

# VISION WEST

West Baton Rouge Parish - Community, Growth, Possibilities

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

## Calendar of Events

**May 1 – June 1-**  
Lincoln: The Constitution and the Civil War, Museum

**May 8 – Three Frog**  
Night musical theater at Library, 9 a.m.

**May 10 - July 20:**  
A Louisianian's Grand Tour in the Belle Époque, Museum

**May 22 – last day of school** for WBR public schools

**June 4 - Noon** workshop and evening workshop on perfume, Museum

**June 7 - Aug. 31:**  
Jim Bowie and Family in Louisiana exhibit, Museum

**June 25 - Lecture and book signing** with author Sam Irwin with his book Louisiana Crawfish, noon, Museum

**July 4 - 4th Fest**

**July 13, 2:30-5pm**  
Sunday, Bastille Day, Museum.

## Parish supports BUMP, but asks residents help with DOTD

West Baton Rouge Parish President Riley "PeeWee" Berthelot is continuing to push for the La. 415 connector route to relieve traffic at the Intracoastal Bridge, and has also gained support from the WBR Parish Council to commit \$100,000 to the proposed BUMP project to relieve traffic congestion.

The Baton Rouge Urban Renewal and Mobility Plan (BUMP), would create a four-lane connector road from Interstate 10 near La. 415 in West Baton Rouge to the old Mississippi River Bridge, and make a portion of Airline

Highway from the bridge in Baton Rouge an interstate style road without red lights. The project is estimated to cost \$700 million to \$1 billion.

"We are supporting any project that will reduce the traffic congestion," Berthelot said. The La. Hwy. 415 connector road would cost approximately \$130 million. Berthelot said he has continued to push for the road with La. Department of Transportation and Development officials, and also made a presentation to state legislators in April.

"We are getting all the complaints, but these are state

and federal roadways so we have no control," Berthelot said. "DOTD tells us that they have not received complaints, so I am urging residents to call DOTD to complain when

they have to sit in backed-up traffic." The phone numbers for DOTD are 1-877-452-3683 or customer service at 225-379-1273.

**FRUSTRATED WITH TRAFFIC CONGESTION ON LA. HWY. 1 AT THE INTRACOASTAL AND BRIDGE?**

**LET THE LA. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND DEVELOPMENT KNOW!**

**CALL THEM: 1-877-452-3683 or 225-379-1273 or e-mail dotdcs@la.gov**

## RECREATION UPDATE

### SPLASH PADS OPEN MAY 1

The parish's splash pads will open on May 1 unless inclement or cool weather delays the opening. This is the second summer the four splash pads at parks throughout the parish will be open. The \$750,000 cost of the splash pads was funded by the WBR recreation tax. The pads are located at Myhand Park in Addis, Alexander Park in Brusly, Port Allen Community Center and Erwinville Park. The parks are open daily from 8 a.m. until 8 p.m. for children 12 years and younger. Parental supervision and proper attire are required at the splash parks. The water systems at each of the parks are dormant until they are activated by pressing the black activation plates found on the splash pads with a bare hand or foot.

### SWIMMING POOL OPENS MAY 23

The parish swimming pool at the Williams and Lee Park will open on May 23, with the YMCA providing operations and lifeguards. It is open Tuesday through Saturday from 9 a.m. until noon for swimming lessons and groups, and from 1 p.m. until 6 p.m. for the public. The pool is closed on Sundays, but is available for private parties. Anyone

(continued on Page 2)



## 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 6:30 p.m. at the Council meeting room in the Parish Council Building.

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

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

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

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## WEST BATON ROUGE MUSEUM

### Teachers Institute opens registration at Museum

The West Baton Rouge Museum has opened registration for the 2014 Teachers Institute. The three-day summer program is designed for in-service teachers and will run July 8, 9, and 10.

The theme this year is History, The Arts, and Agriculture: Cultivating Lessons for the Classroom using Social Studies and STEM Learning. Teachers enjoy daily lectures and presentations from historians and education specialists, field trips to museums and cultural centers, get a package of classroom resource

materials, CLU credits certificate and \$100 stipend upon completion of the institute. Lunch is provided daily and transportation to all the field trips is provided.

The West Baton Rouge School Board is co-sponsor of this program.

The Teachers Institute is limited to 25 participants. To register visit [www.westbatonrougemuseum.com](http://www.westbatonrougemuseum.com) and print out the pdf registration form and fax back to Jeannie Luckett, fax (225) 336-2448, or call Luckett (225) 336-2422 x14 for a registration form.



