

REMINDERS

If we can't reach you, we can't alert you!

West Baton Rouge residents are urged to register their cell phones to receive emergency alerts from the West Baton Rouge public alert system.

Three ways to register are:

- Go to the WBR Council's website: wbrparish.org and scroll to the bottom of the page. Click on Alert sign-up
- Text WBALERTS to 888777
- Call the 911 office at 225-346-1577 between 8 am and 5 pm Monday through Thursday.

Residents can also download the everbridge alert system app on their mobile phones.

HAPPY HALLOWEEN



SUNDAY, OCT. 31
5:30-7:30 PM

Parish fights mosquito infestation with heavy spraying throughout Oct.

Mosquito control operations have been ramped up since September 20. While the parish received little



Shown is the parish's fleet of mosquito spray trucks.

rainfall from Hurricane Ida, Tropical Storm Nicholas inundated the area with 8-10 inches of rain.

This was more than enough rain to begin a major hatch off of floodwater mosquito species. They are voracious biters and breed in extremely high numbers, which led to numerous mosquito complaint calls.

Parish-wide spray truck operations have continued through October, with the entire parish being sprayed 2-3 times each week. Surveillance traps were placed out in mid-October to re-evaluate floodwater mosquito population levels and the need for continued parish-wide spraying.

Regardless of whether parish-wide spray truck operations continue, weekly spraying of all parish

parks and schools will continue into November. The parish will also be sprayed again in advance of Halloween Trick-or-Treat festivities on October 31.

Southern house mosquito (the mosquito species that carries West Nile Virus) population

numbers and West Nile Virus activity is down. West Baton Rouge has had 26 West Nile positive mosquito samples out of 836 samples tested, and zero human cases.

"We encourage everyone to continue to take precautions," said Mosquito Superintendent George Bragg. "Use mosquito repellent. Eliminate standing water, and empty all containers around the home at least once per week. Larvicide tablets and granules for problematic containers or standing water areas can be obtained free of charge by WBR Parish residents at our office."

More information can be obtained by visiting the parish website at <https://www.wbrcouncil.org/241/Mosquito-Control>. Weekly updates on surveillance results and spray truck schedules can be found on [facebook.com/WestBatonRougeMosquitoControl](https://www.facebook.com/WestBatonRougeMosquitoControl).

New early voting location set for Nov. election

West Baton Rouge voters will now have two early voting locations for the November 13 election:

- The Registrar of Voters office in the Courthouse Annex Building, 883 7th Street, Suite A, Port Allen.
- The Early Voting building at 158 East St. Francis Street in Brusly. This is a new early voting location and is the old parish water/gas office in Brusly. It will be used for early voting only. It is not an election day precinct.

Early voting is Oct. 30 through Nov. 6, excluding Sunday, Oct. 31. Hours are 8:30 am to 6 pm. Parish voters will have four constitutional amendments on the ballot.

The building in Brusly has been remodeled and made handicapped accessible to accommodate early voting.

"More than ever, people are voting early. This new 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 year-round.



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 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

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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Museum offers variety of subjects on winter events schedule

Exhibits:

- **Music Behind the Gates (through December)**
- **Louisiana Birds and Dog Breeds by Katherine Klinitas (December)**
- **Places People Remember by Stan Routh (through December)**
- **1968: A Folsom Redemption (November 13 through January 12)**
- **Pelican State Goes to War (January 22nd-March 20th)**
- **1940s West Baton Rouge (January 8th- March 20th)**

November 3 – Noon – Lunchtime Lecture featuring Louisiana architect and artist Stan Routh, who is known for his drawings of historical landmarks, original paintings, sketches, and watercolors of cities and towns throughout Louisiana. Spend the lunch hour with this artist to learn about his process. Free.

November 12 – 6 – 8 PM - Unchained Voices, a special musical performance accompanying the exhibit, Music Behind the Gates featuring Consuela Gaines. Free.

November 13 – January 12 – Exhibition – 1968: A Folsom Redemption - The exhibition highlights Johnny Cash's golden era from the January 1968 Folsom Prison album recording to a March 1, 1969, concert in Anaheim, Calif., when he was getting ready to launch his network television show.

