

# VISION WEST

West Baton Rouge Parish - Community, Growth, Possibilities

A quarterly publication for West Baton Rouge residents by your public agencies • JANUARY, 2011

## Calendar of Events

**Feb. 1** – March 13 – WBR Talented Student Art Show, WBR Museum

**Feb. 8** – Public meeting on WBR future plan, WBR Tourist & Convention Center, 6 p.m.

**Feb. 12** – Black History Parade, downtown Port Allen

**Feb. 20** – WBR Chamber Annual Banquet, Addis Community Center

**Feb. 27** – Addis Volunteer Firefighters Parade, Addis, 11 a.m.

**March 6** – Krewe of Good Friends Parade, downtown Port Allen, 1 p.m.

**March 8** – Mardi Gras Day  
**March 10 – 13** – Lagniappe Dulcimer Fete, WBR Museum

**April 1-3** – Holy Family Bear Fair, Holy Family School  
**April 1-3** – Kite Fest Louisiana', Soccer Complex in Port Allen

**April 1-May 31** – Spring Art Show, WBR Library

**April 2- July 2** – Portraits in Gray, WBR Museum

## Public input sought on WBR plan at Feb. 8 meeting

With the WBR Parish Comprehensive Plan scheduled for completion in June 2011, several options for the final plan have been developed and will be on display for public input from 6-8 p.m. on Tuesday, February 8th at the West Baton Rouge Tourist & Convention Center.

This will be an interactive workshop in which participants will evaluate regional alternatives for the north, central, and south districts of the parish. The input from this meeting will be used to guide the final plan.

This workshop will explore

recommendations related to transportation, parks and recreation, infrastructure and drainage, as well as commercial, residential, and industrial land use.

The planning team has developed these options based upon input gathered during the first community workshop held last October at the Port Allen Community Center, as well as stakeholder interviews, research and analysis. Guiding principles for plan development include retaining community character while providing eco-

nommic development opportunities, offering excellent educational opportunities parishwide, as well as finding solutions to infrastructure and transportation issues.

All residents, stakeholders, businesses, and officials are encouraged to participate. "This is the time to have your voices heard. We will look at parishwide information and break into regional working teams to focus on the three different districts and how they might look in the future," says Kevin Durbin, Director of Public

Works and Parish Planning Official.

The Parish Comprehensive Plan, "PlanWest" is the framework for the future of West Baton Rouge Parish. The consultant team was hired with funding from Louisiana Recovery Authority Grant. It is a collaborative effort between Louisiana planning firm Tipton Associates, local professionals from Patin Engineering & Surveying, international planning firm Sasaki Associates, and economic development expert W-ZHA.



City Marshal Mike Zito, Keep West Baton Rouge Beautiful Director Mary Delapasse and Judge William Kleinpeter are shown in front of the vehicle and trailer that will be used for the new litter pick-up program that begins February 1.

## Litter pick-up program established for criminal offenders

City Marshal Mike Zito got tired of sending criminal offenders to Baton Rouge to perform their community service hours, and has combined forces with the Keep West Baton Rouge Beautiful program to establish a community service litter program in West Baton Rouge.

"I saw a lot of people being sentenced to fines that could not pay or were given fines and community service for DWIs and other misdemeanor offenses," explained Zito, who is Ward 3 Marshal.

"Some people would ask Judge (William) Kleinpeter if they could perform community service rather than paying a fine. We had to send them to Baton Rouge because no program existed in West Baton Rouge, so I decided to create one."

Zito approached Keep West Baton Rouge Beautiful Director Mary Delapasse, who immediately embraced the program and donated a trailer and other supplies. She will also assist in advising Zito and Judge Kleinpeter on where litter crews are needed in the parish. Parish President Riley "PeeWee" Berthelot is supporting the new program, and Zito has also obtained donations for a van to transport the offenders around the parish, a portable toilet, and other equipment.

"I told companies they could have their logo on the trailer for their donation, and a lot of companies jumped on board," said Zito. The

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## 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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://www.bruslyla.com)

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# Litter pick-up program

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community service program will begin February 1, and Zito is initially going to have officers monitor offenders on one Saturday a month, but he thinks the program will grow quickly. "I am going to offer it to the district judges and the local Mayor's Courts," he said.

Offenders will be required to pay a \$25 fee and provide their own lunch for 8 hours of community service to help offset the costs of providing the officers, equipment and supplies. "This helps everyone," Zito said. "We just don't have the manpower to go chase down people who don't pay their fines, and those people often can't afford the fines, so the community service program is a way for them to clear their record while also providing a service to West Baton Rouge Parish."

Those who cannot pick up litter next to a highway or roadway will be assigned to do work at a government or non-profit facility in the parish. For more information, contact Marshal Mike Zito at 346-4702.

# Baseball, softball registration begins

Registration for the Westside baseball and softball leagues is now underway and will continue through February 27. Girls and boys, age 5 to 12, can register online at: [www.wbrbaseballsoftball.com](http://www.wbrbaseballsoftball.com).

A walk-in registration has also been set for February 26 at the Brusly High School gym. For more information call the West Baton Rouge Recreation Department at 336-2423.