### Museum hosts National History Day Regional Competition

The West Baton Rouge Museum was chosen by the National World War II Museum to host the Greater Baton Rouge Regional competition of National History Day for a third year in a row on March 29.

The 350 middle and high school students in the competition selected topics that address the theme "Rights and Responsibilities in History." They produced one of five different projects including exhibits, research papers, performances, web sites, or documentaries that were all displayed in the museum and evaluated by judges. Students competed against their peers for scholarships and cash prizes as they advanced from the regional level to nationals.

### Coming events at the WBR Museum

**May 10 - July 20:**

A Louisianian's Grand Tour in the Belle Époque. The exhibit illustrates the story of young Aurelie Levert of St. Delphine Plantation in West Baton Rouge who set out on an adventure in 1900 when she traveled Europe for three months. She spent most of her time in Paris taking in the sights and sounds of the Exposition Universelle—the World's Fair of 1900. This trip was taken during the height of the Belle Époque (1871-1914), a "beautiful era."



**May 29,** noon Lunchtime Lecture, NOMA Curator Mel Buchanan, Gorham Silver and Martele Silver.

**June 4,** Two opportunities to choose from: A lunchtime workshop at noon or an Evening Workshop at

6pm: About Perfume with the Bourbon French Parfum Company. Participants will learn how to hand mix samples of lovely scents and listen to a brief history of perfumery. Presenting will be experts from the Bourbon French Parfum company, a business that has been in operation since around 1843, and still operates by following traditional methods. Space is limited. Pre-registration is required by calling (225) 336-2422 x15.

**June 25,** noon: Lecture and book signing with award winning author, Sam Irwin with his latest book, Louisiana Crawfish: A Succulent History of the Cajun Crustacean. Delicious samples of crawfish recipes will be shared.

**June 7 - Aug. 31:** Carving Their Niche: The Bowie Family in Louisiana. An exhibit illustrates the story about how James "Jim" Bowie's parents moved their family to colonial Louisiana around 1802. It was in Louisiana that

Jim and his brothers and sisters made a name for themselves, including his sister, Mary, who settled in West Baton Rouge.

**June 26,** 6pm: Painting workshop "Champagne and Claude." An evening informal class at the museum led by professional artist and instructor Jenn Prochaska. Participants will enjoy champagne punch while they learn painting techniques inspired by Claude Monet. Participants will leave with their own original paintings.

**July 17,** noon lecture, Katie Pfohl, Art historian and curator at the LSU Museum of Art, will present "Impressionism in Paris around 1900."

**July 13,** 2:30-5pm Sunday, Bastille Day at the West Baton Rouge Museum. Enjoy an afternoon immersed in French culture. Activities include French food, music, art demonstrations, and hands-on activities. Bastille Day celebration will be a fun day for the whole family.

## WEST BATON ROUGE LIBRARY

### Library hosts "A Three Frog Night," has new blog for teens

The stage is up and the lights are set at the West Baton Rouge Parish Library for nine performances of "Three Frog Night," an original puppet theater musical, May 5 - 8. The army of frogs, and their cousin, toad, have been rehearsing their parts and their songs for several months with help from the library's experienced crew of mostly volunteer puppeteers. As you would expect of frogs, they do quite a bit of croakin', jumpin', and leapin' in the air, but they also have some great tales to tell and when they sing, they sound really swell.

The performances are completely booked by kindergarten, first and second grade classes from area schools, but a few seats in the audience are left for the Thursday, May 8, 9:00 a.m. performance. Call 342-7920, Ext. 227 to reserve a free seat. The 35-minute show is appropriate for children ages 5 through 8 years.

**NEW BLOG FOR TEENS...** Kimberly Mansur, who joined the library staff in January, has created a new blog for teens in which she spotlights the latest "good reads" in young adult literature, as well as events happening for teens at the library. Her "good reads" comments are quirky, interesting, and fun to read. Take a look at the "Teen Zone" by going online to <http://wbrplibrary.wordpress.com/>

### RECREATION UPDATE (continued from Page 1)

interested in renting it on a Sunday should call the WBR Parks and Recreation Department at 225-336-2423. The building adjacent to the pool has also been renovated and can be rented for private parties and events. The pool operation and renovation are funded by the WBR recreation tax.

