

VISION WEST

West Baton Rouge Parish - Community, Growth, Possibilities

A quarterly publication for West Baton Rouge residents by your public agencies • July, 2015

Calendar of Events

Aug. 1- Sept. 13 – Hurricane Katrina photo exhibit, WBR Museum

Aug. 6 - Lecture on atomic bombing, WBR Museum

Aug. 10 – First day of school

Aug. 12 - Lecture on Civil War, WBR Museum

Aug. 18 & 20 - Lectures, book signings on Hurricane Katrina photos, books

Aug. 26 – Chamber meet, Parish President Berthelot speaking

Aug. 29-Oct. 18 - House & Home exhibit, WBR Museum

Sept. 7 – Labor Day holiday

Sept. 11 & 12 – Addis Centennial Celebration

Sept. 12 Oldies But Goodies Fest

Sept. 13 - Smokin' Oldies Cook-Off

Sept. 19-Nov. 15 - Addis Centennial Anniversary exhibit, WBR Museum

Sept. 30 – Chamber meet, Edmiston speaking

Oct. 12 – Fall Break, no school

Oct. 16 - Halloween fun at WBR Museum

Parish gets final approvals for \$3 million sewer project

A \$3 million project to connect almost 200 homes to the parish sewer system has received the final OKs from the U.S. Corps of Engineers, and is expected to begin before the end of this year.

The project will connect residences and businesses to the

sewer system that are in the Lobdell Road area, mostly west of La. Hwy. 415. Some of the areas included in the project are Kahn's Road, Ted's Lane, Plantation Avenue, Parkway Drive, Plantation Avenue Loop, Lobdell Highway (La. Hwy. 415), Credeur Lane and Meche Lane. Presently individual

septic tanks are used in the area.

The project is expected to go out for bid in the fall. Those impacted by the project were notified via mail, and also were invited to a town hall meeting on the change. The project is being funded by Hurricane Gustav/Ike disaster recovery funds.



STUFFING THE BUS...

West Baton Rouge residents and businesses showed their support for students on July 15, donating more than \$20,000 in school supplies during the "Stuff The Bus" drive at the Port Allen Wal-Mart. The West Baton Rouge School System combined forces with WBRZ-TV and numerous sponsors to sponsor the drive. Shown in the photos are, top left, School Superintendent Wes Watts is interviewed by a WBRZ News reporter; top right: Port Allen Mayor Richard Lee, Ransom and Tima Midyette sort supplies; and at right: Port Allen Council members Ray Helen Lawrence and Gary Hubble, teacher Toni Ransom, Parish Council members Bob Robertson and Charlene Gordon. Organizations were also involved, including the Port Allen Rotary Club, WBR Chamber of Commerce, and YMCA. School board member Rose Roche was coordinator for the drive.



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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Football, soccer league registration underway

Registration for fall football and soccer leagues is now underway or will begin in August.

FULL-CONTACT FOOTBALL - Registration for the league will continue through August 3. This league is open to youth age 5 to 12. Fee is \$50.

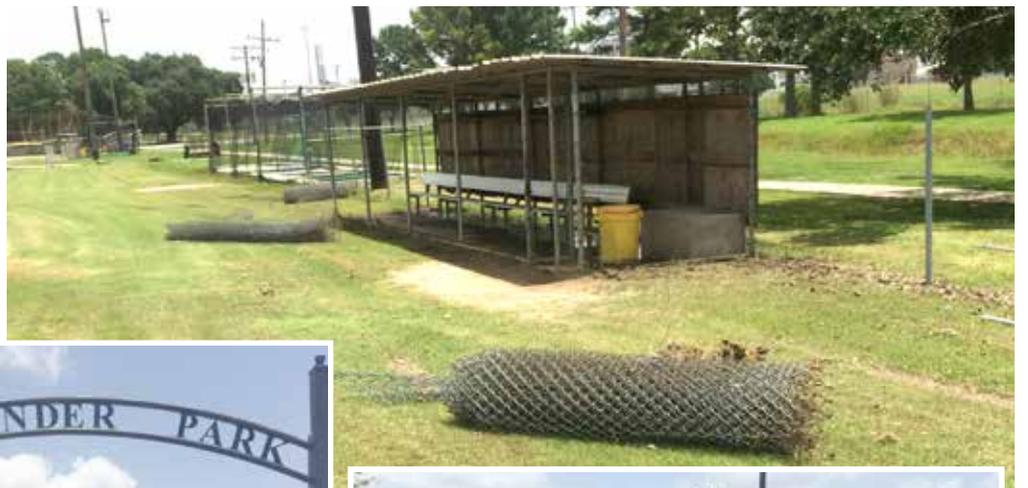
FLAG FOOTBALL - Registration for this league begins August 3 and will continue throughout the month of August. It is open to youth age 4 to 10. Fee is \$20.

