

Holiday Activities Abound

See inside for more information on coming events

Oct. 27 – Halloween Fun event, WBR Museum

Oct. 27 – Live animal show, PA Community Center

Oct. 28 – Blood drive for first responders, PA Fire Station

Oct. 29 – Feast on the Levee, St. John Church, Brusly

Nov. 3 – Addis Live After 5 with Parish County Line

Nov. 4 – Health & Safety Fair, 10 am-2 pm, P.A. Middle School

Nov. 5 – Veterans on Parade, Port Allen, ceremony follows

Nov. 6 – Chamber Golf Classic, The Island

Nov. 10 – Brusly Veterans Day Ceremony, Town Hall

Nov. 15 – Chamber member luncheon, Wes Watts speaking

Nov. 16 – La. Writers Celebration, WBR Library

Nov. 17 – Addis Live After 5 with Rocking Doopsie

Nov. 20 – PA Community Prayer Breakfast

Dec. 3 – WBR Museum Holiday Open House

Dec. 5 – Chamber First Responders Appreciation Breakfast

Dec. 7-23 – Reflections of the Season, WBR Tourist Info Center

Dec. 14 – PA Senior Holiday Dinner, Community Center

Dec. 17 – Festival de Noel parade & bonfire, Port Allen

Dec. 18-20 – Library Childrens' Arctic Christmas

Major infrastructure projects reaching completion



Shown is a portion of the \$1.2 million Diversion Canal project, which will significantly improve drainage from the Lobdell area to Port Allen to the Intracoastal Canal. It will be completed by December.

Two major construction projects which involve drainage and wastewater treatment service are nearing completion, with both expected to be finished by December.

DIVERSION CANAL PROJECT:

This project includes construction of a 3,700 linear feet canal from Port Allen Canal to the Intracoastal Waterway at a cost of \$1.2 million. This canal will significantly improve drainage from the Lobdell area to Port Allen to the Intracoastal Waterway, especially in heavy rain events.

This project was identified after Hurricane Gustav and Ike as a project to be funded by combining WBR Parish funding with CDBG Disaster Recovery grant award dollars.

WASTEWATER TREATMENT PROJECT:

This \$3.9 million project to add 155 homes in the Kahn Road area into the parish sewer system is expected to be complete in November. The project, which has been on-going for the past 18 months, will eliminate septic tanks for residents in that area, along with other related sewer issues. The project includes 3 miles of gravity sewer lines, 67 manholes, and 2.7 miles of 8-inch force main to the Westport wastewater treatment plant. Funding for the project was provided by Hurricane Gustav/Ike recovery funds.

"This project will greatly improve wastewater treatment in the Lobdell area," said Parish President Riley "PeeWee" Berthelot.

WBR HEALTH & SAFETY FAIR



PORT ALLEN MIDDLE SCHOOL | SATURDAY NOVEMBER 4
610 ROSEDALE ROAD, PORT ALLEN | 10:00 AM TO 2:00 PM

HEALTH SCREENINGS
NUTRITION INFORMATION
MENTAL HEALTH INFORMATION
HEALTH & WELLNESS AWARENESS

HEALTHY HOME RESOURCES
PRIZES & GIVEAWAYS
SAFETY AWARENESS
FAMILY FUN

WW I takes the stage at Museum



EXHIBIT: Over Here, Over There: Americans at Home and Abroad in World War I - Nov. 4 - Jan. 7, two-part exhibition captures the patriotic fervor of draft registration, the emotional good-byes of men leaving for training camps, the “hoopla” of Liberty Loan drives, and the craze for volunteerism. It also showcases World War I overseas military photography from the National Archives of behind the war lines, along with consequences and memories of the war.

WWI AND AMERICA DISCUSSIONS – Nov. 4, 11, and 18 and Dec. 2, 9, and 16 from 10-11:30 am. Reading discussion with historians Dr. Paul Paskoff and Dr. Karl Roeder based on the book *World War I and America: Told by the Americans Who Lived It*. The book will be available via download as a project reader at ww1.america.org/book.php.

VETERANS ON PARADE & CEREMONY - Sunday, Nov. 5. Parade rolls at 1:30 p.m., and will conclude in front of the WBR Museum, where a Veteran’s Memorial Ceremony will take place. Immediately following the ceremony, the Museum will be open free of charge for tours of the exhibit, “Over Here, Over There.” Visitors will also be able to enjoy World War I period refreshments, entertainment, and patriotic crafts for children.

