

## REMINDERS

### COVID vaccine at Health Unit

The West Baton Rouge Parish Health Unit is giving the COVID-19 vaccine weekly.

Residents must call the Health Unit and make an appointment to get their vaccine. The vaccines are available to any Louisiana resident age 18 and older.

The vaccines are given only on Wednesdays of every week, and the second and fourth Fridays of the month. Walk-in vaccinations will not be provided - you must call and schedule your vaccination time by calling 215-5201.

Presently the Health Unit has the Moderna vaccine, which is a two-shot vaccine.

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

**Get hurricane ready!**



[getagameplan.org](http://getagameplan.org)

## Bridge work underway soon, other projects get boost from Legislature

Two major road projects in West Baton Rouge moved forward with recent action. Phase 1 of the project to replace the Intracoastal Bridge on La. Hwy. 1 was let in June, and the apparent low bidder for that work is Kiewit Corp. Phase 1 includes building a new southbound bridge on the west side of the existing bridge, and replacing Ernest Wilson Drive.

That project is expected to begin in about 3 months, but will not impact motorists. It is expected to take over one year to build. Then traffic will be shifted to the new bridge while the northbound bridge is constructed.

Meanwhile, the Hwy. 415 connector project had been delayed because of the Groen Fuels project at the Port of Greater Baton

Rouge, but work on that project is moving forward again, with work towards final construction plans is still continuing. The plans should be submitted by the end of this year, with traffic design, right of way, utilities and other work planned through the fall of 2024. The project is scheduled to be let in October of 2024.

A total of \$125 million for the \$180 million project has been secured, and the passage of the \$300 million infrastructure bill in the Louisiana Legislature during the recently-ended session is good news for obtaining the remaining funding needed.

The passage of the bill, which was authored by the Westbank's Senator Rick Ward, will also pave the way for construction of a new Mississippi River bridge south of the bridge at Port Allen. Under the legislation, 75 percent of the funding would go to mega projects, such as the new bridge.

However, studies are still underway to develop a final location of a new bridge, so its actual construction is at least 7 to 15 years away.



## Brusly office to become early voting precinct

The parish is converting the old Brusly utility office at 158 St. Francis Street into an EARLY voting precinct. The Registrar of Voters office in Port Allen is presently the only early voting location in the parish. But the Brusly office will be used in future elections for early voting.

"Now, more than ever, people are voting early. This new site location will be available for all West Baton Rouge Parish residents, and will give early voters who work or live on the southern end of the parish a place to vote early without fighting the traffic surrounding the Intracoastal Bridge," said Parish President Riley "PeeWee" Berthelot.

Parish utility customers will still be able to drop their utility payments into the drop box located outside the building, but this now provides an early voting location on the southern end of the parish. The office will NOT be used for election day voting. All election day voting locations will stay the same.

## GOVERNMENT MEETINGS

**WBR PARISH COUNCIL** - Meets 2nd & 4th Thursday of month, 5:30 p.m., Parish Council Building, 225-383-4755, [www.wbrcouncil.org](http://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](http://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 1st 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](http://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](http://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](http://www.bruslyla.com)

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## Museum plans active fall events schedule

**August 6th, Sept. 3, 1 pm: Le Café Français – Gratuit.**

**August 8th, Sept. 12, Oct. 10 - 3 pm: Old Time Jam** – a monthly Open Jam open to any musician with an acoustic instrument to join in to play tunes including, but not limited to, Old Country, Bluegrass, Cajun and folk music. The public is invited to sit in to enjoy music. Free

**August 15th, 2 pm: Evangeline: The Myth and the Maiden presentation by Belle Heritage's Dr. Elista Istre.** Free

**August 15th, Sept. 19, Oct. 17, 3 pm: Cajun Jam**, a monthly jam featuring traditional Louisiana music presented by the Cajun French Music Association. The public is invited to enjoy music. The August host will be Beausoleil Accordion player Dr. Chad Huval. Free

**August 20th, Sept. 17, Oct. 15 - 6 pm - Historical Happy Hour: Florida Street Blowhards.** The Blowhards play traditional jazz first seen in New Orleans around 1900. Each month features different speakers, musicians, panelists, or trivia.



**August 24th, 6 pm – Yoga** - Join 26-year veteran instructor Elena Moreno-Keegan for a free introductory yoga class. All ages, shapes, sizes and fitness skill levels are welcome including first timers. Bring a yoga mat, wear comfy clothes, and don't eat an hour before class. This class is being offered as part of Port Allen Cultural District wellness initiative programming. Free

**August 25th 12 pm – Lunchtime Gallery Talk with Louisiana's premier artist, Doug Bourgeois.** Free

**September 4th - January 2nd- Louisiana Birds by Katherine Klimitas exhibit opens.** Katherine Klimitas is an artist, speaker, author and graphic

designer. Louisiana Birds provides an intimate look at wildlife with her Louisiana Bird Series. An established watercolor painter, Katherine impressively brings insects, animals, and more to life.