#### REGISTER FOR SUMMER CAMPS

The West Baton Rouge Parks & Recreation Department will again hold summer camp sessions throughout the parish for kids age 5 to 12. The camps include various activities, such as games, crafts and fun field trips. Six sessions will be offered at three locations across the parish:

- **Port Allen** – at the West Baton Rouge Community Center, June 3-5 and June 10-12
- **Addis** – at the Addis Community Center, June 17-19 and June 24-26
- **Erwinville** – at the Erwinville Community Center, July 8-10 and July 15-17

The fee for each weekly camp, including lunch, is \$10. Pre-registration is required, and only checks or money orders will be accepted. For more information or to register, please contact the WBR Parks & Recreation Department at 225-336-2423.

#### TENNIS CAMPS

Tennis camps are being offered from 3:30 until 5 p.m. at the tennis complex on 6<sup>th</sup> Street in Port Allen. For more information call the Recreation Department at 225-336-2434.





# WEST BATON ROUGE PARISH GOVERNMENT



**NEW ROAD AROUND SCHOOL...** West Baton Rouge Parish crews have begun work on a road to provide access behind Cohn Elementary School near Williams and Lee Park. The parish has relocated a fence, removed trees, done drainage work, and is putting down a limestone base for the road. The asphalt road is being bid out as part of its 2014 road overlay program. The photo above shows a parish crew doing dirt work to prepare for the limestone. The road will provide better access to the park and school.

## DRAINAGE PROJECTS ACROSS THE PARISH

West Baton Rouge maintenance crews have numerous projects on tap this year to improve drainage throughout the parish. In the photo at right, trees are cleared for the new Lobdell Diversion Canal. Construction of this canal will begin this summer and will help drain the northern part of the parish and old Mississippi River bridge area, along with Lobdell and west of La. Hwy. 415 in the Rosedale Road/Rebelle Lane area. The canal, being constructed at a cost of \$600,000, will extend into the Intracoastal Waterway. Work is also planned on Coulee Canal, which runs south from the parish line to Choctaw Road, and the Parish Canal, which is a major canal for all areas south of the Intracoastal Waterway. Parish Canal is being dredged for siltation. This will improve the flow of drainage in the southern part of the parish. Canals and ditches on both Treuil Road and Rougon Road are also being cleared of brush and dug out for improved drainage.



## Natural Gas & Water reminders!

Bills are always due on the 15th of each month. If the bill includes a late charge/penalty, that is your disconnect notice. If you have a late charge/penalty, look on the bottom left of your bill for the date that the previous balance must be paid. If you aren't sure whether you have a previous balance, call the Utility Department for verification at 225-336-2406.

If you have a disconnect notice, please do not pay on the parish website after the disconnect date because it takes at least two business days to process online payments. During that time, you are still subject to be disconnected. If your account is disconnected, the service charge cannot be paid online.

If you pay "online" through your bank, remember that banks use a third party payment center, and it takes 5 to 7 days once the money leaves your account to get to the West Baton Rouge Parish Utility Department. The account will not be credited until the funds are

received.

**The following are ways to pay your bill:**

- Offices in Port Allen and in Brusly
- Night depositories next to the drive thru windows at both offices
- Mail
- Bank draft at no charge to the customers on the 5th of each month
- Online payments through the parish website for a fee
- Payments over the phone with credit card for a fee

If your service is turned off, it will be reconnected only after the bill is paid. Once paid, a utility worker will unlock your meter on weekdays, between the hours of 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. If you are not home, the meter(s) will be unlocked and you will have to turn on your own meter(s) yourself. If a utility worker is requested to return to the home to turn on the meter(s) after business hours a \$70 fee will be charged.



**LEADERS AGAINST LITTER...** West Baton Rouge leaders gathered on April 11 to show their support for keeping West Baton Rouge beautiful by supporting the Leaders Against Litter event. Local officials, business and community leaders, using gold litter grabbers, joined Keep West Baton Rouge Beautiful in collecting various forms of litter to help beautify the parish. They also signed the Leaders Against Litter pledge to commit to a cleaner community and state. The event was sponsored by Keep West Baton Rouge Beautiful, Volunteer Louisiana, Keep Louisiana Beautiful, and the Office of the Lieutenant Governor. In the photo above, leaders gather with their litter grabbers in hand.



Quilters in the Senior Spirit program show off one of their creations.

