

VISION WEST

West Baton Rouge Parish - Community, Growth, Possibilities

A quarterly publication for West Baton Rouge residents by your public agencies • APRIL, 2012

Calendar of Events

April 28 – Great American Cleanup in WBR

May 1 – June 24 George Rodrigue painting at WBR Museum

May 1 – July 31 – La. Bicentennial Exhibit: La's Top 200

May 3 – Port Allen Prayer Breakfast

May 6 – Reception for La. Bicentennial Exhibit at Museum

May 12 – Port Allen Health & Wellness Day

May 30 – WBR Chamber lunch meeting

June 11-15 – Blast From Past Summer Camp at Museum

June 18-22 – Blast From Past Summer Camp at Museum

July 4 – 4th Fest at Old Ferry Landing Park

July 17-19 – Teachers Institute at Museum



CELEBRATING EXPANSION... Shown at the announcement of Union Pacific Railroad's expansion plans are, from left, UPRR's local rep Drew Tessier, WBR Chamber Board Member Owen Cope, WBR Sheriff Mike Cazes, UPRR's CEO Jim Young, UPRR's EVP Bob Turner, WBR Parish President Riley Berthelot, Addis Mayor Carroll Bourgeois, and Gov. Bobby Jindal.

Union Pacific announces major expansion in WBR

Union Pacific Corp. Chairman James R. Young has announced a \$200 million capital investment by Union Pacific that will expand the company's South Louisiana operations, including expanding rail lines in West Baton Rouge Parish.

The expansion has three major projects: a new support yard in St. James Parish; an additional 29 miles of track from Livonia to Addis, providing dual lines for greater capacity; and the addition of more staging slots in Livonia.

At its construction peak in June, the expansion is expected to create 1,500 construction jobs and be completed by the end of 2012. The expansion will also create 225 new direct jobs and will result in 502 indirect jobs, Louisiana Economic Development estimates, for a total of 727 new direct and indirect jobs. The 225 new direct jobs will pay an average of \$45,000 a year, plus benefits. Union Pacific already has hired 43 people for the 225 new jobs.

The track from Livonia to Addis will run alongside the existing Union Pacific line, adding capacity and reducing delays. The staging slots in Livonia will give railroad workers space to build and hold trains without interfering with regular traffic. The support yard in St. James Parish will enable growth for existing and anticipated customers in St. James Parish and the

Donaldsonville area. It will reduce train delays, increase fluidity, and enhance performance.

Gov. Jindal said, "Rail lines are the backbone of the chemical and manufacturing industries in Louisiana, and Union Pacific's

Continued on page 2

Calling all organizations and residents!



Great American Cleanup

in West Baton Rouge

Saturday, April 28 9 a.m. – noon

2 ways to help!

- Organizations or groups can call Keep West Baton Rouge Beautiful and select a neighborhood, park, school or any other site to clean up, beautify or improve
- Meet up with other volunteers at Port Allen Middle School, 610 Rosedale Road, and take part in the Keep West Baton Rouge Beautiful annual clean-up event

Lunch to be provided for volunteers
Clean up items provided to registered groups
Call 225-490-8549 for more information!

GOVERNMENT MEETINGS

WBR PARISH COUNCIL - Meets 2nd & 4th Thursday of each month at 6:30 p.m. at the Parish Council Building, 225-383-4755, www.wbrparish.org

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

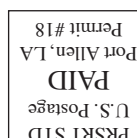
WBR PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION - Meets on the 1st & 3rd Tuesdays of each month at 6:30 p.m. at the Council meeting room in the Parish Council Building

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

CITY OF PORT ALLEN - Committee meetings on 1st Wednesday of each month at 5:30 p.m. Town council meetings on 2nd Wednesday of each month at 5:30 p.m., 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., 225-749-2909, www.bruslyla.com

Postal Patron Local





Union Pacific announces major expansion in WBR

Continued from Page 1

expansion will allow the railroad to better serve key plants along the Mississippi River from Livonia to Avondale. Recent economic development wins, like SNF and NuStar Energy, are creating more demand for Union Pacific. Indeed, this expansion shows that we are using our homegrown commodities to create good jobs for our people and produce quality products for the rest of the country."

"These investments reflect our commitment to build freight capacity that meets our customers' needs while also promoting jobs and business growth in Louisiana," said Young, the Union Pacific chairman, president and CEO.