SOCCER - Registration is open until noon on August 28. It is open to youth age 4 to 18. Fee is \$55 for age 4 and 5, and \$65 for all other ages. Registration also available on-line at: www.wbrsoccer.com.

CHEERLEADER PROGRAM - Registration is open to youth age 5-12, and will continue to August 3. Registration fee is \$30.

To register for any of the leagues, go to the West Baton Rouge Recreation Department office at the Port Allen Community Center at 749 N. Jefferson Avenue, Port Allen, during office hours: Monday-Thursday 8 a.m. until 5 p.m. and Friday 8 a.m. until noon.

Parents or guardian must sign the registration form and waiver, and pay the registration fee by check or money order. For more information go to: www.wbr council.org/Departments/Parks-and-Recreation.



PARK IMPROVEMENTS UNDERWAY...

Park improvements are completed or underway at both Alexander Park in Brusly and Rivalt Park in Port Allen. A new blacktop parking lot with stripping was added at Alexander Park, along with a new sign and landscaping to dress up the entrance, said Anatole Vincent, WBR Recreation Department Director. The parish's first skate park will be completed and ready for public use at Alexander Park by the end of July. Meanwhile a 2-year face-lift of Rivalt Park is underway with the demolition of fencing and dugouts of the baseball field near La. Hwy. 1 and adjacent concession stand. The field will be flipped to face north east, so that central bathrooms and concession stand will be more accessible. A new field with new backstops, dugouts, bleachers and a parking lot will be added this year. In 2016, a skate park, lighting improvements and signage will be added to the park.

WEST BATON ROUGE LIBRARY



Library's summer programs a big hit



The West Baton Rouge Library helped keep local kids busy this summer through its summer reading extravaganza, titled "Every Hero Has A Story!" Partnering with the WBR Recreation Department, the Library presented concerts, science programs, ballet, art, theater, reading, and more. Activities were held both at the library and at various sites throughout the parish. In the photo above at left, more than 450 kids in the WBR Parish Summer Camps and other programs enjoy a Drum Fest Concert at the Port Allen Community Center. And in the photo above at right, a local youngster works with Legos during a Lego Club event at the Library.



NO DUMPING! *at WBR Parish Facilities*

Now under
CAMERA SURVEILLANCE
Violators will be Prosecuted



BULK ITEMS PICKED-UP AT YOUR RESIDENCE

ADDIS - 1st WEEK of every MONTH.

BRUSLY - 2nd WEEK of every MONTH.

PORT ALLEN & UNINCORPORATED

AREAS NORTH of the INTRACOASTAL - From the INTRACOASTAL NORTH to HWY 190 - 3rd WEEK of every MONTH. From HWY 190 W. NORTH to the Mississippi River - 4th WEEK of every MONTH.

WITHIN the PORT ALLEN CITY LIMITS - Saturdays.

Keep WBR Beautiful

KEEP AMERICA BEAUTIFUL AFFILIATE

www.wbr council.org

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

Dispatch improvements making emergency response faster

Technological improvements underway within the West Baton Rouge 911 dispatch system are making emergency response times faster for local residents and businesses.

The parish installed a new computer aided dispatch system about a two years ago. This new system was further enhanced this year as a team at LSU used information from the WBR Assessor's Office to provide digital maps that identify the exact location of structures throughout the parish. That information and the maps were added to the system.