## Senior Spirit takes off in WBR

If you live in West Baton Rouge Parish and are 50 or older, then West Baton Rouge Senior Spirit has a host of opportunities for you to have fun and meet other residents.

A program for seniors offered by the West Baton Rouge Parks and Recreation Department, West Baton Rouge Senior Spirit is five and a half years old. Since it was started in September 2009, the program has grown to almost 400 members and a full calendar of activities monthly.

It is coordinated by its founders, Lucy Landry and Babs Babin, both of Brusly. "It started as a group of seniors playing weekly bridge when Lucy had the idea to offer something more for seniors and it's taken off from there," explained Anatole Vincent, Director of WBR Parks and Recreation Department. The parish has provided them with a Senior Center at 235 Elaine Street in Brusly for some activities and other programs are held in various locations.

"We do a wide variety of weekly activities such as hand and foot canasta,

quitting, aerobics, and bridge to bi-monthly programs like pokeno, bouree, and dominoes," explained Babin. Each month there are group pot luck, lunch and dinner opportunities, with travel as a key component, explained Landry.

"We've had guest speakers, flower arranging classes, jewelry making classes, African Violet programs, Bunco parties, biking trips, and more," she continued.

The April calendar included a WBR Senior Spirit four-day trip to Austin, a day trip to Pierre Part, in addition to other activities and information on parish wide computer classes at the WBR Parish Library and a cooking class at the WBR Museum.

"It has really taken off," Babin said. "We appreciate the WBR Parks and Recreation Department for sponsoring the program. It is working well and is a wonderful thing for the parish." The program is free. For more information on events, call Babs Babin at 225-749-2518 or Lucy Landry at 225-749-2981.

## Residents can help curb mosquitoes

The West Baton Rouge Mosquito Abatement Department is working to minimize the threat of mosquito borne disease in the parish. Following are ways individuals can help curb mosquito populations on their property:

- Flush birdbaths and pet dishes with fresh water at least once weekly.
- Empty all containers of water at least once weekly.
- Dispose of old tires. EIR, Inc. will take up to 5 tires 225-344-8298
- Keep drains, ditches, and culverts clean of weeds, grass clippings, and trash.
- Add sand or gravel to potted plant drip trays to absorb excess water.
- Empty plastic wading pools at least once weekly.
- Do not let tarps or boat covers collect and hold water.
- Fill in, drain or treat all standing water on your property.

For more information go to [www.wbrcouncil.org](http://www.wbrcouncil.org) under the departments tab or on Facebook/West Baton Rouge Mosquito Control.





## WEST BATON ROUGE TOURISM

# Windy skies attract crowd to Kite Fest

Thousands of spectators and participants braved cool, inclement weather to take part in the 2014 Kite Fest Louisianè on April 4-6 in West Baton Rouge Parish.

"We were disappointed by the weather for the weekend, but Saturday saw big crowds and everyone enjoyed the windy weather and special activities held that day," said Sharon Stam, Executive Director of the West Baton Rouge Convention and Visitors Bureau (WBRCVB).

She estimates that about 13,000 attended the 10th annual event that drew kite flying teams from Rhode

Island, New Jersey, Alabama, Florida, Texas, Virginia and Washington D.C. Kites of all shapes and sizes performed ballets over West Baton Rouge, as well as in indoor flying demonstrations in the Port Allen High School gymnasium.

Drynn Oday of Baton Rouge won first place in Saturday's kite design competition. Other winners included Katie Lockett, Prairieville, second place; Kaitlynn Martin, Tahoka, Texas, third place; and Jazmin Dominique, Port Allen, and Maeryn O'Day and Sarah Burleigh, Baton Rouge, honorable mention.

This year, the festival celebrated its milestone anniversary with special activities, including a reception at the West Baton Rouge Conference Center. WBR Parish President Riley Berthelot welcomed out-of-state teams, and honored sponsors, flyers, volunteers and everyone who has supported the event since its inception.

A special anniversary poster by artist Craig Price of Walker, winner of a contest sponsored by American Gateway Bank, was unveiled at the reception. Anyone who would like to purchase the poster may do so at the Tourist Center for \$10. In addition to the special edition poster, organizers recognized the 10th anniversary with a permanent Kite Fest Louisianè public exhibit that highlights its history.

