

VISION WEST

West Baton Rouge Parish - Community, Growth, Possibilities

A quarterly publication for West Baton Rouge residents by your public agencies • January, 2014

Calendar of Events

- Feb. 1** – Lego Club at Library
- Feb. 1** – Alvin Batiste reception at WBR Museum
- Feb. 5** – WBR Chamber Annual Banquet
- Feb. 15** - Addis Fire Dept. Ladies Auxiliary Ball
- Feb. 15** – Meet Rosa Parks performed at WBR Museum
- Feb. 23** – Addis Mardi Gras Parade
- Feb. 26** – WBR Chamber membership meeting
- March 1** – Lego Club at Library
- March 2** – Krewe of Good Friends of the Oaks Parade Port Allen, 1 p.m.
- March 8** – Household Hazardous Materials Collection Day
- March 15 - April 27** – WBR Talented Student Art Exhibit at Museum
- March 16** – Family primitive painting workshop at Museum
- April 4-6** – Kite Fest Louisiana
- April 5** – Lego Club at Library
- April 12** - Clean Up Day/WBR Beautification
- April 12** – Abraham Lincoln's trunk show at WBR Museum
- Thru March 9** – Danny Lyon photography at WBR Museum
- Thru March 30** – Alvin Batiste art at WBR Museum

RECREATION UPDATE: Big strides made in programs, parks

West Baton Rouge's Recreation Department has made great strides in improving both park offerings and programs in the last eight years, providing activities and recreation opportunities for all ages in the parish.

Millions of dollars have been spent on improvements and additions to the recreation facilities, and another \$1.5 million will be spent in 2014 on improvements. Among the most expensive and note-worthy capital improvement projects completed are:

- soccer facility in Port Allen
- water splash parks in all parts of the parish
- new tennis complex
- a football field at Port Allen Middle School
- construction of the Louis Mouch



Kids enjoy the new water splash parks that opened in 2013.



Action from the Youth Flag Football League

- Erwinville Recreation Baseball and Softball Leagues
- Westside Bulldog Youth Football League
- WBR Youth Flag Football League
- WBR Youth Soccer League
- WBR Youth Baseball/Softball League
- William & Lee Youth Baseball/Softball League
- Lukeville Youth Baseball/Softball League
- Therapeutic Horsemanship Program
- Boot Camp at WBR Community Center
- Boot Camp at Addis Community Center
- Fitness classes at Erwinville CC
- Hershey Track and Field
- Pickle Ball League
- Sewing classes
- Art classes
- Senior Spirit program
- Summer day camps

And many residents don't know it, but the Recreation Department is also involved in staging the July 4th Festival, Kite Fest and the WBR Parish Fair; and assists the WBR Parish Library with some programs.

There's never been a better time for recreation in West Baton Rouge – get out and enjoy your facilities and programs! For more information, call the WBR Recreation Department at 225-336-2423.

- Multi-purpose Facility
- substantial improvements to all the parks in the parish
- \$1 million in grant and parish funding obtained and planning underway to add a levee top walking trail in Brusly, and extend the trail in Port Allen
- improvements to the William and Lee Park swimming pool facility

In addition to these projects, the Recreation Department has greatly expanded its programs and offerings, providing fun activities for every age group. Those efforts have paid off with more than 2,500 people involved in the programs. The department partners with other organizations on some of these programs:

- Adult Co-Ed Softball League



New tennis complex in Port Allen

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.wbr council.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

Postal Patron Local

PRSRPT STD
U.S. Postage
PAID
Port Allen, LA
Permit #18



WEST BATON ROUGE MUSEUM



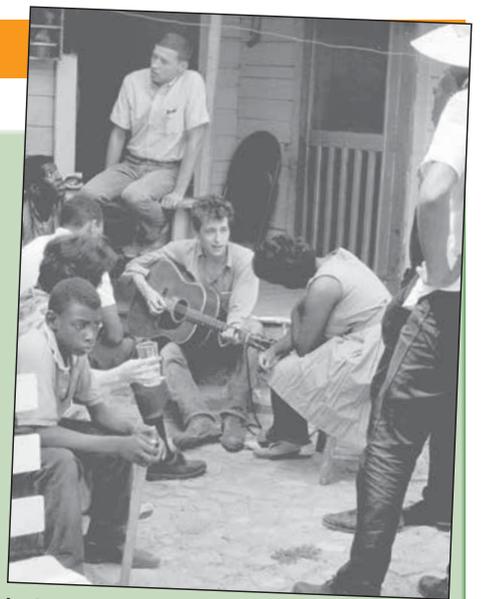
Batiste paintings at Museum

The West Baton Rouge Museum is exhibiting Alvin Batiste Art: South Louisiana Folk Art Paintings through March 30. Self-taught artist Alvin Joseph Batiste, a native of Donaldsonville, is a well-known artist who paints memories of his childhood growing up in South Louisiana, as well as a myriad of contemporary themes. His vibrant folk style art features scenes of story-telling and culinary traditions, rural and plantation life, vernacular architecture, portraits, religious events, and the effects of Hurricane Katrina to name a few.

