numerous changes in school accounting requirements, so our teachers did a good job to keep up with the new demands."

Regarding individual school scores, the only school to drop was Chamberlin Elementary, which went from a B to a C rating. "We will not be satisfied until we are among the top 10 school systems in the state," Watts said.

The individual school ratings are as follows: Brusly Elementary - C (82.8 score), Brusly High School - A (103.4 score), Brusly Middle School - B (90.0 score), Chamberlin Elementary School - C (82.9 score), Cohn Elementary School - C (72.2 score), Devall Middle School - B (87.1 score), Lukeville Upper Elementary School - C (82.8 score), Port Allen Elementary School - C (72.2 score), Port Allen Middle School - C (68.8 score), Port Allen High School - C (80.5 score).

SCHOOL SYSTEM GETS NATIONAL HONOR FOR ADVANCED PLACEMENT INCREASES

The WBR school system was honored as one of only 447 school districts in the United States and Canada to make significant gains in expanding access to advanced placement courses for students. It was named to the College Board Advanced Placement Honor Roll.

The district went from having only 60 advanced placement (AP) exams taken in 2012 to have 375 in advanced placement exams taken in 2017. It offers 10 AP courses at Port Allen High School and nine at Brusly High. "AP courses are rigorous and prepare students for college, so when students challenge themselves with these courses, they are taking very difficult classes," explained Superintendent Wes Watts. Students successfully completing the classes gain college credit while still in high school.

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT UPDATE: Construction projects underway

Ground-breakings on two of the school system's massive school construction projects were held in mid-January, and work on Cohn Elementary and Brusly Elementary Schools is now underway.

The Cohn Elementary addition is an 8,975 square feet multipurpose

building, with new administrative space. The renovations to the existing school will include CAT 6A wiring in all buildings, renovating student restrooms, a new freezer, new cooler, and an upgraded vent hood in the cafeteria. Also, the current administration office will be converted to a space for counselors and school nurses. Completion of this project is scheduled for July 2018.

Construction has also begun on the 7,319 square feet multipurpose/Head Start facility at Brusly Elementary School. The T-buildings are now gone, and foundation work is underway. That project also includes cafeteria and technology upgrades.

Bids on the new addition and renovation at Port Allen High School will be accepted on February 15, and that project is expected to begin by April. Another project at the school includes technology upgrades, roof repairs, HVAC improvements, a new front entrance, an improved bus entrance and better traffic flow. That project will begin when this school year ends in May.

The new Northside School, which will replace Chamberlin and Devall Schools, will go out for bid at the end of March. That school will be for Head Start through 8th grade students, and will open with the 2019-2020 school year. The mascot for the new Northside School will be the Bluejays.

"We are very excited to have some major projects underway now, and work on the other school projects is proceeding as planned," said Superintendent Watts. Residents can get updates on construction on the school board website: www.wbrschools.net.



Rendering of Cohn Elementary Multipurpose Building



Rendering of Brusly Elementary Multipurpose Building