

VISION WEST

West Baton Rouge Parish - Community, Growth, Possibilities

A quarterly publication for West Baton Rouge residents by your public agencies • April, 2016

Calendar of Events

May 1 - Golf lesson series begins. See pg. 3

May 1 - Splash pads open for summer until Labor Day

May 2 - La. Tourism Awareness Week kick off in WBR! see pg. 6

May 7 - Aug. 6 - La. State Capitol exhibit, WBR Museum

May 7 - Sept. 4 - Huey Long & Prohibition exhibit, WBR Museum

May 12 - Port Allen High graduation

May 13 - Brusly High graduation

May 19 - Last day of school for WBR public schools

May 18 - Lecture on artist Angela Gregory, noon

May 26 - Sculpture workshop, WBR Museum

May 28 - Family Day at William & Lee Park

June & July - Summer and swim camps. See pg. 3

June 25 - Aug. 14 - Prohibition in America exhibit, WBR Museum

July 4 - 4th Fest, Old Ferry Landing Park, Port Allen

July 18 - Juneteenth Celebration, William & Lee Park

Hwy. 190 change to ease merging on old bridge



Merging onto the old Mississippi River Bridge from La. Hwy. 1 will soon be easier and more safe as the Louisiana Department of Transportation & Development is planning to install temporary cones to force traffic entering the bridge from U.S. Hwy 190 into the left lane. This will provide a dedicated lane allowing traffic from La. Hwy. 1 to flow onto the bridge without stopping to merge into the Hwy. 190 traffic. The testing is expected to begin soon, and if successful, the re-striping will be scheduled. "We made the

recommendation to DOTD because the old bridge is getting a lot more use, due to the consistent traffic congestion at the new Mississippi River Bridge," said Parish President Riley "PeeWee" Berthelot. He added that pushing for solutions to the traffic congestion continues to be the top priority of parish and local officials. The photo above shows how the right lane of U.S. Hwy. 190 will be striped to force traffic to merge to the left lane. The test cones are expected to be installed by this summer.

\$900,000 road overlay program to begin soon

A road overlay program including 17 roads and totalling \$915,000 is expected to begin by June. The roads to be included in the project are: Higdon Road, Lone Oak Drive, Missouri Drive, Lafitte Court, Auguste Street, Willow Glenn Avenue, Shelter Court, Golden Ridge Drive, Hollywood Court, Levert Avenue, Hilda Court, Evergreen Drive, Beauregard Boulevard,

Maxine Street, South Mulatto Bend, Northwest Drive and Investment Drive.

"The parish has dedicated excess funds to keeping our roads in good condition," noted Parish President Riley "Pee-Wee" Berthelot. "We are also working to develop some new connector roads to help traffic flow, but we have to work through right-of-way and other issues before determining if the roads would be viable."

GOVERNMENT MEETINGS

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

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

WBR PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION - Meets on the 1st & 3rd Tuesdays of each month at 5:30 p.m. at the Council meeting room in the Parish Council Building.

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

CITY OF PORT ALLEN - Committee meetings on 1st Wednesday of each month at 5:30 p.m. Town council meetings on 2nd Wednesday of each month at 5:30 p.m., 225-346-5670, www.portallen.org

TOWN OF BRUSLY - Committee meetings on 1st Monday of each month at 6:30 p.m. Town Council meetings on 2nd Monday of each month at 6:30 p.m., 225-749-2909, www.bruslyla.com

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Natural gas line to serve south end of parish

Installation of a new natural gas line to serve the southern section of West Baton Rouge from the Intracoastal Waterway to Addis will soon begin. The project calls for bringing the line from the natural gas facility in Port Allen, boring under the Intracoastal with an 8-inch line, and looping it through the southern area of the parish. "The new line will enable us to meet the demand from new development and also maintain pressure for businesses on North Line Road," said Utilities Director Daryl Babin.

Curbside RECYCLING

- REMOVE ALL food and liquid from bottles or cans. Rinse. Remove caps.
- Put items **LOOSE** in the bin.
- Place bin out the night before your collection day.