**NEW TENNIS COURTS IN PORT ALLEN...** The WBR Recreation Department improved both the Port Allen Community Center and the city's tennis facilities with a just completed project. The old tennis courts next to the community center were converted into a parking lot, significantly increasing the parking for the community center. And, four new tennis courts were built close to the community center, behind the WBR Museum. The new courts are shown at left.

# Spring Art Show set at Library

The Opening Reception for the 16th Annual Spring Art Show at the West Baton Rouge Parish Library (830 N. Alexander, Port Allen) will be Saturday, April 9, from 2 to 4 p.m. Cash and ribbon awards will be announced during the reception. The exhibit, which is free and open to the public, will continue through Saturday, May 30.

The exhibit includes artwork of residents of Iberville Parish, Pointe Coupee Parish, and West Baton Rouge Parish who are eighteen years and older. Categories are professional, non-professional, and adult art students.

For more information and an entry form, contact Fannie Easterly at (225) 342-7920.

# Library adds TumbleBooks!

West Baton Rouge Parish Library is proud to announce the addition of TumbleBooks to its website at [www.wbr.lib.la.us](http://www.wbr.lib.la.us).

TumbleBooks is a link that provides animated, talking picture books that help teach children the joys of reading by providing reading readiness and reading enrichment books and activities. Illustrations move on the screen and are read aloud, highlighting the text as the story goes along. Children can hear the narrator, or can silence that feature and read for themselves. There are also puzzles, games, and lots of reading-related things for kids to enjoy.

For independent readers and older students, there is a collection of chapter books. A language learning section includes books in French and Spanish. TumbleBooks also provides a TumbleSearch feature that allows a variety of searches. To access TumbleBooks, go to the library's website at [www.wbr.lib.la.us](http://www.wbr.lib.la.us) and click on the blue TumbleBooks icon. TumbleBooks is another free service of the West Baton Rouge Parish Library!

# WEST BATON ROUGE MUSEUM

## Talented Student Art Show opens

The annual West Baton Rouge Talented Student Art Show featuring student work from elementary through high school will run January 30 through March 13.

Art teachers and participating schools are Kimberly Johnson, Brusly High School; Janece Font, Port Allen High; Cheryl Clark, Brusly Middle, Brusly Elementary and Lukeville Upper Elementary; and Jo Firman, Devall Middle, Chamberlin Elementary and Port Allen Middle.

Brusly students have been working on a project entitled "Brusly Gothic" in which they have created their own version of Grant Wood's "American Gothic." The display will include two pieces that placed 3rd and 4th in the state in the Lela Christmas card contest. The students that created those pieces received \$500 scholarships. Photography will be a part of this exhibit as well. A free reception will open the exhibit on Sunday, January 30 from 2:30 - 4 p.m.

## Black history, other events set at Museum

**January 30-March 13: WBR Talented Art Show:** The annual show features student work from elementary through high school in the parish's Talented Art Program. An opening reception, which is free, will be held on Sunday, January 30, from 2:30 to 4 p.m.

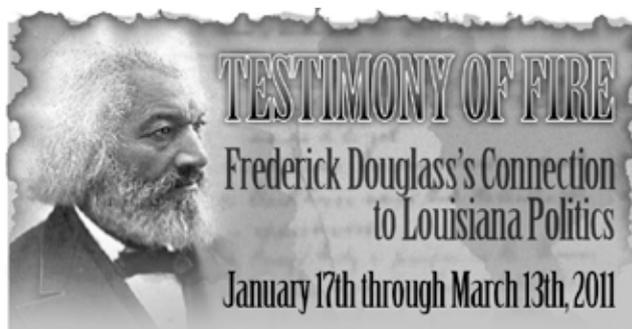
**February 5, 2 p.m.: Black History Film Series:** Taking a Seat for Justice: The 1960 Baton Rouge Sit-Ins is a 50-minute documentary on the events surrounding the first sit-in demonstration cases to be argued before the United States Supreme Court. Filmmaker Dr. Rachel Emanuel will lead a discussion on the film. Free.

**February 12, 2 p.m.: Black History**

**Film Series:** Journey for Justice: The A.P. Tureaud Story. Guest speakers A.P. Tureaud, Jr. and Dr. Rachel Emanuel will screen the film they produced featuring the life and accomplishments of one of Louisiana's most prominent Civil Rights activists and attorneys. Free.

**February 20, 2:30 p.m.: Lecture: Quiet in the Court:** The case for pardons for the 1811 German Coast Slave Uprising. Local historian Fernin Eaton will give an illustrated talk about the slave uprising that is considered the largest slave revolt to ever take place on American soil. Free.

**February 27, 2:30 p.m.: Kenyota Combs, historian and guest curator for Testimony of Fire:**



Frederick Douglass' Connection to Louisiana Politics will give a talk about the historical connections Frederick Douglass had to Louisiana politics and Douglass' impact on the Emancipation Proclamation,

Lincoln's plan for Reconstruction and civil rights for Louisiana's free people of color and freed slaves. Free.