**September 12th, 2 pm – Courtyard Reception for the Louisiana Birds by Katherine Klimitas exhibit.** Free

**September 16th, 12 pm– Lunchtime Lecture featuring Gayle Breaux Smith on Les Aboiteaux: How Acadians turned Salt Marshes into Fertile Farmland.** Free

**September 18th – January 2nd: Exhibition, Music Behind the Gates** - This exhibit features the music and photographs of musicians who live at the Louisiana State Penitentiary at Angola, Louisiana. It begins with a brief history of the prison and follows the music from folk songs to hip-hop. The exhibit ends with the music of the pop culture generation.

**October 3rd: 26th Annual SugarFest, 11 am-4 pm.** Free

**October 20th, 12 pm - Katherine Klimitas Book Signing: Breed All About Us**, a collaboration of watercolor illustrations and Yvonne Krumins' writing, is a remarkable collection of art and voice. Told from the dog's perspective, the book offers an amusing description of each breed, complimenting 64 exceptional watercolor paintings.

**October 22nd: Halloween program at the Museum with West Baton Rouge Parish Library**

**Mondays, Oct. 18, 25, Nov. 1, 8, 15, and 22 from 10 -11:30 am – Poured Acrylic Series 1** – Sign up for an in-depth six-week class to learn the technique of poured acrylic painting. Space is limited, and advanced registration required. Fee: \$75 (includes supplies)

**On Demand: Classes Keeping Traditional Crafts and Trades Alive**, Contact Museum Director of Programs, Jeannie Lockett, at (225)336-2422 Ext. 205 to schedule a workshop at your convenience to learn Blacksmithing, Woodworking, Fiber Arts, and Ceramics. Fees and details are available upon request.

## Summer programs ramping up at WBR Library

We are OPEN Monday–Friday 8:30 am-5:30 pm, Saturday 9 am-1 pm

Upcoming Holiday Closures:

Labor Day – Monday, September 6th

Columbus Day – Monday, October 11th

**Weekly Grab and Go Craft Bags** - We continue to offer weekly Grab and Go Craft Bags for a variety of ages and interests while supplies last. Follow us on Facebook for information on weekly offerings.

**Weekly Storytimes** - No storytime in August. Storytime resumes in September with all ages welcome at 10 am every Tuesday. Call (225) 342-7920 Ext. 231 for more info.

**Teens: Pizza and Teen Safety – Saturday, August 21st at 11 am**

Vaping, internet dangers, narcotics, and fentanyl? What are all these things? Teens and their families are invited to engage in meaningful conversations about safety over food with Deputy Tiffeny Wycoskie of the West Baton Rouge D.A.R.E. Program. Registration required.

**Teen Advisory Board: First Meeting – Saturday, August 28th 11 am**

Teens in grades 6-12, we are creating a library teen advisory board. This is an opportunity to volunteer, share thoughts and programming ideas, and have a voice in teen library offerings and programs. Snacks always served.

**Adults: Creative Sparks-Art and Writing Workshops-Begins Thursday September 9, 2021 at 6:00 pm** This 4-part creative writing and art workshop guides participants through a relaxing evening on of free-form art and writing. Novice and Experts creatives are encouraged to participate.

**LIVE w/the Library-Begins in September** - The WBRP Library will host local business leaders, community official, and other local experts to discuss a wide variety of topics that impact members of the community. Participants will also have the opportunity to ask questions.

**Lawyers in Libraries- October 25 -30, 2021 during library business hours.** In partnership with the Louisiana State Bar Association, the WBRP Library will host the annual Lawyers in Libraries event. Patrons will have the opportunity to speak with an attorney for a limited amount of time concerning civil matters. More information to come soon. Visit our website for more information.

**Save the dates!**

• **Family Outdoor Movie Night - September 24**

• **Heroes Day – October 9th.**

• **Halloween Program** - The annual Halloween Program, sponsored by the WBR Library and WBR Museum, will be on Friday, October 22.

More information is forthcoming. Check out our website and Facebook page for updates.

Follow us Online!



