

VISION WEST

West Baton Rouge Parish - Community, Growth, Possibilities

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

Calendar of Events

August 11-Oct. 28

– Steamboats on the Mississippi exhibit at WBR Museum

August 10 – First day of school

August 15-17

– Qualifying for municipal elections

September 3 – Labor Day holiday

September 1 – Dec. 31

– Poydras and La. Statehood exhibit at WBR Museum

September 15, 16

– Oldies But Goodies Fest & Smokin' Oldies Cook-Off

September 22- Dec. 22

– Shipwreck: Recovered Cache exhibit at WBR Museum

September 26

– New Roads and Old Rivers book signing at WBR Museum

October 7

– Sugar Fest at WBR Museum

\$3 million road improvement program begins

West Baton Rouge Parish will begin its largest single year road improvement project in recent history this fall – spending \$2.5 to \$3 million to overlay a total of 15 roads in 2012. The project will kick-off its five-year, \$6 million road improvement program.

The roads included in the 2012 project are: Balis, Coffield, Maple, Patricia, Erwin, Ena, Cypress, Balis Bypass, Pecan, Oak, Willow, Walnut, Burnside, Commercial Drive, South Westport and Sid Richardson Road.

West Baton Rouge Parish President Riley Berthelot said

the parish received a \$350,000 Louisiana Community Development Block Grant to fund some of the project, and will fund the rest from its video poker trust fund and general fund. He said Sid Richardson Road was not scheduled to be included in the project this year, but the road is

in such bad shape that delaying the resurfacing for another year or two will result in the parish paying a lot more to overlay it.

Bids on the work will be accepted in August, with the construction expected to begin in September.

Biggest crowd ever turns out for 4th Fest



4TH FEST PACKS IN A CROWD...

The July 4th Fest on the Riverfront was a huge success, drawing more than 10,000 Westside residents and visitors to the Port Allen river front for music, food, fun and fireworks. Shown are scenes from the event. The event is sponsored by the WBR Parks & Recreation District and City of Port Allen. Special thanks to Parish President Riley Berthelot and the Parish Council, Port Allen Mayor Roger Bergeron and the City Council, WBR Convention and Visitors Bureau, and WBR Chamber for their assistance; and WBRZ-TV and The Advocate for the fireworks!

GOVERNMENT MEETINGS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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WEST BATON ROUGE MUSEUM

Museum's video wins Telly Award

The new film, West Baton Rouge Museum, created by Dale A. Smith of Multi-Media Productions and produced by the West Baton Rouge Museum, has won a 2012 Telly award in the category History/Biography. The West Baton Rouge Museum's video has been selected from nominations from all 50 states and 5 continents.

The video describes WBR's rich history that was shaped by the mighty Mississippi and seasoned with a gumbo of people from around the globe for over three hundred years. This compelling video not only invites visitors to learn about south Louisiana, but succinctly and sensitively interprets sugar cane agriculture history from the antebellum slavery era through the mid-twentieth century Civil Rights era.

Founded in 1979, the Telly Awards is the premier award honoring outstanding local, regional, and cable TV commercials and programs, as well as the finest video and film productions, and web commercials, videos and films.



Shown are scenes from the Blast From The Past summer program. In photo at far right, Weaver Tracy Flickenger shows an attendee the operation of a loom.

Museum calendar for coming months

Two Hundred Years of Steamboats on the Mighty Mississippi August 11-October 28

This exhibit helps mark the Louisiana State Bicentennial and features a collection of historical photographs by Henry Norman entitled "Kings of the River: Steamboat Transportation in the American South" from the Tom and Joan Grandy Collection at the Briscoe Center for American History at the University of Texas at Austin. In addition, the exhibit commemorates the bicentennial journey of the steamboat New Orleans' to Louisiana with a display on loan from the Rivers Institute at Hanover College called "Steamboat a Comin': The Legacy of the New Orleans."

Art Glass by Jean-Louis Deal July 7-September 16

Mardi Gras Shipwreck: Recovered Cache September 22-December 2

Film "Mark Twain Tonight!" September 9: 2:30 pm Hal Holbrook re-creates for the screen his widely acclaimed stage monologue as Mark Twain, 90 minutes. Free.

Lunchtime Lecture & book signing September 26: noon with Randy Harrelson, Brian Costello and photographer Richard Sexton for the Pointe Coupee Historical Society's new book, *New Roads and Old Rivers*.



Save the Date:
SugarFest
October 7, 2012

West Baton Rouge Museum thanks parish voters

The West Baton Rouge Museum staff and volunteers take this opportunity to extend our sincerest appreciation for your overwhelming support for the museum's tax renewal proposition. We are deeply grateful for your support and belief in the museum's work to teach and preserve our local history.

It is through your support that the museum is able to continue to strengthen our programs, improve our campus, and

develop new and innovative exhibits and programs to serve our community and the south Louisiana region.

