

REMINDERS

COVID vaccine at Health Unit

The West Baton Rouge Parish Health Unit has applied to be a distributor of the COVID-19 vaccine. Once the vaccine is received from the Louisiana Department of Health (LDH), residents will be notified via the parish's website and social media platforms and news media, and a contact number to schedule an appointment for the vaccine shot will be provided.

According to present LDH guidelines, only those age 70 and older are presently being allowed to have the vaccine. Proper identification will be required by the Health Unit. A waiting list will not be taken at the Health Unit. Appointments will be made on a first-come, first-served basis of those calling in once the Health Unit is allowed to open the process by LDH.

Walgreens in Port Allen and Wal-Mart are also approved by LDH as sites for distribution of the COVID-19 vaccine in WBR.

Special Election

The special election to fill the unexpired term of Congressman Cedric Richmond has been set for March 20.

PLEASE VOTE!

Three major economic development projects heading to West Baton Rouge

Three industrial projects proposed for West Baton Rouge could pump billions into the economy, and will produce hundreds of jobs over the coming decade.

GRON FUELS:

The biggest project, by far, is the Grön Fuels bio-fuel plant proposed for property owned by the Port of Greater Baton Rouge near Port Allen. The first phase of construction would involve a capital investment of over \$1.25 billion and create 340 new direct jobs by 2024. The base project is expected to produce up to 60,000 barrels per day of low-carbon renewable diesel, with an option to produce renewable jet fuel utilizing non-fossil feedstocks, including soybean oil, corn oil and animal fats.

With expansions and associated projects, the complex could involve up to \$9.2 billion of total investment over several phases. Through all phases and associated projects, the complex would create an estimated 1,025 new direct jobs, with an average annual salary of \$98,595, plus benefits. "The port is excited to have finalized the ground lease and assist in advancing the investment in the Grön Fuels new renewable diesel project for Louisiana and the Greater Baton Rouge region," said Jay Hardman, Executive Director of the Port of Greater Baton Rouge.

"One of the exciting parts of this project is that Grön will build a new sewer treatment plant and the parish will be allowed to tie into this plant at no expense to the parish," said Parish President Riley "PeeWee" Berthelot. "This will provide the parish with the sewer treatment

infrastructure to accommodate growth for years to come. Grön has applied for its permits and we hope the project will move forward by the end of 2021."

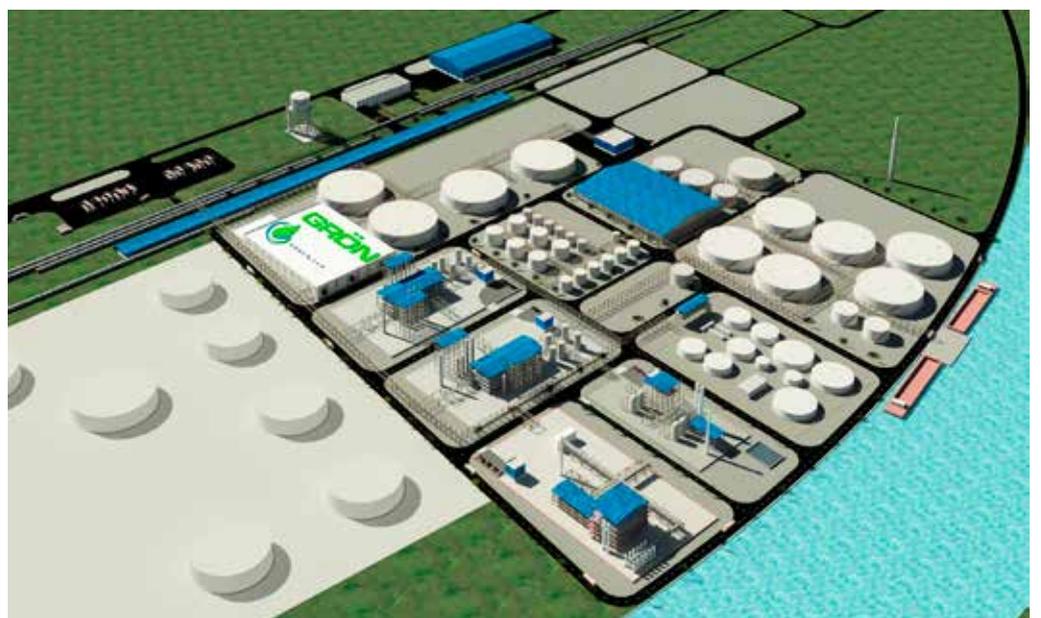
AIR LIQUIDE:

A 15-acre undeveloped site off La. Hwy. 1 near Port Allen was sold to Air Liquide in December for a \$270 million expansion of its operations in the parish. The property was purchased for \$2.3 million. The land was part of the Poplar Grove Plantation. Air Liquide is planning the expansion of its facility in order to supply nitrogen and oxygen to Methanex's methanol plant under construction in Geismar.