## Road improvement program begins

The parish's \$1.58 million road improvement program is now underway. The program includes construction of the extension of La. Hwy. 415 and Commercial Drive, and the extension of Freeman Lane. Overlays will be done on the following streets: Rougon Road, Airline Park Drive, Airline Park Drive West, Parkland Drive, Parkland Drive South, North and South Palmer, Blain Street, Rene Street, Famco Road, Ed LeJeune Street, and Babytown Lane. The project will continue through the summer. Please be careful around construction zones.

## Rains make for active mosquito activity

Record-breaking rainfall has led to a very busy season for the WBR Mosquito Control Department. Control efforts focused on floodwater nuisance mosquito problems have been ongoing since April. Additionally, mosquito samples have now begun to test positive for West Nile Virus (WNV) in our region. West Nile Virus typically returns every year around this time. WNV activity typically peaks in late July to early August and then begins to taper off going into late September / October. WBR Mosquito Control would like to remind all citizens of WBR Parish that now is the time to take precautions to avoid being bitten by mosquitoes.

Check out our web page at [wbr council.org/241/Mosquito-Control](http://wbr council.org/241/Mosquito-Control) for more information on mosquitoes, and like our Facebook page for constant updates on areas of the parish with positive samples and spray truck schedules.

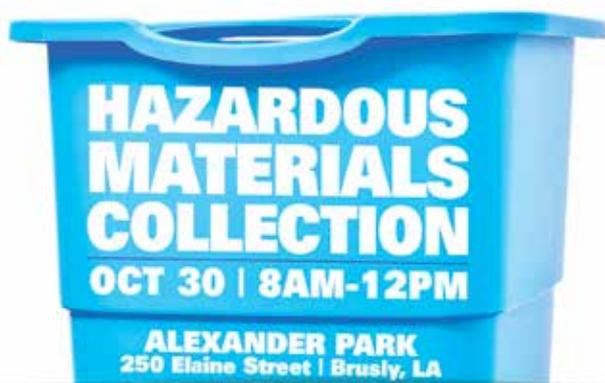
Mosquito larvicide tablets are available for pickup at 3147 Ted Denstel Rd. Port Allen. They are free and one pack per residential address within the parish is issued.

## Trim trees now for hurricane season

Hurricane season has had a busy start, with five named storms already, and 13 to 20 named tropical storms and hurricanes forecasted for this year. However, residents should not focus on this number because it only takes one hurricane to cause widespread devastation, as seen by the storms of 2020 that affected our state.

Residents are urged to get their property and family prepared. Trim your trees and cut down weak trees now, instead of waiting for a storm to enter the Gulf of Mexico to take action. If residents trim trees right before a storm and place limbs on the side of the road, the debris can become airborne in the high winds and cause extensive damage. The parish does not have time to pick debris up before an impending storm. Residents can find additional hurricane preparedness tips at [getgameplan.org](http://getgameplan.org).

Also, the Parish Office of Homeland Security, Emergency Preparedness, and 9-1-1 has developed a free app to track hurricanes and tropical storms. This app updates automatically with the latest storm tracks from the National Hurricane Center at approximately 2 am, 8 am, 2 pm, and 8 pm Eastern Time every day from May 15 to November 30. The public can access this app by going to <https://bit.ly/3hiEwgF>.



ACCEPTED		
ACIDS	CORROSIVE CLEANERS	LIGHTER FLUID
AEROSOL CANS	DEGREASERS	METALLIC MERCURY
ARSENIC	DISINFECTANTS	MOTH BALLS
AUTO PRODUCTS INCLUDING: used oil, antifreeze, brake fluid, diesel, oil & fuel filters	ELECTRONIC EQUIPMENT	OVEN CLEANERS
COOKING OIL	PAINT THINNER	DRAIN CLEANERS
BATTERIES INCLUDING: NICD, lead acid, alkaline, rechargeable	PAINT INCLUDING: latex and oil, stain, varnish, shellac	TURPENTINE
BLEACH, BOWL CLEANERS	FLUORESCENT TUBES AND COMPACT FLUORESCENT BULBS	POLISHES
BUG SPRAYS	LAWN AND GARDEN PRODUCTS INCLUDING: pesticides, herbicides, fungicides, fertilizer	POOL CHEMICALS
WOOD PRESERVATIVES	GLUE	TVS, STEREOS
CLEANING SOLVENTS	FIRE EXTINGUISHERS	AUTOMOBILE TIRES (5 without rims)
PAPER SHREDDING		PROPANE TANKS AND BOTTLES

## RECREATION UPDATE

### Senior Spirit changes

West Baton Rouge Senior Spirit, the fun recreation program for those 50 years old and older, will celebrate its 13th year in September, and now boasts 327 members. One of the organizations founders and coordinators, Lucy Landry, announced her retirement from the position in July. Layne Mire, will assume the role as coordinator. Stella Tanoos will help with the group's newsletter and facebook. Babs Babin, another of the founders, will continue to be active in the group.