"We Love Where We Live"
KEEP AMERICA BEAUTIFUL AFFILIATE

	YES!	NO!
GLASS	Clear or colored food or drink bottles.	Window panes, mirrors, light bulbs or broken glass.
CANS	Steel, tin or aluminum or drink cans.	Aerosol cans, cooking pots or pans, outdoor furniture or other non food-product items.
PLASTICS	Containers marked with 1 through 7 on the bottom. Clear soft drink bottles without marking.	Toys, furniture, coat hangers or other non food-product items.
PAPER	White or colored paper, cereal boxes, newspapers and inserts, junk mail, catalogs, magazines, telephone books. Cardboard boxes WITHOUT food residue.	Hardback books, paper napkins, tissues, cups or plates, styrofoam. Nothing with food residue.

DO NOT USE YOUR RECYCLE BIN FOR GARBAGE!

Rivault Park transformation complete, getting rave reviews



Above is the new field at Rivault Park, and at right is the new south end parking lot.



The \$350,000 upgrade of Rivault Park by the West Baton Rouge Parish Council is complete, and is drawing rave reviews from residents.

The project included flipping the direction of baseball field #1 in order to create a state-of-the-art playing field for ages 13 and 14, with proper irrigation. Other improvements included new dugouts for all three ball fields, new fencing, new backstops, batting cages, new bleachers, and a new lighting system.

In addition, a new south parking lot was created that eliminates parking on the service road and along the roads in The Oaks subdivision. The walking track is presently being reconnected, and other cosmetic improvements are being made. Playground equipment at the site had been upgraded last year.

Flipping baseball field #1 required the demolition of the snackbar near La. Hwy. 1 at the park site. It was in poor condition, and the re-aligned field makes the main concession stand accessible to everyone.

"This was the first major improvement project at Rivault Park in many years," noted Recreation Director Anatole Vincent. "This park is now a premium facility that West Baton Rouge residents can take pride in for many years to come."

WEST BATON ROUGE LIBRARY

Spring Art Show a huge success

If you haven't seen the great works of art on exhibit at the 21st Annual Spring Art Show, be sure to get to the West Baton Rouge Library by May 5, when the show ends.

A total of 63 works were entered by adult artists from Iberville, Pointe Coupee, and West Baton Rouge Parishes. They were judged by Cheri Fry, a contemporary artist from Denham Springs who has won national and international awards for oil and watercolor.

Bing Zheng of Port Allen took home the Easterly Prize for Best of Show for his painting, "Orchid." First Place winners in different categories are: Professional – Betty LaBauve for "Bossy," Non- Professional – Andrea Fleming for "Study of Girl with Pillow," and Art Student – Bonnie Kleinpeter for "Cool Dude."

For information on other programs at the Library, call 225-342-7920 or visit www.wbrpl.com.

Bing Zheng of Port Allen is shown with his painting, "Orchid," which won Best of Show at the Spring Art Show.



ABOUT THIS PUBLICATION:

VISION WEST is published quarterly as a cooperative endeavor of West Baton Rouge Parish government agencies to educate residents about projects, activities and services in the parish. It is produced by Peacock Communications, LLC. Comments can be sent to: ellie@peacockcommunications.com, or call 225-929-9661.



WEST BATON ROUGE PARISH GOVERNMENT

REGISTER NOW FOR SUMMER CAMPS!

West Baton Rouge Recreation Department Summer Camp
Open to ages 5-12, Registration fee \$10 per session

SESSIONS:

June 7-9 & June 14-16

at the West Baton Rouge Community Center in Port Allen

June 21-23 & June 28-30

at the Addis VFW Hall

July 12-14 and July 19-21

at the Erwinville Community Center

Camps are from 8-3:30 p.m. Lunch and a snack are provided.



The camps include fun activities, games, sports, arts and crafts, on-site shows, field trips and splash days!

Register for the summer camp at the West Baton Rouge Recreation Department office in the West Baton Rouge Community Center at 749 N. Jefferson Avenue in Port Allen.

WBR Parks & Recreation sponsors golfing and lessons!

The West Baton Rouge Council is partnering with the Westside Golf Club to offer free rounds of golf every Tuesday and Sunday for WBR residents.

In addition, complimentary golf lessons are being offered in a six-session class beginning Sunday, May 1. Golf clubs, balls and instructors will be provided for the class, open to anyone age 5 and older. The six sessions will each last two hours.