AMAZON:

Land developer Seefried, which has ties with online retailer Amazon, has purchased a 63.3-acre site off La. Hwy. 415 for \$8.15 million, and filed a notice of the lease agreement with Amazon. A sorting facility, which is projected to provide 300 jobs, is expected to be constructed at the site.

Stay tuned for more developments to come on these and other projects.



A rendering of the 141-acre renewable fuels facility Grön Fuels LLC plans to build at the Port of GBR.

GOVERNMENT MEETINGS

WBR PARISH COUNCIL - Meets 2nd & 4th Thursday of month, 5:30 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, 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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Architecture, quilts, wax cloth exhibits at Museum

1st Friday of each month - 1 pm – Le Café Français - Free and open to the public.

1st Sunday afternoon of each month – Old Time Jam - a monthly jam open to any musician with an acoustic instrument to join in playing tunes including, but not limited to, old country, bluegrass, Cajun and folk music. The public is invited. Free.

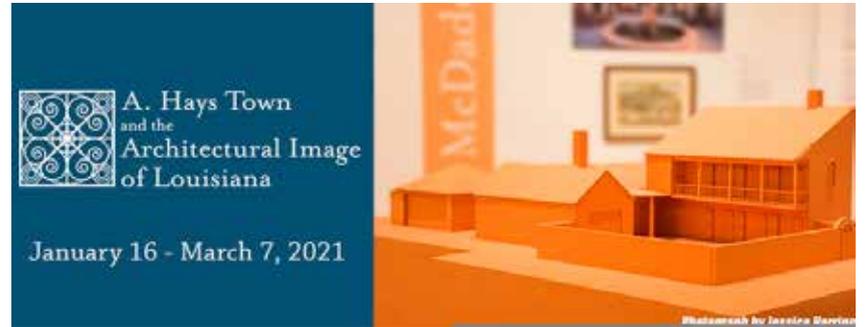
February 24 – Gallery Talk with Leslie Gladney, Noon - Join Leslie Gladney, granddaughter of famed Louisiana architect A. Hays Town, for a lunchtime talk at the museum to accompany the current traveling exhibition, A. Hays Town and the Architectural Image of Louisiana, followed by a visit to the West Baton Rouge Presbyterian Church which was designed by A. Hays Town for a brief tour and light reception. The church is located a few blocks away from the museum. Free.

March 6 – May 30 – Exhibition – Centered Around Culture: Quilts by Cely Pedescleaux. Cely was inspired at an early age by family members who were seamstresses. Her colorful multi-layered quilts reflect various styles of crocheting, beading, and tatting that she learned from these women. Her contemporary quilts have been displayed in France, Italy and China, as well as museums and cultural centers around Louisiana.

March 13 – Baton Rouge Regional National History Day Competition – to be held virtually this year

March 20 – May 2 - Exhibition - Wandering Spirit: African Wax Prints. This exhibit will feature wax cloths from local community members and other items featuring the prestigious wax cloth. The history of the African wax print is a history paved along colonial trade routes and globalization in the post-colonial era. Though not originally African, these textiles have become ingrained in African culture and society, and loved and identified as their own. This exhibit is on loan from ExhibitsUSA and was curated by Gifty Benson.

April 9, 16, 23, 30 – Blues After School – a partnership program between the West Baton Rouge Museum and Rockin' Mozart Music Academy LLC, with support from the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Foundation. It provides blues music enrichment to local middle and high school students throughout the school year.



Shown above at top is the artwork for the A. Hayes Town Architecture exhibit currently underway at the Museum, and at bottom is a jam session during the Old Time Jam, held on Sunday afternoons.