WBR SOLDIERS IN WWI LUNCH LECTURE – Wednesday,

Nov. 29. Noon. Genealogist, WBR Historical Association board member, and retired educator Ellis Gauthier will present historical information on West Baton Rouge soldiers in World War I.

HOLIDAY OPEN HOUSE – Sunday, Dec. 3, 2-5 pm. The annual Open House is complete with live performances, refreshments, ornament making, exhibits, warm cider and gingerbread, local choirs singing holiday music, and special entertainment provided by Manship Theatre. Papa Noel will visit, and children will enjoy making holiday crafts, storytelling, and everyone’s favorite, the campus wide “Find the Elves” scavenger hunt!

WWI IN THE AIR LUNCH LECTURE – Thursday, Dec. 7, noon. Attorney and WBR Museum docent Gary Ethridge will present historical information on World War I in the Air: America Joins the Fight!

Haul of hazardous wastes collected

Keep West Baton Rouge Beautiful combined forces with Dow and Iberville Parish to hold the annual Household Hazardous Materials Day on September 23 in Addis. Collections included 248 gallons of latex paint, 690 pounds of batteries, 1023 pounds of electronics, 250 gallons of used oil, 250 gallons of contaminated fuel, 55 gallons of cooking oil, 55 gallons of anti-freeze, 55-gallon drum of filters, 600 pounds of scrap metal, and 52 tires. Dow volunteers collected the materials for proper disposal.

Cohn students clean up school grounds for service hours



Cohn Elementary 4-H members, with the assistance of Keep West Baton Rouge Beautiful, met service hour requirements for the month of September by performing a litter cleanup around their school. The 5th grade 4-H members picked up litter around the front of their school and were able to fill one large trash bag. The 4th grade members were able to fill four trash bags while cleaning along the fence line of Cohn Elementary. To plan a clean-up program, contact Keep West Baton Rouge Beautiful at 225-490-8549.

WBR LIBRARY

Host of fun activities set for fall!

Friday, Oct. 27, 5:30-6:55 pm Halloween Fun! at WBR Museum, hosted by the WBR Parish Library, the Museum and Parks and Recreation. Treats, tricks, games, robots, music and more! LSU Tiger HATS Therapy Dogs, Lagniappe Dulcimer Society of Baton Rouge, Port Allen Alumni Band, and West Baton Rouge Parish Library Robots.

Friday, Oct. 27, 7-8 pm, Live Animal Performance, Port Allen Community Center. Zoo Zoom the Little Zoo on Wheels from Lafayette presents “Creepy Freaky Animals and Why They Are.”

Saturday, Nov. 4, 2-4 pm, Organizational meeting for the new Computer & Internet Club (CIC) at the Library. This will be a computer & internet skills discussion club for adults over 18.

Thursday, Nov. 16, 10-11 am, award-winning Louisiana writer and musical performer Johnette Downing will speak at the library. This event is a partnership with the West Side Women’s Club, in celebration of women writers. Downing, who was just awarded the 18th Louisiana Book Award 2017 by the Louisiana Center for the Book in the State Library of Louisiana, has been called the “Musical Ambassador to Children” and the “Pied Piper of Louisiana Music Traditions.”

Dec. 18-20, the Children’s Department Arctic Christmas Event! The Children’s Department will be all decked out for the holidays looking like places close to the Arctic Circle, where winter comes with snow and reindeer. Pre-schools and families with pre-schoolers are invited to attend Scandinavian inspired story times when tales about tomtens (small elf-like people who look after animals) will be spun and Viking songs will be sung. We’ll have great fun with ice skating, crafts, and more. The story times, including ice skating, will last 45 minutes. Call 342-7920, Ext. 224 or 227, to make a reservation to attend one of the programs, scheduled for 8:30, 9:30 or 10:30 a.m., on one of the three program days.

Shelter in Place

Take One Step at a Time



- 1 Go Inside
- 2 Close all windows & doors
- 3 Turn off AC & heater
- 4 Tune to local TV & radio
- 5 Stay off the phones
- 6 Stay inside until “All Clear” is given

For More Information contact the West Baton Rouge Parish Office of Homeland Security/ Emergency Preparedness (225) 346-1577 www.wbrlepc.org

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.

La. 1/ 415 connector still in works

Parish President Riley "Pee Wee" Berthelot and the Parish Council is still working toward construction of the La. Hwy. 1/ La. Hwy. 415 connector route to help reduce the traffic buildup at the intracoastal and Mississippi River bridges.