Stam credited the festival's success largely to its volunteers and sponsors, including Entergy, WBRZ-TV,

The Advocate, EMCO Technologies, Extreme Inflatables, American Gateway Bank, Placid, Coastal Bridge Co., Lamar Advertising Company, ExxonMobil, 101.5 WYNK, the Louisiana Office of Tourism and the West Baton Rouge Museum, Brand Energy Solutions, GSA Consulting Engineers Inc., Southern Packaging, Petrin Corp. and Baton Rouge Beer Company. In addition, Stam thanked the West Baton Rouge Parks and Recreation Dept., the School Board, Sheriff's Department, Parish Council and Fire Department for their assistance with the event.

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



Come see the new Kite Fest Louisianè display at the West Baton Rouge Convention and Visitors Bureau. The display commemorates the 10 years of the festival's history.



Kites dance in the skies over West Baton Rouge during Kite Fest Louisianè on April 4-6. About 13,000 spectators turned out for the 10th Annual Kite Fest.

## WEST BATON ROUGE ASSESSOR

# Enhanced website provides mapping solutions

Imagine viewing your property from the front, back and sides, virtually as if you were on site, with the click of a mouse on your home or office computer. Now, thanks to enhancements made to the West Baton Rouge Parish Assessor's website, you can do just that.

Deputy Assessor Chris Guerin explained after 12 years, the office decided it was time for a "new, cutting edge technology to give service back to the residents of West Baton Rouge Parish." Although the website has been heavily utilized in providing assessment data, archived reports, qualified sales, reporting forms and digital mapping and imagery, Guerin says he and Assessor Barney "Frog" Altazan agreed last December the popular digital mapping site could use fresh, state-of-the-art technology.

With assistance from Fenstermaker & Associates of Lafayette, a GIS(Geographic Information System) vendor, the Assessor's Office now offers a user-friendly, high performance digital

mapping solution with a new Pictometry imagery interface. Pictometry is the name of a patented aerial image process that utilizes low-flying airplanes to capture multi-dimensional images of objects.

"We needed an updated digital mapping solution that not only looked current, but was also easy to use and produced superior results," Altazan notes. "Our goal to be transparent and user-friendly helped us define what we felt was the best possible mapping solution. By providing the public free access to Pictometry imagery in an integrated solution, we feel we have added value to the investment taxpayers make in their public infrastructure."

Guerin added the WBR Assessor's Office now has the only website in the state with a public Pictometry interface, and is already fielding inquiries from other entities interested in implementing the process.

The website improvements also include enhanced and simplified printing



Deputy Assessor Chris Guerin reviews the website enhancements that provide improved digital mapping.

capabilities that allow users to print maps as well as capture aerial images that can be downloaded or emailed. "The map printing options offered on the site are much more user-friendly than what we had before," Guerin says. "And still, for about \$9,000 a year, we're able to keep our office open to the public 24 hours a

day, seven days a week by utilizing the website."

He encourages the public to visit the website at [www.wbrassessor.org](http://www.wbrassessor.org). As always, the Assessor's office has an open-door policy and invites anyone with questions or concerns to contact the office at (225) 344-6777.





# WEST BATON ROUGE SCHOOL SYSTEM

## Local student a finalist for state Student of Year

Brusly Middle School student Logan Berthelot may only be 13 years old, but his resume is already more impressive than many people three times his age. Logan was a finalist in the Louisiana Department of Education's "Student of the Year" awards, held on April 16.



Logan Berthelot

Brusly Middle School newspaper, First Assistant Editor and Editor-in-Chief; and Brusly Middle School Yearbook, section editor. He is also a member of National Junior Beta Club, 4-H Club and Brusly Middle School Youth Legislature.

In 2011, Logan

was an elementary finalist in the Louisiana Student of the Year awards. He was the first Student of the Year from WBR Parish to represent the region. "Along with writing a novel when I become older, I would also like to travel the world to visit different civilizations, and perhaps run for presidency," Logan states in his portfolio presentation.

That might not be far-fetched, according to Brusly Middle School Principal Callie Kershaw. "Logan is absolutely capable of doing all of those things. He would make a great president," she shares. "When he puts his mind to something, he accomplishes it." He is the son of Donald Berthelot Jr. and Maria Berthelot.

"Logan is one of those young people who you know is going to make a mark on this world," shares Charlotte Blanchard, West Baton Rouge School Board Supervisor of Child Welfare and Attendance. She oversees the district's selection committee to pick nominees based on portfolios and oral interviews.