The West Baton Rouge Museum will continue its quest to provide outstanding exhibits, education programs and events for all West Baton Rougeans and visitors-from-afar to enjoy. Again, thank you for allowing us to continue this mission.

WEST BATON ROUGE LIBRARY

West Baton Rouge Parish Library will receive no state aid for books and technology in 2012-2013. The state budget, signed by Governor Bobby Jindal on June 15, eliminated all state aid to public libraries, a total of \$896,000, which up to now has been distributed by formula to every public library system in the state.

"In the time I have been in West Baton Rouge Parish, state aid has dwindled each year," said Library Director Beth Vandersteen. "For 2011-2012, we received \$11,505, and spent every penny of that, plus some of our own funds to stay current with our Technology Plan. We replace roughly one-fourth of our computer equipment and upgrade software and licensing each year using primarily state aid funds. It enables us to offer current technology to our patrons and keeps our staff working efficiently. But for 2012-2013, it was zeroed out."

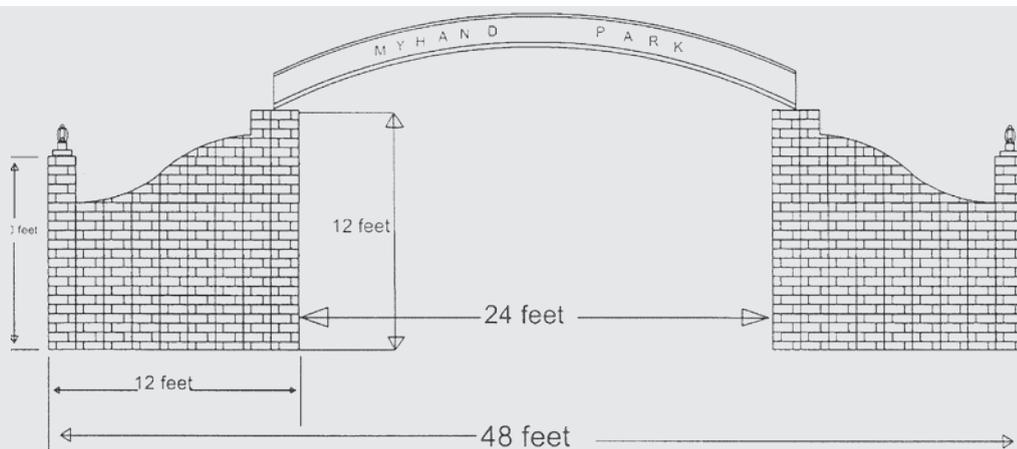
State aid to public libraries cut

"As state agencies continue to downsize, more and more of their clients must access those services online, and they often come to the library to do that," Vandersteen said. "When the Division of Children and Family Services closed their office in Port Allen, those clients were told to come to the library to use computers and Internet to apply for assistance and track their accounts. The library has only one reference librarian to help them navigate the DCFS website and help them find what they need. The state has not provided funding for additional computers, additional staff, or training for existing staff to assist their clients."

In addition, the State Library of Louisiana suffered another budget reduction for the upcoming fiscal year, which will further reduce the services it provides to local libraries. "West Baton Rouge Parish Library will continue

to do what we always do – offer the best library service possible with the resources we have," said Vandersteen, who is also a past president of the Louisiana Library Association. "Many people use public libraries to educate themselves, prepare for jobs, update resumes, and apply for work. In a spot check of the laptops we check out, over half of them were being used for job searches," she said. "The burden for providing state services is being shifted to the local tax base, which supports public libraries."

*As part of a Federal grant, the State Library of Louisiana has provided laptops for check-out to the main library in each parish. For the month of June 2012, WBRP Library laptops were checked out 46 times. Of those circulations, 26 patrons indicated that they were used for job searches.



ENTRANCE FOR MYHAND PARK...

A brick entrance to Myhand Park will soon be built, thanks to Sid Richardson Co. The entrance will be a nice addition to the popular park, said Parish President Riley Berthelot. "Sid Richardson uses the park for company picnics and wanted to give something back to the community, so they are funding the entrance (shown at left)," he said.