**March 10-13: Dulcimer Feté:** To register for classes visit [www.la-gniappedulcimer.org](http://www.la-gniappedulcimer.org)

## Quilting challenge is on

The West Baton Rouge Museum is challenging regional quilters to create quilts using select fabrics, designs, and techniques to commemorate the 150th Anniversary of the U.S. Civil War for 2010. The entries will be juried to include 20 original quilts that will be exhibited at the museum. Cash prizes will be awarded for first, second, third place, and honorable mention winners. Entry materials are due March 8. Visit [www.westbatonrougemuseum.com](http://www.westbatonrougemuseum.com) or call (225) 336-2422 x11 for rules and registration forms.

### ABOUT THIS PUBLICATION:

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](mailto:ellie@peacockcommunications.com), or call 225-929-9661.



## WEST BATON ROUGE PARISH GOVERNMENT



Client Tristan Pertuis, center, 8, holds on to Sophie the horse while volunteers Eleanor Stone, left, and Lauren Webb, right, help him to balance on her back. Pertuis has cerebral palsy and receives hippotherapy from the GaitWay Therapeutic Horsemanship program.

Photo by Liz Condo



## Horse therapy comes to WBR for special needs residents

West Baton Rouge special needs residents are being provided with a new form of therapy thanks to the WBR Parks and Recreation Department and GaitWay Therapeutic Horsemanship.

Therapeutic horseback riding and hippotherapy sessions are being offered for all ages within the special needs community at the Louis A. Mouch, Jr. Multi-Purpose Facility. Registration and evaluations are offered monthly.

GaitWay provides equine-assisted therapeutic horseback riding for children and adults with physical, mental, and emotional disabilities and learning differences. The riding program fosters body movement, coordination, balance, breathing and self confidence that would not be possible for the participants otherwise.

West Baton Rouge residents will be given the special opportunity to participate at a reduced fee. Volunteers are needed in all areas of GaitWay's program to participate in the rewarding opportunity of helping the special needs community. Volunteers are the backbone of the riding program for the disabled. Most of GaitWay's riders cannot ride without the physical, emotional, and psychological support of their volunteers.

In addition, new and used equipment that is in exceptionally good condition is needed, along with show clothing and boots in exceptionally good condition. For more information, to volunteer or to donate items for the program, contact Shelley Barry at (225) 892-8928 or e-mail her at [Shelley@gaitway.org](mailto:Shelley@gaitway.org).

## Projects underway to improve drainage, roads

The parish is working on several projects to improve drainage in various areas, both in south and north West Baton Rouge. A major drainage project in the Lynndale area has been completed and a project aimed to improve storm water runoff is planned for the area North of I-10 to the Huey P. Long Bridge.

Some homes in the Lynndale area flooded last July because the area received 7 inches of rain in a two-hour period, exceeding the drainage system's design for the heaviest rain expected in 50 years. The parish bored under La. Hwy. 1, adding additional drainage from the Lynndale area. Other projects to help Lynndale/Brusly area drainage include cleaning out and widening the parish canal; and widening and deepening the TonTon canal.

Work is being planned to increase drainage capacity via a diversion canal from the old bridge to the Calumet Road area. The canal will run to the Intracoastal Canal. Engineering designs are presently underway on a \$600,000 project to improve the watershed from the area north of I-10 to the Huey P. Long Bridge (Old Bridge). A diversion canal of approximately 4,000 feet will be constructed to provide a more direct access for the flow of storm water runoff from that area directly into the Intracoastal Canal. This project is being funded with hurricane relief funds.

**ROAD IMPROVEMENTS:** The parish is planning a road overlay program for 2011, which will include the following roads: Freeman Lane, Park Lane, Red Hat Road, Randall Gay Street, Genre Road, Smithfield Road, Commercial Drive and South Westport Drive. Bids are expected to be taken for the work by the summer.



The photo shows the completed improvements to increase drainage capacity from the Lynndale area under La. Hwy. 1 to the parish canal.

## Tax help available at library

Need help preparing your taxes? For the second year in a row, the West Baton Rouge Parish Library and WBR Council have teamed up to provide help to those who are eligible.

The Library is serving as a Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) site and the Council is providing 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. Volunteers will not prepare returns dealing with rental property, royalties, farm income, casualty losses, health savings accounts, moving expenses, alternative minimum tax, household employee taxes, or married filing separately filing status.

To schedule an appointment call 383-4755. 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.

## Parish gets new court to get tough on trash, building code statutes

West Baton Rouge Parish is stepping up its enforcement of parish ordinances on building codes, junk and unsightly property with a new Code Enforcement Court.

Parish President Riley "PeeWee" Berthelot and the West Baton Rouge Council has established the court through state statute with Judge William Kleinpeter serving as Administrative Hearing Officer.

The new court, which began operation in December, is designed to make sure parish properties are up to code and are kept tidy. "Previously, there were many steps to go through with district court," explained Kevin Durbin, director of WBR Community Planning and Development. "The Code Enforcement Court will allow us to move much quicker on cases."

"The state statute allows this court to cover any citations for public health, housing, fire code, environmental or historic district ordinances," he explained. "The first cases we are going after are properties with junk in their yards."