November 14 – 2 PM - ECD Lecture "Ring of Fire, Circle of Love: The Women in Johnny Cash's Life" with Dr. Elista Istre. Johnny Cash was a rebel; and the public loved him for it. He performed in prisons and sang violent lyrics throughout his career, kicked out Grand Ole Opry stage lights, set fire to a national park, and trashed hotel rooms. Far from his public image as "America's favorite bad boy," Cash's most intimate relationships reveal the kind, sensitive, and even vulnerable side of a man who loved deeply. Free.

December 7th – Noon – Lunchtime Lecture - Georgetown ethno-musicologist Benjamin J. Harbert presents from his forthcoming book on the history of music at the Louisiana State Penitentiary. The remarkable cases of jazz, country, R&B and gospel performance show how music was a part of overcoming the pressures of the institution, and enabling unlikely collaborations with administrators and security staff. Free.

January 22nd- March 20th – Pelican State Goes to War exhibit opens. A new special exhibit called The Pelican State Goes to War: Louisiana in World War II. Produced by The National WWII Museum, the exhibit will feature artifacts, photographs and oral histories that highlight Louisiana's extraordinary contributions toward America achieving victory in World War II.



WEST BATON ROUGE LIBRARY

Holiday programs take the forefront at WBR Library

November:

Alpaca Storytime - Saturday, November 13th at 11 am with an alpaca from Lazy B Alpacas.

Teen Thanksgiving Cookie Decorating Class for students in 6-12th grade on Tuesday, November 23rd, 6-7:30 pm. Space is limited. Registration will open in November.

December:

December Grab and Go bags will feature four weeks of DIY Christmas ornaments.

Christmas Cookie Decorating Class for students in grades 3-5 on Saturday, December 11th, 10-11:30 am. Space is limited. Registration will open at the end of November.

Christmas Pajama Storytime 6 pm Tuesday, Dec. 21st.

Adult/Family Programs:

Check out our new and improved website for more details on upcoming programs like "Let Go & Create", A Christmas ornament workshop, our 2nd annual Christmas Concert, and more! www.wbrpl.com

Youth Services Offerings: 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

Fall storytime continues through December 21st. Children of all ages welcome at 10:00 am every Tuesday Morning. Call for more information, (225) 342-7920 Ext. 231 or register online.



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

Upcoming Holiday Closures:

Veterans Day – Thursday, Nov. 11th

Thanksgiving Holiday – Thursday - Saturday, Nov. 25-27th

Christmas Holiday – Thursday, Dec. 23rd close at noon-Dec. 27th.

New Year's Eve - Friday, Dec. 31st close at noon.

Follow us Online!



Joliet Trail project going out for bids

The parish's Joliet Trail project, which will provide a walking and biking trail from Alexander Park to the base of the Mississippi River levee, will go out for bids before the end of the year. The path is part of the parish's extensive walking and biking trail system that has been constructed in phases over the last 6 years.

The path will extend from the park to West St. Francis Street to the River Road and then along the base of the levee. The parish has also been approved for two other trails for construction in the upcoming years: a trail in the Choctaw Road area with possible links to Alexander Park in Brusly, and another along Court Street in Port Allen to improve the tourism walking system. The Acadian Trail in Addis, which is similar to the Joliet Trail in Brusly, is also slated for construction in the next couple of years.

OTHER PARISH PROJECTS:

The parish's \$1.58 million road improvement program for 2021 is nearing completion. The program included construction of the extension of La. Hwy. 415 and Commercial Drive, and the extension of Freeman Lane. Overlays included Rougon Road, Airline Park Drive, Airline Park Drive West, Parkland Drive, Parkland Drive South, North and South Palmer, Blain Street, Rene Street, Famco Road, Laws Road, and Babytown Lane.

The Andre Lane water line is being upgraded. Approximately 1,800 feet of 4 inch pipeline is being replaced with 8 inch pipeline to improve water pressure. This was funded with a state CWF grant.