Dan Borné, president of the Louisiana Chemical Association, noted, "An investment of this size shows the railroad is convinced that the renaissance in Louisiana chemical manufacturing is real and will continue. We welcome the opportunity to work closely with Union Pacific on service, interconnection and rate issues as it completes this major capital outlay."



A large screen TV and paint material are collected at the WBR HHWD.



Hazardous waste day huge success

West Baton Rouge residents dropped off more than 17,000 pounds of household hazardous materials and technology equipment at the 3rd Annual Household Hazardous Waste Day (HHWD), making it a huge success.

The Dow Chemical Co. was the major sponsor of HHWD, Dow provided both funding and Dow employees, who volunteered to help unload and group over 9,821 pounds of hazardous materials and 2,239 pounds of technology equipment.

Also collected at this event were 92 tires, 275 pounds of vegetable oil, 2,200 pounds of motor oil, 440 pounds of anti-freeze, 1,444 pounds of batteries, and 1,750 pounds of paint, which was given away to Habitat for Humanity.

The event was coordinated by Keep West Baton Rouge Beautiful. Dow is a major sponsor of the organization and was instrumental in its formation in West Baton Rouge.

WEST BATON ROUGE MUSEUM

June 11 – 15 (session #1) June 18-22 (session #2): Blast from the Past Summer History Camp – This summer, children ages 6 to 12 will enjoy a week filled with activities from "alligators to zydeco," said education curator Jeannie Lockett. Kids will be immersed in singing, dancing, playing old-fashioned games, meeting colorful characters from the past, and making art projects to take home. An infamous pirate will be stopping by, Jean Lafitte! So will singers from Opera Louisiana. Campers can register for Session One **June 11-15, 2012** or Session Two **June 18-22, 2012**. Drop off is from 8:00 a.m. to 8:30 a.m. and pick up is from 3:00 to 3:30 p.m. Space is limited. Advanced, paid registration is required. For more information call (225) 336-2422 x 15 or visit www.westbatonrougemuseum.com.

Teachers Institute 2012: Teaching Louisiana Statehood - As part of the Louisiana Bicentennial celebration (1812-2012), the West Baton Rouge Museum will explore the state's path to statehood through field trips, lectures, hands-on colonial cooking and crafts, music and lesson plans. The three-day Teachers Institute, now in its sixth year and endorsed by the West Baton Rouge Parish Schools, will be held July 17, 18, 19, 2012. Teachers each receive CLU credits, a \$100 stipend (made possible by the West Baton Rouge Historical Association), classroom resources, free admission and lunch daily. Registration is based on first-come first-served, so educators are encouraged to register early. Space is limited to 20 educators. For more information call (225) 336-2422 x15 or visit www.westbatonrougemuseum.com.

Summer camp open at West Baton Rouge Museum



TALENTED STUDENT ART EXHIBIT... Shown at the opening of the WBR Talented Student Art Exhibit are, from left, teacher Janeece Font, student Austin Carroll, and Port Allen High Principal Warren Lejeune. The exhibit ended April 22.

Upcoming events:

Blue Star Museum: The West Baton Rouge Museum has joined over 1,400 museums and cultural institutions across the country in a national celebration of culture and learning. From Memorial Day weekend in May until Labor Day in September, the West Baton Rouge Museum will offer free admission to military personnel and their families from across the nation.



April 28 through July 29: Louisiana's Top 200! A Bicentennial Celebration Exhibit. The exhibition, "Louisiana's Top 200! A Bicentennial Celebration," was curated by Lauren Davis. Davis used surveys and social media to cull public opinion on what citizens considered were the most notable people, places, products, and events in our state's history. This method is called 'crowd sourcing' and has led to a rich exhibit filled with art, history, sports, food, music, personalities and a variety of Louisiana trademarks that make our state truly unique. Artifacts from outstanding collections statewide are assembled to highlight our 200 year history.

April 27 through May 17: Becoming Louisiana: The Path to Statehood is a traveling exhibit that begins its statewide tour in April 2012. The traveling exhibit is presented by the Louisiana Bicentennial Commission and is on display in museums and libraries around the state through April 2013. Inaugural sites for the exhibition include the West Baton Rouge Museum.