WBR Library coming programs offer something for everyone

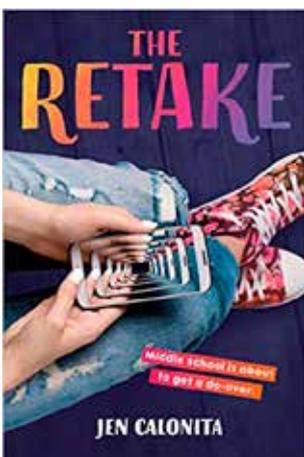
We are OPEN. Monday – Friday 8:30-5:30 Saturday 9:00-1:00.

Upcoming Holiday Closures: Mardi Gras – Feb. 24-25

Weekly Grab and Go Craft Bags: Made for a variety of ages and interests while supplies last.

Among Us Virtual Game Nights

Friday, February 12 & March 12 – 6:30-7:30 pm - Among Us is a popular free game app that follows a clue-type mystery in which participants try to discover the imposter. Open for students in 6-12th grade. Registration is required.



Virtual Visit with Elementary and Middle Grade Author, Jen Calonita!

Tuesday, March 2 – 6:00 pm - Join us for a virtual visit with elementary and middle school author Jen Calonita, who will discuss her latest book, The Retake.

“Who Get’s To Vote” Virtual Book Discussion

February 25- April 8 (Every other Thursday) - The Library, by way of the Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities, has launched “Who Gets to Vote: Conversations on Voting Rights in America,” a new

book club program focused on the history of voting—and efforts to suppress the vote—in the United States. Who Gets to Vote is part of the “Why It Matters: Civic and Electoral Participation” initiative. All sessions will be led by subject specialists. For more information on Who Gets to Vote, visit leh.org/special-initiatives/who-gets-to-vote or contact Corey Young at the West Baton Rouge Parish Library at cyoung@wbrplibrary.us

Virtual Black History Program-“The Roots of Black Music in America” by Karlus Trapp - February 11, 2021 at 7pm - The Library will celebrate the vast contributions of African Americans to music as we know it today, hosted by Karlus Trapp.

Family Dinner and Movie Series - March-April 2021 - The West Baton Rouge Library will host drive in or outside picnic style movie showings in March and April. Food trucks will be on hand to complete the evening. More information to come in the following weeks.

For more information on any of these programs, check out the Library's facebook page: facebook.com/WestBatonRougeLibrary or call (225) 342-7920.

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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.

Appeals Court rules for parish on levee walking/biking trail

A Louisiana appeals court has ruled in favor of West Baton Rouge Parish, granting the West Baton Rouge Parish Council a permanent injunction against landowners to prevent them from interfering with the bicycle path and walkway on top of the Mississippi River levee.

The parish began the extensive levee trail project in 2016, and several landowners filed suit in 2017, claiming that the levee top was their private property and construction of the walking and biking path was a violation of their property rights.

The trial court ruled in favor of the parish in 2018, noting that the use of the levee top for a walking and biking trail is constitutional and does not constitute taking of the landowners' property. It further prohibited the landowners from constructing anything to interfere with or delay the construction of the levee top path, or the obstruct the completed path.

The First Circuit Court of Appeals issued its ruling on January 11, 2021, in which it affirmed the trial court's ruling.

Utilities Director Keowen retires, Genre takes position



West Baton Rouge Utilities Director Pam Keowen, who has worked in the Utilities Department for 37 years, retired at the end of January. She had moved up in the department through the years after being hired on as a clerk in 1984. She worked in accounting and as office manager before being appointed Director when former Director Daryl "Turf" Babin retired in 2017.

Among many significant improvements made in the Utilities Department operations and infrastructure over the 37 years include:

- consolidating Addis Water District #1, Brusly District #2, and District #4 in the northern part of the parish under the Parish Utilities Department;
- the gas line construction installation under the Intracoastal Canal;
- establishing a computer mapping system for all infrastructure lines
- a gas tap on St. Romain Road;
- and the Genesis project. She noted that Babin led the Genesis project and gas tap on St. Romain Road - both major projects;
- construction of a new 20-inch water line to serve the southern part of the parish and water well; and
- a new software billing system.

Office Manager Monica Batiste retired in December. She had been with the Parish for 30 years. Adrian Genre was hired to take the Utilities Director position in 2020, and has been training under Keowen for almost a year, while she was completing the installation and implementation of the new billing software.

RECREATION UPDATE



New dog park opens!