The dispatch system and maps help the parish's 911 operators know what emergency responders to contact and also provide the exact location of the emergency, all within about 30 to 40 seconds. Emergency personnel then can be notified by text or a smartphone app, which provides them with a map of the location.

PROJECT UPDATES

ROSEDALE ROAD... Culverts and a four feet sidewalk will be added for 3/4 of a mile along the south side of Rosedale Road from La. Hwy. 1. The project is expected to begin in November or December. The La. Department of Transportation and Development is funding 80 percent of the cost of the approximately \$1 million project. It will greatly enhance pedestrian, motorist and cyclist safety.

INTERSTATE-LA. 415 CONNECTOR... The parish is working with landowners to secure rights-of-way. LDOTD has agreed to fund 80 percent of the cost of the update to environmental clearance and 80 percent of the vessel survey and value engineering study, which are required for state "mega-projects."

LEVEE BIKE PATHS... Continuing high water in the Mississippi River had delayed the levee top bike trail projects in both Brusly and Port Allen. Once the U.S. Corps of Engineers determines that the water has dropped enough in the river, work on those projects will continue.

DIVERSION CANAL EXTENSION... The parish has received the final U.S. Corps of Engineers approvals for a 3/4 mile extension of the Diversion Canal that drains the northern part of the parish. In the fall, parish crews will begin clearing trees along the route of the extension, which is largely in swamp land and will extend to the Intracoastal Waterway. Once completed, it will provide faster drainage during heavy rains.

BIG CROWD FOR 4TH FEST

A crowd of thousands made their way to the Old Ferry Landing Park in Port Allen for the 4th Fest fireworks on the Mississippi



River. In its effort to stop underage drinking, the WBR Healthy Community Coalition checked ID's and provided bracelets to those wanting to purchase alcoholic beverages, and designated an alcohol-free zone in the kids play area. The event is sponsored by the WBR Recreation Department, WBR Convention & Visitors Bureau, Port Allen, and WBRZ-TV. (Photo courtesy of West Side Journal)



HWY. 190 RE-STRIPING PROPOSED...

In an effort to reduce traffic congestion issues along La. Hwy. 1, West Baton Rouge Parish's administration has developed a conceptual design for re-striping Hwy. 190 at the entrance of the Old Mississippi River Bridge (shown above). This concept would limit east bound traffic from La. Hwy. 190 onto the bridge to one lane for a small stretch, allowing merging traffic from La. Hwy. 1 north bound to have a better opportunity to merge onto Hwy. 190. This concept is currently being reviewed by the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (LDOTD) for feasibility with traffic counts for Hwy. 190 east bound during peak hour traffic.



LOBDELL FIRE STATION ADDITION...

West Baton Rouge public works crews recently completed a new three-bay addition to the Lobdell Fire Station located on Lafiton Lane in Port Allen. The 40 feet by 80 feet addition, plus a breezeway between the existing fire station and the addition, was done completely with parish labor. The addition was insulated, and improvements to lighting and driveway access were also made. "The parish's three fire trucks at that location could barely fit into the existing part of the station," explained Fire Chief Kenny Hunts. "This addition will allow us space to walk around the units to service them, and we can park a reserve service unit and other equipment in the existing building."

Get emergency alerts on your cell

Register your cell phone number to receive emergency alerts from the WBR public alert system. Go to: www.wbrlepc.net and click on the cell phone registration link, or call 225-346-1577 from 8 a.m. -5 p.m. Monday through Thursday.

West Baton Rouge PUBLIC NOTICES

The West Baton Rouge Board of Adjustments meets on the third Tuesday of every month at 5 p.m., proceeding the Planning and Zoning meeting. The purpose of the Board of Adjustments is to hear any property variance request.

WEST BATON ROUGE PARISH NATURAL GAS & WATER SYSTEMS

P O BOX 807, PORT ALLEN, LA. 70767 (225) 336-2406

An individual copy of the annual Consumer Confidence Report (CCR) for the Parish **will not be mailed** to your home. If you wish to obtain a paper copy, please contact our office at (225) 336-2406. The entire West Baton Rouge Parish Public Utility - Natural Gas & Water Systems CCR's, can be viewed on our website at:

www.wbrcouncil.org/Departments/Utilities/Consumer-Confidence-Report



WEST BATON ROUGE ASSESSOR

Pictures help visualize assessments

A picture may be worth a thousand words, but to the West Baton Rouge Assessor's Office it can be worth thousands of dollars.