Among its regular activities are aerobics, bouree, bridge, canasta and dominoes games, and quilting. The group also plans regular excursions and trips. There is no fee to join Senior Spirit. For more information on Senior Spirit go to [wbrparish.org/598/5352/Senior-Spirit](http://wbrparish.org/598/5352/Senior-Spirit), or email [seniorspirit@wbr council.org](mailto:seniorspirit@wbr council.org).



Lucy Landry



Babs Babin



Layne Mire

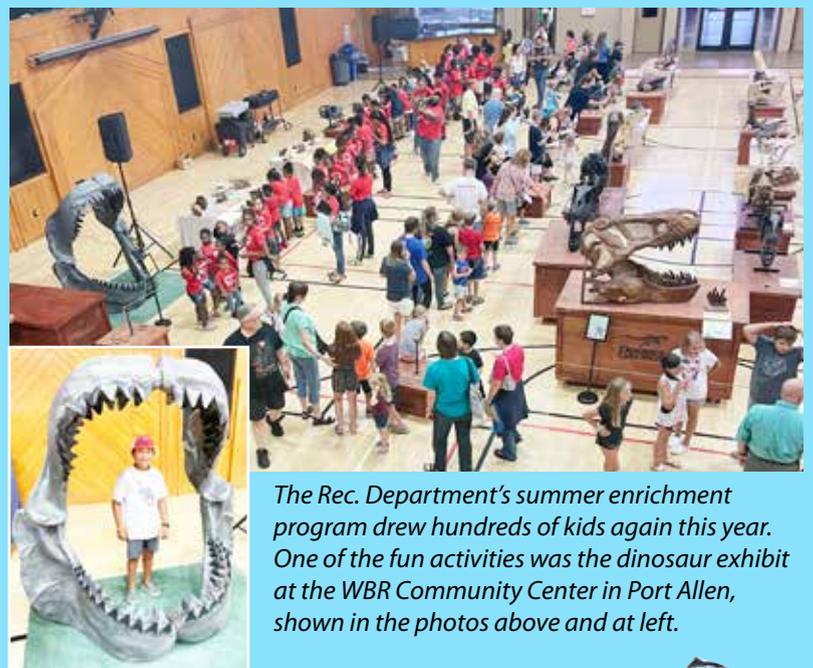
### Football, soccer, cheer registration

Fall recreational opportunities are just around the corner. The full contact football and cheer programs currently have registration open. Both programs are for Ages 5-12.



Soccer and flag football registration will open on August 1st. All children Pre-K4 through 8th grade are eligible for soccer. Flag football is open to ages 4-12.

For more information about all of the fall programs, call the WBR Recreation Department at 225-336-2423.



The Rec. Department's summer enrichment program drew hundreds of kids again this year. One of the fun activities was the dinosaur exhibit at the WBR Community Center in Port Allen, shown in the photos above and at left.

## Maybe it's time to add a new suit to your wardrobe!

The West Baton Rouge Parish Fire Department is seeking volunteers to train and serve as firefighters. For more information call 225.346.5676



## Sandbag stockpile ready for severe weather events

The West Baton Rouge Sheriff's Office has been actively preparing sandbags, with the help of parish inmate labor, for severe rain events, such as hurricanes. "We are stockpiling the sandbags for use by the Sheriff's Office and other public agencies during emergencies," said Sheriff Mike Cazes. "This is part of our pro-active planning for hurricane season, but this year we have



seen an extreme amount of rain, so the preparation has been important." The WBR Sheriff's Office recently assisted Iberville

Parish with providing sandbags during the flooding it experienced in both east and south Iberville from very heavy rains. "When we are called to help, we will do it," said Sheriff Cazes.

**Be ready for hurricanes! Go to [getagameplan.org](http://getagameplan.org)**



## Deputies complete active shooter training

All West Baton Rouge deputies who carry guns completed a week-long Advanced Law Enforcement Rapid Response Training (commonly referred to as active shooter) Course during July. The course was held at Caneview K-8, and with several agencies participating. It included simulations with shooting of paint bullets. "We do this every year to make sure our deputies are prepared to handle these very volatile and dangerous situations," said Sheriff Mike Cazes.



## Motorcycle Deputy Brown wins top honors again

WBR Deputy Clifton Brown won his 12th championship in the Mississippi Law Enforcement Association Motorcycle Rodeo in April. He received the best point score of 71 officers from three states competing in the rodeo's three riding challenges. This is the 12th year he has won the top honor at the rodeo. Brown is also a motorcycle instructor, and his team of area officers competing brought home nine trophies! Congratulations Deputy Brown!