Lyon Southern civil rights photography on exhibit

The exhibition DANNY LYON: MEMORIES OF THE SOUTHERN CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT, is being shown now through March 9 at the WBR Museum. Lyon helped define a mode of photojournalism in which the picture-maker is deeply and personally embedded in his subject matter.

Lyon was the first staff photographer for the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), a national group of college students who joined after the first sit-in by four African American college students at a North Carolina lunch counter. From 1963 to 1964, Lyon traveled the South and Mid-Atlantic regions documenting the Civil Rights Movement.



In this photo from the exhibit, Bob Dylan plays for members of the SNCC.

WBR Museum Calendar for January-April

January 11 - March 9, 2014: Danny Lyon: Memories of the Southern Civil Rights Movement Lyon was photographer for the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). From 1963 to 1964 he captured moments from the American Civil Rights movement.

January 18-March 30: Alvin Batiste's South Louisiana Folk Art Donaldsonville native Alvin Batiste is known as one of Louisiana's premier folk artists. His subject matter ranges from biblical scenes to rural life to portraits, reflecting the rich tapestry of Louisiana.

February 1, 1-4 p.m.: Reception for Alvin Batiste's South Louisiana Folk Art, Meet the Artist! Batiste will set up a temporary studio in the museum to

demonstrate his painting techniques.

February 9, 3 p.m.: Black History Film Forum Freedom Riders View clips of the Emmy-winning documentary "Freedom Riders" along with a facilitated discussion led by Dr. Rachel Emanuel. The Freedom Riders took the civil rights struggle out of the courtroom and into the streets of the Jim Crow South in 1961.

February 15 performance "Meet Mrs. Rosa Parks" performed by Melissa Waddy Thibodeaux of Flying Geese Productions.

March 15 - April 27: Talented Art Student Exhibition The annual exhibit showcases the work of West Baton Rouge elementary through high school

age children enrolled in the Talented Art program. Opening Reception is March 16, 2:30-5 p.m.

March 16, 3-5 p.m.: Family Workshop: Primitive Painting Party: Celebrate Louisiana's famed folk artist Alvin Batiste. Pick up a paint brush to capture a memory on canvas. Festivities include the Talented Art Student Exhibit reception.

April - May: Lincoln: The Constitution and the Civil War Using the U. S. Constitution as the cohesive thread, this panel exhibit offers a fresh and innovative perspective on Lincoln that focuses on his struggle to meet the political and constitutional challenges of the Civil War. Organized thematically, the

exhibition explores how Lincoln used the Constitution to confront three crises of the war—Southern secession, slavery, and wartime civil liberties.

April 12, 10:30 to 11:30 a.m.: Family Workshop: Abraham Lincoln's Trunk presentation. One woman show engages the audience members in stories about Lincoln and mid-19th century farm life chores and crafts.

April 6, 2:30-4 p.m.: Harlem Renaissance documentary in partnership with the LSU Museum of Art. Free. The music and rhythms that started a cultural revolution featuring Cab Calloway, Duke Ellington, Nat King Cole, Count Basie, Lena Horne, Dorothy Dandridge and more.

WEST BATON ROUGE LIBRARY



West Baton Rouge Parish Library is again offering LEGO CLUB to everyone ages three and older! Lego Club will start at 1:30 p.m. on the first Saturday of February, March, and April at the library, 830 North Alexander, Port Allen. The sessions are free and open to the public. Please register by calling 342-7920 extension 224, or via the library's website, www.wbr.lib.la.us.

TOUCH SCREENS are here! The library is introducing touch screen monitors on public computers and Public Access Catalogs. Come in and enjoy the latest technology! Use of computers with Internet access is a free service of the library.

BASIC COMPUTER CLASSES are taught every Wednesday at 11 a.m. at the library. Topics include introduction to computers, basic Internet searching, e-mailing, and more. The sessions are free and open to the public. To register or for more information, please call 342-7920, exten-

sion 230.

New DATABASES have been added to the virtual library available through the WBRP Library website, www.wbr.lib.la.us. In addition to existing core resources like World Book Online and Mango Languages, you can now find Reference USA, a premier source of business and residential information, including a new jobs module to help identify available jobs by type and link to the profiles of hiring companies. Also new are Louisiana Legal Forms and Auto Repair Reference Center. These and other databases can be accessed from the library or from home via the Internet.

And of course, don't forget BOOKS in every format – regular print, large print, audiobooks (recorded on CD), e-books and e-audiobooks for downloading, and books for every age and interest. Visit your West Baton Rouge Parish Library soon and see what's new for you!

Register your cell phone for emergency information

All West Baton Rouge residents are being reminded to register their cell phones with the West Baton Rouge Parish Office of Homeland Security, Emergency Preparedness and 9-1-1 in order to receive emergency information.