"Photos give us an idea what the quality and condition of properties is for re-evaluation," explains Assessor Barney "Frog" Altazan. "It's just another tool to help us do our jobs properly."

For the past few years, part-time field inspectors Barry Brewer and Melvin Wyble have snapped about 20,000 photos of the parish's residential and commercial properties with the goal of enhancing evaluation procedures.

In addition, the Assessor's Office also uses "Pictometry," a patented aerial image process that utilizes low-flying airplanes to capture multi-dimensional images of objects. It allows viewers to see property from the front, back and sides similar to being on site. During the hot summer



Barry Brewer takes a photo of property for use in assessment re-evaluations.

months, Brewer and Wyble were mainly inside, comparing the photos to the information on hand. "These photos allow us to see if there's something we may have overlooked or for a property improvement that didn't have a permit," Altazan says. "For example, there are a lot of times when a property owner may add on a room or a garage if a family member has the skill set to do the work, they may not have gotten a permit."

Altazan explains that when an addition of any permanent structure is made to property, a legally issued permit should be obtained, and the addition will usually increase the property value.

In 2014, 1,434 commercial and residential permits were issued in West Baton Rouge Parish. In 2015, from January to June 739 permits have been issued. "The permit system works beautifully. We pick up more improvements than those that slip by," he adds.

Over the next few months, the Assessor's Office will be preparing to finalize assessment information for 2015. In the next issue of Vision West, Altazan will discuss the tax schedule. In the meantime, Altazan maintains an open door policy and encourages anyone with questions or comments to visit the website at www.wbrassessor.org or call (225) 344-6777.



View your property assessment
 See your property on digital aerial maps!
 Learn about tax exemptions
 Download forms and more!
www.wbrassessor.org

TOWN OF ADDIS

TOWN OF ADDIS CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 11

Town of Addis Railroad Museum & Park

- 6 p.m. – The Penalty Box
- 8:05 p.m. – 9-11 tribute
- 8:10 p.m. – Parade with lighted floats (same route as Addis Mardi Gras Parade)
- 9:30 p.m. – Louisiana

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 12

Myland Park & Addis VFW Hall

- Food and drinks, historical exhibits, art show, **KIDS CORNER***
- Battle for the Paddle Jambalaya/Pastalaya Cook Off

ACTIVITY SCHEDULE FOR SATURDAY:

- 10 a.m. – Opening ceremony
- 10:30 a.m. - Geno Delafosse band
- 11 a.m. - 2nd Nature (Tent Stage)
- 12:30 p.m. – Neighborhood Stars
- 1:30 p.m. - The Anteeks (Tent Stage)
- 3 p.m. – Parish-County Line
- 4:30 p.m. - Mitch Landry & Gumbeaux Rouge (Tent Stage)
- 5 p.m. – Chris LeBlanc Band
- 7:15 p.m. – NaNaSha
- 9 p.m. – Firework show!
- 9:30 p.m. – Don Rich

MAJOR SPONSORS



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***KIDS CORNER** includes inflatables, mobile game van, train rides, carousel, balloon twister, human hamster balls, face painting, visits by Disney princesses, Spider Man, Batman, Mickey and Minnie Mouse, caricaturist

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

Brusly's longest serving employee also a role model

Curtis Allen believes in "earning an honest day's work," and the Town of Brusly has been the beneficiary of his philosophy for 30 years. Allen, leader of the town's maintenance crew, is the longest serving employee in the town's history.

Mayor Joey Norman said Allen is a role model for other employees because of his work ethic and positive attitude. "He's the number one ambassador for the town, and he works just as hard now as when he started 30 years ago," Normand said. "He is a joy to have as an employee and a pleasure to be around."