The parish will get word by the end of the year on whether the Capital Region Planning Commission will approve a \$7 million grant to the parish for final plans to be drawn up, making the project "shovel ready." The connector route is expected to cost \$160 million to build. In the meanwhile, the parish continues to pursue other state and federal funding for the project, and officials continue to make the case for the state to make the remedy to the traffic congestion a priority.

The state is scheduled to rebuild the Intracoastal Bridge in 2020, increasing it from a four lane bridge to a six lane bridge. 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.



Brown water is safe

Residents in some areas of West Baton Rouge may have noticed brown or discolored water from their faucets. The WBR Utility Department reports that the water is safe to drink and use.

Discolored water contains iron and/or manganese sediment, and is non-toxic. Five causes are: 1. Water main flushing; 2. Fire fighting or a main break causing a sudden change in flow that stirs up sediment in the pipes; 3. Water heaters can build up rust and sediment and should be flushed periodically; 4. Pipe corrosion; and 5. Naturally occurring iron or manganese in the aquifer.

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 be called or texted the day before their service is to be disconnected, and given the opportunity to make payment. "If we find the pilot program works and is beneficial to customers, we will continue it," said Utilities Office Supervisor Pam Keowen.



The photo shows road work underway on First Street in Addis. Besides the road overlay, a sidewalk was added as part of the Acadian Walking Trail.

Road overlays complete

The parish's \$1.5 million road overlay program for 2017 will be complete by the end of October. Roads included in the project are South Mulatto Bend, Webster Lane, Tonawanda Street, Horner Road, Solomon Street, Moody Street, Eleanor Street, Clark Street, Louisiana Avenue, North Jefferson Avenue and First Street in Addis.

First Street in Addis will be turned over to the Town of Addis, and it will assume maintenance of the street. That project included the addition of a sidewalk, which is part of the Acadian Walking Trail. The trail begins at Myhand Park to First Street to the Addis Railroad Park, then to Harris Street to La. Hwy. 1, and will continue down Addis Lane to the River Road. That project will be constructed in 2018.



New WBR firefighters

New firefighter recruits are shown with St. George Fire Academy training officers. On the front row, from left, are recruit Martin Segraves, WBR Fire Department secretary Deanna Fourroux, WBR Fire Chief Kenny Hunts, and recruits Blake Laiche and Zachary Causey. The firefighters have completed a five-month training program, and are now stationed in West Baton Rouge fire stations, said Hunts. They graduated from the training on Sept. 30 and are now certified in fire rescue, hazardous materials, EMT, and fire truck driver/operator.

Blood drive for first responders

Saturday, Oct. 28

Port Allen Fire Station

700 North Alexander Ave. in Port Allen

10 am - 2 pm

Please come out and support your first responders

RECREATION UPDATE:

Biddy basketball registration

West Baton Rouge Biddy Basketball will open registration on Monday, November 6. WBR Biddy Basketball is open to girls and boys ages 4-12 years old. All league games are played mid-week at the Port Allen Community Center. Games will begin the second week in January and go through February. Registration fee is \$30 per child. For more information call the West Baton Rouge Parks and Recreation office at 225-336-2423

Got an idea?

Got an idea? We want to know about it! West Baton Rouge Parks and Recreation prides ourselves on offering recreational opportunities to people of all ages, and we would love to know if there is something else out there that peaks your interest.

If you have a programming idea, a great new sport, or even another feature that you would like seen at a park near you, give us a call at 225-336-2423. We would love to hear what you have to say!

Senior Spirit marks 10 years

The WBR Senior Spirit program marked its 10th year anniversary this summer. The program, for those age 55 and over, includes a wide variety of activities, including aerobics, quilting, day and overnight trips, a variety of games, and other events. Call the WBR Recreation Department at 225-336-2423 for a monthly schedule of activities.

Sheriff ramps up litter collection

The West Baton Rouge Sheriff's Office has beefed up its litter pick-up program, adding both more trustees and more collection days in an effort to keep the parish clean. Since the summer, more than 1,000 55-gallon bags of litter were picked up from Hwy. 190 at the old bridge to Erwinville, and more than 1,500 bags were picked up on La. Hwy. 1 from La. 190 to Addis. "We ramped up this program as a service to our community," said Sheriff Mike Cazes. "We want to keep our home clean."

WBR deputies help out in Texas

West Baton Rouge deputies were deployed to Port Arthur, Texas to assist law enforcement agencies in the area after Hurricane Harvey. Sheriff Mike Cazes sent three groups of deputies, who assisted in search and rescue operations; and later with security and patrols. The deputies went loaded down with supplies and pallets of water donated by Mockler Beverage Co. They were distributed to flood victims. The West Baton Rouge Sheriff's Office is part of the La. Sheriff's Task Force, which coordinated the assistance. Sheriff Cazes is the Southern District Coordinator for the Task Force.