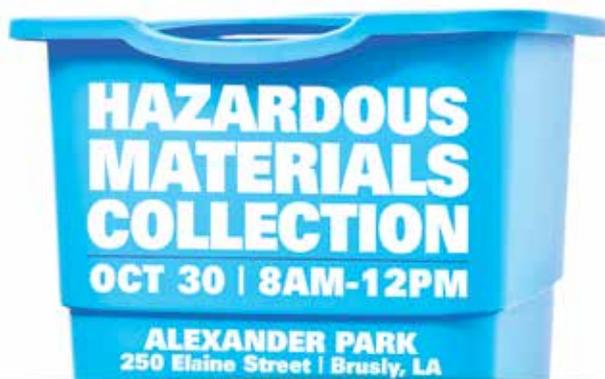
The screens for the Lukeville water treatment plant are being replaced, and three generators are being added to sewer system lift stations along Cohn Road. Both of these projects are funded by LGAP grants.

Port City ramps up help for disabled

Port City Enterprises, a Port Allen-based service provider for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, has hired a new director and is taking steps to re-brand and expand services. Susanne Romig, native and resident of Brusly, has been appointed as the new Executive Director and will implement a plan to address the area's shortage of resources for individuals with special needs and their families.

The announcement was made by Judge William Kleinpeter, Board President for Port City Enterprises. Romig served since 2018 as Executive Director of The Arc Baton Rouge. Romig noted that the numbers of students obtaining an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) and enrolled in special education classes in WBR has risen ten-fold in recent years, and many of them have autism and related behavioral diagnoses.

Port City Enterprises offers vocational and supported employment services, adult day hab, respite care and supervised independent living. Through a new partnership with Louisiana Rehabilitation Services (LRS) and local high schools, Port City will provide school to community transition classes which help students enrolled in special ed to prepare for life after high school. The agency plans several new initiatives. For more information about new opportunities in West Baton Rouge for teens and adults with disabilities contact Susanne Romig at 225-344-1142.



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

Biddy Ball registration to open

WBR Biddy Basketball will hold registration for the winter league through the month of November. Practices will begin in December, and games will be played in January and February. The league is open to boys and girls age 4-12 as of January 1, 2022. Registration is available online through the parish website: wbrparish.org, or through the Recreation Department office. Fee is \$30. For more information call 225-336-2423.

All West Baton Rouge water splash pads are now closed for the winter.

Fall sports are experiencing record number, with more than 800 children participating in soccer, full contact football, flag football and cheerleading. A big thank you to all the volunteers who make this possible!



Answering the call to house linemen

An idea by Port Allen resident Rhonda Coye to house electrical linemen after Hurricane Ida quickly became a reality once the West Baton Rouge community pitched in. Within one day the parish jumped in to offer the Addis Community Center to house the linemen, and residents, organizations and businesses jumped in with a huge outpouring of supplies and food for the linemen.

Approximately 35 to 40 linemen from across the country stayed at the Community Center each night for a week in early September. They slept on cots and air mattresses, and were provided all meals, along with other toiletries and supplies and laundry service! The parish provided them with a meal of jambalaya the first night the center was open.

"We heard that linemen were sleeping in their vehicles and we wanted to help them, and show these linemen some Cajun hospitality and our appreciation for being here to get electrical power back on," Coye said. She served as coordinator with a core committee, but she was quick to say, "It was a real community effort. We had so much donated, we had to stop taking donations, but everything that was left over went to the hurricane victims."

"The linemen were so appreciative of everything we did," she said. "They were taking pictures to send to their families, raving about the food, and so many thanked us as much as we thanked them!" Thanks to all who contributed and volunteered for this effort!



Shown at left, linemen sleeping at the Addis Community Center enjoy a meal provided for them. At right, local residents prepare one of their meals. The parish and local residents joined forces to provide a cool and comfortable place to stay and meals for the linemen for a week after Hurricane Ida.

Gearing up for Halloween weekend

The West Baton Rouge Sheriff's Office is planning extra patrols for Halloween weekend, and also will be conducting monitor checks of all sex offenders in the parish to help keep children safe as they enjoy trick-or-treat and other Halloween activities. Trick-or-treat hours throughout the parish are from 5:30 until 7:30 pm on Sunday, October 31.

Sheriff Cazes urged parents to watch their children carefully at Halloween, and to follow these safety tips for kids 12 and under:

- Always go trick-or-treating with an adult
- Know how to call 911 in case they get lost
- Know their parent's cell phone number
- Walk on sidewalks on lit streets (never through alleys or across lawns)
- Walk from house to house (never run) and always walk facing traffic when walking on roads
- When crossing the street, never assume that vehicles will stop. Wait for them to fully stop.
- Have flashlights with fresh batteries or wear glow sticks as bracelets or necklaces.
- Parents should limit trick-or-treating to your neighborhood and the homes of people you know.