May 6: The West Baton Rouge Museum will officially mark the Louisiana Statehood Bicentennial with an **opening reception for Louisiana's Top 200! A Bicentennial Celebration and Becoming Louisiana: The Path to Statehood on May 6, 2012, 2-5pm**. The public is invited to the opening reception at the West Baton Rouge Museum that will include the performance of the one-act play "Poydras 1812 Overtures" from 2:30 to 3:30pm. The play was specially commissioned by the Pointe Coupee Historical Society and tells the story of Julien Poydras negotiating for Louisiana's statehood in front of the U.S. Congress. Show time 2:30-3:30 p.m. Free.

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.



WEST BATON ROUGE PARISH GOVERNMENT

Lynndale sewer and drainage project set to begin by summer

The \$1.4 million Lynndale sewer project will be underway by this summer, said Parish President Riley "PeeWee" Berthelot. The project will replace the area's existing low pressure forced main sewer system with a gravity sewer system.

"This is important because right now each home has a sewer lift station, and when power is out, the parish has to pump each station at each home," Berthelot explained. "Moving to a gravity system eliminates that pumping."

The project includes connecting 120 homes to the gravity sewer system, so construction crews will be working on residents' property to convert them. Magnolia Construction is

performing the work, which should take about six months.

The project also includes enlarging the drain at the western part of the subdivision to better accommodate heavy rainfalls. In addition, the parish is also working on obtaining generators for all sewer lift stations, which will eliminate pumping during power outages. This project is expected to cost about \$1.1 million, and will be put out for bid soon.

"These projects are being funded with the Hurricane Gustav/Ike recovery funds, and should help the parish significantly during hurricanes or extreme weather conditions," Berthelot said.



Facebook page established for emergency preparedness

The West Baton Rouge Office of Homeland Security, Emergency Preparedness and 9-1-1 has established a Facebook page as another tool to get information out to residents in a timely manner. To get updates go to <http://www.facebook.com/wbrohsep> and Like Us.

"Trends show that people are using social media more than ever," noted Anthony Summers, Assistant Director. "We visited with the Governor's Office Of Homeland Security and the St. Martin Parish Office of Homeland Security to get ideas from them on how they use their Facebook pages for public outreach."

The Facebook page will provide residents with timely information about large scale emergencies that occur in the parish, such as hurricanes, tornados, chemical releases, etc... The page will also be used to disseminate information, such as planned road closures, general information, and public emergency preparedness awareness tips.

The page will post weather alerts direct from the national weather service, and when hurricane season starts, information will be posted on hurricane activity in the Atlantic Ocean and the Gulf of Mexico.

WBR Summer Camp for Kids

Every Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday in June & July

Locations shuffle between Addis, Port Allen and Erwinville

Ages: 5-12
Hours: 8:30 – 3:30 p.m.
Fee: \$10 per week,
meals provided!



Field trips and activities!

For more information call WBR Parks and Recreation Department
225-336-2423

Mild winter results in mosquito problems

The West Baton Rouge Mosquito Abatement Department has been spraying regularly to handle early mosquito infestations caused by floodwater and a mild winter.

"We had early issues this year," said George Bragg, assistant director of the Office of Mosquito Abatement. "The last two years we had droughts and cold winters, but this winter we had a lot of rain and mild weather. The breed of mosquitoes that breeds in these conditions bite hard, and travel 15 to 40 miles overnight, which

makes them very hard to control."

Bragg said the department has been spraying almost nightly based on complaints and trap landing rates. "We're seeing a decline of this breed now. The summer mosquitoes will start coming in, but they don't migrate as much, so they are easier to control."

For more information on the parish's mosquito abatement efforts, go to www.wbrcouncil.org and click on the Mosquito Abatement Department.



Cohn Elementary Students harvest their school gardens. The gardens are sponsored by Keep West Baton Rouge Beautiful.



REGISTRAR'S OFFICE MOVED... The West Baton Rouge Registrar of Voters Office has moved from the Governmental Building across the street to the Courthouse Annex in Port Allen. Parish President Riley "PeeWee" Berthelot said the Registrar and the Office of Community Planning and Development needed more space. To accommodate them, the Registrar was moved to more spacious quarters in the Courthouse Annex building, Berthelot will move his office to the old Registrar's space, and his office area will be converted to provide additional space for the Office of Community Planning. The new Registrar's Office, at 883 7th Street, Suite A, now has a separate voting room, which is more private for voters; a night drop, and also offers ADA (disability) accessibility. In the photo at left, a portion of the new absentee voting room is shown; and in the photo at right, work is done to renovate the space where Berthelot's office will be located.