The parish is seeking authority to add other ordinances for building code, zoning, vegetation and nuisance violations to be handled through the Code Enforcement Court. Durbin said State Rep. Major Thibaut has agreed to sponsor the legislation in the Spring session of the legislature, and the parish hopes to have that authority

approved in this legislative session.

The parish will hold quarterly Code Enforcement Court sessions, and Durbin said the parish will work with property owners who are willing to fix the problems cited. "We don't want to fine people," he said. "We just want the parish cleaned up and codes to be met."

Any parish resident who has a complaint about a property should call the Community Planning and Development office at 336-2434. The next Code Enforcement Court is March 10, and the parish will take complaints for that court date until February 10. Any complaints received between February 10 and May 16 will be handled on the June 16 court date.

### PUT ADDRESS NUMBERS ON YOUR HOME:

West Baton Rouge Parish law requires address numbers on homes and mobile home trailers. Penalties for violation of this law is a \$500 fine. The following is required: 4-inch high numbers on residences and 6-inch high numbers on mobile home trailers. Violators will be prosecuted through the Code Enforcement Court. The numbers are necessary to help emergency response personnel find homes during emergencies.



## CITY OF PORT ALLEN

### City Council urges legal action to prevent additional storage tanks

A plan to build more bulk storage tanks in Port Allen near Rivault Park was met with swift opposition from members of the Port Allen City Council and residents. Center Point Terminal, also known as Apex Oil Company has announced construction of several more tanks at the site. The project is expected to cost \$10 million. Initial reports about the project state the tanks will be filled with petroleum-based products, including asphalt and carbon black oil.

The company's interest in investing in this project has some Port Allen residents and community leaders worried about the safety of those who live near the park. In particular, there are concerns for children who play in the area. The Port of Greater Baton Rouge owns the property where the additional tanks will be built.

Port officials assured residents that precautions will be made to leave significant space between the tanks and the park and the neighborhood. In January, the council passed a resolution requesting the city hire the services of an environmental attorney with experience in similar cases.

### State grant pays for city water well upgrades

Construction is expected to begin in the next six months to build a new water well in Port Allen. Mayor Derek Lewis says the city received a \$698,500 Community Development Block Grant from the state Department of Environmental Quality for the project. The new well is replacing the old Avenue D well that has not functioned for many years. The mayor says the construction will ensure the city has adequate water supply in

case of fire or other emergencies. It will be the third well in Port Allen, along with the existing wells on 6th Street and North 12th Street.

City leaders explained recently that water well upgrades are long overdue. The Avenue D well suffered breakdowns and multiple malfunctions before it was shut down. Mayor Lewis says having only two wells was a cause for concern and he expects the new well to be ready for operation by

the end of the year.

The city has applied for the grant several times and was awarded the funding from the state in January. The state's Community Development Block Grant Program is part of the Office of the Governor. It awards federal financial assistance to local governments in designated areas to help develop communities.

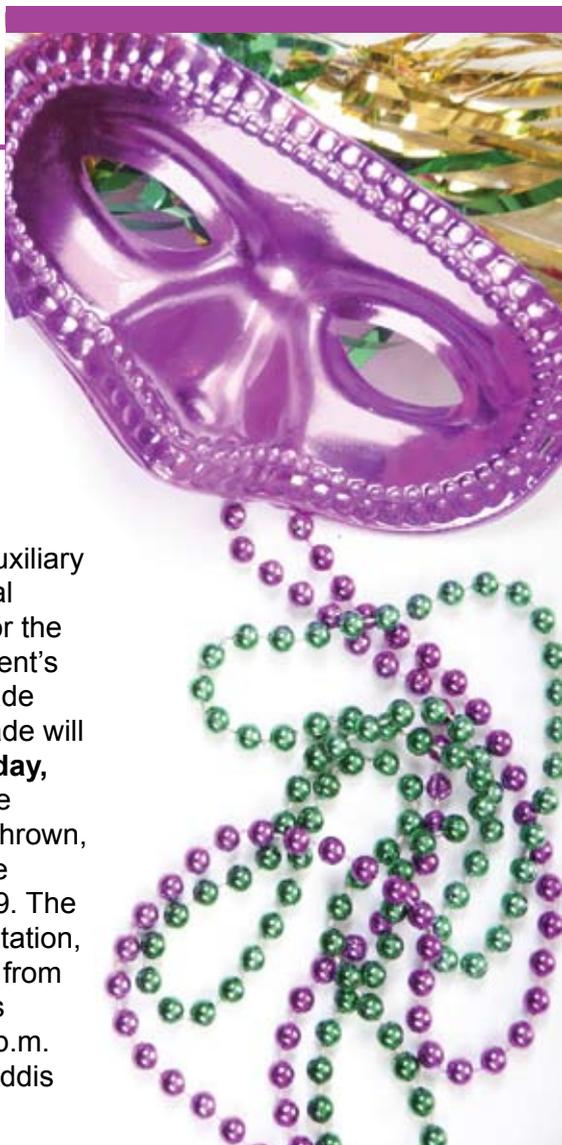


A view of Rivault Park and the Mississippi River Bridge

## TOWN OF ADDIS

### Mardi Gras parade planning underway

The Addis Ladies Auxiliary is gearing up for carnival season. Preparations for the Volunteer Fire Department's annual Mardi Gras parade are underway. The parade will start at 11 a.m. on **Sunday, February 27**. Before the beads and trinkets are thrown, a king and queen will be selected on February 19. The Children's Court presentation, which includes children from age 5-14 from the Addis community, is set for 6 p.m. on February 19 at the Addis VFW Hall.