The new WBR Dog Park is now open, said Recreation Director Anatole Vincent. Located north of the Port Allen Middle Campus, it is situated between the football complex and the northern property line. The park includes two separate areas, one for smaller dogs and one for larger dogs. "This park was requested by numerous parish residents, and we are looking forward to spring time, so that all pups can enjoy the new park," said Vincent.

Custodians sought for part-time positions at community centers

West Baton Rouge Parks and Recreation is currently hiring part-time help at the parish Community Centers. Custodial workers are being sought for all sites. For more information, call at 225-336-2423.

ERWINVILLE FITNESS CREW :

The Erwinville fitness crew is looking for more members who are trying to get fit in 2021. The group meets on Tuesdays and Thursdays at the Erwinville Community Center at 6:30 pm. Classes are free to West Baton Rouge residents. For more Information please check out Erwinville Fitness on facebook.com.

WBR RECREATION UPDATES:

Have you checked out the Parks and Recreation page on facebook? Stay up to date with all that is going on with Parks and Recreation by following along at facebook.com/West Baton Rouge Parks and Recreation.

S. Riverview road rehab project to begin

A project to repair a portion of South Riverview Road is expected to begin within a month. The \$93,000 project to remove the existing road, located off Hwy. 190, and replace it with a new concrete road will be performed by Industrial Enterprises. The road is a heavily used industrial roadway. The parish's annual road improvement project for 2021 will be bid out later this year, and is expected to get underway by the summer.

New water rates now in effect

The charges for water usage in West Baton Rouge changed effective January 1. Most residents will have a slight increase in their water bill of less than \$1 per month. For example, an average home water usage of 6,000 gallons will pay \$19.05 under the new rates, just 50 cents more than the existing rates.

The primary change is a new, simplified rate structure, as follows:
\$8.65 for 0-2,000 gallons (this is a \$1 increase);
\$2.60 per 1,000 gallons for 2,001 to 10,000 gallons; and
.75 cents per 1,000 gallons for over 10,000 gallons of water used.

Commercial rates will be \$25.31 for 0-10,000 gallons used, and
.75 cents per 1,000 gallons for over 10,000 gallons used.

The industrial rate was .60 cents per 1,000 gallons, and will go to .75 per 1,000 gallons.

EVERYONE SHOULD



Clean your hands often

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds especially after you have been in a public place.
- If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.



Avoid close contact

- Keep about 6 feet distance between yourself and others.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home as much as possible.
- Remember that people without symptoms can spread the virus.



Cover your mouth and nose with a face mask when around others

- You could spread COVID-19 to others even if you do not feel sick.
- The cloth face cover is not a substitute for social distancing.

New training center offers high tech equipment, capabilities

West Baton Rouge Parish deputies now have a new training facility that offers firearm simulator training and other high-tech capabilities to help deputies be as prepared as possible for their difficult job.

The 4,000 square feet facility is located behind the parish jail facility, and includes a large training room with a projection screen for classes, a full kitchen, office and storage rooms, and a state-of-the-art firearm simulator training room.

The new facility was paid in large part by grants and donations by local businesses. "All deputies train for 80 to 100 hours, much more than the required annual training," explained Training Director Tommy Schiro. "We finally have one location where we can offer all of the training, and can keep the records required of the training for each deputy."

The firearm simulator training is new, and is one of few simulator training facilities in this area. It provides more than 4,000 training scenarios played on a huge screen. During the training, deputies are required to make split second decisions on whether to shoot in very volatile and rapidly evolving situations. This specialized training helps deputies be more prepared for these situations in their work.

Computers are set up with internet access for deputies to do other on-line training. "There are constant changes in protocols and technology in law enforcement and this facility enables us to provide the best training possible for our deputies," said Schiro.

"We have already offered our facility and equipment to other local law enforcement agencies and the fire department for their training," said Schiro, who credited Sheriff Mike Cazes with the vision for the facility and pushing for grant funding for construction.



The top photo shows the large class and self defense training room of the training center. The bottom shows the exterior of the 4,000 square feet metal building. The metal WBR Sheriff's Office emblem and the awning were among many items for the building that were donated by local businesses.



Christmas Crusade helps 104 local children

The West Baton Rouge Sheriff's Office provided Christmas gifts for 43 families with a total of 104 children in its annual Christmas Crusade for 2020. Deputies and volunteers collected toys and gifts outside of Walmart in December, along with \$700 in cash donations used to purchase toys. The gifts were bagged for each family and distributed. Shown at left are just some of the toys prior to bagging. Sheriff Mike Cazes thanks everyone who contributed to this worthy program this year.