TOWN OF BRUSLY

Brusly Fire Department goes high tech

Fighting fires is labor intensive, but the Brusly Fire Department has recently added technology that allows a firefighter to get to the scene quicker and technology that helps firefighters maneuver in smoke-filled environments.

The department has just purchased two remote controlled hydro valves for water hydrants. "Before, when we had a fire, we had to drive the firetruck to the nearest hydrant, have a firefighter hook up the hose from the truck to the hydrant and then wait at the hydrant



An Eclipse thermal camera shown next to a baseball glove shows its size.

while the truck was driven to the site of the fire and the hose was positioned to signal to the firefighter to open up the hydrant," explained Assistant Fire Chief Kenny Hunts. "Then the firefighter had to rush back to the scene of the fire."

"Now the remote controlled hydro valve is already connected to the hose on the fire truck, so we drive to the nearest hydrant, hook up the hydro valve to the hydrant and all fire fighters head to the fire," he said. "When we're ready for water from that hydrant, all we do is push a button on the remote, which is installed on the fire truck, and we have water from that hydrant. It's a real time saver, and allows us to have all firefighters at the scene where we need them."

The two remote controlled hydro valves cost \$3,000 each, and are guaranteed to work at a distance of 1,200 feet, but Hunts said they tested one and it worked 2,300 feet from the hydrant.

The department also now has new thermal imaging cameras that are much smaller than older equipment and can be clipped onto the fire suit of firefighters. This makes it easy for firefighters to have this needed tool when they are in smoke-filled areas. "When you get in a fire, the smoke is so thick you can't see your hand in front of your face," Hunts said. "Firefighters can scan a room with this equipment and it shows you where the hottest parts of the room are, where fire victims are, where furniture and exits are – it can be a lifeline for both victims and firefighters."

The Bullard Eclipse thermal cameras cost \$4,500 each, and firefighters are required to have six hours of training a year using the camera. "We are doing our part to fight fires effectively," said Hunts, "but we need Brusly residents to do their part, and their job is to have 4-inch address signs posted at the front of their homes. "About 65 to 70 percent of homes in Brusly still do not have them, as required by law, and not having visible house numbers can hinder our response time," he noted.



Assistant Fire Chief Kenny Hunts shows how a new remote controlled hydro valve attaches to a hydrant.

Do Your Part!

Order your 4-inch
blue reflective
house numbers

Cost is only \$10, and
the Fire Department
installs them for Free!

These address numbers are vital to finding
your home in an emergency

Call 749-3233 to order your numbers!

TOWN OF ADDIS

Mayor Bourgeois not to seek a ninth term

Mayor Carroll Bourgeois has announced that he will not seek a ninth term for mayor this fall. Bourgeois has served as Addis' mayor for 32 years, and is presently serving his eighth term in office!

"I moved here when I was 22 years old, and the people of Addis made Carolyn (his wife) and I feel welcome," he said. "We have made a lot of good friends and I hope this community maintains its hometown atmosphere so younger people will still have that same feeling of family that we had when we moved here."

Bourgeois said they are not moving away, he is simply retiring. "It's time for some new blood in here," he noted. Bourgeois said the only way he will throw his hat into the race is if he thinks the candidates who run will not have the best interests of the community at heart.

Parish President Riley "PeeWee" Berthelot, who served on the Addis Council under Bourgeois before being elected as parish president, noted, "Carroll didn't always take the path of least resistance, but the biggest thing he did for the town was build the sewer system and



then use it to attract development that resulted in town growth." He added, "I can say as a witness that Carroll kept politics out and his integrity was never in question. Carroll has a lot of passion and vision for the Town of Addis, and he has always put the town first."

"It is amazing to see the progress and growth of Addis from a little village to where it is today, and it has happened because of Mayor Bourgeois' leadership and progressive thinking," noted long-time Addis attorney Dana Larpenteur. "Addis went to a pressurized sewer system more than 20 years ago, and no one believed that it would work, but

it is still working very well today. They have annexed areas, added to the sewer system, and added a police force. Addis has come from a country village to a fiscally sound community, and is one of only two municipalities in the state with no property taxes, so they have done it with grants and good management. Mayor Bourgeois has done a fabulous job, and did it with integrity."

Bourgeois said he is proud of the upgrades made in the Addis sewer system during his tenure. "We had about \$7 million in sewer system upgrades done over the years that were all funded by federal and state

grants," he said. The sewer system now has the capacity to handle 10,000 homes and less than 5,000 homes are presently on the system. "The sewer improvements were the springboard for the growth we have seen in Addis because the developers want to tie into a public sewer system," he said.