With more residents opting out of home phone service and moving to cell phones only, Director Anthony "Deano" Moran said residents should register their cell phone numbers with his office to receive messages from the parish "all call" system.

The automated calls are sent to parish resident's phones in cases of evacuations, shelter in place, or any safety announcements. "This

gives everyone an opportunity to receive emergency information if they don't have a home phone," Moran says.

The information provided will not be shared with any third parties. The cell numbers are kept confidential and are only used to relay emergency information. Call the Office of Homeland, Security, Emergency Preparedness at (225) 346-1577 for more information or log on at www.wbrlepc.net.

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

Parish lists capital improvement projects for 2014

The West Baton Rouge Parish capital outlay budget for 2014 totals \$12.1 million, and includes significant spending on parish road improvements, recreation and purchases of heavy equipment for the public works, utility and drainage departments. Following is a breakdown of major capital outlay spending:

Recreation - \$1.5 million

- Levee top trail in Brusly
- VFW Hall renovations
- Improvements at Erwinville, Addis and Port Allen Community Centers
- Basketball goals at Winterville Park
- City of Port Allen levee-top walking trail
- Shade covers at Erwinville, Alexander, William & Lee and Myhand Parks and arena

- Park main entrance signage at Erwinville, Rivault and Alexander parks
- New goals and resurfacing basketball courts at William & Lee Park
- Bathroom additions at Erwinville and Myhand Parks
- Walking area around the splash pad at Alexander Park
- Renovations to William & Lee pool house
- Livestock panels and murals at arena
- Parish match for levee-top trails in Brusly

Road improvements - \$1,497,500

- Road linking William & Lee Park to 14th Street
- Overlay/repairs of Antonio Road, Trueil Road, Commercial Drive, South Westport and Charles Drive

Ride or volunteer with GaitWay

Those with disabilities can ride and others are needed to volunteer with GaitWay Therapeutic Horsemanship. Gaitway provides equine assisted activities and therapy (EAAT) for people with special needs at the Louis Mouch Jr. Multi-Purpose Facility in Port Allen.



GaitWay offers children and adults with disabilities the opportunity to move beyond their boundaries through the healing power of the horse and the dedication of professionals and amazing volunteers. Volunteers are needed! For further information please contact GaitWay at: Info@GaitWay.org or call 225-766-1614.

GaitWay is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization and is in need of Western and English tack and clothing. Donations are greatly appreciated and tax deductible.

Tax preparation help available

The WBR Council will again to provide FREE tax return preparation by certified volunteers. To be eligible, residents must be low to moderate-income, disabled, or a senior adult with an income of less than \$50,000. To schedule an appointment call 383-4755 or go to the WBR Governmental Building across from the WBR Courthouse.

Bring the following documents for the appointment: the current year's tax package and/or label, all forms W-2 and 1099's, other income information, all deductions/credits, a copy of last year's return, Social Security number or taxpayer identification for you, your spouse and dependents and proof of identification.

Great American Clean Up/Day of Beautification

Saturday, April 12 9 a.m.- noon

Call 490-8549 to register and participate

Free lunch and prizes at Port Allen Community Pavilion

Household Hazardous Materials Collection Day

Saturday, March 8 8 a.m. - noon

Louis A. Mouch Jr. Multi-Purpose Facility

152 Turner Road, Port Allen

Bring old paint, TV's computers, tires, etc.

For a complete list go to wbr council.org

Sponsored by Keep West Baton Rouge Beautiful



Photo above shows the new road to provide better access to William & Lee Park, and additional access to Cohn Elementary School.

Master plan transportation projects

Sewer improvements

- Lobdell sewer improvement project - \$2,883,000
- Sewer lift station generators - \$332,000
- Lukeville sewer improvements - \$335,000
- Diversion Canal drainage project - \$600,000
- Rosedale Road culvert/sidewalk project - \$850,000
- Computer upgrades and networking - \$164,000

Heavy equipment and vehicles

- \$989,000 (dump truck, street sweeper, tractor, slope mower, excavator, tractor with loader, service vehicles, etc.)

911 and communications equipment/software upgrades - \$200,000

Detention center improvements - \$220,050

Erwinville Food Pantry improvements - \$100,000

Port Allen Food Pantry improvements - \$30,000

415 Connector project planning - \$2,000,000

Major sewer, drainage projects planned

The parish has a Lobdell \$2.8 million sewer project in the works for 2014, and a major drainage project that is presently in engineering, and is expected to begin in early 2015, said Parish President Riley "PeeWee" Berthelot.

LOBDELL SEWER PROJECT:

Approximately 150 homes in the Lobdell area will be connected into the parish sewer system in the \$2.8 million sewer project that will begin this summer. Most homes being connected are on the west side of La. Hwy. 415, but some are on the east side also.