Sign-up set for Christmas Crusade

The Sheriff's Office has set the sign-up dates for its annual Christmas Crusade toy give-away as: Nov. 22 & 23 - 9 am - 3 pm, Nov. 24 - 9 am - 11 am, and Nov. 29-Dec. 3 - 9 am - 3 pm at the WBR Law Enforcement Center, 1150 Northwest Dr. in Port Allen. The building is right next to the jail through the glass double doors.

Toys will be collected at the Wal-Mart in Port Allen on Dec. 4, and the pick-up will be Dec. 15.



Helping out in storm recovery



The WBR Sheriff's Office provided assistance to law enforcement hard hit by Hurricane Ida in September. They cooked meals, provided supplies and deputies helped with patrols in multiple parishes for several weeks. In the photo at left, Sheriff Mike Cazes, center, cooks for deputies.

Heroes Day fun in WBR

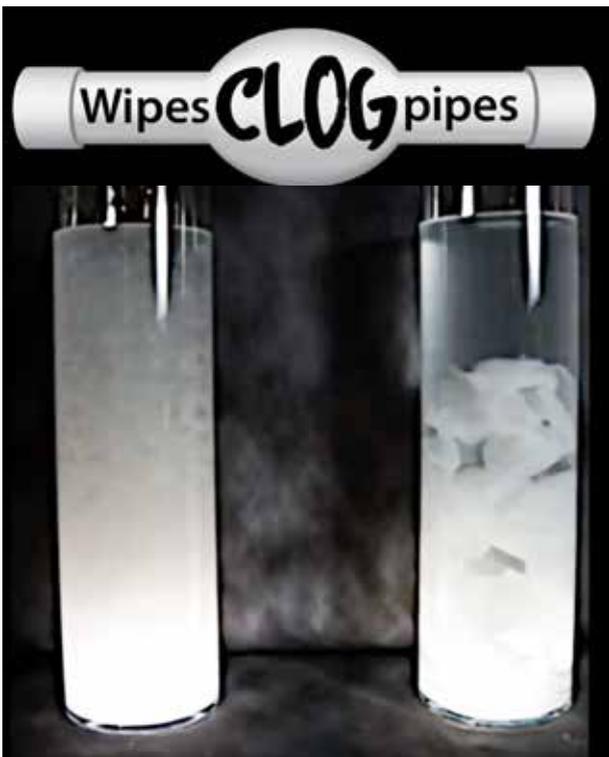
The WBR Sheriff's Office participated in the Library's Heroes Day activities on Oct. 9, with a variety of its services on display: the DARE program, boat, and even a horse from its posse unit. Shown are scenes from the event.



TOWN OF ADDIS

Don't flush your disposable wipes!

Disposable wipes — used for changing diapers, personal hygiene, housecleaning, and more — cause major problems when flushed down toilets. Because they don't break down the way toilet paper does, these wipes clog homeowner and municipal sewer pipes, put stress on community wastewater collection and treatment equipment, and cause towns to spend thousands on premature equipment repair and replacement.



The photo above shows two glasses with water. At left, toilet paper is dissolved after 8 days, while on the right, wipes have not dissolved at all after 8 days.

Wipes snag on any imperfection in sewer pipes, catch passing debris and grease, and create a "ball" that will grow to plug the pipe. They also get drawn into sewer-line and wastewater treatment plant pumps and clog and damage them, and must be manually cleared out of pumps.

Although many brands of disposable wipes are labeled "flushable," don't flush them! The clogs and backups they cause may result in expensive plumbing bills for your home, or issues and expenses for the Town of Addis. The resources wastewater facilities expend on wipes could be better spent on systems to improve water quality. Put your wipes in the trash - it matters more than you realize!



The historic Union Pacific Big Boy steam locomotive, built in 1941, made a stop in Addis on Aug. 22 as part of its US tour. Only 25 of these locomotives were built, each 132 feet long and weighing 1.2 million pounds. Big Boy No. 4014 was retired in December 1961, having traveled 1,031,205 miles in its 20 years in service. Union Pacific reacquired No. 4014 in 2013, and relocated it back to Cheyenne to begin a multi-year restoration process. It returned to service in May 2019 to celebrate the 150th Anniversary of the Transcontinental Railroad's Completion.