Norman said that in his 16 years as mayor, he had never received a single complaint from a resident that the maintenance crew was seen wasting time. He attributes that largely to Allen, who refuses to waste time and doesn't let those who work with him do it either.

Allen is the most skilled worker the town has in operation and repair of its equipment, including the backhoe, slope mower, track hoe, and tractor. He is certified to operate heavy equipment. "He is mechanically inclined, so he can make numerous repairs for us, saving the town a lot of money in repair costs," noted Wayne Delapasse, Brusly Maintenance Director.

Allen began his career with the town in 1985 after working in cane fields in the Plaquemine area for many years. "I worked in the cane fields, and I

learned how to run a lot of machines working there, but when it rained we didn't work and we didn't get paid. With this job, we had guaranteed pay and I was happy to have the job," Allen said.

Allen's official work day begins at 6:30 a.m., but he always arrives for work by 6 a.m. Depending on the season of the year, Allen and the maintenance crew of three full time and one part time worker are busy cutting and weeding grass on public property, cutting down tree limbs where necessary, maintaining streets and signs, putting up fencing, making sewer system or equipment repairs, putting up flags on the La. Hwy. 1 median, putting up Christmas decorations at town hall, picking up trash, installing culverts and cleaning out ditches, and handling other town maintenance projects.

"I like to earn my pay, and make the boss pleased," said Allen. "I feel good when I can go home after an honest day's work." Allen said he feels blessed to have a job with vacation and holidays, but worries about leaving his boss without his help. "I watch the guys and try to do the right thing," he said. "I still enjoy my work," he said, adding that he has no plans to retire now.

Allen said he also loves living in Brusly, with his wife, Sheryl. "It's a quiet and peaceful town, with no violence," he said. "Things close up at 10 p.m., and I like that."

Congratulations, Curtis, on 30 years of excellent public service.



Curtis Allen in front of the Town of Brusly's slope mower.

CITY OF PORT ALLEN

City employees get raises, step pay

Employees of the City of Port Allen received a 4 percent pay raise effective July 1, and are now guaranteed a step merit increase of 2 percent each five years.

"It has been two years since employees last had a raise, so it was time," said Mayor Richard Lee. "And the step increases were also past due. We had employees who had not had a step raise in seven or eight years. The plan adopted by the City Council provides that they are guaranteed a step increase each five years."

Lee said the pay plan had the support of the City Council, and officials hope it is an incentive to keep city employees.

"We want our employees and the community to know that the city treats its public workers well," said Lee.

Public works director retires

Long-time Public Works Director Terry Vincent has retired after 25 years with the City of Port Allen, said Mayor Richard Lee.

His last day on the job was July 15. Lee said Vincent started working with the city on roads and drainage, and rose through the ranks to direct public works.

"Terry did a great job, and I commend him for his service to the public and our city," said Lee. "We wish him a happy retirement!" Lee said Vincent's successor has not been selected yet.



PORT ALLEN SIDEWALK WORK CONTINUES... The addition of sidewalks on Avenue B from the railroad track near La. Hwy. 1 to 14th Street in Port Allen has been completed. This is the second phase of a 2-year sidewalk project. City of Port Allen crews are performing the work and will begin work on sidewalks along Avenue C, Pacific, 10th, 11th, 12th and 13th streets this fall.

City joins call to Congress to act on traffic congestion

Port Allen Mayor Richard Lee and the Port Allen Council formally joined the call for federal help to relieve the constant traffic congestion at the Mississippi River Bridge.

The Council adopted a resolution asking Congress to modify federal statutes and regulations regarding highway project planning so that emergency infrastructure improvements can be made in the region.

The resolution noted that design flaws on Interstate 10 and La. Hwy. 1 at the Intracoastal Waterway contribute to the long traffic delays and also pose unreasonable dangers. The Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (LDOTD) has failed to correct the problems and is citing that another federally required study is needed, the resolution states. LDOTD now says no relief can be expected for 14 years.

The resolution asks that the federal regulations be modified so that improvements can be made quickly. The resolution noted that industrial expansions in West Baton Rouge and Iberville Parishes on the way will add thousands more motorists to these roadways in the coming years.