The project includes extending pipelines from the area into the parish sewer plant, connecting the residences and properly closing all residents' septic tanks according to federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) guidelines. When the project is complete the residences will be on the parish sewer system and will pay a monthly fee for that service.

Funding for the project is part of the \$8 million in Hurricane Gustav recovery funds that the parish received. Other projects that have already been completed with recovery funds include generators for all sewer left stations, drainage improvements in the Lynndale area, and the parish and Port Allen master plans.

OLD BRIDGE AREA DRAINAGE PROJECT:

Another project being funded by the recovery funds is a new three quarter of a mile canal to help drainage from the northern part of the parish and old Mississippi River bridge area, along with Lobdell and residents west of La. Hwy. 415 in the Rosedale Road/Rebelle Lane area. The canal will extent into the Intracoastal Waterway. This \$600,000 project is presently in the engineering phase, and will have to be submitted to federal agencies for wetlands mitigation because it will run through wetlands. It is expected to bid out in early 2015.

On-line bill pay offered, but not advised for disconnects

West Baton Rouge Parish Natural Gas & Water now offers bill pay on the parish website. However, customers should be aware that online payments through the website are NOT automatically posted to your account. It can take up to 3 business days for the payments to be settled and posted, therefore if you are due for disconnection, and it is past the disconnection date, it is not wise to pay online through the website, as you are still subject to disconnection.



WEST BATON ROUGE TOURISM

Lights draw heavy crowds

The year ended with a bang for the West Baton Rouge Convention and Visitors Bureau (WBRCVB) as a record number of visitors toured West Baton Rouge Parish's Reflections of the Season during December.

Although numbers have not yet been finalized, WBRCVB Director Sharon Stam estimates that attendance at the annual holiday light display was about 10 percent more than last year.

"We had nothing but positive feedback. We were cited as one of the top 10 holiday events for Louisiana families, and we're growing every year," Stam explains. "We're already planning for next year and considering additional attractions."

Stam attributes much of the event's success to its sponsors and volunteers. Louisiana's only singing and talking reindeer, Trevor, the newest addition to the holiday event, was also a big draw. Other attractions included ice fishing, presented along with Spillway Sportsman, as well as snow nights, wagon rides, craft and gift vendors.

The magnificent 300,000-light show attracted many interstate travelers from places like Texas, Arkansas, Florida and California, Stam adds. Many visitors came back a second time with family and friends to enjoy the festivities.

10TH KITE FEST!

As they're packing up the Christmas displays, tourism officials are also looking ahead. This year's Kite Fest Louisiana is planned for April 4-6. Stam is planning "something special," like a permanent historical display in the WBRCVB lobby, to commemorate

this year's tenth annual event and recognize West Baton Rouge Parish as the state's kite capital.

She suggests that any schools interested in field trips to Kite Fest on April 4 contact the WBRCVB to register as soon as possible.

Stam also notes that, as a member of the 13-parish Southeast Louisiana Gumbo Partnership, the WBRCVB will benefit from a \$372,000 grant from BP to spread news about regional tourism and seafood. Some of the funds will be used to publish the "Spicin' Up Life" cookbook, which promotes Louisiana cuisine. The cookbooks, along with gumbo seasoning packets, are distributed at RV/Leisure Shows throughout the United States and Canada.

She is also planning another media tour to Jackson, Miss., Memphis and Chicago aboard Amtrak to gain national interest in Louisiana seafood and the Southeast Louisiana region.

For more information about upcoming events, visit the website at www.westbatonrouge.net or call the WBRCVB at (225) 344-2920.



Scenes from the Reflections of the Season light display.



WEST BATON ROUGE ASSESSOR

Save on property taxes with exemptions

West Baton Rouge property owners may be able to lower their property taxes or freeze their property value by taking advantage 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 \$70,484 or less in 2014.

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.

"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, 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.





WEST BATON ROUGE SCHOOL SYSTEM

Technology successes get notice

For the past 10 years, West Baton Rouge School administrators and teachers have applied more than a bit of emphasis on technology. It appears those efforts are paying off as two district teachers are being recognized for their commitment.



Lindsay Gates

"We've worked hard to be on the cutting edge of technology as much as we can," said Superintendent David Corona. "Obviously that is the world our children live in and we want to prepare them as best we can."

Corona commended Port Allen Elementary School early childhood educator Lindsay Gates and Brusly High School teacher Mandy Ford for recognition from Louisiana Computer Using Educators (LACUE), a professional nonprofit organization that promotes computer usage in education. At its annual convention in December, Gates and Ford were honored as "2013 Educator of the Year Regional Winners" for early education and high school, respectively. In addition

to West Baton Rouge Parish, Region 2 is comprised of teachers from 14 other parishes.

"The tools and knowledge gained at the LACUE conference have proven to be vital in breathing new life into my every day routines," noted Ford. "It's amazing how expansive students will be when they are allowed to create, publish and post."

Ford, along with West Baton Rouge's Danielle Lamotte, presented a session at the conference on "Teaching Digital Natives in the Middle and High School Classrooms."