The Louisiana Students of the Year program selects finalists from three categories of students: Grade 5; Grade 8; and Grade 12. They must have a cumulative grade point average of at least 3.5 on a 4.0 scale, and must exhibit leadership qualities, activities, recognitions and service/citizenship.

This is no challenge for Logan, a 4.0 student. Among his many leadership roles are: Brusly Middle School track team, manager;

## Other local Students of Year

In December, the WBR system also recognized 5th-grader Isabella Matthews, 11, of Lukeville Upper Elementary School, and 12th-grader Margarite LaBorde, 18, of Port Allen High School as district Students of the Year. Margarite is the daughter of Raymond LaBorde and Becky LaBorde. Isabella is the daughter of Charles Matthews and Crystal Matthews.



Isabella Matthews



Margarite LaBorde

## Finance official adds credentials

Jared Gibbs, West Baton Rouge Parish School Board's Supervisor of Business Services, loves numbers.

So in addition to managing the district's money matters, he's also been adding to his financial knowledge. On Jan. 1, Gibbs earned a Certificate of Achievement from the Louisiana Association of School Business Officials for fulfilling "personal, ethical and professional requirements."

The Morganza native and University of Louisiana-Lafayette accounting graduate has worked with the school district for three years. Prior to that, he served two years with the Pointe Coupee Parish School Board.

The certificate represents 45 hours of seminars, workshops and training, in addition to years of experience. Gibbs was one of only six statewide to receive the

Certified Louisiana School Business Official certification at a ceremony on April 4 in Lake Charles.

"I can tell you this, with Jared Gibbs as the district's chief financial officer, West Baton Rouge taxpayers' money is in good hands," comments Superintendent David Corona.

Gibbs says the interest in finance is in his blood. His grandfather was an accountant and his mother is a bookkeeper. "I've always liked numbers. I guess it runs in the family," he adds. He plans on pursuing his education by earning certification

in three or four years as a Louisiana School Board Administrator, which requires a few more years of experience.



Supervisor of Business Services Jared Gibbs displays his Certificate of Achievement.

## SAFETY TOWN: Children learn real life safety tips

Every day, children face danger, whether from crossing the street or playing with their toys.

West Baton Rouge officials want to equip them with information that could save their lives. "Safety Town" is a program for children that teaches safety lessons using a realistic, child-sized recreation of a town that is designed to provide complete hands-on education for children, according to West Baton Rouge Parish Schools Elementary Supervisor Cindy Ourso.

It is part of a national program founded in 1937 by an Ohio policeman as a traffic safety education program. Through the years, it was expanded and updated as a comprehensive education program. Ourso says it is successful locally because of the support of entities like the West Baton Rouge Parish Office of Emergency Preparedness, which spearheaded the annual event on March 27-April 4 at Addis VFW Hall.

"It is truly a community project that was created with the support and cooperation of many businesses, public and private agencies and civic organizations," Ourso notes. The school system has worked with the community for about 20 years in offering kindergarteners the Safety Town experience, Ourso says. Over the years, thousands of children have learned gun safety, bike safety, fire safety, poison and emergency preparedness.

The students drive their "big wheels" around the streets of the miniature Safety Town, complete with city buildings, railroad crossings, stop signs and traffic lights. They are issued tickets for traffic violations and receive rewards for good safety practices. This year, each was given a bike helmet donated by Dow Chemical Company.

Local law enforcement representatives also teach the kindergarteners how to correctly

report an emergency by calling "911" and fire safety is taught as they travel through the smoke house trailer and learn how to crawl out of a fire.

Superintendent David Corona commends the program for helping children deal with emergencies. "It's a tremendous program and has already saved at least one child's life," he says. He described a

life-threatening fire in which a young girl found herself after taking part in Safety Town. By employing techniques she had learned years earlier, was able to survive by dropping to the floor and escaping the burning building.

"With children being so vulnerable to a variety of accidents, it is important to teach good safety practices and tips," he adds.



West Baton Rouge kindergarteners watch a puppet show during Safety Town activities.





CITY OF PORT ALLEN



A letter to our residents

Dear friends,

Thank you for electing me to lead the City of Port Allen. I am humbled by your support and am committed to bringing our community together and moving Port Allen forward. Our first step is for the City Council and I to come together as leaders and show the community that we have a vision of unity for our city.