The West Baton Rouge Parish office of Homeland Security, Emergency Preparedness and 9-1-1 celebrated National Public Safety Telecommunicator Week April 10-16. This week honors the thousands of men and women who take emergency calls, dispatch emergency professionals and equipment, and render life-saving assistance to our citizens 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Shown are the WBR telecommunicators.



Splash pads open May 1

Looking for some cool summer fun? The splash pads operated by the West Baton Rouge Recreation Department will open on May 1. Hours are 8 a.m. until 8 p.m. daily through Labor Day. The pads are closed on Monday mornings for maintenance.

Swim lessons offered for ages 3-12



Swimming lessons will be offered at Williams and Lee Pool in Port Allen under an agreement with the WBR Recreation Department and the YMCA. The fee is \$10 per child. Register now because the number of participants is limited.

Swimming lesson sessions are:

Session 1 - May 31-June 10

Session 2 - June 14-24

Session 3 - June 28-July 8

Session 4 - July 12-July 22

Each session is 30 minutes long, and the sessions are age 3-5 from 10 to 10:30 a.m., age 6-9 from 10:45 to 11:15 a.m., and age 10-12 from 11:30 to noon.

For more information or to register a child for the swimming lessons, call WBR Parks & Recreation office at 225.336.2423 or Dow Westside YMCA at 225.687.1123.

Call 5-1-1 for traffic updates

Parish residents are reminded to call 5-1-1 for traffic updates, not the parish's emergency number - 9-1-1.

Emergency Preparedness Director Deano Moran said the calls to 9-1-1 take emergency dispatchers away from the critical work of assisting residents in true emergencies. "9-1-1 should be called for only emergencies," Moran said.



The first three new recruits of the West Baton Rouge Fire Department will complete four months of training at the St. George Fire Department Training Academy on May 31, and will then train for another 4-6 weeks in West Baton Rouge before being stationed locally. In the photo above, Fire Chief Kenny Hunts (right) watches as two recruits learn how to properly connect a hose to a fire hydrant. The new recruits are James Hartley, Nicholas Mayard, and Trevor Morrow.



WBR SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Going above and beyond with training



In the top photo, supervisors get people skills training. In the photo above, deputies get firearms training, and in the photo at right, Sheriff Mike Cazes reviews the shots of a deputy after a firearms session.



Sheriff Mike Cazes says that “emphasis on training is a critical component to effective law enforcement.” With that in mind, it is no surprise that members of his department receive extensive training beyond the minimum training required by the state. In fact, West Baton Rouge Parish deputies receive between 40 to 60 hours of training a year, while the required training is only 20 hours a year.

“Recently we had a mandatory eight-hour class for all supervisors on understanding differences in personalities and how to effectively supervise subordinates and interact with the public,” noted Tommy Schiro, Director of Training. “It was a people skills class, which provided excellent insight into personalities and effective communication.”

Some of the training deputies receive annually includes firearms, officer survival, active shooter tactics, DWI and field sobriety testing, defensive tactics, ethics and integrity, legal matters, use and deployment of chemical spray, along with numerous training electives.

“Over and above the 40 to 60 hours of training annually, the Special Response Team trains monthly on making entry into buildings, active shooter, hostage negotiation, and rescue, just to name a few,” Schiro noted.

Sheriff Cazes says that the Sheriff’s Office has staff members who are certified as instructors in various disciplines, saving the department thousands of dollars in training fees.

“It is critical that the men and women of our department are trained to the highest standards possible to provide for the most effective law enforcement we can, keeping the public as safe as possible,” said Sheriff Cazes.

TOWN OF ADDIS Treatment plant upgrades coming

A new effluent pump station at the Addis wastewater treatment plant will be under construction soon. The \$250,000 project will increase the flow rate of treated wastewater to the Mississippi River from 450 gallons per minute to 2,200 gallons per minute.

Mayor David Toups said the new pump station

is needed to keep the plant operating efficiently with the increased load of new development. “The new pumps are very efficient and can transport large volumes of water,” he explained. The new pump station will be located next to the existing pump station. Construction will begin once the Mississippi River level subsides.