TOWN OF ADDIS



Shown after their swearing-in are, from left, Council Members Kevin LeBlanc and Rhonda Kelley, Mayor David Toups, and Council members Bliss Bernard and Ray LeJeune, Sr. At back are Council Member Rusty Parrish and Police Chief Ricky Anderson

Addis town officials sworn in for 2021-24 term

Addis Town officials were sworn in for their 2021-2024 term during a ceremony prior to their first meeting on January 6. They were sworn in by District Judge Elizabeth Engolio. Mayor David Toups and Police Chief Ricky Anderson were both unopposed for re-election.

Two new members of the City Council were elected to their first term in office. They include Bliss Bernard and Ray LeJeune, Sr. Re-elected to the Council are Rhonda Kelley, Kevin LeBlanc and Rusty Parrish.

Parrish was also elected as Mayor Pro Tem by fellow Council members during the meeting.



TOWN MEETINGS (all held at Town Hall):

Town Council - first Wednesday of each month, 6 pm
Planning and Zoning - third Tuesday of month, 6 pm
Mayor's Court - last Wednesday of the month, 3 pm.

ADDIS INFO:

Keep up with town activities through the Addis facebook page at: facebook.com/Town of Addis; or on the Addis website: addisla.org.

MARDI GRAS CANCELLED

The Addis Mardi Gras Ball and Parade have been cancelled for 2021 due to current COVID-19 restrictions and the safety of residents. The Spring Live At 5 on the Westside music events are also cancelled.



Town wins prestigious award for bike program

The Town of Brusly has won first place in its category of the prestigious Community Achievement Awards for its Dow Bikeshare Program. The awards are given by the Louisiana Municipal Association. Brusly competed against municipalities across the state with populations under 3,000.

The Bikeshare program launched in 2019, providing the public with bike rentals at both the Brusly Landing of the Mississippi River levee and at Alexander Park. The bikes can be rented for rides along the West Baton Rouge Heritage Trail on the levee or throughout town.

Dow Chemical Co. provided a grant for the program, and local businesses added to the effort by donating funds for bike maintenance and repairs.

Brusly was one of the first municipalities in this region to offer a bike share program, and it has been very popular with both residents and visitors.

In the photo at right, Mayor Scot Rhodes is shown with the plaque for the Community Achievement Award, and Town Clerk Blaine Rabalais is shown with a sign noting the Bike Share sponsors.



Officials take office for new term

The Town of Brusly installed its officials for the 2021-2024 term at a brief ceremony in January. The officials are, from left, Town Council Members Blake Tassin and Don Neisler, Mayor Scot Rhodes, and Town Council members Joanne Bourgeois, Shane Andre', and Rusty Daigle.

Get all the latest Town of Brusly news and updates!
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City officials take oaths, projects set for 2021

Lee, Hicks and Council take oaths

Mayor Richard Lee, III took the oath for his second term as mayor of Port Allen prior to the City Council's January meeting. He and other officials were sworn in by new District Attorney Tony Clayton.

Corey Hicks was sworn in as Chief of Police, beginning his first term in office. New Council members include Clerice "Clo" Lacy, Council Member at Large; and Charlene Gordon, District 1. Council members beginning another term include Brandon Brown, Garry Hubble, and Hugh Riviere. Brown was appointed by a vote of the Council as Mayor Pro Tem, and Rose Roche was appointed Municipal Clerk by a vote of the council for this term.

Bruce Bass named Employee of Year

The City of Port Allen named Bruce Bass as its Employee of the Year for 2020. His honor was announced at the city's annual awards ceremony in December. Bass is the Roads & Drainage Supervisor for the city, and is in his 28th year as a city employee.

Sewer treatment remains priority for 2021

The location for a new city wastewater treatment plant remains a top priority for the City of Port Allen in 2021, said Mayor Lee. "We are still searching for a site that is suitable for us to connect our line that discharges effluent to the river," he explained. "Our plant is 60 years old, and needs to be re-located out of a residential area," he said.

"We have a number of supervisors who are contemplating retirement in the upcoming years, including roads & drainage, wastewater treatment, water & gas and administration. We need to have a replacement for each one of these positions trained and certified prior to these supervisors leaving," said Mayor Lee.