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

Construction of St. James Square begins in November

Construction on the new St. James Square at the levee and East Main Street will begin in November, now that the contract has been signed with Kelly Construction for the project.

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.

In addition, it has a small pavilion surrounded by trees, 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 is closing part of Bourg Street as part of this project.



Rendering of the layout of St. James Square.

Sewer system upgrades planned

The Town of Brusly will be using its American Rescue Funds for upgrades to its sewer system, said Mayor Scot Rhodes. The one-time money was provided by the federal government for COVID recovery. The town will purchase new pumps and make other upgrades to the sewer system over the next two years.

Get all the latest Town of Brusly news and updates!

Like us on facebook! [Facebook.com/BruslyTownHall](https://www.facebook.com/BruslyTownHall)



Park fitness station complete, ready for use

The fitness station near the Old Ferry Landing Park and Mississippi River walking trail is now open and ready for public use!

The City installed the station, which offers a variety of exercises, near the walking trail because it is so heavily used by local residents. It is complete with a bench and shades, and sits among beautiful oak trees lining the street. The station is shown at right.

SEWER SYSTEM WORK CONTINUES...

The City has completed the repairs to the Eighth Street manhole and sewer lines at California Avenue by replacing a 26-year old sump pump that failed. The replacement had to be special ordered.

In addition, the City is completing the final installations of the three new effluent pumps, which will be used to discharge our treated wastewater into the Mississippi River. The sludge pumps for the wastewater system have now been rebuilt and they are fully operational.

"We are continuing to improve the functionality of the wastewater plant with the help of some of the \$1.6 million in American Rescue Plan funding," said Mayor Richard Lee. "We are making steady progress on the extensive sewer system work needed in the city."



New fitness station at the Old Ferry Landing Park.

Veterans Get Special Discount

The City has initiated a special program in which local stores give veterans a 10 to 15% discount on their purchases on Veterans Day, November 11. A number of stores in the downtown area are participating as a way to thank our veterans.

Christmas on Court St.
 December 17-19 5-9 pm each night
 Vendors • Carnival rides • live music
 Food • Games • Holiday fun
 For information call Rose Roche - 225-346-5670

Drive by Christmas lighting display planned for December



The Parade of Veterans and Reflections of the Season events were cancelled for November and December. However, the WBR Convention Center's extensive Christmas decorations will be installed for drive-

viewing of the many light displays it offers.

"Visitors can make the loop from La. Hwy. 415 to Commercial Drive turning on Office Park Drive then North Westport Drive," said Kathy Gautreau, Executive Director of the Convention and Visitor's Bureau. "We want to bring some holiday cheer, but there were many obstacles to holding the Reflections of the Season. We plan to bring it back next year," she said.

GOOD NEWS ON VISITORS: While local hotels have been full with Hurricane Ida recovery workers, the Bureau has been trying to find rooms for softball and baseball players coming in from the region for a tournament at Alexander Park. The CVB has managed to get hotel blocks at three hotels, with a total of 110 rooms. These tournaments are not only good for tourism, but are good for the local economy. Another student group from the United Kingdom is planning a visit to West Baton Rouge next fall, thanks to marketing efforts by the Convention and Visitor's Bureau.



One of the beautiful sights at the WBR Convention & Tourist Center

Landscaping upgrades coming

An extensive project will begin in early 2021 to level the back property of the Convention Center, install new landscaping, signage, and add benches. Plans also call for a dog park for travelers with pets. In addition, signs for the Center will be added at the corner of Commercial Drive and Office Park Drive, and in front of the tourist and conference center to help visitors locate the building easier. The Bureau is also changing out tourist signage at the Ferry Landing Park at the Mississippi River levee outlook.



WEST BATON ROUGE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

LUNCH & LEARN

WITH SUPERINTENDENT WES WATTS
with West Baton Rouge Schools
Topic: State of Education Address

Wednesday, November 17th
Doors Open at 11:30am | Lunch Begins at 12pm
Chamber Members - \$25 per person
Non-Members - \$35 per person

Please purchase your tickets at:
<https://bit.ly/WattsLunch>

Get in on great Chamber events!