## TOWN OF ADDIS

### Annual road project underway

The town's 2021 road improvement project is now underway. Streets included are Eliza, Virginia, Carolina, Olivia, Denby, Union, Clarkland, Camp Circle, Belle Vale, Sugar Mill Parkway, Stonewall, Belle Vue, Ed LeJeune, Tullier Lane and Peter Messina.

The project includes milling, overlay and hot patching on streets based on a condition rating provided by the town's consultant Material Resources, Inc. Approximately \$625,000 will be spent on this year's road program. Residents are asked to be cautious around the construction sites and to be patient as the town's streets are improved.

### Recycling/ pickup information

Bulk items that are too large to fit in garbage receptacles are picked up on the first week of every month. Brush must be cut in 4-foot lengths. Furniture, boxes and other large household items will be collected.

Recycling items are collected as follows: Residents who live EAST of Hwy. 1 – picked up on Tuesday. Residents who live WEST of Hwy. 1 – picked up on Wednesday. Following are items that CAN be recycled: aluminum cans, plastic bottles and jugs, newspapers and junk mail, brown paper bags, catalogs, magazines, and phone books, cardboard, cereal boxes, shoe boxes, etc., computer/copier paper, and envelopes.

The following CANNOT be recycled: aluminum foil, small batteries, glass, ceramics, porcelain, light bulbs, painted or treated wood, paper towels, plastic grocery bags,

**TAKE BROADBAND SPEED TEST:** Go to [dra.gov/speedtest](http://dra.gov/speedtest). Take the test various times of day to help Delta Regional Authority map where internet is slow.



### TOWN MEETINGS:

- Town Council - 1st Wednesday of month, Town Hall, 6 pm
- Planning & Zoning - 3rd Tuesday of month, Town Hall, 6 pm
- Historical Society - 2nd Tuesday of month, Addis Museum - 5:30 pm

**The Music is Back This Fall!**

**Oct. 1 DON RICH**

**Oct. 15 RYAN FORET & FORET TRADITION**

**Oct. 29 PHAT HAT**

**LIVE**

**AFTER 5**

**on the WESTSIDE**

**5:30-8:30 pm**

**Sponsored by Town of Addis**

## Construction of St. James Square begins soon!

Construction on the new St. James Square at the levee and East Main Street is expected to begin by September! The project is currently out for bids.

The park ties in to the Mississippi River levee walking and biking trail entrance at Brusly, and provides a pavilion that will include a covered stage area, the town's bike share racks, restrooms, and water fountains both for people and dogs.

In addition, it has a small pavilion surrounded by trees to provide for family or small events. It will also have a green space, water features, landscaping, lighting, and area for food trucks to park for events.

One of the most unique aspects of the park is the "Legacy Walk," in which walkers can scan icons on the walkway with their cell phones, and learn about the town's history. The town plans to close part of Bourg Street as part of this project.

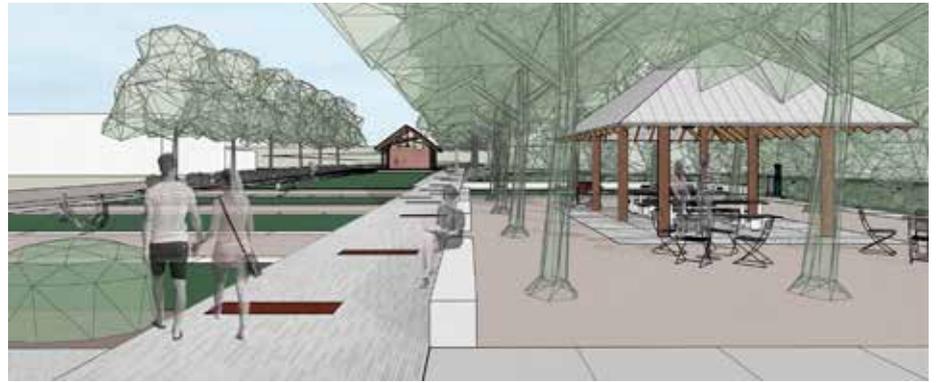
"This project has been a long time coming," said Mayor Scot Rhodes. "There were 32 heirs to one small part of the half acre site, so it took quite a bit of legal work for the town to get legal ownership of the site."



Shown are renderings of the new St. James Park.

During the surveying for the park, a town plan with a map from 1854 was discovered. This town plan included a park, named St. James Park, almost exactly where this park is located. "The map was created before the Mississippi River levee was built, and it was so interesting that a park was planned in this area 167 years ago!" said Mayor Rhodes. "It was an easy decision to name the park what it had been named then – St. James Park."