Missouri Acres, River Landing roads to be reconstructed

The roads in River Landing and Missouri Acres subdivisions will be completely reconstructed this summer, said Mayor David Toups.

The \$250,000 project includes grinding the existing roadways down to the base and rebuilding the roads with a soil cement base and a 2 to 3-inch overlay, providing very strong roads able to handle heavy loads.

“These roads have been in need of an overlay, but we were waiting until most of the subdivisions were built out because of the damage done by heavy trucks. Once these roads are re-done, they should last more than 10 years,” Toups said.

NOTICE: Those living in the old section of Addis who have sewer grinder pumps are reminded that during severe weather you should limit flushing toilets, running water and washing laundry, and should not use water if power is out to avoid possible backup and flooding.

Addis joining parish computer data system

The Town of Addis is joining the West Baton Rouge Council’s geographic information system (GIS) project, which will put data on the town’s infrastructure, including sewer lines and manholes, water lines and other pertinent information, on the system.

Presently, personnel with Environmental Science Services, Inc. are walking the town

to gather information needed about the sewer system. Mayor Toups asks residents to assist in this project by allowing personnel with the company to have access to manholes and grinder locations. “Being part of this GIS system will assist us in economic development and in maintaining the town’s infrastructure,” he said.

Meetings: Addis Mayor & Town Council - 1st Wednesday of each month - Town Hall - 6:00 P.M.
Addis Planning & Zoning - 3rd Tuesday of each month - Town Hall - 6:00 P.M.
Addis Historical Society - 2nd Tuesday of each month - Addis Museum - 5:30 P.M.



TOWN OF BRUSLY

New police cameras offer wider views

Brusly police officers will soon be equipped with new body and police unit dash cameras that provide increased accountability for both officers and the public, said Assistant Police Chief Tom Southon.

Town officials approved the \$71,000 expense and the new equipment is expected to be operational by the end of April.

"We went to body cameras a year ago, but we had issues with those cameras, and also had to plug them into a computer for downloading, so we had a 3 hour window when they were downloading and officers were not wearing them," he explained.

The new cameras automatically download to a computer system, offer a high resolution video and a split screen where the viewer can see the officers perspective and the police unit view, and provide a wider unit camera view along with taping what happened just before

the camera was activated, said Southon.

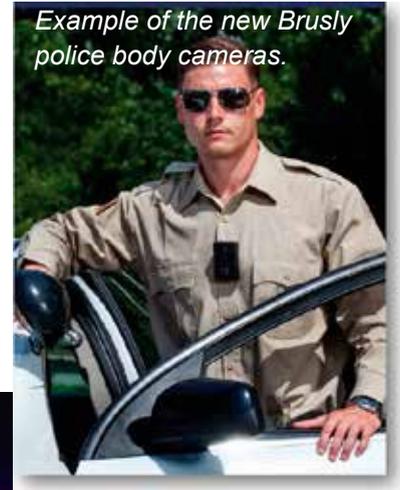
"One big factor is that everything is done wirelessly - there is no human touching the video, and only the Police Chief and myself have access to the videos," he noted.

The new video system will also allow district court judges to view the video from remote locations. "They only have access to the files we let them see, but it speeds the process of getting information to judges," he said.

Southon is a big advocate of body and unit cameras. He said the videos have significantly reduced complaints. "Before the cameras we averaged seven to eight complaints a month on officers," he said. "Now we review the video with the person complaining and the complaints filed after viewing the video are down to less than one a month."

"We had one case where a woman claimed an officer had

sexually harassed her in a stop," he noted. "The video showed he was never within 4 feet of her, and was very professional. It ended up that she was trying to make her husband jealous, so the cameras provide accountability for both the officers and the public.



Example of the new Brusly police body cameras.



BRUSLY POLICE DEPARTMENT MEET & GREET
 Saturday, May 14, 12 pm - 3 pm
 Tour Police Station & meet officers

CITY OF PORT ALLEN

Road improvement project underway

Phase three of the Port Allen road improvement project began in April. Whitehead Boulevard and Pine Streets will be reconstructed, and Courthouse and Kentucky streets will be overlaid.