Fall has arrived, and we are looking forward to hosting our final Chamber events of 2021! Join the WBR Chamber of Commerce on Monday, November 1st at The Island Golf Course for our 2021 Golf Classic and on Wednesday, November 17th at the Addis Community Center for Superintendent Wes Watt's State of Education address, with a special recognition of our parish's Teachers of the Year. For details on either events, please visit our website at www.wbrchamber.org.

We would like to take a moment to thank the WBR Small Business Council for putting on the Shopping Extravaganza in October! The WBR Small Business Council paired with numerous small business Chamber members provided the ultimate shopping experience with live entertainment, great food, drinks and more from our local small business retailers on the Westside. A great time had by all, and we appreciate the support of everyone in attendance.



Congratulations to our newest Chamber member and business in Addis, Empowerment Consultants, LLC! Our Chamber hosted a successful ribbon cutting and grand opening for this new clinic last month. Empowerment Consultants, LLC delivers person-centered, trauma-informed therapy that helps people build better lives for themselves, their families, and their communities. For more information on Empowerment Consultants and other new Chamber members, please visit our membership page at <http://wbrchamber.org/membership/>

WEST BATON ROUGE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

ANNUAL GOLF CLASSIC

NOVEMBER 1ST, 2021
AT THE ISLAND GOLF COURSE

9AM REGISTRATION
10AM SHOTGUN START
2PM LUNCH & AWARDS CEREMONY

FOURSOME \$500
SINGLE PLAYER \$150

- 18 HOLES WITH CART
- SNACKS, LUNCH & BEVERAGES
- AWARDS CEREMONY W/PRIZES

REGISTER & PAY AT:
[HTTPS://BIT.LY/WBRCCGOLF](https://bit.ly/WBRCCGOLF)

Recapping 2021 - Record increase in assessed values



West Baton Rouge Parish will see its largest ever year to year increase in assessed property values in 2021, \$72.9 million. "The increase in values is due in large part to 2020 real estate value increases that were postponed to 2021 and a large Industrial Tax Exemption Program (ITEP) contract that became taxable in 2021 as business personal property", said Assessor Chris Guerin in the WBR Parish Assessor's Office annual property assessment report.

The total assessed value of real estate increased from \$205 million in 2020 to \$238.7 million in 2021. As noted earlier, there was a large ITEP contract that became taxable and accounted for a large portion of the business personal property (inventory, business furniture and fixtures, machinery and equipment) increase from \$305.7 million in 2020 to \$344.9 million in 2021. Also, the value of public service properties decreased from \$49.59 million in 2020 to \$49.38 million in 2021.

Guerin noted that 81.5% of all property taxes paid in West Baton Rouge Parish are paid by business and industry. Additionally, the parish has approximately \$1.7 billion in industrial property exemptions that will be phased onto the assessment rolls by 2029. "These are exemptions the Louisiana Economic Development Office granted for new manufacturing businesses and existing manufacturing business expansions," Guerin said.

Property owners can expect to see the parish wide property tax rate for 2021 decrease from 108.32 mills to 107.25 mills. The rate reduction is a result of the Parish Council decreasing rates by 0.12 mills, the School Board decreasing rates by 2.3 mills and the Assessor's Office levying only 1.35 mills of its constitutional 2.47 mills. However, even with a property tax rate decrease, property taxes for property owners will increase in 2021 because real estate assessed values were reduced by 10% in 2020 as a COVID relief measure as mentioned in the beginning of this article.

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.

Where do your property tax dollars go? 2021 Property Tax Breakdown

TAXING DISTRICT	MILLAGE	TAXES
Assessor's Office	1.35	\$ 785,071.00
Atchafalaya Levee Dist.	4.01	\$ 2,323,639.00
WBR Parish Council		
Communications/E-911	3.00	\$ 1,744,594.00
Community Center	2.00	\$ 1,163,063.00
Council on Aging	2.50	\$ 1,453,828.00
Drainage	7.08	\$ 4,117,241.00
General Fund	3.52	\$ 2,046,990.00
Health Unit	0.75	\$ 436,148.00
Library	4.10	\$ 2,384,278.00
Museum	2.00	\$ 1,163,062.00
Recreation	5.00	\$ 2,907,656.00
WBR School Board		
Constitutional	4.39	\$ 2,552,922.00
Special general fund	15.00	\$ 8,722,968.00
Special bonds & interest	12.45	\$ 7,240,063.00
Special salaries I	12.00	\$ 6,978,374.00
Special salaries II	12.00	\$ 6,978,374.00
WBR Sheriff's Office	16.10	\$ 9,362,656.00
Total Taxes		\$62,360,927.00

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.