"I am also proud that we have never had a deficit budget, and when I came into office we had a \$35,000 deficit. Our budget has grown from \$64,000 to \$2.5 million," he said. "We went from no full-time employees to 16 full-time employees and a police department with 10 full-time employees and 4 or 5 auxiliary officers. We are a fully functional community."

Also during his tenure, an old bar room was renovated into the town hall and police department, and more recently the town annexed a significant area that has proved very beneficial. "When I first got elected we had a population of 1,200 people," he said. "The Census says we now have 3,600, but I believe the correct population is closer to 5,000. Once all of our newer developments - Sugar Mill, Byrd Heights, Missouri Acres and Plantation Ridge - are full, we'll have about 8,600 residents."

"It's been a very rewarding experience, and I thank the people of Addis for allowing me to serve for 32 years," Bourgeois said. Election for the next Addis mayor and council is set for November.

Meetings:

Addis Mayor & Town Council - 1st Wednesday of each month - Town Hall
Addis Planning & Zoning - 3rd Tuesday of each month - Town Hall
Addis Historical Society - 2nd Tuesday of each month - Addis Museum

Civic League of Addis - 2nd Monday of each month - Town Hall
WBR Water District #1 - 1st Thursday of each month - Town Hall
Fire Sub-district #1 - Last Tuesday of each month - Fire Station #3



WEST BATON ROUGE SCHOOL SYSTEM

Technical courses lead students to lucrative careers

When Sylvia Guillot's daughter, Caroline, enrolled in a Digital Media class at Brusly High School, she probably didn't expect to see tangible rewards so soon.

"Caroline has been able to learn skills that she can implement in her life outside school and skills that will allow her to help others and earn money," Mrs. Guillot says. "She has been booking jobs taking pictures for fellow students and for people in the community."

Caroline, a 12th grade high school student, is taking a digital media class, including Adobe Photoshop, just one of many course offerings in West Baton Rouge School System's revitalized Career and Technical Education (CTE) Program.

Instructional Strategist/Career and Technical Educator Mary Wilson Arrasmith explains that although CTE has been in place for several years, the program is introducing new courses geared toward today's competitive job market.

"There have been so many changes in the job market that learning new types of employability skills is incredibly important to our kids right now. The labor market has changed and we want to be responsive. We had a great program before and now we're putting a new focus on high-demand, high-wage, high-skill jobs," she says. "It's not enough that students get a diploma. They need a challenging curriculum that will prepare them for life after high school, whether it is technical college, community college, or a four-year university."

CTE provides much more than the vocational training that parents may remember from their school days. The system's 1,140 CTE students are offered classes in a wide array of fields that include business education, customer service, welding, information technology, family and consumer science, and architecture and construction. Next school year, classes are being added for certified nursing assistants, oil and gas production certification, first responders and child development associates.

"We want to provide electives that society has a need for, something meaningful," adds Superintendent David Corona, noting that these classes integrate academics with technical skill development to help prepare students for higher-level courses.

Classes like Microsoft Office Certification teach the industry-based certification on basics of Microsoft Word, Excel and Power Point, giving students an advantage



Keddrick Wilson (left), 10th grader, and Terrall Lockett, 12th grader, explain the components of a motherboard and hard drive. Both students attend Port Allen High.

"There have been so many changes in the job market that learning new types of employability skills is incredibly important to our kids right now. The labor market has changed and we want to be responsive"

Mary Wilson Arrasmith

Instructional Strategist/Career and Technical Educator

when applying for internships or positions with many businesses.

"Arrasmith says that when planning the CTE curriculum, administrators analyze the Louisiana Work Force Commission's labor market data. They have identified health care, business education, information technology and business education manufacturing/petrochemical among the 'hottest' career choices in our area."

The school system also has a productive partnership with Capital Area Technical College to provide instructional staff for "dually enrolled" students who can earn high school and technical college credit at the same time. In addition, the system partners with Louisiana State University and Baton Rouge Community College for dual enrollment courses.

"All of our elective courses are linked to potential

careers for children to explore and many are linked to them achieving dual enrollment credit. They can even earn multiple credits toward a bachelor's or associate's degree," Arrasmith explains.

She also plans to soon invite representatives from local industry "who actually work in the field" to share their experiences with students and tell them what training, qualifications or certifications are needed to succeed.