### Addis Volunteer Fire Department

## 50 Years...and counting

New construction and increases in population continue to be part of daily life in Addis. Those changes impact more than just the line at the grocery store check-out. New structures and more residents also mean the town's fire protection must be capable of handling the additions. The Addis Volunteer Fire Department is entering its 50th year of service to the community and the volunteer fire chief says he is working to help the department keep up with the increased demands.

The fire department operates with one full-time paid firefighter, five part-time firefighters, a volunteer chief and about 20 part-time volunteer firefighters. "Ideally, I would like to have at the very least 30 volunteers," says Chief Henry Melancon. The department recruits new volunteers through word of mouth and signs around the area, but with the addition of the three story Sugar Mill apartment buildings, the department will need to quickly increase its volunteer ranks. He wants residents to consider

dedicating time to volunteer with the department to help keep homes and businesses safe. New volunteers must attend three training classes, provided by the department, before they can be certified and receive equipment.

Chief Melancon says a three-story building requires more volunteers and a new ladder truck because of fire protection regulations imposed by the state. The town's fire rating determines home and business insurance rates. The department is working with several firms that build fire trucks to determine the correct design for its new ladder truck.

Chief Melancon said the truck will cost approximately \$600,000. In 2010, the Addis Fire Department responded to 241 calls for assistance, just slightly up from 2009. In the case of large fires, the department is often assisted by Bruly, Port Allen and Plaquemine fire departments. If you are interested in serving the department or to find out more about volunteer qualifications, call the department at (225) 749-6175.

### 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 WBR School board members sworn in

The new board convened its first meeting of the year on January 12th. The four newly-elected members of the West Baton Rouge Parish School Board all come from different parts of the parish, but they all have one thing on their mind - serving public schools.

In January, the new members took the oath during disturbing economic conditions for school systems. School boards across the state are battering down the hatches as uncertainty over school system budgets loom at the State Department of Education. The new board members all agree that keeping WBR schools in sound financial standing will be the board's number one priority this year. In addition to money matters, continuing the good progress in the classroom will be at the forefront of their plans as well.



Terri Bergeron

At-large member Teri Bergeron says she is passionate about assisting in the success of the youth of West Baton Rouge Parish. Her run for the school board was about getting involved

on a real level. "Kids are the future and want a hand in guiding our kids the right way." Bergeron is a life-long resident of Port Allen.

District 6 does not have a new face representing the area, but Thelma Pattan just won her first elected seat on the board. With 47 years of total education experience under her belt, Pattan sees her time on the board as the continuation of a calling. She served the remainder of her husband, Paul Pattan's term, after he retired in February 2010 due to illness. The board appointed Thelma to fill the remainder of his term. In October, she was elected to the seat and says she plans to continue pursuing positive gains for students, teachers and staff in WBR schools.



Thelma Pattan



Craig Sarradet

As the father of two young

children, Craig Sarradet knows the importance of early education and keeping students on the right track. The Brusly High graduate represents District 1 and says he wants to have a part in making sure West Baton Rouge schools continue performing better than most districts in the area. "The superintendent has introduced some initiatives that are making some great strides in math and reading, and we want to continue in that direction."

In District 2, Toby Sarradet, like his relative in District 1, is looking to increase the advances the school system is making in student performance. Just like his colleagues, Sarradet has a personal connection to the school system. His two children attend Brusly Middle and Elementary. He says his top issues for the system are to make sound financial decisions and continuing bringing in great teachers.



Toby Sarradet

# West Baton Rouge students prepare for graduation and jobs

The benefits of a high school education are clear to many people, but for students who have slipped behind their peers, it can feel like a futile experience. It is that feeling of irrelevance that Jobs for America's Graduates is intended to eliminate.

The initiative is in the first year of implementation in West Baton Rouge Parish Schools. Superintendent David Corona sees it as a tool in helping students who have fallen a bit behind the ultimate goal of graduation on time and connecting them to a productive life as a resident of the parish.

***"The students are starting to see the value of the program."***

observing the students and interaction with them that they are more interested in school. They feel validated that they can be successful," says Lair.

The goals of the JAG program are specific: career development, job survival, communication skills, work place skills, and life survival skills. These are not the typical results expected in traditional college prep high school classes, and West Baton Rouge JAG instructor Tara West says these skills are what will transform her students from average students to in demand workers.

She says the message of her instruction is starting to hit home. "The students are starting to see the value of the program. I hear language from them like 'this is not just a class, this is preparing me for the future'," West said. A former math teacher and state administrator,

West has seen education from all sides. She says the methods required to teach students in the JAG program would benefit all students. "My friends say I have the dream job. I have the perfect mix of teaching and administration."