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

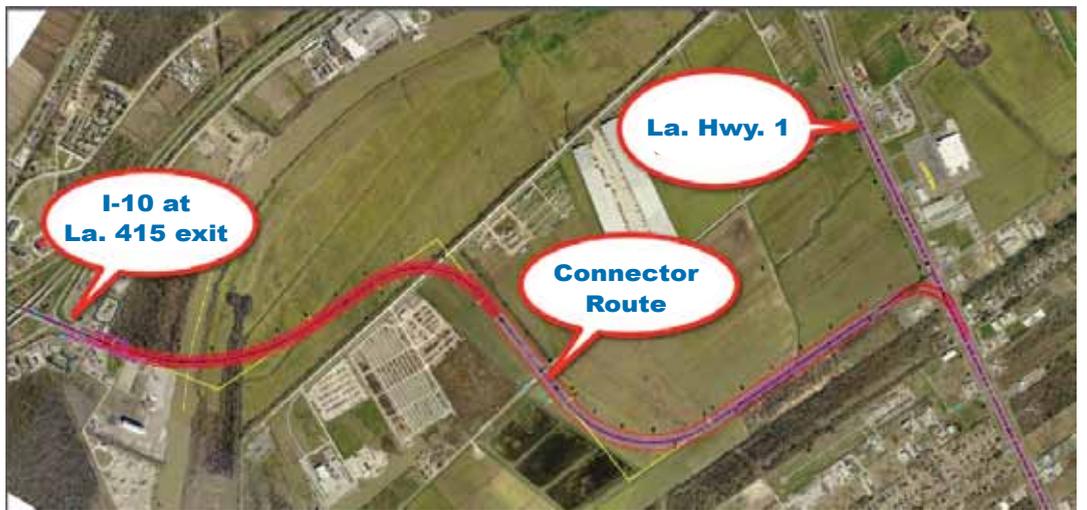
Study underway to determine connector road financing options

A comprehensive study to determine accurate revenue projections for the proposed La. 1 and Interstate 10 connector route at La. 415 is now underway, said Parish President Riley Berthelot.

The parish has contracted with CDM Smith to conduct the 8-month, \$460,000 study, which should be completed by the end of this year. "This study will tell us a lot about whether the road will get enough use to interest a private partner, how much additional funding we will have to secure and the funding required," said Berthelot.

The study is being funded by a Louisiana capital outlay grant. "The state awarded \$4 million to the parish several years back, and we have completed \$1.3 million in preliminary design work on the road. The funding for this study will be paid from those grant funds."

He noted that the parish has also received an additional \$10 million from the state in Priority 5 funding. The road is expected to cost \$130



million, but Berthelot said the number of lanes could be reduced to cut construction cost to \$75 million.

The study includes travel demand models, analysis of a toll-free road and tolled road, detailed financial models, and surveys of area drivers and residents. "CDM will conduct surveys of drivers' origin and destination points, along with surveying local residents and drivers about

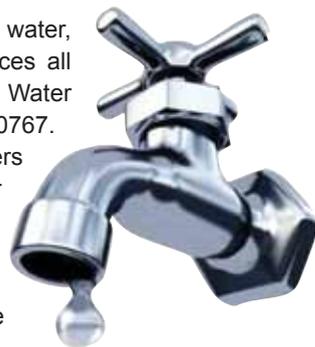
whether they would support a toll road or a tax for the road. A tax would be a last resort," Berthelot said.

The connector route project has been in the works for more than a decade. Berthelot said the complicated and costly road is necessary to relieve the congestion of the 44,000 vehicles that cross the Intracoastal Waterway bridge daily.

Parish takes over Water District #4

The WBR Natural Gas and Water System has assumed operation of Water District #4 in the northern part of the parish, and that means it will be easier for customers to pay their bill because all parish services will be on one bill.

Customers will now have natural gas, water, garbage, and sewer (in some areas) services all on one bill, which is payable to the Gas and Water System at P.O. Box 53, Port Allen, LA, 70767. Water rates will not increase and customers should not see any change in their water service, other than the water service being included in the parish bill with other services. All monies in the Water District account will be spent on Water District #4 line upgrades and enhancements in the future.



Payments can be mailed to the Gas and Water System at P.O. Box 53, Port Allen, LA, 70767, or made directly at the office drive-thru and also a night deposit box, which is located next to the drive-thru for customers making payments after working hours.

The office's phone number is (225) 336-2406, and hours are 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Thursday, and 8 a.m. to noon on Friday. Water-related emergencies that occur after office hours should be reported to the WBRP Sheriff's Office at (225) 343-9234. The Sheriff's Office will call the water department, which has an employee on call 24 hours a day for emergencies.

Register now for football, soccer leagues

The WBR Recreation Department's soccer league, youth football league, and youth flag football program are all gearing up in August. For more information, or to register for a league, call the Parks and Recreation office at 225-336-2423.



The 6th Street tennis complex in Port Allen is presently being expanded from two courts to four courts, and a restroom facility is being added. The project should be completed in August. The photo at left shows the construction underway.

Union Pacific to increase train speed

Motorists are warned to stop at railroad crossings if trains are coming, especially since Union Pacific Railroad Co. is increasing the speed of trains from 10 miles per hour to 20 miles per hour.

Roger Lambeth, Union Pacific superintendent, notified the parish that the speed will increase beginning July 30. He said

the change will enhance traffic flow and grade crossing safety.

The speed increase will affect the railroad lines from Addis through Brusly and Port Allen. The federal government sets the speed limit for all trains based on the classification of the track on which they run. The 20 mile per hour speed is the speed limit set for freight trains on the track classification through West Baton Rouge.

Battery collection program started

Keep West Baton Rouge Beautiful has started a battery collection program. Old batteries are considered hazardous waste and should not be placed in your trashcan.