According to the Institute for a Competitive Workforce (ICW), nearly 90 percent of the fastest growing jobs in the United States require some form of education beyond high school. Almost 80 percent of all jobs will require some type of certifications, credential, post-secondary degree or long-term training. Only 40 percent of those jobs will require a four-year college degree, the ICW states.

Ledarius Williams, an 11th grader at Port Allen High School, enrolled in the Computer Technology Literacy class because he thought he might study engineering or computer engineering.

"Taking this class is helping me. Let's say I want to be a computer technician or start my own business in computer repair or computer architecture and programming," he says. "I took it because I could get certifications and start earning money right out of high school and have a good job while I work through college."

Ledarius plans to enroll in another computer technology course next year to earn further certifications.

Arrasmith says one former welding student recently shared that he is supporting his family on his \$35 per hour job that offers scheduling flexibility, incentives that make the industry attractive to many young people.

Jacob Snearl is one of 23 students currently in the welding program. After two years, the students are eligible for industry-based certification in welding, allowing them to work anywhere the certifications are required for a higher rate of pay.

"I chose welding because I know people who earn a living doing it. Now I'm learning skills I will need to know when I finish school," Jason Jacob says. "I'd like to work in a plant, in construction or in a fabrication warehouse so I know welding is a good career path for me."

Arrasmith and Corona agree that the CTE programs also pay off in other meaningful ways. "It's rewarding to see students find their niche and choose career paths while becoming adept at performing skills," Corona shares. "CTE courses are for all students because they level the playing field. Students' hands-on abilities start to shine as they learn problem-solving skills and proficiencies you can't get from a text book alone."



Computer technology student Ledarius Williams, an 11th grader at Port Allen High School, receives a passing score on one of his certification exams.



Abigail Gassie (left) and Caroline Guillot, seniors in Connie Brown's Digital Media class at Brusly High School, practice their skills in the Adobe Photoshop program.



WEST BATON ROUGE ASSESSOR

West Baton Rouge Parish citizens should not necessarily be alarmed if they see a photographer snapping pictures of their property, says Assessor Barney "Frog" Altazan.

His office has begun a new project to add digital photos of the parish's 7,000-8,000 residential and commercial properties. It is a modernization technique that is just now beginning to catch on around the country, with West Baton Rouge being among the first parishes in the state to utilize it.

"This is to provide an in-house assessment system for use during our re-evaluation of properties," Altazan explains. "It will be an awesome tool that will allow us to see the condition of the homes in order to place a fair value on them."

So, Altazan doesn't want citizens to be concerned if they spot photographer Barry Brewer, easily identified in a green vest labeled "Assessor," parked in front of their homes or businesses. He also drives a white truck with the Assessor's designation clearly marked on it.

Thus far, the Assessor's Office has only received a few inquiries about the photographing, and is diligent in informing local police of Brewer's location.

"We don't want anyone worrying needlessly," he says. "This is strictly for in-house use only. These digital photos will be imaged into each account, and they will only be able to be viewed on public terminals in our office."

The project got underway about six weeks ago and Altazan estimates that it will take about 12 to 18 months to cover the entire parish. Brewer began taking

the photos in newer, established neighborhoods and has already captured pictures of about 400 homes.

"We're not in a rush. We want to do this in a quality way," Altazan says, adding that the photos will be updated in about eight years. "We take pride in having

a cutting-edge website and we want to continue to upgrade our system."

He notes that the website, www.wbrassessor.org, was also updated with new images and information in March to benefit citizens.



Barry Brewer of the West Baton Rouge Assessor's Office photographs residences and commercial buildings throughout the parish.

Dow celebrates 5 with the Dow Westside Y



The Dow Chemical Company and the YMCA have something in common – for decades we've both been contributing to the well-being of generations of families. That's why Dow donated \$1 million to the construction of the Dow Westside YMCA five years ago, and why we contributed an additional \$25,000 during the Dow Westside YMCA's 5th Birthday Party on March 15. Generations of great chemistry have led to healthy activities for generations to come. Now that's something to celebrate!



Amerchol, ANGUS, Grand Bayou Operations, Louisiana Operations, St. Charles Operations, Weeks Island



WEST BATON ROUGE TOURISM

WBR Parish named Kite Capital of Louisiana

While basking in the success of another Kite Fest Louisiane', West Baton Rouge Parish has been dubbed Kite Capital of Louisiana.