HOLIDAY SAFETY TIPS

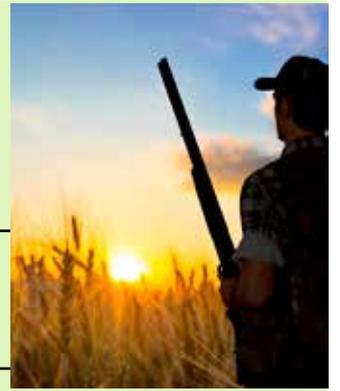
HALLOWEEN: The Sheriff's Office will have extra deputies on patrol for Halloween trick-or-treat, and will have its Sex Offender Division on duty to make sure no sex offenders are involved with any Halloween activities. Residents are reminded to watch your children closely, stay in groups, and check candy before letting children eat it.

CHRISTMAS: Crime is usually on the rise during the holiday season. Residents are urged to be aware of their surroundings when shopping. Park in well-lit areas, stay vigilant, and keep your purse and valuables close to you and secure.

When shopping on-line, be sure to buy from reputable companies to avoid internet fraud. And, monitor tracking of packages being delivered to you to make sure the packages do not remain on your doorstep where they can easily be stolen.

Another hunter safety course set

Due to high demand, a third hunter safety course is set for Dec. 1 & 2



Offered free by the WBR Sheriff's Office

For more information and registration go to www.wbrsheriff.org or www.facebook.com/WestBatonRougeParishSheriffsOffice

Hunters beware of trespassing

Hunting season has just begun, and the West Baton Rouge Sheriff's Office has already received numerous complaints from landowners about hunters trespassing on their property. "Hunters are reminded that the wooded area between the levee and the river itself is private property," said Major Dale Simoneaux. "If you are driving an ATV, hunting or fishing there, you must have permission from the landowner or you are trespassing. And remember that there are numerous landowners, so getting permission from one landowner may not give them permission to be on the property they are on," he said.

Christmas Crusade work begins

The annual Sheriff's Office Christmas Crusade kicks off in December. Go to the Sheriff's Office website, www.wbrsheriff.org, or to www.facebook.com/WestBatonRougeParishSheriffsOffice to register or to donate. Deputies will collect for the drive at Wal-Mart on December 9.

TOWN OF ADDIS

Town projects ramp up this fall

Several projects are ramping up to begin this fall, addressing a variety of town improvements.

ADDIS PLACE SUBDIVISION WASTEWATER REHAB WORK:

The first project of the \$2.5 million in wastewater treatment system work begins with replacement of some system wastewater lines and relining others in Addis Place Subdivision. That project is expected to start in November. "We met with subdivision residents because we will be digging in the servitudes and in some areas fences have to be moved," said Mayor David Toups.

"It will be a short term inconvenience for residents, but it is necessary," said Toups.

ROAD WORK UNDERWAY:

The town's annual road improvement project began in October in Acadian Crossing Subdivision. Boulevard Acadian is being totally replaced, and other streets will be overlaid. In addition, some patch work will be done on streets in Sunset Place Subdivision.

EXTERIOR IMPROVEMENTS:

The roof on town hall was recently replaced, and the Addis Civic Center in the old fire station is getting numerous exterior improvements including stucco on the walls, fresh paint, and new awnings and doors. "This will dress it up a lot," said Mayor Toups.

CULVERT INSPECTIONS:

Mayor Toups said Union Pacific Railroad Co. has finally given the town permission to study culverts under the railroad lines via a camera run through the culverts.

"We've got some drainage issues in heavy rains and have to determine if we have obstructions or failures in any of the culverts under the tracks," he said. The camera testing will be done in the area of Sugar Hollow Subdivision. "We are also working on other alternatives to divert water from the area," he said.

Live At 5 on the Westside

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

Friday, Nov. 3 - Parish County Line - country/Southern rock

Friday, Nov. 17 - Rocking Dopsie - zydeco and R&B, Jambalaya Cook-Off - sponsored by Dow Chemical Co.

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

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.

New Christmas decorations coming this holiday season

Town residents and visitors will see new town Christmas decorations as the holiday season begins this year! The town has purchased lights and a Happy Holidays sign for across East Main Street, along with a number of other holiday decorations for La. Hwy. 1 and Town Hall.

“Most of the decorations the town has had up in years past were 30 years old and needed to be replaced,” said Mayor Scot Rhodes. “And we have added to the decorations to make Brusly more festive for the holiday season. We hope residents enjoy them!”