Mayor Richard Lee said \$300,000 has been allocated for this phase of the city's road improvement program. If funds allow, Oaks Avenue from Alexander Street to Jefferson Street will also be overlaid. F.G. Sullivan Jr. was the low bidder on the project.

NATURAL GAS LINE PROJECT SET TO BEGIN

The city has also received bids on the construction of an 8-inch natural gas line that will extend almost two miles. The gas line will serve Genesis, Dryfus and United Postal Service exclusively. While construction will be funded by the companies, the line will be owned by Port Allen, and the city will provide them with natural gas for their operations.

The line will extend from the natural gas plant off of La. Hwy. 415 to Court Street, to Allendale, to Commercial Drive, then over to the Port of Greater Baton Rouge. The project is expected to take about five months to complete.

"This is a win for Port Allen," noted Mayor Lee. "The companies are paying for construction of the line that will serve them, and then the city will gain three significant industrial natural gas customers."

COMING: Family Day in the Park - May 28 William & Lee Park • Juneteenth Celebration - June 18 William & Lee Park

Port Allen Centennial Celebration
 Celebrating 100 Years of Community
 1916-2016

October 7 - 9, 2016
Port Allen Downtown & Riverfront

WEST BATON ROUGE TOURISM

WBR to kick off Tourism Awareness Week

Tourism representatives from around the state and West Baton Rouge will converge on the West Baton Rouge Convention and Visitors Bureau on May 2 for the statewide kick-off of Louisiana Tourism Awareness Week!

“We are thrilled that the state picked West Baton Rouge for the kick-off,” said Tourism Director Sharon Stam. “We expect numerous dignitaries and media attention for this event.”

West Baton Rouge was also recently one of the sponsors of the one-year out kick off of the Women’s

Bowling Congress, which will be held at the River Center in Baton Rouge. Stam said West Baton Rouge hotels drew a lot of guests during the last bowling congress held at the River Center, and she expects West Baton Rouge to benefit from the event in 2017 as well.

West Baton Rouge will also be represented at the IPW International Travel Show in New Orleans in June, the largest trade show in the world; and Stam will be joining forces with other Louisiana tourism agencies for shows and receptions with tour operators in Canada in late April.



La. Tourism Assistant Secretary Kyle Edmiston, WBR Tourism Director Sharon Stam and Baton Rouge Mayor Kip Holden at the Womens Bowling Congress kick off.

Kite Fest draws new audience from New Orleans!

Kite Fest drew great crowds again this year, including a group of 200 students from Warren Easton High School in New Orleans who want to return next year.

Their teachers used the event as a fun way to teach geometry to the students, and were so pleased that they have already confirmed attendance, and probably more students, next year. “The students had to make their kites and had geometry worksheets to make numerous calculations, such as how far their kite flew,” Stam said. “The teachers told us it was an exceptional educational day for the students. This opens up a new education component for Kite Fest,” Stam said.



Shown are scenes from Kite Fest, held in early April at the West Baton Rouge Soccer Complex.



CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



Chamber hosts Leader Roundtable

By Jamie Hanks, Executive Director

For the West Baton Rouge Chamber March Membership Luncheon, we were thrilled when Parish President Riley “Pee Wee” Berthelot, Jr., Port Allen Mayor Richard Lee III, Brusly Mayor Joey Normand and Addis Mayor David Toups all agreed to participate in our first-ever Parish Leader Roundtable.

Throughout the dialogue, common themes emerged: partnership, love of service, and traffic being the chief issue for our area.

When moderator Kevin Durbin, the Chamber’s Economic Development Chairman, asked, “How do the four of you work together?,” each individual echoed the same sentiments regarding how easy it is to collaborate.

President Berthelot cited a specific reference with the three municipalities coming together to have plumbing inspections—a request from Former Governor Kathleen Blanco— implemented a year later.

Mayor Lee let the audience know that the four officials meet every month, and that each has helped him learn through their experiences. Mayor Toups also said that when he was elected, each official opened up their staffs to help him hit the ground running, and that they work together on everything. Mayor Normand said he could not be more thankful of the help he receives from the Parish and mentioned

there are rarely disagreements.

Another commonality that was sprinkled throughout the roundtable was each leaders’ frustration with the traffic issue afflicting the region.