"Kite Fest Louisiane' was recognized by the State of Louisiana as 'Festival of the Year' for 2011, and it's the only kite festival in Louisiana, so what better designation could there be?" asks West Baton Rouge Convention and Visitors Bureau (WBRCVB) Director Sharon Stam. "It is a natural promotional and marketing tool for our parish."



Secretary of State Tom Schedler has officially recognized the parish as the kite capital, and the West Baton Rouge Parish Council unanimously adopted a resolution on March 22 endorsing the designation. This year's annual festival, now in its eighth year, attracted 12,000-13,000 visitors to the West Baton Rouge Soccer Field March 31-April 1, according to Stam.

Nearly 2,200 West Baton Rouge students from West Baton Rouge and surrounding parishes attended Student Day and participated in kite-making and kite design. The Parkview Baptist School Key Club was named "Volunteer of the Year" for its assistance on Student Day, she adds.

Kite fliers came from across the country, including Washington, Oregon, New York, New Jersey, Delaware, Texas, Florida and Rhode Island. This year, four different teams flew indoors. Connor Doran, a semi-finalist of "America's Got Talent," also performed. "We're getting bigger and better every year," Stam notes.

BOWLING CONGRESS BRINGS VISITORS...

West Baton Rouge is seeing a return on its sponsorship investment of the U.S. Bowling Congress Open Championships (USBC), billed as the world's largest annual sporting event, which got underway on Feb. 11 and continues through July 9 at the River Center in Baton Rouge.

"We've seen our visitation numbers go way up.



The bowlers are staying in our hotels and eating at our restaurants, so it's important that West Baton Rouge put on its best customer face and give them a great experience," she explains.

The typical USBC member plays on a team of 5 bowlers and stays in the host city for an average of 3.5 days. "For every \$1 spent per visitor, it is turned over six times for a total economic impact to the parish of \$469,536," Stam said. "It's a phenomenal economic impact."

For more information about upcoming events, call the WBRCVB at (225) 344-2920 or visit the website at www.westbatonrouge.net

CITY OF PORT ALLEN

City continues public improvements, new construction



Despite fiscal challenges, Mayor Roger Bergeron sees positive times ahead for Port Allen.

The City of Port Allen is facing a murky fiscal future, but there are also some positive endeavors ahead for citizens.

Mayor Roger Bergeron is focused on addressing a \$180,000 deficit in this year's budget while planning the 2012-13 budget that includes about \$233,000 more in additional expenses over this year.

"This presents some challenges as to how we're going to deal with the fiscal matters of the city," he notes. "Our sales tax revenues are

running ahead about \$100,000 so that helps, and we're going to cut in some other areas so we finish the year with a balanced budget."

Next year's budget also presents a challenge due to a 2-percent raise for city employees, additional health care contributions and employee retirement system contributions, for a combined total of about another \$100,000 per year. In addition, the city's 60-year-old wastewater collection system treatment plant upgrades are virtually complete and the annual note will cost the city about \$101,000 per year. Also, there will be some one-time severance payments and the usual inflationary increases due to rising fuel and construction costs.

"The problem is there are no new additional revenue sources to offset those expenses," Bergeron explains. On the plus side, the general fund has a healthy balance of about \$5 million. However, the mayor intends to request the City Council dedicate \$1.5 million for a 5-year infrastructure program. The City Council has



already restricted \$2.5 of that fund balance for emergencies and other contingencies.

MASTER PLANNING UNDERWAY...

The mayor added that a master plan process has just begun with a community meeting in March to see how residents would like Port Allen to develop in the future. He is currently organizing a steering committee of 15 residents to provide input from various segments of the community.

"To me, the exciting thing is that it's going to lend itself to attracting and keeping younger people in town. A lot of the focus is going to be on what works in other cities to retain people population wise," Bergeron explains. "We've got a lot of good things going for us. It's just a matter of expressing that vision and planning for it."

PUBLIC WORKS... Acting Director of Public Works Terry Vincent reports that the upgrade of the city's 60-year-old waste water treatment plant and waste water collection system will cost about \$1.9 million, and will bring the city into compliance with state and federal requirements. A new water well on Avenue D is scheduled for substantial completion on April 24 at a cost of \$690,000.

NEW BUSINESSES IN PORT ALLEN...

This new strip center on the corner of La. Hwy 1 and Avenue D is home to an O'Reilly's Auto Parts, Pizza Hut and

Stevens Pharmacy. In addition, Walgreens has purchased the former Hubben's Supermarket property at La. Highway 1 and California Street for \$825,000. The store will be torn down and a new Walgreens will be constructed on the site.