Bobcat now on the job

A new bobcat loader/excavator is now on the job in Brusly. It was purchased to help the town dig and do maintenance work in smaller spaces where its other equipment cannot reach. In the past the town has



rented a bobcat when needed, but the need for the equipment has grown. It will be used for digging, drainage work and other maintenance jobs. In the photo at right, town workers look over the bobcat after its delivery.



The town's new website home page features rotating photos of Brusly.

Improved website now live

The Town of Brusly has completed an overhaul of its website, making it modern, user friendly and offering a variety of improvements over its old website. The town meeting minutes and archives are organized, it has an improved historic site and landmark locator, including an interactive map, and is mobile responsive. Log in to www.bruslyla.com and check it out!



Centennial Park work begins

Phase one of the construction of Centennial Park will begin in November. 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 and a decorative gazebo. Phase two will include benches and decorative lamp posts to provide lighting. The gazebo to be constructed will have the same look and be the same size as the gazebo on the levee top of the Old Ferry Landing Park. It will also have the city and Dow Chemical Co. logos, since Dow donated \$100,000 for the project.

FINAL PHASE OF ROAD PROJECT BEGINS

The final phase of the city's 5-year road improvement project will begin in November, with Louisiana, Michigan, 8th, 3rd, 4th Streets being overlaid. Barrier Construction is expected to complete the work by early 2018. This will complete the five-year program of overlaying or reconstructing all city streets.

DRAINAGE IN WEST PALM SUBDIVISION

In a cooperative endeavor project with the West Baton Rouge Parish Council, a large drainage ditch in West Palm Subdivision is being closed in to improve both drainage and the quality of life in the neighborhood. A 60-inch culvert will be installed in place of the open ditch.

WASTEWATER IMPROVEMENTS

Work on replacing the pumps at two lift stations in the city is continuing and is expected to be completed by March. The \$350,000 project includes lift stations in the area of La. Hwy. 1 and the railroad track. Both pumps had exceeded their capacity and were very aged.

SECOND RAILROAD TRACK COMING

The City of Port Allen has been informed that Union Pacific Railroad Co. will build a second railroad track from the crossing at Avenue B to the interstate as part of its switch yard expansion at the Port of Greater Baton Rouge. The second track will allow the railroad to increase its number of rail cars from 40 to 80 cars per train. Because the city has a water main under the railroad servitude, the city must relocate the water main at a cost of \$100,000 to the city. A spur will be added near the railroad crossing at Avenue G to accommodate the second railroad track.

Community Prayer Breakfast

Monday, Nov. 20, 7 am
Port Allen Community Center
Free but must pick up tickets from
Port Allen City Hall

Senior Holiday Dinner

Thursday, Dec. 14, 6 pm
Port Allen Community Center
Entertainment, door prizes and activities
Free but must RSVP to 225.346.5670

Festival de Noel Christmas Parade & Bonfire

Saturday, Dec. 16, 6 pm
Old Ferry Landing Park
Vendor booths open - 5 pm,
Night parade -bands & floats - 6 pm,
Bonfire on the levee - 8 pm
Musical entertainment until 11

All events sponsored by City of Port Allen

Oldies Fest sets record

The Oldies But Goodies Fest held in September was the largest and most successful Oldies event in its history, drawing some 12,000 to 14,000 people to the West Baton Rouge Convention and Visitors Center in Port Allen. Tourism Director Sharon Stam said they had a 30 percent increase in people, sales and in vehicles in its Oldies auto show. The center's new patio addition was well used at the event, and it also provided a great opportunity to show people how it can be used for private functions, such as weddings and parties. By next year's event, a pergola will be added to the patio.

**13TH ANNUAL
VETERANS ON PARADE**

**Sunday, Nov. 5, 1:30 pm
Downtown Port Allen**

**Line up at Rivault Park & Alexander Ave.
from 11 am to 1 pm for vehicles and bands**

Parade ends at WBR Museum, where ceremony for veterans and other activities will be held



For more info call WBR Convention & Visitors Bureau 225.344.2920 or go to www.westbatonrouge.net




**FIRST RESPONDERS
APPRECIATION
BREAKFAST**

**Tuesday, Dec. 5 8- 10:30 am
Addis Community Center**

Come help us honor the commitment and courage of the men and women who serve West Baton Rouge Parish and this area!