WEST BATON ROUGE TOURISM

Oldies Fest features "Fill A Float" For Troops

2015
Oldies but Goodies Fest
& BBQ COOK-OFF
10TH ANNIVERSARY
COME SUPPORT THE BLUE STAR MOMS
BBQ SHRIMP CONTEST FRIDAY - SEPT 11 \$1000 AWARDED

SATURDAY - SEPT. 12
STATE CHAMPIONSHIP BBQ COOK-OFF. \$6,600 IN CASH AWARDED.
MUSIC BY: BIG RIVER EXPRESS 12:30PM-3:30PM

SUNDAY - SEPT. 13
ANTIQUE CAR SHOW, CRAFTERS, DANCE, HULA HOOP, & CRAZY HAT CONTEST. LA FOOD & BEVERAGE VENDORS.
MUSIC BY: RYAN FORET & FORET TRADITION 11:00AM-2:00PM
REWIND 2:30PM-5:30PM

ON THE GROUNDS OF WBR TOURIST INFORMATION & CONFERENCE CENTER
2750 NORTH WESTPORT DRIVE PORT ALLEN, LOUISIANA 70767
FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO REGISTER FOR THE CAR SHOW OR BBQ CONTEST CALL
1-800-654-9701
WWW.WESTBATONROUGE.NET

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This year's 15th Annual "Oldies but Goodies Fest" will benefit troops while featuring the traditional barbecue cook-off, antique car show, music and more.

West Baton Rouge Convention and Visitors Bureau Executive Director Sharon Stam says "Fill a Float," introduced at last year's Annual Veterans on Parade, was so successful, it will be done again this year. But, instead of waiting until November 8, the Blue Star Moms will be on hand to accept donations at the Oldies Fest on Sept. 12-13.

A list of items can be found on the WBRCVB website at www.westbatonrouge.net. The donations can be dropped off at the Tourist Information & Conference Center during regular hours. A special float will be filled with all the collected supplies and will be in the Veterans on Parade on Nov. 8 in downtown Port Allen.

Names of those who have served or are currently serving in the military will also be placed on a special memorial float.

To submit a Veterans name or to register for the Oldies Antique Car Show or BBQ Contest or for more information about upcoming events, visit the website at www.westbatonrouge.net. You may also call the WBRCVB at (225) 344-2920.

CONFERENCE CENTER RENOVATIONS

Renovations at the Tourist Information & Conference Center are nearly complete (and getting numerous compliments), just as a new landscaping project is about to get underway.

Stam said the patio in the rear of the building will be given an appealing face-lift, and a fountain will be added. "It will be great for weddings and all sorts of outdoor events," Stam noted.

She adds that several sales missions to encourage tour and travel operators to visit the area are continuing. Trips are planned to Dallas and Austin, as well as to Monterrey, Calif., where a music festival that attracts Louisiana visitors will be held.

The Louisiana Tourism Summit is planned for the end of August in Baton Rouge, and WBRCVB officials will sponsor a "familiarization tour" of the Port Allen Locks, Moby the Alligator at the Tourist Center and the West Baton Rouge Museum.

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

WELCOME TO THE PARISH



Shakewood Custom Cabinets and Southern Girls Design



Terry Russo Lacy, Attorney At Law

UPCOMING CHAMBER MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS

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

August, October and November meetings will be at the Addis Community Center.
September meeting will be at the WBR Tourist Information and Convference Center

AUGUST 26 MEETING
West Baton Rouge Parish
Riley "Pee Wee" Berthelot, Jr., Parish President
State of the Parish Address
Sponsored by: Tipton Associates

SEPTEMBER 30 MEETING
LA. Office of Culture, Recreation & Tourism
Kyle Edmiston, Assistant Secretary
State of the Tourism Industry in LA.
Sponsored by: WBRCVB

OCTOBER 21 MEETING
American Sugar Cane League
James Simon, General Manager

NOVEMBER 18 MEETING
West Baton Rouge School System
Wes Watts, School Superintendent
State of Education
Sponsored by: The Dow Chemical Company



WEST BATON ROUGE MUSEUM



Museum gets award for store preservation

The West Baton Rouge Museum won the 39th Annual Preservation “Brick and Mortar Award” from the Foundation for Historical Louisiana for the preservation and restoration of the Arbroth Mercantile Plantation Store. The awards banquet was held at the City Club of Baton Rouge on July 16. The awards program honors outstanding projects accomplished by preservationists of Louisiana’s cultural and architectural heritage from across the state.