Rechargeable batteries, and A, B, C and D batteries can be brought to the following locations for disposal in marked battery collection boxes: Addis Hardware, Port Allen Hardware & Supplies, West Side Lumber Co., West Baton Rouge Parish Library, and Po-Folks Fruit & Vegetables.

As the containers at each business fill up, they will be collected and properly disposed of at the parish Household Hazardous Materials Collection Day in March.





TOWN OF BRUSLY

Police Department to get new headquarters

Plans are on the drawing board for a new \$3.3 million Brusly Police Department headquarters, which could be ready by 2014.

According to Mayor Joey Normand, the Town of Brusly received a \$2.7 million state capital outlay grant that will pay for the bulk of the new facility. It will be built where the existing police station is located, behind Town Hall, after it is demolished.

"The current building was built in the 1960s and once served as the town hall. We had it evaluated to see if could be remodeled, and we were told it would be less expensive to tear it down and start from scratch," Normand explains.

The grant was appropriated by the Louisiana Legislature, thanks to the diligence of State Representatives Karen St. Germain, Major Thibaut and Regina Barrow and Senators Rick Ward and Troy Brown. Former Rep. Rob Marionneaux was also instrumental in securing the funds, Normand says.

"This is the first time this town has received capital outlay funds from the state," he notes. "And, because of this grant our fund balance will not be in jeopardy."

He adds that Brusly's population grew by 26 percent in the 2010 census to include nearly 2,600 residents. The new, modernized headquarters, which will house Brusly's chief and six officers, will more efficiently accommodate increased business.

"With a relatively new town hall (built in 2000), after this is completed, our town is positioned so that we shouldn't have infrastructure needs for decades to come," he says.

The building will also be built with the capability to house Brusly's emergency operations center in the future, Normand adds.

Architectural renderings have been prepared by Holden Architects of Baton Rouge, with detailed plans due to be completed by the end of the year. Normand estimates that bids for the station will be received in early 2013, with the goal of moving into the new facility the following year.



The current Brusly Police Station will be demolished to accommodate room for a new \$3.3 million headquarters.



TOWN OF ADDIS

New Fire Chief has big plans

Mayor Carroll Bourgeois believes that running a fire department takes an individual who's 100 percent dedicated to fire prevention and protection, and he is confident that newly appointed Addis Volunteer Fire

Department Chief Richard Wood is the man for the job.

"You look for a person with the mindset to provide service and to preserve life and property," Bourgeois explains. "This young man has all of that."

Wood was named fire chief on May 1 by the Fire District's Board of Commissioners when former Chief Henry Melancon retired. He joined the department in 2005 because he "wanted to help" after seeing the efforts firefighters put forth during a fire at his daughter's house.

An analyzer technician/electrician at Georgia Gulf in Plaquemine, where he has been employed since 1979, he has served as a member of the U.S. Air Force Reserve's Hurricane Hunters for the past 26 years. He'll retire from that position in September to devote more time to his new position as Fire Chief.

In the meantime, he has an array of plans for the department. He wants to meet with all of the 40 or so volunteers and five paid

part-timers, attend a live burn exercise and assess the need for new equipment. He is also focused on ensuring permits are obtained for burn bans, and wants to institute a burn ban flag system at the fire station to signal no burn (red), extreme caution (yellow), and no ban (green).

Wood has already established a Junior Fireman program for high school students. His hope is that when they become adults, they will have basic firefighting skills and will join the experienced volunteers with the Department. "We're having training on July 21. The goal is to prepare them so that they can hit the road when they're ready," he explains.

Wood encourages young men and women who are interested in participating to complete an application, with parental approval, at the Fire Station. Bourgeois adds that the key to a successful volunteer fire department is its volunteers.



Addis Mayor Carroll Bourgeois (seated) and new Fire Chief Richard Wood talk over plans for the volunteer fire department.

Local election qualifying is set for August

Qualifying for the Nov. 6 municipal elections is Aug. 15-17. Voters will elect a new mayor (Bourgeois is retiring after eight terms), a police chief and five at-large councilmen.

Meetings:

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

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



WEST BATON ROUGE SCHOOL SYSTEM

New standards to change teaching/learning approach in WBR schools

While students have been enjoying their summer vacations, many of their teachers and administrators in the West Baton Rouge Parish School System have been studying hard.

The efforts are linked to Louisiana's adoption in July 2010 of a new, nationwide curriculum called "common core state standards." The state joins 47 other states, two territories and the District of Columbia in signing on to the initiative with the aim of providing educators and parents a common understanding of what students are expected to learn and know.

"The common core standards define the knowledge and skills students should have within their K-12 education careers so that they will graduate from high school able to succeed in entry-level, credit-bearing academic courses and in workforce training programs," explained Superintendent David Corona. "In this fast-paced world, we want to prepare young people to solve problems quicker and with better accuracy that leads to success."