**State of WBR Education
Chamber member luncheon
Wednesday, Nov. 15, 11:30 - 1 pm
Addis Community Center**



Join us for the WBR State of Education address given by our Pride of West Baton Rouge winner, Superintendent Wes Watts. It will include a progress report on our schools and new construction projects! In the words of Superintendent Watts, "The schools are AWESOME!"

To register call 225.383.3140 or go to www.wbrchamber.org

Reflections Of the Season

**Enjoy wagon rides,
(December 14-17 & 21-23)
children's carnival rides,
crafters, and Trevor the Reindeer.
Food and beverages available.
Santa Claus on
Fridays & Saturdays.**

**Snow night Dec. 16th
Ice Fishing Dec. 9th-15th**

**December 7th-23rd
Open Thursday through Sunday
5:30 - 9:00 pm**

West Baton Rouge
Tourist Information & Conference
Center Grounds
I-10 West, Exit #151
2750 North Westport Drive
Closed Monday through Wednesday
Call 1-800-654-9701 or visit
www.westbatonrouge.net

**\$5.00 per vehicle entrance fee.
Buses \$1.00 per person.**
Drive thru or parking
at Louis Mouch Arena,
152 Turner Road
Free Shuttle to/from festival

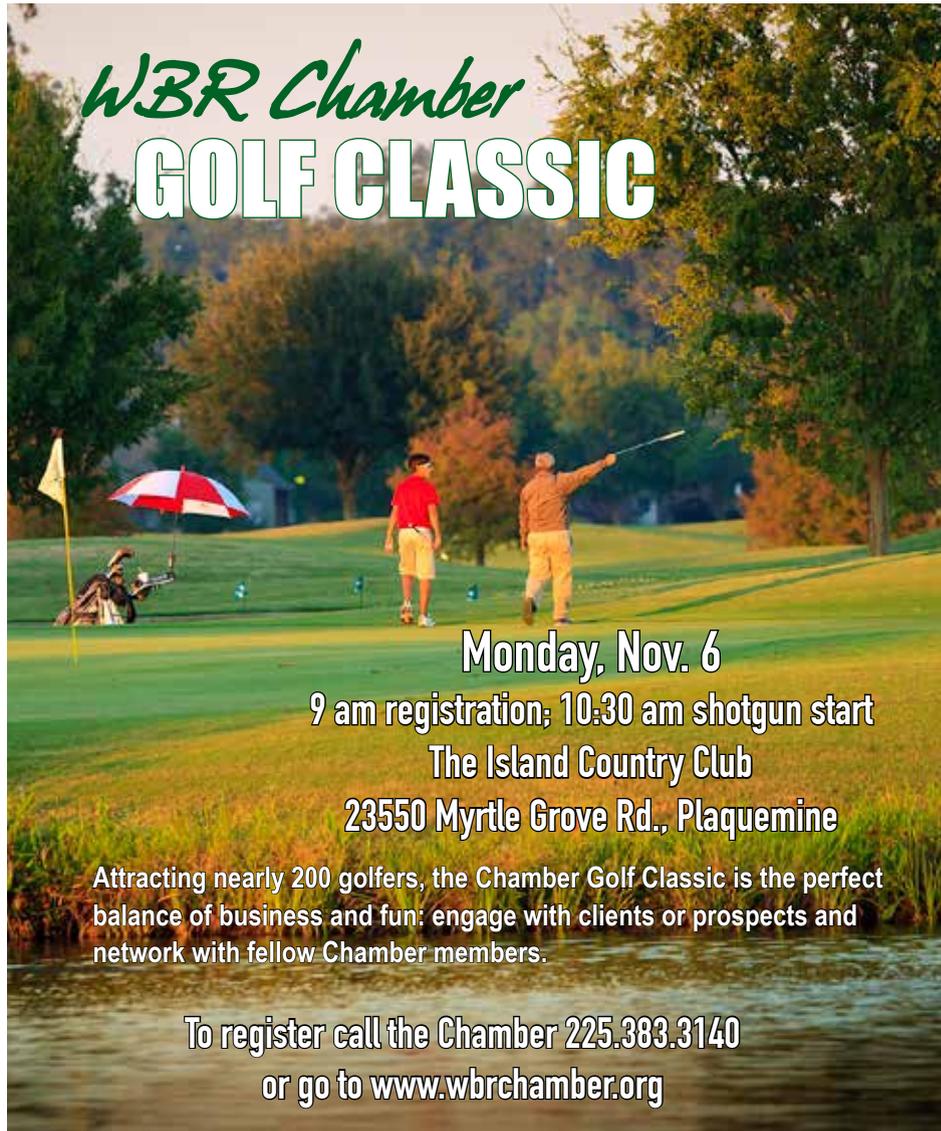
Dancing light display!