The West Baton Rouge Museum has saved, preserved and restored the Arbroth Plantation Mercantile Store, in an effort that started in 2007 and has been completed over the past 8 years. The store and its entire contents were donated to the museum by Joanne Busse and family.



Supporters for the restoration of the store include many community volunteers and A-1 Heat and Air; Joanne Busse and family; Cangelosi and Ward General Contractors ; Jay Dykes, Dykes Electric; Dr. Jay Edwards; Ellis Gauthier; Jessica Golebiowski Richardson; Sid Gray; Harvey Hill; Dr. Robert Karney; Dale Langland; Louisiana Arts and Science Museum; Port Allen Rotary Club; Buddy Ragland, Coleman Partners Architects LLC; Don Robert; Dr. Matthew Reonas; Union Pacific Railroad; Jane Thomas; West Baton Rouge Historical Association; West Baton Rouge Museum Board; and the West Baton Rouge Parish Council.

Today, the store is interpreted to the era between the two World Wars. The store was an important gathering place for locals because it included a saloon, post office, payroll office, and sold gasoline, hardware, dry goods and groceries.

Katrina photo exhibit of survivors underway

An exhibit titled “Holding Out and Hanging On: 10 Years After Hurricane Katrina” is on display at the WBR Museum through September 13. It features photographs and stories of Katrina’s survivors gathered by retired LSU professor and first responder, Thomas Neff in the days following the storm, which he later published in his 2007 book, *Holding Out and Hanging On: Surviving Hurricane Katrina*.

Neff spent 45 days in New Orleans following the storm, and through his volunteer work, interviews, and photography he came to know the people who decided to remain despite the hardships. The exhibit provides an in-depth and personal view of the trying times New Orleanians faced after the hurricane, as well as updates on the survivors pictured whenever possible.

Home exhibit opens Aug. 29

House & Home, a new exhibit opening August 29 at the WBR Museum, embarks on a tour of houses both familiar and surprising, through past and present, to explore the varied history and many cultural meanings of the American home.

Visitors will learn about issues of housing inequality, land distribution, and the role of the government, from the Colonial period through the Homestead Act and the creation of the Federal Housing Administration in the 1930s. Items from West Baton Rouge will be added to the nationally touring exhibition, including photographs and artifacts from local homes, as well as a section on Creole cottages.



**Have you heard
the New?**

Ranked 9th nationally in total tonnage, there’s a lot of “new” these days at the deepwater Port of Greater Baton Rouge. Like **new companies** locating at the port, **new investment** in infrastructure, and **new land available** for development

- Genesis Energy, L.P. is constructing a \$150 million crude oil, intermediates and refined products import/export terminal, expanding that company’s commitment to providing efficient mainstream supply and logistics services in the region.
- Drax Biomass, one of Europe’s biggest renewable electricity generators, has launched its \$30 million wood pellet storage and transfer operation.
- Stupp Coatings, LLC has constructed a facility on 24 acres at the port’s Inland Rivers Marine Terminal to operate concrete weight pipeline coating services for the oil and gas industry. The site is service by rail, truck and barge.
- Louis Dreyfus Commodities is successfully operating its new grain dock and export grain elevator.
- Westway Terminals, LLC has completed its \$3.5 million expansion at the port’s liquid bulk terminal.
- Acreage at the port’s Inland Rivers Marine Terminal is available for development, with access to the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway.

For the full story, just give us a call and ask, “What’s new?”
Contact Greg Johnson, Director of Business Development, at 225.342.1660.