WHAT PARENTS CAN EXPECT:

The new approach is designed to focus teaching on core topics in math, English and other subjects, with an emphasis on students achieving those skills before moving to the next grade level.

In the upcoming school year, the parish's kindergarten and 1st grades will implement common core standards, with pre-school and 2nd grades following in the 2013-14 school year, and 3rd through 12th grades in the 2014-15 school year.

Supervisor for Educational Technology and Information Services Dr. Tammy Seneca says in her 20 years in education, this is the most exciting initiative she's experienced and incorporates "a lot of technology into training teachers and students with collaborative skills and problem solving."

"It's scary for some people because it's a change, but it's exciting too," she says. "We are trying to train children for jobs that haven't even been created yet. With the emphasis on problem solving instead of just learning the facts, we're challenging our students to create their own learning. Everything starts with a question now."

For example, students will not be instructed to merely memorize facts about the War of 1812, according to Dr. David Strauss, Supervisor of Special Education and Child Search Coordinator. With common core, "they'll put the pieces together and use the information that they have to form answers."

Another example shows the difference in teaching math skills. The old way was to present this problem: Mary buys 40 apples at 35 cents each. She eats two apples and sells the rest for 45 cents. How much money does she make?

With common core standards, the student will be asked to consider this problem: Mary buys some apples at 35 cents each. She eats two apples and sells the rest for 45 cents each. She makes \$4.40. How many apples did she buy?

TEACHING THE TEACHERS

In order to shift to common core standards, the school system has offered a great deal of professional development in the past months. A voluntary "Summer Summit" was held a few weeks ago with two leading experts in creating common core standards, Dr. Tim Shanahan of the University of Illinois and Kathy Sealy of the University of Texas, as keynote speakers, according to Associate Superintendent for Human Resources and Staff Development Annette Mire.



Sharon Lair, Kathy Sealy, Annette Mire and David Corona at Summer Summit.



High School teachers examine literature passages at the Summer Summit aimed at professional development in the common core standards.



Middle school teachers work on a math activity at the Summer Summit.

"This is a huge initiative and they worked with our coaches and teachers to make sure they truly understand how it's going to affect our teaching," she explains. "We're looking at how students have more access to information at an earlier age. For example, skills that might have previously been taught in fourth grade may now be taught earlier."

Associate Superintendent for Instruction Sharon Lair notes that the school district has had the benefit of two pilots as part of the Integration Grant through the Gates Foundation, and was one of only four school districts with the state to receive the grant.

The pilots, the Literacy Design Collaborative and the Math Design Collaborative, have provided an "instructional framework" to assist teachers in implementing common core standards.

"We're very grateful that these pilots enable us to get a jumpstart by assisting teachers in determining if students are learning or not," she explains. "It will be important for parents to understand that what students are now expected to do in fourth grade may be expected in the second grade level. It may take longer to cover a subject, but students will definitely know the material rather than just recall it with rote memory."

In addition to the common core standards, the state is also instituting a system to improve the way public school teachers are evaluated called "Compass." It takes into account student achievement, coupled with annual reviews.

"We already have great teachers. With the new standards just comes a new way of how teachers teach," Strauss says. "We want to implement an effective instructional plan for all students."

In addition, the West Baton Rouge Parish School System was one of only 16 districts in six states to receive the Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy Grant which will "have a huge impact" on seeing results more easily and more rapidly, he notes.

"All the stars lined up. Even though this grant is not directly related, it will help ensure that students get what they need, when they need it," Strauss says.



WEST BATON ROUGE ASSESSOR



Are you exempt? Property tax exemptions/freezes listed

Some property owners may be exempt from property taxes due to a variety of state exemptions and/or voter approved exemptions. Following is a list of exemptions/tax freezes available:

Disabled or 65 years or older property value freeze – The Louisiana Special Assessment Level program allows for residents who are disabled, disabled veterans with 50% disability, or those 65 years of age or older to have the assessed value of their home frozen for tax purposes. This means their home would not be subject to re-valuation and the assessed value of their home would remain the same no matter if property values increase. Property owners must live in the home, be disabled, be a disabled veteran, or 65 years or older, and have a combined adjusted gross income of \$67,670 or less for 2012. This income rate will increase to \$69,463 in 2013.

Veterans with a service-connected 100 percent disability exemption – West Baton Rouge voters approved this additional exemption in 2011. It provides an additional \$75,000 exemption to property owned and occupied by veterans with a service-connected, 100 percent disability. It also extends to their surviving spouse. This is in addition to the \$75,000 homestead exemption, raising the total exemption for these veterans to \$150,000.

10-year industrial tax exemption – Some large



companies that have met certain guidelines required by the state get a 10-year industrial tax exemption. These companies usually get this exemption in the first 10 years they are located in a parish as an incentive to get them to locate in Louisiana. After 10 years, the exemption rolls off and they pay existing industrial property tax rates.