Dr. Tammy Seneca, Associate Superintendent for Informational Systems and Educational Technology, serves as LACUE's Region 2 Director. She notes that the school system had presenters at three sessions, an indication of the progress being made in technological instruction.

"Our reputation is growing and we're building a reputation as a good place

to see where technology is successfully being used in curriculum," Seneca says, adding that school officials have been approached by other organizations like the Public Broadcasting System and the West Baton Rouge Parish Museum to partner in technological projects.



Danielle Lamotte, left, and Mandy Ford are among state educators who presented technological sessions at the LACUE annual convention in December.

Educators make mark nationally

Two Port Allen High School educators are stepping out of the classroom to support others in teaching literacy.

Literary Instruction Specialist Michelle Tureau and Master Teacher Susan Herrington have received certification to become national jurists. This will allow them to judge "modules" submitted by their colleagues from



Susan Herrington

around the country to the Literacy Design Collaborative (LDC), which offers a framework for building the college and career-ready literacy skills specified by the Common Core State Standards.

The modules show the plan for skills students will learn and instruction that will develop those skills. As a jurist, Tureau and Herrington will identify good-to-go tasks and modules and then a smaller set of tasks and modules that are exemplary.

"LDC is a framework for planning good instruction.

It has a teachers' plan for reading and writing, as well as discussion in class," Herrington explains. "The LDC framework is a lot of planning up front by the teacher, but the result is student-driven instruction where students are doing the thinking, questioning and discussing instead of the teacher lecturing and students copying notes from the board."

Dawn Henry, Secondary Supervisor of Instruction, agrees. "These modules are a lot of work, 20 to 30 pages of detailed information," she says. "But when you see how the students respond, it pays off. They are actively engaged."

"West Baton Rouge's progressive approach is not only changing the way teacher's think and respond. It teaches students how to focus on problem solving and opens their eyes to global issues that require a more in-depth analysis," Tureau says. "Advanced thinkers in an ever-changing world!"

Associate Superintendent of Instruction Sharon Lair added, "Tureau and Herrington are the only certified jurists in our school district and among only a small, select number in the state. Having certified jurists not benefits our school system and other districts around the state and country, but also shows their dedication and passion for their profession."

"They have gone beyond and above. In addition to their classroom duties, they spent many hours afterward working on this, even over the Christmas holidays," Lair notes.



Michelle Tureau

School Board members get training

Each year, Louisiana district school board members hit the books and head back to the classroom to complete training hours as required by state law.

Since 2011, Act 705 has required all board members to attend six hours of training, and additionally, they must complete one hour of ethics training for elected officials. West Baton Rouge School District board members recently complied with the requirements and received a certificate from Superintendent David Corona.

Corona notes that this year, each board member exceeded the required hours of training. Board members are Jason Manola, Dr. Atley D. Walker Sr., Toby Sarradet, Craig Sarradet, Teri Bergeron, Leon Goudeau, Thelma L. Pattan, Ronald "Blue" LeBlanc, Michael A.

Maranto and G. Alden Chustz, Jr.

Required subject matter includes school law, powers, duties and responsibilities of school board members, educational trends, research and policy, the open meetings law, public bid law and the Minimum Foundation Program law.

Other topics may include literacy and numeracy, leadership development, dropout prevention, career/technical education, high school redesign, early childhood education, school discipline and harassment, intimidation, ethics and bullying.

This year's presentations included "Early Childhood Development/West Baton Rouge Head Start Program" by Crystal Leon, Supervisor of PreK/Head Start Director; and Heidi Grissom, Early Childhood Curriculum Coach.

Local teacher publishes first book, more on way

When Brusly High School English teacher Sarah Guillory awoke one morning she knew she had to write a book. "I had this dream and then a second one so I decided to connect them and got to work," Guillory explains. "The result is a dark love story about three teens who come together while their lives are falling apart."

More than three years later, her novel, "Reclaimed," is in bookstores and on electronic media. The Arkansas native set the book's scenes in her home state. But, she doesn't completely draw from her own experiences. None of the characters is patterned after her students, although she did name one after a former student who asked her to remember him when she published her first book.

Response from her students has been "awesome, incredible," she says. "At my first book signing in Baton Rouge, we sold out 10 minutes before it started. It was because of my students," Guillory credits, adding that Barnes and Noble and Books-a-Million have sold out three or four times.

A second book signing is being planned at Barnes and Noble for February. Guillory has already written a second book, which she hopes will be the first in a trilogy. It is set in Louisiana and is both contemporary and historical, with flashbacks connecting the scenes.



Sarah Guillory displays her book, "Reclaimed," at a book signing.



CITY OF PORT ALLEN

Budget includes numerous capital outlay projects

LETTER FROM THE MAYOR

Dear friends,

As we begin a new year, I am optimistic that we are also beginning a new era of building community and trust in Port Allen, an era of working together to bring progress and prosperity to our city.