**PORT OF GREATER
BATON ROUGE**

2425 Ernest Wilson Drive • P.O. Box 380 • Port Allen, LA 70767-0380 • Phone: (225) 342-1660 • Fax: (225) 342-1666 www.portgbr.com



WEST BATON ROUGE SCHOOL SYSTEM

STEM Academy to offer something for everyone

Whether a child is a hands-on, mechanically inclined student or one who is more intellectually gifted, West Baton Rouge Parish school officials say the new STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) Academy offers something for everyone.

“The STEM Academy will provide coursework for a wide variety of students. We’ve been asked if it is a magnet school or a vocational-technical school. It’s neither,” according to Coordinator of Career and Technical Education Mary Wilson Arrasmith.

When the STEM Academy opens at the parish’s two high school campuses in August, it will serve about 80 students in grades 9-12. The majority of the courses are housed at Brusly and Port Allen high schools, but students participating in certain skilled craft courses will attend class with program partners at technical facilities, like Baton Rouge Community College and ABC Technical Institute.

“It’s also good for the chemical and industrial industries. We will be building a good, strong work force – from engineering to pipe fitting to electrical and welding,” said

Superintendent Wes Watts.

The STEM Academy’s goals will “inspire students in STEM via engagement in authentic problem-solving, intensive peer collaboration, real-world artifact production and frequent skills application in solving relevant community and regional problems,” Arrasmith adds.

To meet the needs of the work force, the WBR STEM Academy will offer pathways that include:

- Oil and Gas Production/T2 Safety Systems
- Process Technology (PTECH)
- Engineering and Robotics
- Skilled Craft Construction Trades

“We have been renovating two classrooms to provide the apparatus needed to have a successful program,” Watts says. “We will continue to evaluate the program and add improvements as we identify them.”

In addition to the high school course offerings, the district will also provide high-quality STEM programming at elementary and middle school levels. Over the summer, teachers have been preparing for these initiatives to feed the STEM “pipeline.”



Superintendent Wes Watts looks over a newly painted wall in the West Baton Rouge Schools new STEM Academy.

Dow announces funding commitment for new WBR Parish STEM Academy

Dow Louisiana operations announced a \$200,000 commitment from The Dow Chemical Company Foundation for the new West Baton Rouge Parish Dow STEM Academy.

The skills needed to stay competitive continue to rise in the areas of science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) education.

A steady stream of data shows that jobs requiring STEM skills are in higher demand than ever before and will be an even bigger part of our economy in the future. The Dow STEM Academy will help further expose West Baton Rouge Parish students to these careers.

The Dow STEM Academy will have something for all students planning on going into a STEM field. It will follow a state approved STEM Pathway, where students will have the opportunity to learn about engineering, process technology and industrial maintenance.

“At Dow, we know how important it is for students to receive relevant and rigorous STEM courses so that they can be prepared for a STEM

career,” said Abby Cook, Dow Public Affairs Manager. “Dow has been a part of the local community for near 60 years and we want local students to have the training and education they need to find fulfilling, high-paying careers here in the place they call home. We are thrilled to be working with leaders and educators in West Baton Rouge Parish to support students in our local parish and develop the workforce of tomorrow.”

Superintendent Wes Watts calls the partnership “an unbelievable opportunity” for the parish’s students. “This is a win-win. We will be building a good, strong, competent work force for Dow with the citizens who live in the community,” he said. “It also benefits us by helping us reach all types of students - those who want to pursue university degrees to those who want to go directly into the work force.”

Dow’s sponsorship is a part of the company’s ongoing efforts to improve STEM education across Louisiana.



Equipment lines the wall in one of the new STEM Academy’s classroom.

Signs honor extraordinary students

If you were traveling around West Baton Rouge Parish during June, you may have spotted a billboard baring the photos of some of the school district’s exceptional students. “We thought it would be a great way to acknowledge these students’ achievements,” says Superintendent Wes Watts.

Those honored include: Rhea Lee, Port Allen High School valedictorian and West Baton Rouge Parish High School Student of the Year; Jake Dunn, Brusly High School valedictorian; Monica Gordon, recipient of the prestigious Gates Millennium Scholarship; Erin Stephens, West Baton Rouge Parish Middle School Student of the Year; and Ashley Coco, Elementary School Student of the Year.