I want to focus on bringing back both a positive atmosphere and festivals that pull the community together, while also helping residents see that we are not a divided city, but instead One Port Allen. Once we begin to take a positive step into making Port Allen attractive, business and economic development will follow.

Other immediate goals are to pursue the annexation that has been re-started by Interim Mayor Lynn Robertson, and to begin developing positive and cooperative relationships with the other mayors and parish officials of West Baton Rouge.

I want to thank Mayor Robertson for her service to our city at a very critical time. Her leadership in a short period of time has started us on the road to positive change. As mayor, my door is open to you and I look forward to working with everyone to make Port Allen a great city.

Sincerely, Mayor Richard Lee III



Mayor Richard Lee III

City gets serious about clean-up, blight

Residents may have noticed that the City of Port Allen has been in the "clean-up" mode in the last two months, sprucing up landscaping at the Old Ferry Landing Park/riverfront and on major thoroughfares and repairing and painting.

The work has included pruning back the suckers and saplings at the base of trees on city rights of way, repairing broken electrical boxes, repairing broken sections of curbs, cleaning up trash in drainage areas, changing out a torn American flag at the Depot and repairing a trip hazard.

The city is also landscaping and re-planting flowers and shrubs in planters to beautify the city. The areas of focus include Court Street, La. Hwy. 1 and the Old Ferry Landing Park/Riverfront. "Many of the projects are being done by city crews to minimize cost," noted Interim Mayor Lynn Robertson in late March. "We had a professional tree company come in and trim the trees, and re-painting the Depot is underway."

In addition, the city has sent out 68 letters ordering property owners to remove dilapidated cars from their property. Newly elected Mayor Richard Lee III supports the clean-up activities, and said he will continue them under his new administration.



The Depot is getting renewed with a fresh coat of paint, and will become the office of the city inspector.

WEST BATON ROUGE SHERIFF'S OFFICE



Sheriff's Drug Interdiction Program among top in country

The West Baton Rouge Sheriff's Office Drug Interdiction Unit is among the top programs of its kind in the United States. Members of this department have been recognized by the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration as "Subject Matter Experts" and by other agencies for their expertise.

Members of this unit travel around the United States training other interdiction units, as well as training members of the WBR Sheriff's Office uniform patrol deputies.

While this is impressive, Major Zachary Simmers says that the highest form of compliment is stopping a smuggler and finding a map with West Baton Rouge clearly marked with the notation to avoid the parish all together.

The team includes Simmers, Deputies Chris Green, Donald Dawsey and James Woody, along with their three K-9 dogs.

In the five years that this unit has been working interstate patrol they have arrested numerous individuals for crimes of murder, armed robbery as well as various narcotics trafficking offenses. They have also seized millions of dollars worth of illegal narcotics, including more than 25,000 pounds of marijuana, 200 pounds of cocaine, 500 pounds of synthetic marijuana and a kilo of heroin.

The deputies work together in teams on varying shifts and each deputy has a highly trained K-9 dog. The dogs are Belgian Malinois, a breed of Shepherd, that

cost between \$10,000.00 and \$14,000.00, depending on the level of training. These dogs are trained to meet nationally accepted standards for K-9s in narcotics detection and criminal apprehension. Before a deputy can take a new dog on the road, they must train together for at least two months so that the deputy and the dog learn each other's habits and develop a bond.

The members of this unit have over 4,000 hours of training in various aspects of criminal patrol, court testimony, search and seizure, new concealment techniques, interviewing techniques, understanding body language, defensive tactics, survival Spanish, report writing and a basic understanding of automobile structure, just to name a few.

Each deputy has a specially equipped vehicle that can be either marked or un-marked. However, each vehicle has a compartment for their K-9 to ride in with an automatic opening door that can be operated remotely by the deputy should he need the K-9's assistance.

In addition the vehicles have computer systems for interface with various local, state and federal law enforcement databases, and video recording systems for capturing audio and video each time a deputy interacts with the public. This is a permanent record of the entire event. These are just some of the tools of the profession used by these deputies in their day-to-day crime fighting efforts.



Major Zach Simmers and Deputy Chris Green with 550 pounds of marijuana confiscated from a huge tire (seen in background) of a vehicle stopped on I-10 in 2010. Just a few months ago, the Drug Interdiction Unit confiscated 20 kilos of cocaine valued at \$2 million in another I-10 stop.



Major Zach Simmers and Deputy Chris Green with Green's K-9.