President Berthelot noted that this is “a big ticket item; we cannot do it alone.” He has met with state and federal officials specifically on this issue and promised to keep fighting, while also noting, “A billion dollars would certainly help.”

This led to the biggest laugh from audience when Mayor Normand stated, “Money ain’t coming from heaven.” Matching aggravation with traffic congestion was found in members of the

audience as well.

Which brings me to my favorite shared response amongst the group. This being their passion for the people they serve and giving back to the community. This was listed as each person’s favorite part of their jobs. Our leaders combined commitment to better our area and the open dialogue they have with one another makes West Baton Rouge Parish one great place to be, in my opinion.

I certainly learned a lot from the candid answers, and I hope the attendees did as well. I am already looking forward to the next one.



Shown at the WBR Chamber Parish Leader Roundtable event are, at front, Chamber Director Jamie Hanks, and back, from left, Addis Mayor David Toups, Port Allen Mayor Richard Lee, Brusly Mayor Joey Normand, 2016 Chamber Board Chair John Richard, Al McClendon with Lofton Staffing and Security Services, and WBR Parish President Riley “PeeWee” Berthelot.



WEST BATON ROUGE ASSESSOR New aerial photography enhances views

The aerial photography of West Baton Rouge properties flown and captured by Pictometry, Inc. on the Assessor's Office website has received rave reviews since it was added to the site in 2013. New aerial photography that was flown by Pictometry, Inc. in February of this year is presently being uploaded to the Assessor's website and should be available for viewing by May 1.

West Baton Rouge Assessor Barney "Frog" Altazan said the photography is updated every three years, and the parish has been fortunate to join with three neighboring parishes in having the photography captured in order to cut costs for each parish. "The aerial photography for West Feliciana, Pointe Coupee, Iberville and West Baton Rouge Parishes were all flown in the same flight. That makes it feasible for each parish," he explained.

"The new photography includes an 80% increase in resolution of images, providing great clarity. Previous flights concentrated the high resolution images in our three municipal areas, whereas with this flight we were able to greatly increase our coverage to include all of U.S. Hwy. 190W and most of our populated rural areas," he said. "The updated photography helps us locate and measure homes and buildings for assessments, and helps show us if we missed or overlooked some properties."

The aerial photography also benefits other governmental agencies and businesses, and is available to the public. It has been used by the Parish Maintenance and Utilities Departments, E911 to help pinpoint emergency calls, the School System to develop bus routes, and the Council on Aging to develop meal delivery routes. Developers, realtors and mortgage companies use this data.

There are now 5 sets of aerial photography that can be easily accessed on the Assessor's Office website: www.wbrassessor.org Simply click on the "Digital Maps" tab and you will be led to a map view of the entire parish. You can zoom in and out of any area of the parish or search for a specific property by putting in an address. Information about the property, including owner's name, assessed value, etc, is provided.

The pictometry views can be accessed either by selecting the pictometry tab in the far right corner of the tool bar or by selecting the pictometry icon located directly on a property once you have zoomed into your selected property. For more information on the website, call the Assessor's Office at 344-6777, or visit www.wbrassessor.org.



Examples of aerial photography available on the Assessor's Office website. At top is photo of a portion of Rivault Park taken in 2013, and at bottom is the park under renovation in February of 2016.

WEST BATON ROUGE MUSEUM

UPCOMING

April 2 – June 12 An exhibition, **Angela Gregory: From Paris to Port Allen**, a retrospective on the life and art of the Louisiana artist.

May 7 – September 4 An exhibition, **Huey Long and the Noble Experiment: Prohibition in Louisiana**.

May 18 noon **Lunchtime Lecture, "Angela Gregory: From Paris to Port Allen"** with Historic New Orleans Collection art historian, Judith Bonner. Free.

May 26 6:30 – 8:30 pm **Workshop, "Sculpture and Sangria with Cetin Ates"** An evening art experience for adults, class limited to 15 participants who will create art with a professional sculptor. Free. Reservations required call (25) 336-2422 x15.

June 25 – August 14 An exhibition, **Spirited: Prohibition in America** In a tumultuous 13-year era, Americans could no longer manufacture, sell, or transport intoxicating beverages. Ratified in 1919, the 18th Amendment stirred passionate debates between "wets" and "drys" that cemented Prohibition's place in history.