In addition, the city has received a \$35,000 State of Louisiana LGAP grant to "enclose open ditches for safety purposes," Vincent says.

The city is awaiting permit approval from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for a drainage project between Louisiana Avenue and Rosedale Road. Once approved, the city will accept bids for the \$565,000 project, financed with federal hurricane recovery funds.

COMMUNITY EVENTS... Mayor Bergeron is planning a prayer breakfast on May 3 for city and area ministers as an "opportunity to talk about community issues," and a Health Fair and Wellness Day offering free health screenings is set for May 12. Both events will be held at the Port Allen Community Center.



Triton Industries receives U.S. Chamber Award

West Baton Rouge Chamber member Triton Industries is now among elite companies that have received the U.S. Chamber **Blue Ribbon Small Business Award®**.



The winners are successful small businesses that have contributed to the vibrancy of American free enterprise and have been leaders in job creation and economic growth. "The Chamber celebrates the positive impact made by these companies and is proud to recognize them for their outstanding achievements," said

Thomas J. Donohue, U.S. Chamber president and CEO.

"We are excited and proud of Triton Industries for receiving this very important business recognition," says WBR Chamber Executive Kathy Stuart. All Blue Ribbon recipients will be recognized during **America's Small Business Summit**, May 21-23 in Washington, D.C. This summit will promote pro-business policies and empower the voice of small business.

Triton won a national award for innovation in manufacturing in 2011 from the National Institute of Standards and Technology. Triton manufactures, sells, and rents portable industrial vacuum machinery to shipyards, refineries, chemical plants, and barge companies. It's machinery helps companies vacuum up product for less cost, fit into a fraction of the space, is quieter, and inherently safer.



Louisiana Going Global Seminar

Attending the Louisiana Going Global Seminar and representing the WBR Chamber were Board Chairman David Ogwyn and Executive Director Kathy Stuart. The agenda of this seminar was to inform small to middle size businesses of the many opportunities to do business on an international level. Some of the presentations included: Freight Forwarding, Foreign Corrupt Practices, and How to Protect your Intellectual Property Internationally. This seminar was hosted by LSU's Louisiana Business & Technology Center and BRAC. Shown at the seminar are, from left, Left to right: Charlie D'Agostino, Executive Director, LSU's La Business & Technology Center; WBR Chamber Board Chairman David Ogwyn, Congressman Bill Cassidy, and WBR Chamber Executive Director Kathy Stuart.

WBR Chamber hosts Membership Appreciation Crawfish Boil

WBR Chamber members recently enjoyed a crawfish boil at the WBR Community Center Pavilion. The cool, spring weather made for a great evening of Chamber networking. "We wanted to have an event to let our Membership know how much we appreciate them and the businesses they represent," said WBR Chamber Board Chairman David Ogwyn. "Under the leadership of our Community, Organizational and Development Committee Co-Chairs Teal Gray and Sandra Hughes, this event was a huge success!" Crawfish were enjoyed from local crawfish ponds in WBR Parish and beverage products were provided by Baton Rouge Beer, Coca Cola Bottling and Mockler Beverages.



From left: WBR Chamber Board member Blaine Rabalais and David LeBlanc, La Dow Federal Credit Union; and Ricky Sparks, American Gateway Bank.



From left: WBR Chamber Chair-Elect Joy Hopkins, Placid Refining; WBR Chamber Chairman David Ogwyn; WBR Chamber Past Chairman Ricky Sparks, American Gateway Bank; and BP Site Manager Larry Fauchaux.



From left: Suzanne Blanchard, Cox Media; Chamber guest Robin Blanchard Green, Amedysis; and Teri Bergeron, Turner Industries.



From left: WBR Chamber Board members serve crawfish. They are Owen Cope, Entergy; Joe Howell, Acme Truck Line; Joy Hopkins, Placid Refining; and Sandra Hughes, Lofton Staffing & Securities.



From left are WBR Chamber Board member and Event Co-Chair Teal Gray and Ricky Sparks, American Gateway Bank.

MAY MONTHLY MEMBERSHIP LUNCH MEETING



Speaker: John Kennedy, State of Louisiana Treasurer
Wednesday, May 30th
Registration 11:30 a.m.
12 Noon - Lunch & program
Addis Community Center
\$20.00
RESERVATION REQUIRED: 225/383-3140 or
bonnie@wbrchamber.org