West has time to take a closer look at the history of her 39 students. She has reviewed their records from the time they started school until now and says she can identify when they started having trouble in school. This provides a launching point toward correcting issues that have plagued them in the past. West recognizes all teachers do not have the freedom to do this because her class sizes are much smaller, but says the techniques are still valid in helping each student attain their ultimate goal of graduation and quality employment.

This spring West plans to recruit

local businesses for partnership with the program. She says this is critical to JAG's effectiveness. "The students are learning to be good employees and receiving instruction in work place etiquette, but the key to instilling these values is experience in real world environment. I'm reaching out to the local chamber of commerce and area businesses. We want them to understand what we are trying to accomplish with our students who live in this parish and hopefully they will agree to participate," West says.

The JAG program is a statewide effort to curb dropout rates throughout the state. While West Baton Rouge Parish does not have the high numbers of some other districts in the state, school leaders say even one high school dropout is too many.

West Baton Rouge JAG instructor Tara West

Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG) is a national dropout prevention and recovery program aimed at not only keeping school aged students in school, but preparing them for civic responsibility, leadership development and becoming a productive part of their community.

Students at Brusly and Port Allen High Schools are in their second semester of the mentoring program. The school system received money from the Louisiana Department of Education to initiate this first year of the services. The system's Director of Curriculum and instruction Sharon Lair is pleased with the progress so far. "We can see through



**JOB'S FOR AMERICA'S GRADUATES PROGRAM AT WORK...**  
JAG teacher Tara West helps Port Allen High students during a team building program. Pictured from L to R are: Travis Dickerson, Ashton Paul Williams, Tara West and Ronald Nolan.



## WEST BATON ROUGE ASSESSOR

# Older, disabled property owners can get assessment relief

West Baton Rouge Parish residents age 65 or over and those who are disabled may qualify for a property assessment freeze. The freeze on their property value comes from a program called the Louisiana Special Assessment Level program and it allows qualifying individuals to have the value of their home frozen.

### Conditions of the Special Assessment include:

- Person or persons shall have an adjusted gross income, as reported on their federal income tax return for the year 2010, of no more than \$65,891.43 for 2011 applications.
  - For those whose filing status is married, filing separately, adjusted gross income shall be the combined adjusted gross income from both federal income tax returns.
  - An eligible owner must apply for the special assessment level by filing a signed application with the West Baton Rouge Parish Assessor's Office. The special assessment level shall remain on the property as long as:
  - The owner, or the owner's spouse who is 55 years of age or who has minor children, remain as the owner of the property.
- And
- The value of the property does not increase more than 25 percent because of construction or remodeling.
- The special assessment level on property that is

sold shall automatically expire on the last day of December in the year the property is sold. In such cases the property shall be immediately revalued by the Assessor and placed on the next assessment roll at the revalued fair market value.

Homeowners with the special assessment should be aware that the assessment does not prevent them from paying more property taxes if voters approve new taxes.

The form for the Special Assessment Level Program is available on the Assessor's Office website at [www.wbrassessor.org](http://www.wbrassessor.org). Once printed out, the form must be completed and signed by the property owner, and delivered to the Assessor's Office.

Forms are also available at the Assessor's Office, located in the West Baton Rouge Parish Courthouse in Port Allen. For more information, call the Assessor's Office at 344-6777.



## PORT OF GREATER BATON ROUGE

# Port of Greater Baton Rouge Commission elects officers

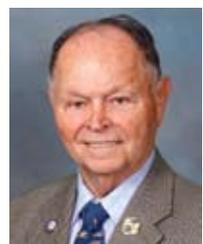
The Board of Commissioners for the Port of Greater Baton Rouge recently elected officers for 2011. They include Larry Johnson, West Baton Rouge, president; Jerald Juneau, East Baton Rouge, vice president; Tim Hardy, East Baton Rouge, treasurer; and Blaine Sheets, Ascension, secretary.



Larry Johnson

Larry Johnson has served as a port commissioner representing West Baton Rouge Parish since 1992 and also served three previous terms as president of the port commission: in 1996, 2002 and 2006. He is a general contractor and a former councilman of the West Baton Rouge Parish Council. Johnson is chair of the proposed LA 1/ I-10 Connector Route in West Baton Rouge Parish, and has been involved in obtaining funding for a number of port capital improvements.

During his presidency, Johnson plans to promote the assets of the port and place emphasis in 2011 on strategic planning for future port growth. "The port is an asset to this entire region and has tremendous potential to create jobs and investment throughout its jurisdiction," he said.



Jerald Juneau

Jerald Juneau, vice president, is the former deputy secretary-treasurer for the Louisiana Teachers Retirement System and a retired United States Army Colonel. Governor Jindal appointed Juneau to the commission in 2008.



Tim Hardy

Timothy W. Hardy, secretary, is the managing partner at Lemle Keller, LLP and joined the firm in 1994. From 1982 to 1988, he served as an Assistant Attorney General in the Louisiana Department of Justice in the Environmental Enforcement Section. In 1988, he was appointed to serve as Assistant Secretary for the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality. In 2007, he served as vice chairman of Governor Bobby Jindal's Environmental Transition Advisory Council. He also currently serves as an adjunct professor teaching Environmental Law at the Southern University Law Center.