It is my honor to serve as your Mayor until the election of a new mayor in 2014. During my time at City Hall, my focus will be on building a spirit of trust and consensus among officials and residents, making sure the city's business is being handled efficiently and effectively, and re-establishing the City's Master Plan Steering Committee and working toward the plan's goals.

I also want you to know that I welcome your comments and suggestions. Come by City Hall or call me at 225-346-5670. I love and believe in our city, and with healing also come new possibilities and understanding. I look forward to serving you for the coming months.

Sincerely,
Mayor Lynn Robertson

The City of Port Allen budget, which was approved in January, includes a variety of capital outlay projects that include road improvements, an addition to the city's levee-top walking trail, and new police units.

"The capital outlay expenditures in this budget address major needs for the city, along with providing funding to begin implementing the city's master plan – all projects that will move us forward," said Mayor Lynn Robertson. Capital outlay expenditures total \$631,000 for the year.

The budget also includes proposed expense increases from excess sales tax revenues totaling \$156,000. Sales tax revenues are presently \$268,000 over the projected budget for the first six months of the fiscal year.

The major capital outlay projects and expenditures include:

- Road improvement program for streets east of La. Hwy. 1 - \$375,000 (\$600,000 in grant funds was spent last year on roads west of La. Hwy. 1. This is part of the

city's 5 year road improvement plan totaling \$1.5 million.)

- Six new equipped police vehicles and police supplies - \$190,000
- Begin implementation of the city's master plan - \$50,000
- Election costs - \$35,000
- Public utilities equipment purchases - \$34,000
- Public works equipment – \$25,000
- Staff and elected official training - \$25,000
- Community events and promotion - \$15,000
- Upgrading the city's computer system - \$12,000

- Upgrading the city website - \$6,000

In addition, the city had already allocated \$50,000 to extend the levee top walking trail, and the parish is contributing another \$50,000 to this project. The funds are expected to extend the trail from its present ending northward about eight to nine blocks to about Rosedale Road. Engineering work is starting on this project, and it is expected to be completed this year. City officials hope to eventually extend the trail to the old Mississippi River bridge.



The walking trail on the north end of the Old Ferry Landing Park will be extended about 9 blocks in 2014 under a \$100,000 project funded by Port Allen and the parish. The photo above shows the trail. The additional trail will be blacktop material.

PORT OF GREATER BATON ROUGE

The Port of Greater Baton Rouge continues expansion

On October 1, 2013 Louis Dreyfus Commodities (LDC) officially opened a state of the art grain and oilseed export elevator at the port following construction, expansion and upgrades to the facility valued at over \$150 million. This facility will be Dreyfus' flagship facility on the Mississippi River and is designed to handle up to 5 million metric tons of grains and oilseeds annually. A significant part of the products will be sourced from the farm communities immediately surrounding Baton Rouge, and the terminal at full capacity will employ up to 60 staff.

New Bulk Storage and Export Facility

The two white, 120-foot-tall bulk storage facilities belong to one of the port's newest business partners, Baton Rouge Transit, LLC. The facilities will store biomass material produced locally in the form of wood pellets, which will be shipped from the port to overseas markets to be used as a clean and renewable power resource. The two new facilities represent a substantial investment on the part of the Baton Rouge Transit, supporting nearly 120 construction jobs and potentially leading to a significant increase in ships calling at the Port of Greater Baton Rouge.



An aerial view of Baton Rouge Transit, LLC's new bulk storage facilities at the Port. Located on 10 acres of port property, the facilities will be capable of storing approximately 80,000 metric tons of wood pellets once they are fully operational. The project is expected to be completed by the end of 2014.



DAL-CO, LLC, Captain Rickie LeBlanc, daily provides a variety of services to ships, tugs and other marine vessels in the Mississippi River.

DAL-CO Marine opens new launch service at the Port

DAL-CO, LLC is one West Baton Rouge's newest small businesses to locate at the port. DAL-CO is a launch service operating 24 hours a day, seven days a week and 365 days a year to service the many barges and vessels in the Mississippi River. The launch service provides mid-stream deliveries including groceries, equipment, parts, supplies, crew changes, mechanics, inspectors, electronics, refrigeration, emergency response, mail services and airport and bus station transfers.

He also works very closely with Benedetto's Market Land and Marine, owned by Derek Benedetto in Addis. "We operate just like a taxi service in the Mississippi River; it is exciting and we have been busy since we opened as a result of the increased shipping and marine traffic on the river," says Kim D'Albor, owner.

Dal-Co's services are computerized to meet the growing demands for all barges, tugs, work boats, ships, etc. calling within the Mississippi River Area. The launch service is located just behind the north dolphin at the Port of Greater Baton Rouge, at 932 Ernest Wilson Drive, Port Allen, LA. 70767. Contact information - Dispatch - (225) 385-5747 | email - launchservices@dal-co.com | website - www.dal-co.com

Jay Hardman, port executive director, notes that recently completed rehabilitation projects have the port's docks and transit sheds in the best condition they have been in since they were constructed over 60 years ago. This enables the port to take advantage of future economic growth opportunities associated with increased cargo movement.