Agriculture and timberland exemption – Property owners who have three or more acres of land that are actively used for farming, timberland or horticulture (such as having cattle, chickens, fruit or pecan orchids, etc...) can receive a use value exemption. A minimum of three acres must be actively used for agriculture, horticulture or timberland, and it must produce at least \$2,000 a year in income. Property that meets the qualifications is assessed at a much lower value than residential or commercial property.

Assessor Barney "Frog" Altazan said the property is put into one of four agricultural/timberland classes, which will determine the value per acre. For example agricultural classes are: Class 1 - \$34.79 per acre value; Class 2 - \$29.19 per acre value; Class 3 - \$21.52 per

acre value; and Class 4 - \$18.62 per acre value. This is a significant reduction from the normal residential and commercial land values. Timberland classes are valued a bit higher per acre than agricultural class values.

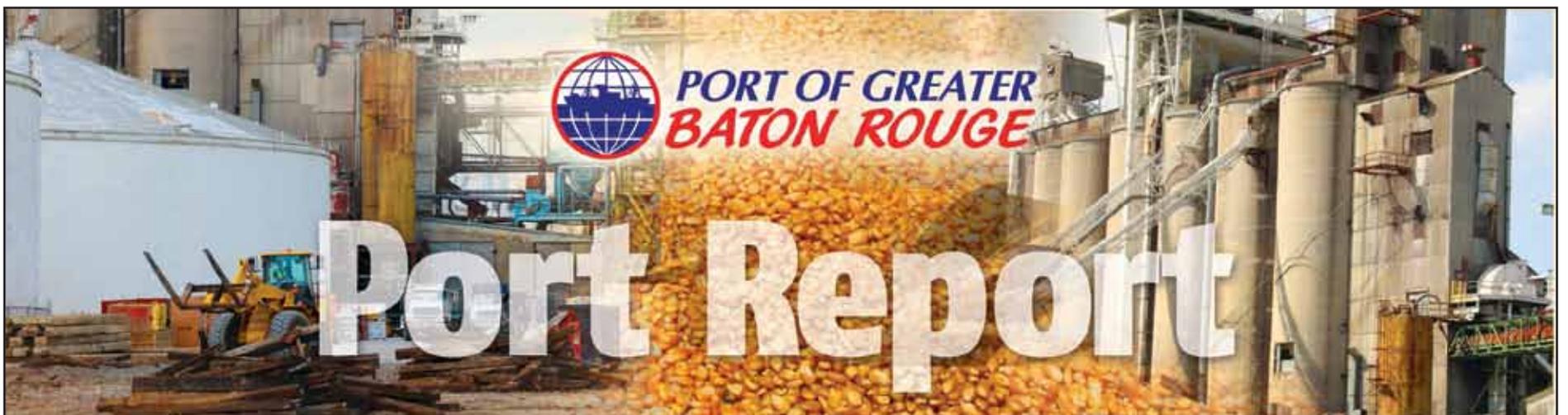
"There are restrictions on this exemption," Altazan said. "The minimum of 3 acres of property

must be in active agricultural, horticulture or timberland use, and we determine that by both inspection and the use of aerial photography," he said. "If an agricultural use is claimed, the property must be fenced and have cattle or chickens or something that is sold in the market for consumption. If it is claimed for fruit trees, they can't have a few fruit trees, it has to be an orchard with rows of trees."

Property owners can also claim the homestead exemption for the property where their home is located, so it ends up being a tremendous exemption, Altazan said.

"We would be happy to help any property owner who thinks he/she may be eligible for any of these exemptions," Altazan said. Information about these exemptions is available on the West Baton Rouge Assessor's Office website, at www.wbrassessor.org or by calling the Assessor's Office at 225-344-6777, or by going to the Assessor's Office located in the West Baton Rouge Courthouse in Port Allen.

PORT OF GREATER BATON ROUGE



Renovations are underway at the grain elevator and grain dock at the Port of Greater Baton Rouge. Louis Dreyfus Commodities, operator of the grain facilities at the port, is constructing a new dock with barge loaders and unloaders utilizing state-of-the-art environmental and grain-handling technology.

More than \$100 million is projected to be invested by Dreyfus in the upgrade to the grain dock, elevator and storage facilities at the port. The company has stated that it anticipates Baton Rouge will become the base of its Mississippi River operations in the future.

According to Dreyfus officials, there is potential to bring in more than 5 million metric tons of grain a year at the upgraded facilities, which is the equivalent of 36,000 barges.

Louis Dreyfus was founded in 1851 and actively participated in the development of grain trading. The Group has since expanded its expertise to a wide variety of commodities and participates in various diversified businesses.

www.portgbr.com



WEST BATON ROUGE TOURISM

Movie industry ramping up in West Baton Rouge Parish

Just as one movie wraps up shooting in West Baton Rouge Parish, more film makers are interested in the area as a backdrop for the big screen, and pumping dollars into the local economy.