Watch for progress on the new park in the coming months!



## Juneteenth celebration biggest ever

The City of Port Allen hosted its annual Juneteenth celebration on June 13 at Williams and Lee Park, with some 2,500 attendees - the largest Juneteenth celebration in city history. The park was overflowing with a celebratory crowd enjoying the yearly cultural, educational and entertaining experience.

## City sponsors flag design contest

The City of Port Allen is sponsoring a City Flag Design Contest to create a city flag. The flag will serve as a symbol of the past, present, and future of our cherished community.

The public is invited to submit a design for the new official City of Port Allen flag. The contest begins on September 15 and will end on October 14, 2021 at noon. The winner will be announced at the November City Council meeting.

## New playground at Cohn Park



Check out the new playground at Cohn Park on N. 14th St! The playground is a new addition to the park, and is part of the redevelopment plan for the park.

## Live on the Levee!

Friday evenings in September  
6:30 - 8:30 pm



September 10

September 17

September 24

Lil Nate and the Zydeco Big Timers

The Mellow Band R & B Band

Don Rich and Rougaroux Swamp Pop

## Watch for these upcoming events

### Veterans Day - Nov. 11 - Honoring those who sacrifice all

The Never Forget the Fallen event will be held on Veterans Day, November 11, at the Old Ferry Landing Park on the levee top beginning at noon. The city is working with local veteran and community organizations to honor those who sacrificed so much for our country. Please contact the office of Community Development for further information.

**Christmas on Court Street!** - Watch for more on the holiday fun coming to downtown Port Allen in December!

## Kite Fest, more events as activity ramps up for the fall



Kite Fest was back in May after a year off due to COVID, and it did not disappoint! The event drew great crowds, good winds for kite flying, and no rain! This year's event also featured a fireworks display that was enjoyed by all!

The WBR Convention & Visitors Bureau is proud to announce that the Veterans on Parade will be back this year also! It will be held on Sunday, November 7. And some form of Reflections of the Season will be back for the Christmas season. Watch for more on these events in the October issue of Vision West.

## Capital projects slowed by ongoing rains

Decorative improvements are underway in the Conference Center, finishing off a capital improvement project that included renovations to the banquet room.

Beautification of the grounds behind the center was planned for 2021, but has been delayed due to continued rains this year. "Since Oldies Fest is on the grounds, we don't want to start the landscaping renovations until after that event is over," explained Executive Director Kathy Gautreau. "The project may get pushed back to 2022."

Gautreau just returned from the first La Travel sales and marketing symposium in Lafayette, picking up valuable information on marketing West Baton Rouge's tourism attractions and events.

**2021 OLDIES BUT GOODIES FEST & BBQ COOK-OFF**

**SATURDAY - SEPT. 11**  
 BCA CHAMPIONSHIP BBQ COOK-OFF, LA FOOD & BEVERAGE VENDORS.  
 THAT 70'S BAND  
 SUNDAY 11:00AM-2:00PM

**SUNDAY - SEPT. 12**  
 LIVE MUSIC, ANTIQUE CAR SHOW, CRAFTERS, LA FOOD & BEVERAGE VENDORS.  
 CHASE TYLER BAND  
 SUNDAY 2:30PM-5:30PM

ON THE GROUNDS OF  
**WBR TOURIST INFORMATION & CONFERENCE CENTER**  
 2750 NORTH WESTPORT DRIVE  
 PORT ALLEN, LOUISIANA 70767

1-800-654-9701  
 WWW.WESTBATONROUGE.NET

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## WBR CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

**West Baton Rouge Chamber of Commerce**

*You're Invited!*

**Upcoming Events**

- Westside Shopping Extravaganza**  
 SUNDAY, AUGUST 22ND  
 Addis Community Center  
 \*Hosted by the WBR Small Business Council
- Annual Sporting Clay Tournament**  
 FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 17TH  
 Bridgeview Gun Club  
 Port Allen, LA
- Annual Golf Classic**  
 MONDAY, NOVEMBER 1ST  
 Copper Mill Golf Club  
 Zachary, LA
- Small Business Saturday**  
 SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 27TH  
 Participating Businesses throughout WBR Parish  
 \*Hosted by the WBR Small Business Council

WWW.WBRCHAMBER.ORG

## A taste of normalcy for WBR Chamber

From the 1st Annual West Baton Rouge Restaurant Week to the 2021 Taste of WBR Tailgate, our parish was able to experience a "taste of normalcy" with these two recent events following the reopening of our state. The Chamber of Commerce would like to thank our local restaurants for their participation in both events, as well as the guests and patrons that frequented these events to show their support for our hometown restaurants that are still in the midst of recovering from the lingering effects of the pandemic. West Baton Rouge Restaurant Week and Taste of WBR Tailgate were both a tremendous success, and we look forward to making these events bigger and better each year.