TOWN OF BRUSLY



Brusly attorney elected president of municipal attorneys association

Town of Brusly Attorney Tom Acosta was elected as president of the Louisiana City Attorneys Association (LCAA) for 2014 at its annual conference, held in October in Baton Rouge.

Acosta will lead the 186-member organization of attorneys who represent municipalities across the state. A native of Brusly and resident of Addis, Acosta has been town attorney for eight years.

As president of LCAA, Acosta is also a member of the Louisiana Municipal Association (LMA) Executive Board. The LCAA is an affiliate organization of the Louisiana Municipal Association, which provides information and education services for municipal attorneys and attorneys in private practice whose clientele include municipal and local governments.

Acosta has been an active member of LCAA since 2009 and has served in a variety of leadership positions. "The biggest benefit of this organization is that the attorneys share information and experience," said Acosta. "This is a great resource because in serving municipal government, an attorney must know a little about a lot of different things – a wide variety of issues come up." He noted that serving on the LMA Executive



Board has also been interesting. "I'm exposed to a lot of different issues and municipal representatives."

Acosta said his experience in practicing law for 21 years before becoming town attorney helped prepare him for his work as town attorney. Even so, he says, "there is a lot to learn about municipal law."

"I grew up in the area, have a lot of relatives here, and love that Brusly is a small-town, family-oriented place," Acosta said. "I feel I am giving back to my community in this work. I also like working with Mayor Joey Normand, and the fact that he is a retired engineer, not

a career politician. I like that he is trying to do things right."

"We are proud that our town attorney is serving as the state LCAA president," noted Mayor Normand. "It's certainly a reflection of his commitment to service, and also will be beneficial to the town in terms of his experiences as LCAA president."

Acosta graduated from Rice University and the L.S.U. Paul M. Hebert Law Center. He served in the United States Army for over 28 years, including active duty in Germany, and in the Louisiana Army National Guard, and the United States Army Reserve until his

retirement from military service in 2008. He served from 2001-2003 on active duty in the Middle East for Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom. He has a solo attorney practice in Port Allen, is married to Mary Broussard Acosta and their son, William, is a student at LSU.

He is a member of and served in leadership positions with the Port Allen Rotary Club, and was named Rotarian of the Year in 2000. He has also served on the board of the West Baton Rouge Chamber of Commerce and West Baton Rouge Museum Board.



Construction of the new Brusly Police Headquarters has begun. The facility is expected to be completed this summer.

TOWN OF ADDIS



Mayor encourages citizen participation in 100th anniversary



Mayor David Toups reads the original proclamation establishing the Town of Addis in 1914. The proclamation hangs in Addis Town Hall. The town celebrates its 100-year anniversary this year.

The Town of Addis will be 100 years old this September and Mayor David Toups wants to commemorate the centennial with a special celebration.

"We want to celebrate our history, generate enthusiasm and get the community involved in this event," he explains. The first step, he notes, is to organize a committee to plan the festivities. He's encouraging anyone who would like to be involved to join town and historical society officials in the planning process.

"It's all about the community," Toups adds. "We want everyone to get excited and get as much participation as possible." The town celebrated its 75th birthday in August 1990 with two days of activities that included entertainment, fireworks and the dedication of the new town hall.

Toups envisions this year's event to include the dedication of the town's new park, but additional details will be finalized by the volunteer steering committee.

Anyone who would like to assist the committee is asked to call Town Hall at 687-4844 or visit the website at www.addis.la.org for more information.



Addis Volunteer Fire Department Ladies Auxiliary Annual Ball

Saturday, Feb. 15 7:30 p.m.

Addis Community Center

Call Mikey Fouquier at 405-1700, Linda Fouquier at 241-9991 or Todd Berthelot at 413-3456 to reserve a table or get individual tickets.

Addis Volunteer Fire Department Mardi Gras Parade

Sunday, Feb. 23 1 p.m. (New Time!)

Organizers are encouraging veterans from Addis, Brusly, Plaquemine and Port Allen to contact them in order to ride in the parade. They are asked to call Rene Levron at 687-2936 or Linda Fouquier at 241-9991.

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
 Fire Sub-district #1 - Last Tuesday of each month - Fire Station #3



CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



Chairman Juan Carrillo, The Dow Chemical Company



Chair-Elect Scott Gaudin, Investar Bank



Treasurer Drew Maciasz, Harry L. Laws/Cinclare



Ex-Officio: Joy Hopkins, Placid Refining Company, LLC

Chamber announces 2014 officers and board

The WBR Chamber will install its 2014 Officers and Board at the Annual Banquet on February 5. Leading the Chamber's membership this year will be: Chairman Juan Carrillo, The Dow Chemical Company; Chairman-Elect Scott Gaudin, Investar Bank; Treasurer Drew Maciasz, Harry L. Laws and Company/Cinclare; and Ex-Officio Joy Hopkins, Placid Refining Company, LLC.