2425 Ernest Wilson Drive • P.O. Box 380 • Port Allen, LA 70767-0380
PH: (225) 342.1660 • FAX: (225) 342.1666 • www.portgbr.com

School board one of first in state to bring wifi capability to students

The West Baton Rouge School Board is blazing the trail for other school systems in Louisiana with a unique initiative to provide wifi access to students at or near their homes.

"When we moved to remote education during COVID, we provided every student in grades 4 through 12 with chromebook laptops, but we realized quickly that a portion of our student population did not have access to the internet," said Tammy Seneca, Supervisor of Information Systems and Educational Technology.

"We are trying to close this digital divide by providing Cradlepoints in strategic locations in the parish," she explained. "The Cradlepoints are like hotspots where students can get wifi to complete homework assignments, but Cradlepoints provide features that are needed when students are involved."



A Cradlepoint unit is installed at the Addis Train Depot by IT workers with non-profit ITDRC.

While the students can get internet access, the Cradlepoints have a content filter so that they cannot be used except by WBR Parish students with the Chromebooks, and the students will have access to only what pertains to their school work on the internet. In addition, they can be easily turned on and off. "They will not be able to access games or movies or other things on the internet," Seneca said. "This is strictly for school work and is an extension of the school system's internal network."

The school district is just beginning to install the Cradlepoints, but the plan calls for a total of 69 to be added to electrical poles in both public areas, such as parks, and in neighborhoods where the parish has a high number of students on the free and reduced lunch program.

While not every neighborhood will have Cradlepoints, it will be accessible to students relatively close to their homes. Parents will be notified as the Cradlepoint locations are added, but Seneca added that updates on new locations will be posted on the school board's social media sites and website.

The project has been a year in the making, and has required a lot of planning and collaboration with other agencies. The technology team working on the project has had to get approval from AT&T and Entergy to mount the Cradlepoints on their poles, and had to involve the La. Public Service

Commission and the parish for aspects of the project.

In addition, the non-profit organization Information Technology Disaster Resource Center (ITDRC) has been instrumental in assisting on this project, both by donating installation equipment and also installing the Cradlepoint units for free. The purchase of the units was funded with federal COVID recovery funds, and the approximately \$60,000 in annual wifi fees will be paid through the school board's technology budget.

"ITDRC has been so helpful to us in this initiative, providing expertise and IT experts to assist us," Seneca said. "We can't thank them enough for their willingness to partner with us and help us."

Seneca credited Garrett Couvillon, Network Administrator, for assisting in this project and also working with AT&T to customize boxes that cover the Cradlepoints and protect them for weather.

"We are very excited to provide this for our students," Seneca said. "As we move into the future, it is very important for the school district to provide the tools that students need to complete school work at home. Teachers can't assign internet homework if the students don't have access. This provides that access."

"A lot of school districts across the state are watching us and waiting to see how this works," Seneca said. "We're the first to put them on utility poles, and we are leading the way on this technology."

Congratulations Teachers and Students of Year!



Amanda Normand, Elementary Teacher of the Year, Cohn School



Angie Roger, High School Teacher of the Year, Port Allen High



Michael Brown, Middle School Teacher of the Year, Caneview K-8



Avery Vaughn - Elementary Student of the Year - Brusly Upper Elementary School



Bailey Richardson, High School Student of the Year, Brusly High



Layni Taylor, Middle School Student of the Year, Caneview K-8

Scott wins Gates Scholarship

Naturi Scott, a 2021 graduate of Port Allen High School, was one of only 300 seniors across the United States to win a prestigious Gates Scholarship.

The Gates Scholarship (TGS) is a highly selective scholarship for outstanding, minority seniors from low-income households to help them realize their maximum potential. The selection process is very rigorous and includes academic, personal and community achievements.

Besides providing any funding needed to pursue her bachelor's degree, the Gates Foundation will provide Naturi with resources and programs throughout college, including leadership training.



Naturi Scott, winner of the Gates Memorial Scholarship, Port Allen High