"The movie industry is really rocking here," says West Baton Rouge Convention and Visitors Bureau (WBRCVB) Director Sharon Stam. "We get phones calls daily asking for locations and requesting information."

The most recent production to come to the parish was "Pawn Shop Chronicles," which taped "all over the parish," and also in Plaquemine, Stam says. The producers were so pleased with the cooperation they received from locals that they sent a letter of praise to Stam. "They gave us many compliments and said the experience was better here than in Louisiana's larger cities," she notes.

Starring Paul Walker ("The Fast and the Furious" and "Running Scared"), the cast includes Matt Dillon, Brendan Fraser and Ashlee Simpson, and is described as a dark comedy.

As Hollywood South becomes more attractive to the movie industry, Stam says she and other officials, including the West Baton Rouge Film Commission, want to take advantage of the lucrative opportunities that will arise. "This can have a huge economic

impact on our parish and we want to make sure it is done correctly. This has been a great experience, and we look forward to more in the future," she notes.

Upcoming Activities...

The Oldies but Goodies Fest is planned for Sept. 15-16 at the West Baton Rouge Tourist Information and Conference Center grounds. Saturday's events will include a state championship barbecue contest with live music from 1 to 4 p.m. by The Carbon Copy Band. On Sunday, Na Na Sha plays from noon to 3 p.m., with Vince Vance and the Valiants performing from 3 to 6 p.m. An antique car show, poker run and dance and hula hoops contests will also be featured.

Sponsorship and volunteer opportunities are available for the event, as well as for the upcoming Reflections of the Season exhibit that begins on Dec. 1, Stam adds.

For more information about upcoming events and to view a video on the Oldies but Goodies Fest, as well as other parish events, visit the website at www.westbatonrouge.net or call the WBRCVB at (225) 344-2920.



CITY OF PORT ALLEN

Administrative team guides future of Port Allen

When Mayor Roger Bergeron took office last November, he sought leaders who would "be responsive to the needs of Port Allen's citizens and who would ensure the integrity of the city's finances."

Today, his team is assembled and he says he's "excited to have the most qualified folks on board for the benefit of the city and myself." That team includes Chief Administrative Officer Adrian Genre, Chief Financial Officer Audrey McCain, and Acting Public Works Director Terry Vincent. With varied and diverse backgrounds, each brings a unique perspective to city government.

Genre, who has just been on the job since June 13, is the newest member of the team. He began his professional career as a Port Allen police officer and served as Police Chief from 1993 to 2000. Most recently, the Port Allen native was the owner of Jason's Restaurant and Catering for 10 years. He looks forward to representing Bergeron in the day-to-day responsibilities of city government.

"Our job is to be the mayor's marketing team and to promote his vision," Genre says. "That's our mission so to speak."

McCain, a lawyer who practiced for 25 years, also holds a master's degree in public administration. Her interest in government led her to a career as a state legislator from 1993 to 2000, and she plans to use that experience to benefit the city.

Vincent has worked for the city in various public works capacities for nearly 23 years before being named as the Acting Public Works Director a few months ago. Bergeron will ask the City Council to approve his recommendation to make Vincent the permanent Public Works Director at its July meeting.



Mayor Roger Bergeron (left) is joined by members of his leadership team Chief Financial Officer Audrey McCain, Chief Administrative Officer Adrian Genre, and Acting Public Works Director Terry Vincent.

Vincent has seen economic challenges facing the city, but notes that even with tight budgets, major repairs have been achieved, including the \$1.9 million rehabilitation of the waste water treatment plant and waste water collection system, the \$697,000 water well on Avenue D and a \$565,000 U.S. Army Corps of Engineers grant for a drainage project between Louisiana Avenue and Rosedale Road.

"It's important to point out that through this economic downturn, there has been no reduction of city services," Genre says. "While other places are experiencing it, we haven't seen it here. It has a lot do with fiscal

responsibility and budgeting."

McCain agrees, noting "our goal is provide citizens the best quality of services with the least possible cost," while operating within the general fund budget of \$4 million and maintaining secure fund balances.

As for the future, the team looks forward to continuing a positive relationship with parish government and working on projects like extending Phase 3 of the levee top northward and closing open ditches along Rosedale Road.



WEST BATON ROUGE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Honoring WBR Parish Teachers of the Year...

The WBR Chamber recognized these special teachers at its May Membership Meeting. The WBR Chamber firmly believes that education and economic development go hand-in-hand. Shown, from left, are Elementary Teacher of the Year Ann Stelly, Port Allen Elementary; La. Secretary of State John Kennedy; Middle School Teacher of the Year Kimberly Guillot, Port Allen Middle; and High School Teacher of the Year Will Mulina, Port Allen High School. Not pictured is Holy Family Catholic School Teacher of the Year Monette Celestin.



New Dow leader welcomed...