New to the Board this year will be: Toni Myer, BRCC; Lis Patrick, DLFCU; John Richard, Turner Industries Group, LLC; Arnold Spiers, Criterion Catalysts & Technologies; Kevin Durbin, WBR Parish Government; Trevor Gautreaux, Neighbors Federal Credit Union; and Hampton Obier, The Island Country Club.

Returning Board members are: Joanie Bishop, Pointe Coupee Electric; Owen Cope; Teal Gray, Sun*Plus/Beaulieu; David Ogwyn, Ogwyn Law Firm; Ricky Sparks, American Gateway Bank; Sandra Hughes, Lofton Staffing & Security Services; Julie Rose, WBR Museum; B.J. Militello, Better Business Bureau of Baton Rouge; Duane Smith, Alliance Safety Council; and Gene Stevens, Bengal Logistics. Call the Chamber office for sponsorship and tickets: 225/383-3140.

WELCOME TO THE PARISH



Fred's Super Store: 6311 Highway 1 South, Brusly

Chamber Ambassadors honored

The WBR Chamber 2013 Charter Ambassadors were recognized and honored at the end of the year Membership Meeting. Chamber Ambassadors are the front line representatives for the West Baton Rouge Chamber of Commerce at public and Chamber sponsored events/activities. They assist in the promotion, volunteer support and development of various Chamber sponsored events. They were honored for dedicating their time and efforts and are appreciated and highly valued.

Shown left to right seated: Julian Washington, Investar Bank; Jason Ippolo, American Hydraulics; Tima Midyette, Dow Westside YMCA; Toni Myer and Lisa Verret, BRCC; Paula Bernard, Mary Kay Cosmetics.



Standing left to right: WBR Chamber Executive Director Kathy Stuart, James Corry, Hilton Baton Rouge Capitol Center; Carrie Heath, Magnuson Hotel; Dennis Quinn, Hampton Inn & Suites; Board Member B.J. Militello, BBB of Baton Rouge; Yvonne Terrance, American Gateway Bank; WBR Chamber Membership Director Sharon Williams; Bridgette Homer, Lofton Staffing & Security Services; and Trevor Gautreaux, Neighbors Federal Credit Union.

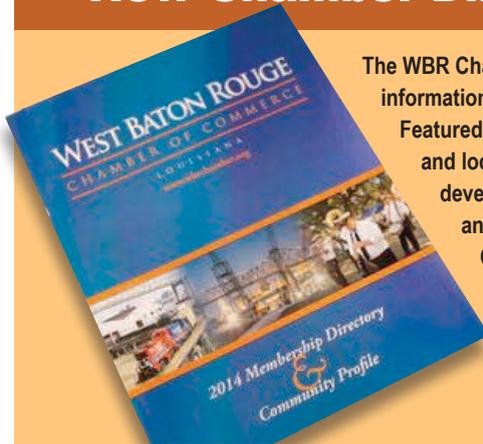
2014 Annual Banquet and Installation of Officers and Board of Directors

The West Baton Rouge Chamber's Annual Banquet is set for Wednesday, February 5, at the Addis Community Center. An evening event includes a social hour with a silent auction and a dinner program featuring LABI's President Stephen Waguepack. The 2014 Officers and Board will be installed and the Pride of West Baton Rouge Parish honoree and Chamber Volunteer of the Year will be recognized. Contact the Chamber office for sponsorship and tickets: 225/383-3140.



LABI President Stephen Waguepack

New Chamber Directories are in!



The WBR Chamber Directory is YOUR guide to all information in WBR Parish and our Chamber. Featured in this directory is a listing of parish and local municipality information, economic development and education highlights, and most importantly, a listing of all our Chamber members and their business information. It is available at the Chamber office and events this year!



At a recent Chamber membership meeting these outstanding Brusly High School seniors were recognized! Shown are, left to right: WBR Superintendent of Schools David Corona, and Brusly High students Kwanstan Adkins and Carlie Comeaux, Lunch Sponsor DLFCU's CEO Rick Williams, and Brusly High Principal Walt Lemoine.

UPCOMING CHAMBER MEMBERSHIP MEETING



Sen. Rick Ward Sen. Troy Brown Rep. Karen St. Germain Rep. Major Thibaut BRAC's SVP Erin Monroe-Wesley Rep. Regina Brown

February Meeting

Wednesday, February 26th

Sponsor: Dow YMCA Westside

Meeting Location: Dow YMCA Westside

3688 Sugar Plantation Parkway, Addis



2014 Legislative Session Program

What's on the agenda for the 2014 Legislative Session

RESERVATIONS REQUIRED!
225/383-3140 or bonnie@wbrchamber.org