The pavilion at Centennial Park

City gets state award for Centennial Park

The Louisiana Municipal Association presented the City of Port Allen an honorable mention Community Achievement Award for the development of Centennial Park, located adjacent to the Old Ferry Landing and City Hall. The park includes a beautiful pavilion, walking trail and benches. A bathroom facility and exercise equipment with a canopy for shade, totaling approximately \$162,000, will be added to the site in 2021.

WBR tourism gets big grant for advertising

The West Baton Rouge Convention & Visitors Bureau has received a \$77,500 grant for advertising from the Louisiana Office of Tourism, announced Tourism Director Kathy Gautreau.

"The grant must be used for advertising, and there are restrictions about the venues we use to advertise, but we are very pleased to get these funds, especially with the blow that tourism has taken due to the COVID-19 pandemic," said Gautreau. She said the parish will use the grant funds to promote local hotels, shopping, attractions and dining.

KITE FEST RE-SCHEDULED

Kite Fest, which was set for March, has been tentatively rescheduled for May 22 and 23, said Gautreau. "Of course, we will have to see if the state moves out of Phase II and into Phase III of COVID restrictions to make a determination on whether we can hold the event. It is an outdoor event in a very large open area, so that may help some. We will make a determination on the event later this Spring," she noted.

CAPITAL OUTLAY PROJECTS FOR 2021

The visitor and convention center were renovated with new carpeting, flooring and a re-do of the banquet room during 2020, and now the outdoor landscaping will get a re-do too! The landscaping at the facility will be rejuvenated beginning in January. The outdoor area behind the center was significantly upgraded in 2019, when a large new patio area, complete with a pavilion and landscaping, were added.

Gautreau is also planning on having drone footage shot of the building and grounds this year to provide fresh video to promote the facility for events. Presently events of 50 people or less are being allowed, but bookings have been slow due to COVID restrictions.



Shown above is the pavilion and patio area behind the WBR Convention Center; and at left is the new bar area and pull-down screen in the banquet room.



Chamber announces Board of Directors for 2021

The West Baton Rouge Chamber of Commerce proudly announces our 2021 Board Officers and Directors. Shown at right are the Executive Officers. Below are the board members:

EXECUTIVE OFFICERS:



Patrick Hobbins
Chairman, Placid Refining Co., LLC



Sandra Hughes
Chair Ex-Officio, Lofton Staffing & Security Services



Arron Pierre
Chair-Elect, A. Wilbert's Sons, LLC



LeAnn Stelly
Treasurer, Cox Business



Nick Cicero
Member-At-Large, Peak Performance Physical Therapy

BOARD MEMBERS:

- Cheri M. Ausberry, Entergy
- Abby Cook Barden, The Dow Chemical Company
- Annie Claire L. Bass, SoSis
- Adam Beatty, GIS Engineering, LLC
- Paula Bernard, Western & Southern Life Insurance Company
- Bryan Casebonne, Shintech
- Ashley Coco, Commerce Title
- Glen Daigle, Business First Bank
- Bridget Easley, Easley Builders
- Ben Graham, Stirling Properties
- Jason Hammack, Court Street Café
- Desiree Lemoine, The TJC Group
- Julie Mayeux, West Baton Rouge Parish Public Schools
- Heath Morris, Sugar West, Inc.
- Ash Patel, Tower Investments Group, LLC
- Rawlston Phillips, III, Sun*Plus, Inc. / Beau-lieu Plantation
- Chris Reeves, Edward Jones
- Brittany Weaver, State Farm Agent

PARISH GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVE

Jason Manola, West Baton Rouge Parish Government

New Year,
Fresh Start.

At The West Baton Rouge Chamber of Commerce, we pride ourselves in being the voice and connection for local businesses within our parish and beyond. Let us assist you in making 2021 your best year yet!

Special assessments, exemptions available to property owners

Louisiana residents have several special assessments and property tax exemptions for property owners who qualify, said West Baton Rouge Parish Assessor Chris Guerin. The special assessments and exemptions are listed below.

SPECIAL ASSESSMENT FOR BEING AGE 65 or OLDER OR DISABLED:

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

- 65 years of age or older, or
 - a veteran with a service connected disability rating of 50% or more by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, or
 - a person permanently totally disabled as determined by a court or a state or federal agency, or
 - a member of the armed forces of the U.S. or Louisiana National Guard who was MIA/KIA /POW
- to have the assessed value of their residence frozen for property tax purposes. This means their homes would not be subject to revaluation every four years and the assessed value of their homes would remain the same no matter if property values increase.**

To be eligible for any of the Special Assessments property owners must:

- own and occupy a residence qualifying for the homestead exemption, and
- have a combined adjusted gross income of

\$100,000 or less in 2019 or later, and

- present proof of income and personal identification.