The Chamber is excited about this year's remaining signature events:

- the Annual Sporting Clay Tournament on September 17th at Bridgeview Gun Club, and
- the Annual Golf Classic on November 1st at Copper Mill Golf Course.

Register your teams and sponsors today at [www.wbrchamber.org](http://www.wbrchamber.org). Please contact the Chamber's Development Manager, Scarlet Theriot, at [scarlet@wbrchamber.org](mailto:scarlet@wbrchamber.org) or 225-385-5277 for more information on these events and sponsorships. We hope to see you there!

In addition to our annual signature events, the Chamber has teamed up with the WBR Small Business Council again this year to host the Westside Shopping Extravaganza on August 22nd at the Addis Community Center, and Small Business Saturday on November 27th at participating businesses throughout the parish. For more information on these two events, please visit the West Baton Rouge Small Business Council's facebook page.

Lastly, we'd like to thank our Chamber members, ambassadors, board members and volunteers for their continued support of the WBR Chamber of Commerce. We take pride in being the voice and connection for all local businesses within our parish and beyond. Our team is always ready to help with your business needs.

**LET'S PULL TOGETHER**  
 for our local businesses!

**ANNUAL SPORTING CLAY Tournament**

**Friday, Sept. 17th, 2021**

at Bridgeview Gun Club | 1365 Northwest Dr. | Port Allen, LA 70767  
 Sponsorships Available! For more information, contact Scarlet Theriot at [scarlet@wbrchamber.org](mailto:scarlet@wbrchamber.org) or 225.385.5277

# What to expect on your property assessments in 2021

COVID-19 brought many changes in 2020. You may recall that the Assessor's Office provided a value reduction on property assessments to help property owners across the parish who were struggling with the financial fall out of COVID.

The following excerpt is reprinted from the October 2020 Vision West newsletter:

*Assessor Barney "Frog" Altazan is happy to announce "in 2020 the Assessor's Office will provide a one-time 10% value reduction to all residential, commercial and industrial real estate properties. Additionally, our office will provide a one-time 5% value reduction to all business personal property accounts." Altazan further explained there is no application process to receive the value reductions, the Assessor's Office will automatically calculate the value reductions for all properties previously noted. The value reductions will remove approximately \$39 million in property value from the 2020 assessment roll.*

Current Assessor Chris Guerin states, "As a reminder to all West Baton Rouge Parish property owners, the above referenced value reduction in 2020 was provided to property owners in consideration of the uncertainties and economic hardships brought on by the Covid-19 pandemic. **Because it was a one-time value reduction, all real estate property owners in 2021 can expect to see a 10% increase in their property values and a corresponding increase in property taxes for the upcoming year.**" Guerin further explains 2020 was a quadrennial revaluation year mandated by Louisiana Constitution Article VII, Sect. 18(f) and Louisiana R.S. 47:2331. Also worth mentioning, when the Assessor's Office completes a quadrennial revaluation, the new values assigned to real estate properties are set for a four year period and will not increase unless there are significant improvements made to a property.

## Assessor's Office rolls back millage

For 7 of past 13 years, Assessor's Office has rolled back its millage, resulting in \$4 million in savings to taxpayers

For 2021, the Assessor's Office will again roll back its millage, taking reduced funding which saves taxpayers \$650,000.

For example, in 2020 if a property was revalued to \$250,000, it was assessed at \$225,000 (90% of the newly determined value because of the one-time 10% value reduction). Going forward in years 2021, 2022 and 2023 the same property will be assessed at \$250,000.

In regards to property tax rates, Assessor Guerin states, "In 2020 the parish-wide millage rate was 108.32 mills and we are anticipating the rate for 2021 to remain the same or even possibly decrease by a few mills. The Assessor's Office is in control of a very small fraction of the property tax rate in West Baton Rouge Parish.

"Our office is funded by a maximum constitutional millage rate of 2.47 mills and in 2021 we will levy only 1.35 mills (approximately \$785,000) to fund our office operations.

Additionally, in seven of the past thirteen years (2008 – 2020) our office has opted to take reduced funding for our office operations. By doing so we have saved property owners approximately \$4 million dollars". Guerin further stated the Assessor's Office has no control or influence over the millage rates ultimately levied by other taxing jurisdictions.