Childrens' craft night - Dec. 17 Carriage rides - Dec. 14-17 & 21-23 (\$5 per person)

WBR Chamber GOLF CLASSIC



**Monday, Nov. 6
9 am registration; 10:30 am shotgun start
The Island Country Club
23550 Myrtle Grove Rd., Plaquemine**

Attracting nearly 200 golfers, the Chamber Golf Classic is the perfect balance of business and fun: engage with clients or prospects and network with fellow Chamber members.

**To register call the Chamber 225.383.3140
or go to www.wbrchamber.org**

Total assessed property values up for 2017

The residential growth West Baton Rouge has been experiencing is paying dividends to parish taxing bodies, as assessed property values are up for 2017 by \$10.9 million, Assessor Barney "Frog" Altazan noted in his annual end of year property assessment report.

The total assessed value of real estate increased from \$181.6 million in 2016 to \$187.5 million in 2017. In addition, the value of personal property (inventory, business furniture and fixtures, machinery and equipment) increased from \$218.4 million in 2016 to \$221.2 million in 2017. And, public service values increased from \$36.5 million in 2016 to \$38.8 million in 2017.

"The number of new residential units in the parish increased from 124 in 2016 to 187 in 2017," said Altazan. "That's a 50 percent increase in the number of new residences in one year."

While all of that is good news, property owners can expect their property tax bills to go up between 20 and 25 percent this year, due to West Baton Rouge voters approving two new millages in December 2016. "We have not revalued any properties this year unless it was new



construction," Altazan explained. "The increase in property taxes is strictly due to voters approving the new millages.

Altazan noted property owners who have been approved for special assessments and have their property values frozen as a result, will still see increases in their property taxes this year. Property owners who are age 65 and older, are disabled or are disabled veterans can apply for the special assessment.

"While a special assessment freezes property values, it does not exempt the property owner from paying additional property taxes resulting from the new millages approved by voters," Altazan explained. The parish had 1,039 property owners who qualified for special assessments in

2017, including 851 property owners age 65 and over.

Altazan said 80.1 percent of all property taxes paid in West Baton Rouge are paid by businesses. However, the parish had a total of \$1.86 billion in industrial property exemptions that will be staggered onto the property tax rolls by 2026. "These are exemptions that the Louisiana Department of Economic Development granted for new manufacturing businesses and existing manufacturing business expansions, but the parish had no control over whether those exemptions were granted," Altazan said.

Agencies presently receiving property tax revenues include the Atchafalaya Levee District, School Board, Sheriff's Office, WBR Parish (includes Assessor's Office, Community Centers and Recreation, Council on Aging, Drainage, E911 Office, Health Unit, Library and Museum) and the City of Port Allen.

If you would like to review the property assessment for your property, go to the Assessor's Office website: www.wbrassessor.org.