July 19, 20, 21 **Teachers Institute, "The Tumultuous Twenties and Thirties"** Required registration forms are online at westbatonrougemuseum.com or (225) 336-2422 x15.



Shown at the Volunteer Appreciation Barn Dance are junior volunteers for 2015 and Mrs. Angela Sylvan (center). Her Brusly High Middle School students volunteered at Sugar Fest, Halloween, and the Holiday Open House.



Shown at the reception for the exhibit Cohn High School: How We Love Thee, are from left, WBR School Superintendent Wes Watts, WBR Museum Director Julie Rose, school Alumni liaisons Wilhemenia DeCuir, Joycelynn Green, and Angeliqne Bergeron, co-curator with Kathe Hambrick.



WEST BATON ROUGE SCHOOL SYSTEM

Graduation Walk: Taking to streets to help young people

Students who drop out of school often find it difficult to find jobs and become successful. That's why about 20 Port Allen High administrators, teachers, school board staff, community and PAHS alumni members recently reached out to the former students with help.

The teams spent a Saturday walking to homes in Port Allen and Erwinville to advise the former students of options to either get their GED or go back to school to finish. "We identified kids with a lot of high school credits and went to try to encourage them to finish," said Port Allen High Principal James Jackson.

"We offered to help them get registered and to take the GED practice test for free, and showed them on-line and other options," Jackson said. "We got five kids back

in school, a few others are doing on-line courses, and a handful took the GED practice test, so it was a tremendous success," he said. "This will give them better options in life."

Port Allen High alumni Kati Gunter participated in the walk and said, "Our message was simple: You are important to us, and we care about your future." She noted, "Every member of the administrative staff took time out of their Saturday to tell kids they care... kids who desperately need to hear that they matter to someone and need an education."



Participants in the Port Allen High Graduation Walk gather for a photo before heading out to encourage drop-outs to get back in school or get their GED.

Burke is new HR Director

Barbara Burke has been named the new Human Resources Director for the West Baton Rouge Parish school system.



Burke has an extensive career in education. She originally taught high school English in two parishes, and then was Instructional Support teacher and Coordinator of the English as a Second Language Program (ESL).

She has worked at the La. Department of Education since 2004, first as an Education Program Consultant in the Certification Office and as Assistant Director of Teacher Certification. Since 2012, she was the State Director of the Division of Teacher Certification, Preparation and Recruitment.

She has a bachelor's degree in Secondary English Education and a master's degree in Secondary School Administration and Supervision. Barbara is married to Monte Burke and is the mother of three children: Robert, age 16; Jacob, age 15; and Jenna, age 12.



Paying tribute to local law enforcement

Local law enforcement personnel were honored by the students in the Port Allen High Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG) Program on March 8. The students initiated the program, did all of the planning and staged the event with the help of teacher Louise Stewart. "We were pleased that the students picked this project themselves, and it was good for them to interact with

officers in a positive environment, instead of when officers are responding to trouble," said Principal James Jackson. Officers with the Port Allen Police Department, WBR Sheriff's Office and La. State Police attended. The students, law enforcement officers and other attendees at the event are shown in the photo above.



Lesson in event manners

Students in the Brusly High School Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG) program recently got a hands-on lesson in manners at formal events during the JAG Social Awareness Luncheon. The students learned professional business attire, dining etiquette and social skills by taking part in an elegant luncheon at Oak Lodge Reception & Conference Center. "We wanted to put them in a true professional social setting to show them what to expect," said JAG Specialist Sonya Gilbert. The students had a full place setting and enjoyed a three-course meal as part of the program. Shown above students interact at the luncheon.

WBR sports teams excelling

Sports teams of schools in West Baton Rouge have excelled this year. Here's a list of some of WBR's best:

- Brusly High baseball team - ranked #1 in Louisiana in District 3-A and ranked nationally, and has broken the school's season win record
- Brusly High wrestling team - finished #2 in the state in Division III
- Port Allen High softball team - marked a tremendous turn-around this year and has broken the record for most regular season wins
- Port Allen boys and girls track has taken first in several meets