The WBR Chamber welcomed Eduardo DoVal, the new Site Leader of The Dow Chemical Company's Louisiana Operations, at a recent Community Advisory Panel (CAP) meeting. DoVal began his career with Dow in 1985 in Brazil and has held a variety of manufacturing and business roles around the world. Shown from left are WBR Chamber Board Chairman David Ogwyn, Dow Site Leader Eduardo Douvall, WBR Chamber Executive Director Kathy Stuart, and WBR Parish President Riley Berthelot.



New Chamber members welcomed! Shown at a recent Chamber membership meeting are new members, from left: Steve Jones with Didier Consultants; Abby Flynn with Capital Area United Way; Kimberly Murphy Paul with Noah's Pharmacy; Bobby Boudreaux with Crump Wilson Architects; Steve Rogers with Village Profile; Sandy Martinez with Geaux Postal, Etc.; Scott D'Agostino and Jennifer Hall with Tipton & Associates; and WBR Chamber Board Chairman David Ogwyn.

Dow Westside YMCA cuts ribbon on new computer lab!

The Westside YMCA recently opened its new computer lab, which was underwritten by BP. This new computer



lab will be instrumental in helping students with technology and continuing education, especially in math. Shown at the ribbon-cutting are, from left: WBR Chamber Chairman David Ogwyn, BP's Brian Wilson, YMCA's Rose Wilson, BP's Tandra LeMay, BP Plant Manager Darko Vukojevic, YMCA's Bob Jacobs, Owen Cope, YMCA Board Chairman and WBR Chamber Board Member; Congressman Bill Cassidy staffer Dale Marionneaux, Westside YMCA Director Tima Midyette, and Port Allen City Councilperson Ray Helen Lawrence. Shown at back are WBR Parish President Riley Berthelot, Addis Mayor Carroll Bourgeois, and Brusly Mayor Joey Normand.



Deric's celebrates new location... Shown at the ribbon cutting of Deric's Heating & Air, LLC are, from left, WBR Chamber Executive Director Kathy Stuart, WBRP Sheriff Mike Cazes, Deric's Heating & A/C staff: Kacy Curle, Mario Anzaldua, L.J. Nelson, Owner Deric Breaux, and John Nelson; David Ogwyn, WBR Chamber Chairman; Brusly Mayor Joey Normand, and Deric's Heating & A/C staff: Wanda Daigle, Gabe Nelson and Emily Curle. Deric's is located at 1923 West Shore Drive in Port Allen.

O'Reilly Auto Parts holds ribbon cutting...

Shown at the ribbon cutting for the opening of O'Reilly Auto Parts in Port Allen are, from left, WBR Chamber Executive Director Kathy Stuart; American Gateway Bank's Glen Daigle and Ricky Sparks, Past Chairman of WBR Chamber; Port Allen Mayor Roger Bergeron; WBR Chamber Board Chairman David Ogwyn; O'Reilly Auto Parts General Manager Pete Goodman; O'Reilly Auto Parts District Manager Tommy Boudwin; Edward "Bob" Robertson, WBR Parish Council; Sgt. Leo Fontenot, WBR Sheriff's Office; and Scott Gaudin, Iberville Bank and WBR Chamber Board Director.



SAVE THE DATE!

2012 Procurement & Business EXPO Partners:



Thursday, September 13th 10AM - 6PM
Addis Community Center
CONTACT CHAMBER TO REGISTER!
225/383-3140 www.wbrchamber.org

EXCITING, NEW FORMAT FOR THE EXPO!

- 10 a.m. – 12 noon Procurement EXPO: Face time with procurement directors from leading industries
- 12 noon - 1 p.m. EXPO Lunch: Featured Speaker: Bruce Lambert, Executive Director, Institute for Trade and Transportation Studies
- 1:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m. Business EXPO
- 10 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. FREE for Chamber Members: Seminars on Social Media/ Networking your business and H/R tools for a better work environment
- 4:30 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. EXPO After Hours: Social showcasing our Chamber restaurateurs and caterers

FALL CHAMBER MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS

(All on the LAST Wednesday of the month)
11:30 Registration/Networking Noon: Program begins
\$20 for Chamber members/\$25 for Non-members
RESERVATIONS REQUIRED: 225/383-3140 or
bonnie@wbrchamber.org
No December meeting



AUGUST 29TH
WBR Parish
President
Riley Berthelot
Addis Community
Center



SEPTEMBER 26TH
Congressman
Bill Cassidy
Addis Community
Center



OCTOBER 31ST
Lt. Governor
Jay Dardenne
WBR Visitors &
Convention Bureau



NOVEMBER 28TH
Superintendent
of WBR Schools
David Corona
Addis Community
Center

Congratulations to the West Baton Rouge Museum, which recently won a 2012 Telly Award in the history/biography category for its film chronicling cultural aspects and benefits of West Baton Rouge Parish. Telly Awards honor outstanding local, regional and cable TV commercials and programs, as well as video and film productions. The museum's video was selected from among entries from all 50 states and 5 continents! View the prize winner at www.YouTube.com and type in West Baton Rouge Museum to see the video.