EXEMPTION FOR VETERANS DISABLED IN SERVICE:

Veterans with a service-connected disability rating of 100% unemployability or totally disabled by the United States Department of Veteran Affairs are eligible for an increased homestead exemption, constitutionally approved by West Baton Rouge Parish voters in 2011. Veterans who qualify are **eligible for a homestead exemption up to \$150,000** on their owner occupied primary residence. The surviving spouse of a qualifying deceased veteran shall be eligible for the exemption if the surviving spouse occupies and remains the owner of the property, whether or not the exemption was in effect on the property prior to the death of the veteran.

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

Act 678, approved by state voters, became effective December 1, 2016. **Act 678 establishes an exemption from property tax for the total assessed value of the primary residence** for the unmarried surviving spouse of a person who died

while on active duty as a member of the 21 armed forces of the U.S. or the Louisiana National Guard, or while performing their duties as a state police officer, local law enforcement officer or fire protection officer.

EXEMPTION FOR UNMARRIED SURVIVING SPOUSE OF FIRST RESPONDERS:

Act 427, approved by state voters, became effective January 1, 2018. **Act 427 establishes an exemption from property tax for the total assessed value of the primary residence** of an unmarried surviving spouse of a person who died while performing their duties as an emergency medical responder, technician, paramedic or volunteer fire fighter.

Assessor Guerin urges any property owners who qualify to come in and complete their applications for these programs at the Assessor's Office in the West Baton Rouge Parish Courthouse in Port Allen.

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

CONTAINERS READY TO GEAX!



The successful public/private partnership between the Port of Greater Baton Rouge and SEACOR AMH has produced steady increases in the number of containers handled at the Port's barge terminal.

As a result, a project to create nearly 4 acres of additional paved container storage capacity has been successfully completed. The yard is now capable of handling approximately 2,000 containers including containers measuring 40 feet, versus 20 feet.

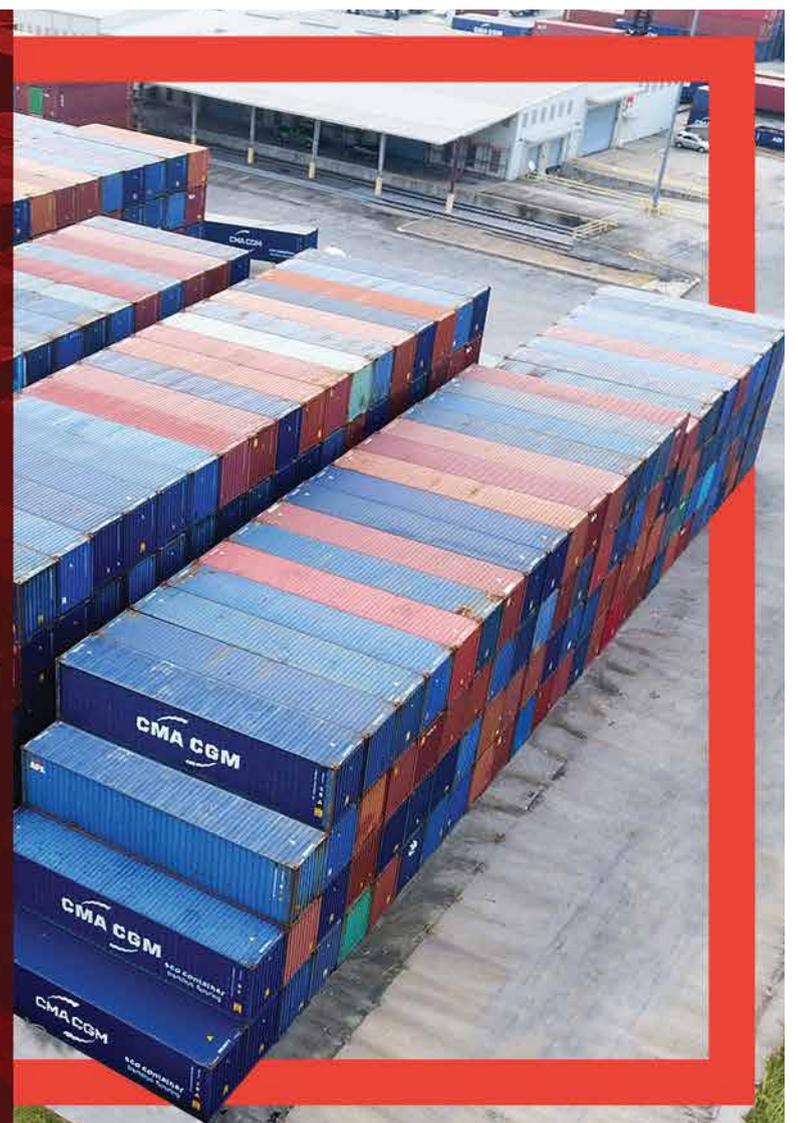
Port Executive Director Jay Hardman said that the response from local industry has been very positive. "We have been able to build in more efficiency in our COB service, which translates to a smoother, more fluid operation, lowers costs, and keeps the service competitive," says Hardman. "As the service continues to grow, it's catching the attention of more and more potential customers."