As always, the Assessor's Office website is available 24/7 for access to valuable parcel information including ownership data, assessed values and legal descriptions as well as aerial photography and digital maps of West Baton Rouge Parish. You can visit the site at [www.wbrassessor.org](http://www.wbrassessor.org).

If you would like to review the assessment for your property, go to the Assessor's Office website: [www.wbrassessor.org](http://www.wbrassessor.org)



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## PORT OF GREATER BATON ROUGE



## PORT OF GREATER BATON ROUGE

### A 20% efficiency gain in container operations

at the Port of Greater Baton Rouge is just one positive outcome of the Port's new, deep-reach container stacker known as *The Big Red Beast*.



With a telescopic boom for stacking 4 containers high, shorter loading and unloading times have helped meet the increasing demand for container shipping services between Baton Rouge and New Orleans for area customers in the petrochemical industry sector, said Port Executive Director Jay Hardman.

Financed almost 100% by a Maritime Administration grant, the one-of-a-kind Beast was designed and manufactured specifically for the Port by Taylor Machine Works of Louisville, MS. The addition of the custom-made stacker is another component of the Port's recent expansion of its successful container operations including a container storage yard totaling 4 acres.

Up to 2,000 containers ready to Geaux! For more information, contact Greg Johnson at (225) 342-1660.

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# Huge turnout for summer learning program provides many benefits

The West Baton Rouge Summer Learning Program doubled in size this June, with 25 percent of the school district's 4,100 students attending! While the growth is a great success story, the biggest benefits were for the students and teachers involved!

"This was our best summer program ever," said Superintendent Wes Watts. "The kids were really engaged and loved it. We received numerous calls from parents who thanked us, talked about how excited their kids were to go every day, and begged us to do it again next year."

"We will see the benefits of this program in the coming school year because it allowed us to help the kids academically, and also helped them to bond with teachers in a relaxed setting," he added. "We are just thrilled that it went so well."

The La. Department of Education encouraged school districts to ramp up their summer programs, and to combine learning with fun activities to engage kids. It was funded through the federal stimulus dollars the state received as part of the COVID pandemic recovery plan to try to offset the learning loss sparked by the radical changes in education in the 2019-20 school year due to COVID.

The kids got math and education lessons intertwined with arts, music, physical education, games, STEM projects, and other fun activities during the Monday through Thursday sessions from 8 am until noon. In addition they received a hot breakfast and take home lunch.

Superintendent Watts said all West Baton Rouge schools held the sessions throughout the month of June. Caneview K-8 had the highest turnout - a whopping 200 kids daily! "This was a great opportunity for us to increase the kids' school readiness skills for the coming school year," said Principal Laree Taylor. "We also exposed the students to many things they don't have time for during busy school days, like music, sign language, arts and crafts and social learning. We put the math and reading units around these fun activities and the kids had a fabulous time."

Taylor, like other principals, said she received calls and e-mails from parents who thanked them because their kids loved the program so much. "In addition, the teachers were able to spend time with students in relaxed settings and smaller groups, so they built relationships with the students that will be beneficial in the coming school year," Taylor said.

Port Allen Middle School Principal Jessica Major echoed Taylor's comments. She added that computers were not available to the kids at her school this summer and that really enhanced the experience. "The kids were involved and engaged - not hiding behind a computer device."

Lukeville Elementary averaged 90 kids a day in its program. Principal Kelley Stein noted that it was successful because "it was pressure-free learning. There was no pressure of a curriculum and tests on the teachers and kids, and everyone was happy to be there." She added that the kids also enjoyed the sense of normalcy of no masks and being with friends. "It was a lot of hard work, but worth the effort. We will see the pay off this coming school year."



## Wishom named new PA Elem. principal

Erika Wishom has been named the new principal of Port Allen Elementary School, after serving as an assistant principal at various schools for the past six years.

A native of Tallahassee, Wishom ended up in Louisiana on a track scholarship at Southern University. She obtained both her bachelor's degree in education, and her master's degree in mental health and school counseling from Southern. Wishom has worked as a teacher, a

guidance counselor, and more recently as assistant principal of Glen Oaks Magnet High, Thrive Academy, and, for the past two years, at Brusly High School. "I love West Baton Rouge because of the support and resources they offer to the staff," she said. "Their effort to provide valuable professional development has helped me grow."

Wishom said she will focus on enhancing the climate and culture of Port Allen Elementary, and on building "buy-in" from the faculty, families, the community. She is married and has three children - all attending WBR schools.



Shown above are scenes from the Lukeville Elementary Summer Learning Program.



Scenes from the Caneview K-8 Summer Learning Program