Blaine Sheets, treasurer, was appointed to the commission by Governor Jindal in 2008. He is president of Specialized Industrial Maintenance and is a former member of the Board of Commissioners for the Pontchartrain Levee District.

The port's governing body is a 15-member commission appointed by the Governor. The port commission's responsibilities are to establish policy and provide oversight into the port's development. Port commissioners are selected from the four parishes served by the port.

The Greater Baton Rouge Port Commission oversees 85 miles of the Mississippi River. This port is ranked 14th in the United States in total tonnage, handling over 51,809,486 million short tons of cargo annually, while providing access to mid-America through the

Gulf Intracoastal Waterway and the upper Mississippi River system.

For more information on the Port of Greater Baton Rouge, visit [www.portgbr.com](http://www.portgbr.com).



Jay Hardman, executive director of the Port of Greater Baton Rouge, presented Commissioner Raymond Loup a plaque on behalf of the Port Commission and staff in appreciation of his outstanding dedication and leadership as the 2010 Port Commission president. Raymond Loup joined the Port Commission in 2006 and was reappointed to the Commission by Governor Jindal in 2008. Loup is a contractor from Brusly, and the president of Rad-Ton Inc., a water and sewer excavation company that he founded in 1987. Loup also served as the director of the West Baton Rouge Natural Gas and Water System and was a founder and past president of the Capital Area Groundwater Conservation Commission.



## WEST BATON ROUGE TOURISM Christmas card contest winners

The tradition of holiday greetings was big time competition for several West Baton Rouge Parish Schools this December. The West Baton Rouge Convention and Visitors Bureau sponsored the greeting card contest for area schools. The cards were large-scale designs and stood on display for several weeks at the WBR Tourist Information and Conference Center. Members of the public voted on their favorite cards. The winners for this year's holiday greeting card contest are:

- 1st Place-Brusly High School
- 2nd Place-Cohn Elementary School
- 3rd Place-Brusly Elementary School

The winners were awarded a plaque and ribbons for their artistic efforts.



HOLIDAY GREETING CARD CONTEST WINNER...Brusly High School's holiday greeting card artwork won 1st place in the greeting card competition.

*Come Fly  
With Us!*

## Holidays light up with "Reflections of the Season"

The spirit of the season was on bright display during the second "Reflections of the Season" lights show at the West Baton Rouge Tourist Information and Conference Center. The drive and walk-through holiday light display drew more than 12,000 people.

A statewide advertising campaign helped to draw spectators, but some travelers along Interstate 10 were lured to the scenery from the highway. "We had a man from England who saw the lights while traveling by and he drove through, he was amazed," recalled tourism Executive Director Sharon Stam.

The December 1-25 event included live entertainment, including horse drawn wagon rides, and holiday treats. The light show kicked off with an opening night premiere party on November 30th. The special guest of the evening was the secret Santa Troy Landry of the popular "Swamp People," a History Channel television show. Another special event was a pajama party for 130 children. Stam says planning is already underway for next year's lights display.

*Watch pros fly huge kites!  
See amazing kite ballets!*

*Exotic & unique kites!  
Fly a kite for fun!  
Kite making competitions!*

# Kite Fest Louisiana 2011

Friday, April 1 - 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. (Student Day)  
Saturday & Sunday, April 2 & 3 - 11 a.m. - 6 p.m.  
"Classic Sounds by Jude"

West Baton Rouge Soccer Complex  
Highway 415 @ Rosedale Rd. in Port Allen

**"FREE TO THE PUBLIC"**

<p><b>Friday</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children's Educational Day</li> <li>• Kite making information available for educators (in advance)</li> <li>• Plan a field trip with your school or class - Space is limited!</li> <li>• Children's kite making workshops</li> </ul>	<p><b>Saturday &amp; Sunday</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kite flying "just for fun"</li> <li>• Kite Design Competitions</li> <li>• Children's kite making workshop</li> <li>• Sport kite team ballets</li> <li>• Professional kite flying</li> <li>• Show kite demonstrations</li> <li>• Louisiana Food Booths</li> <li>• Candy drop &amp; Bol Races for kids</li> <li>• Kite flying lessons</li> <li>• Extreme Inflatables</li> <li>• Face Painting</li> </ul>
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For event information, field trip bookings or to volunteer:  
800-654-9701 www.westbatonrouge.net  
Vendor space: 225-344-2920 or kgautreau@westbatonrouge.net



Horse drawn wagon rides were one of the fun offerings of Reflections of the Season.

## TOWN OF BRUSLY

# Maintaining quality of life in Brusly a top priority of mayor, council

The status quo is not a bad thing in the mind of Brusly Mayor Joey Normand. He says his goal for the Town of Brusly is to keep it the way it is--free of crime and clear of debris.

A major part of this effort is to increase enforcement of the town's recently upgraded nuisance ordinances. Normand says he and the council are rolling up their sleeves to rid Brusly of overgrown grass, abandoned buildings, and broken down cars. "We are not running people out of Brusly, and the town is not in the business of tearing down buildings, grass cutting or car towing. However, if the owner of the property does not take care of it, the town will" Owners of blighted properties can face a fine or a lien can be placed on the property if the issues are not corrected.