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



**PORT OF GREATER
BATON ROUGE**

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



WBR names Principal, Teachers, Students of Year

Congratulations to the 2020-21 school year Principal, Teachers and Students of the Year, who were announced in December. They will go on to district competition this Spring.

"We are grateful to have such outstanding educators in our school system," said Superintendent Wes Watts. "It has been a trying year with COVID and educators have had many challenges, and we owe a debt of gratitude to all our educators who have shown resilience and dedication in educating our children and youth."



Angie Roger
High School
Teacher of Year
Port Allen High



Michael Brown
Middle School
Teacher of Year
Caneview School



Amanda Normand
Elem. Teacher of Year
Cohn Elem. School



Bailey Richardson
High School Student
of Year
Brusly High School



Layni Taylor
Middle School Student
of Year
Brusly Middle School



Avery Vaughn
Elem. Student of Year
Brusly Elem. School



Cassy Brou
Principal of the Year
Cohn Elem. School

LASS picks Watts as Superintendent of Year

The Louisiana Association of School Superintendents (LASS) named West Baton Rouge Parish Superintendent Wes Watts the Region II Superintendent of the Year in December. Watts was selected from a group of ten finalists in Region II for the award. He currently serves as the president of the LASS.

Final school improvement projects coming this year

The old wrestling building located at the new Brusly Middle School (formerly the old BHS) has been converted into four classrooms. The completion of that project marks the end of the \$90 million school improvement program that began in 2017.

However, because the School Board held down change orders and managed construction dollars wisely, funds are available to add two needed projects to the plan.

They include a new pupil appraisal/counselor building, which will be located behind Port Allen Middle School; and a new roof on Port Allen High School. Those projects are expected to be underway later this year.



Port Allen High School State Class AA
Championship team of 2020

PAHS basketball champs working on repeat

The expectations are high this season for the Port Allen High School basketball team, which beat basketball powerhouse Rayville in the Spring of 2020 to win the state LHSAA Class AA championship.

Coached by Derrick Jones, last year's team ended the year with a 31-6 record. Along the way, the team beat several much larger schools and had solid play from Collin Holloway (19 ppg, 1st Team All State, District MVP), Jy'ron Allen (13 ppg), and Tawasky Johnson (12 ppg).

This year, Jones said his team returned seven varsity players, but it is a very different team than last year. This year's team has better shooters, but last year's team was better at attacking the basket and was bigger.

"People expect another state championship, and if we continue to progress like we are, then we should have a good shot of making it to state," Jones said.

This is his fourth year as the basketball coach at Port Allen, and he's been coaching since 2003. At deadline for this issue, the team had a 9-4 record for the 2021 season.



Jordan Brooks for the score



Jalen Knox

Student progress good despite set-backs of COVID pandemic

Despite numerous challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, Superintendent Wes Watts praised educators and school administrators for continuing to operate schools safely, meet the unique needs of many parents, provide extracurricular activities, and above all, teach effectively this trying school year.

"I am very proud of how our entire district has handled these challenges," Watts said. "Our students are much farther along than expected. We were determined when the stay-at-home order was issued that we were not going to allow our students to fall behind. There are areas where we need to catch up, but our teachers and students did an amazing job to not have a huge amount of learning loss. Our virtual students have a little more ground to catch up on, but it is not insurmountable."