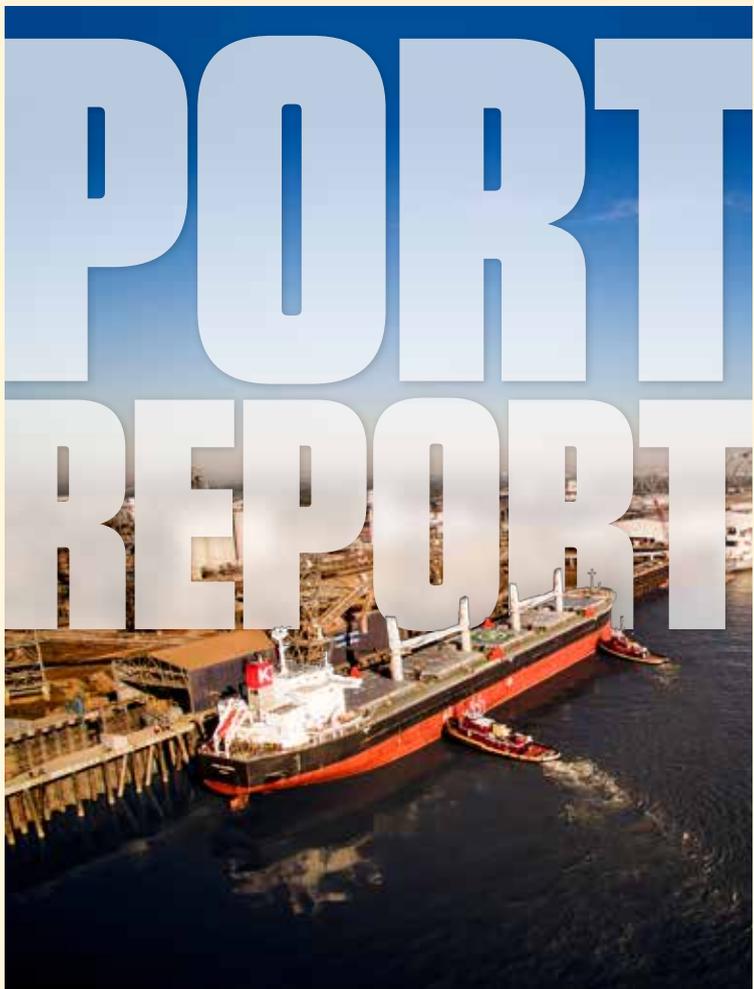
VIEW YOUR PROPERTY ASSESSMENT

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**

www.portgbr.com

2425 Ernest Wilson Drive / P.O. Box 380
Port Allen, LA 70767-0380

PH: (225) 342.1660 · FAX: (225) 342.1666

Students are creative engineers with Cardboard Challenge



Three West Baton Rouge school system librarians are proving that librarians are teachers too! When Hollie Williams of Cohn Elementary School heard about the Cardboard Challenge program, she quickly got the support of fellow librarians Rebecca Gerdes with Port Allen Elementary and Amanda Reulet of Lukeville Elementary.

They began the challenge at all three schools, with students being required to design and build their design using only cardboard and tape. "This was a natural fit with our STEM initiative and also a fit with our MakerSpace program, which uses the engineering process," she said. Students, working in groups, had to sketch their creation, determine materials needed, make the design, and then make adjustments before their creations were displayed in school cafeterias. Dow Chemical Co. provided the supplies.

"Students really like creating their own ideas and projects," said Williams. "They enjoyed it so much they are asking when they can do it again." Shown are some students with their creations.



Eckert now a very busy spokesperson for Louisiana educators as Teacher of the Year

It's been a whirlwind of activity for West Baton Rouge Parish teacher Kim Eckert, who was selected as Louisiana Teacher of the Year in July.

Eckert is the first WBR teacher to be named La. Teacher of the Year, and the first to make it to the state Teacher of the Year finals.

The Brusly High School English I teacher didn't realize all the perks that would come with the honor. Not the least of these is a trip to Washington with teachers of the year from other states to visit President Trump in the Oval Office in April. Here's some of the other highlights:

- Received a Mercedes Benz to drive for one year,
- Was honored on the field before a crowd of more than 90,000 at the LSU-Syracuse home football game,
- Has a seat on the powerful La. Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE),
- Will go on various trips to meet and collaborate with other 2018 State Winners,
- Has various speaking events on behalf of the Department of Education and Dream Teachers,
- Is involved in state-wide teacher recruitment campaign,
- Served as a Natchitoches Chamber Meeting Panelist,
- Will be honored at a Northwestern State University game, and speak at NSU Senior Night, the NSU College of Education, and Natchitoches Rotary Club,
- Will throw the first pitch at an LSU baseball game,

- Received VIP tickets to take a group of 12 students to a Baton Rouge Little Theater play and meet the cast,
 - Will be honored by the WBR Chamber of Commerce,
 - Was honored by at a Brusly Town meeting.
- "It's been very intense because I am teaching full-time and have a 2-year-old daughter," she says. "I have six trips in the Spring so I'm trying to work with students a lot. But I am very excited to meet other state winners who are just as passionate about education as me, hear what they are doing and bring that back to West Baton Rouge."
- When she can find the time, she posts on her blog to share her journey: www.mrseckertseckcellentadventure.blogspot.com



Kim Eckert waves at the crowd during an LSU football game after being introduced as Louisiana Teacher of the Year.

Jones takes reigns of Port Allen High boys basketball

Derrick Jones has come home to West Baton Rouge after coaching stints at several colleges to take head coaching duties for the boys basketball team at Port Allen High School.



An Erwinville native, Jones played for Mississippi State University, and then transferred to Stamford University, where he played two years, and graduated in business.

He started his coaching career as an assistant at John Ehret High in Morrerro, and then was an assistant at Stamford, Louisiana Tech, Vanderbilt and Stephen F. Austin before coming to Port Allen High.

"I wanted to get back home," he said. "My wife, Tiffany, and I have two young sons, and we wanted to settle down. I am enjoying working with these young men."



Students make a quick battery change during the Game of Drones competition in October. Dow employees worked with Port Allen High and Brusly High students during the competition. PAHS House of Ice was the winner.