In 2009, the Brusly Town Council decided to add "teeth" to its ordinances that regulate derelict and blighted properties. Normand says these changes are at the request of residents. "Many of them came forward and identified properties that needed to be taken care of and asked that we take action," Normand said. The goal is to keep Brusly as a quiet bedroom community where residents can continue to feel comfortable and avoid the hassles that larger municipalities suffer. "Our goal is not to become a large city. We are happy the way we are now. Everyone knows his or her neighbors and it is a lifestyle we want to keep," he says. Ultimately, Normand adds, the ordinances are a benefit to responsible

property owners.

Another change that was implemented recently was a limitation on new trailers in Brusly. The council decided no new trailers can be installed in the town limits, but existing trailers can be upgraded if they meet certain qualifications.

The focus is not only on blight and unsightly property, the mayor points out the town has been proactive in recognizing historic properties. The Brusly Landmark

and Heritage Committee is dedicated to finding properties of historic significance in town and honoring them with the presentation of a certificate and placing a bronze plaque on the residence. Residents can submit their property for consideration to the committee. So far, several dozen homes and buildings in Brusly have been so distinguished, many of them identified with a plaque in front of the structure with information about its historic significance.



In addition to eliminating abandoned and unkempt properties, the mayor and town council are working to recognize historic properties like the Hebert House on East Main Street.



# The West Baton Rouge Chamber of Commerce

# Annual Banquet

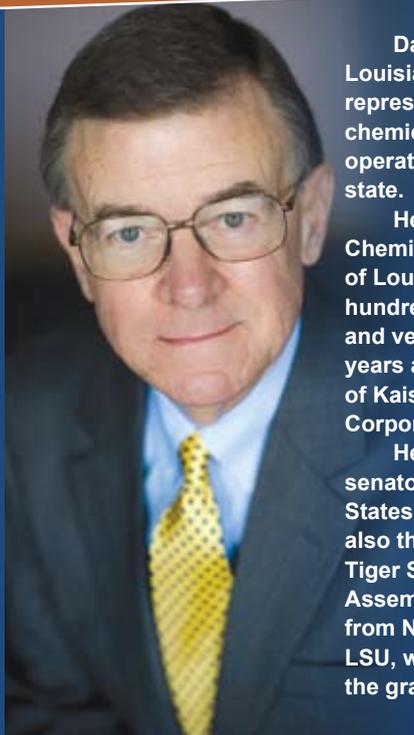
Presented by the Dow Louisiana Federal Credit Union

Wednesday, February 9, 2011  
Cash bar and silent auction opens at 6 p.m.

Program begins at 7 p.m.

## Guest Speaker – Dan Borne'

President of the Louisiana Chemical Association and voice of the LSU football program in Tiger Stadium



Dan Borne' is President of the Louisiana Chemical Association, which represents the interests of over 60 chemical manufacturing companies that operate at more than 90 locations in the state.

He is also President of the Louisiana Chemical Industry Alliance, a partnership of Louisiana's chemical plants and hundreds of their suppliers, contractors and vendors. Before joining the LCA 22 years ago, Borne' was a vice president of Kaiser Aluminum and Chemical Corporation.

He has also worked for a state senator; a congressman; three United States Senators and a governor. He is also the public address announcer at Tiger Stadium and at the Pete Maravich Assembly Center. Borne' has a bachelor's from Nicholls State and a master's from LSU, where he is an adjunct member of the graduate faculty.

The Chamber will also welcome new officers and board members as well as recognize the 2010 volunteers and outgoing board members.

\$40.00 for Chamber members and \$50.00 for the public.

Pre-registration is required and seating is limited

Sponsorships and items for the silent auction are still being accepted!

Call the Chamber office at 383-3140 for more information.



## THANKING MEMBERS FOR SUPPORT...

The West Baton Rouge Chamber hosted a Holiday Celebration on December 15 at Antonia Plantation to thank members for their support in 2010. Shown in the photo above are Sandra Hughes and Katherine George, both of Lofton Staffing; Denise Rodrigue of Guaranty Bank and Joanie Bishop of Pointe Coupee Electric. Other photos are scenes from the event, which drew more than 100 members and guests.



## Nominations needed for Pride of West Baton Rouge Award

Do you know someone who has worked hard to promote the civic, business, educational or cultural attributes of West Baton Rouge Parish? If so, nominate that person for the prestigious Pride of West Baton Rouge Award.

The presentation of the award is a highlight of the Chamber's annual membership banquet, set for February 9. The award is open to individuals, organizations or groups whose work meets any of the following criteria:

- promotes a sense of pride in WBR, its people and assets;
- encourages activities to enhance the overall quality of life in the community;
- works to develop new business opportunities; assists in developing tourism and historic potential;
- works to make West Baton Rouge a better place to live, work and do business.

Supporting documentation should accompany the nomination form, which is available from the Chamber office by calling 383-3140. The nomination should include a brief description of the entry, a summary including history, results and impact; and supporting materials (photos, articles, information, etc). Photos are encouraged.