**TOWN OF BRUSLY**

**Brusly Fire Department gets grilling in inspection**

The Brusly Fire Department has just completed the arduous grading inspection that determines the fire suppression rating for the town. This inspection is done every five years, and takes months of preparation, said Assistant Fire Chief Kenny Hunts.

The rating is a critical factor that property insurance companies use to determine homeowner and commercial property insurance costs. Ratings range from the best rating of 1 to the worst rating of 10.

"We are grilled on all aspects of fire protection and response, and without our volunteer firefighters we wouldn't have a 3 rating," Hunts said. In the inspection, the department must provide stacks of folders documenting required training, additional firefighter certifications, records on building inspections, fire prevention programs and other activities. The inspectors also require firefighters to test fire hose, fire hydrant and tanker flow rates, and show that all equipment is working properly.

"The inspection is all about our ability to respond to a fire," Hunts said. "We have 384 fire hydrants and we flush them, check flow and lubricate them twice a year so they have no stagnant water," Hunts said. "We know this is a little bit of a burden on residents when we flush hydrants, but it is a fire safety measure."



In addition, the paid firefighters are required to have an average of 220 hours of training per year, and the town's 20 volunteer firefighters are required to have 145 hours of training. "This is a big commitment by our volunteers," Hunts noted. "We train twice a month for about three hours during each training

session."

Hunts said the rating is based on three categories – water availability, communications and fire. Since the town is now on the parish water system and its new well, it has increased its water capacity. In addition, the parish's central 911 communications system with three

workers on duty 24 hours has provided the fire department with an excellent communications system. "Our part is making sure we're as prepared as we possibly can be to respond to fires, and we do everything we can to prevent them," he said. "We work every day to make sure we're prepared."

**TOWN OF ADDIS**

**Mayor: Addis appeals to business, residents**

With more than a year in office behind him, Addis Mayor David Toups is still enjoying his job and urges others to get involved.

"It's all about the sense of community. That's what draws people to this area," he said recently. To strengthen that sense of community among its nearly 4,000 citizens, Toups is working on a number of goals to improve the quality of life in Addis.

**CLEAN-UP TIME:** Because a good impression is important to business owners or residents who might be considering relocating, he has asked everyone to "clean up" along the town's main corridor, Louisiana Highway 1. Practicing what he preaches, he recently joined other local officials in the "Leaders Against Litter" campaign.

**PROTECTING RESIDENTS PRIVACY:** In an effort to protect citizens' privacy, Toups introduced a "Home Solicitation" ordinance at the April City Council meeting. It will be up for final approval at the May meeting.

"It is designed to toughen the criteria to gain a home solicitation permit," he

explains. "There will be a no solicitation list for citizens if they do not want door-to-door sales people visiting their residences."

The ordinance attempts to balance the First Amendment rights of the solicitors with the "privacy, safety, health and welfare" of Addis residents.

According to the ordinance, solicitors (both commercial and noncommercial) must get a permit from Town Hall. Likewise, anyone who doesn't want the sales calls can register with Town Hall by calling 225-687-4844. The town will maintain a list of all residential addresses with such requests. Solicitors are also prohibited from entering or remaining on any private residence that has a "No Trespassing" or "No Solicitation" sign.

In addition to prohibiting sales calls, the ordinance limits the hours of door-to-door solicitation from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily. The ordinance applies to all activities that are religious, charitable or political in nature and all solicitation of newspaper or magazine subscriptions.

**NEW BUSINESSES:** Business people are learning that Addis is a great place to live and work, Toups noted.

La Petite Maison les Learning Center opened in February on Belle Vale Drive at Sugar Mill, Wham Bam Ice also began operations recently, and there are plans for at least one other new business to open within a few months.

**NEW WEBSITE:** Anyone who would like more information on Addis' demographics, the school system, local government, resources, upcoming events or history, should visit the town's website, Toups said.

As an example, he suggested that residents can learn more about the

town's centennial anniversary there. He is recruiting those who are interested to contact him and become a member of the planning committee.

"I not only want those who are familiar with the history to get involved, but the young people too. They have a different perspective and their views are as important as those of the older citizens," he added.

Those who would like to assist the committee are asked to call Town Hall at 687-4844 or visit the website at [www.addis.la.org](http://www.addis.la.org) for more information.



La Petite Maison les Learning Center opened its doors in Addis in February to provide care for infants through 4-year-olds.

**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

WBR Chamber's Annual Banquet a huge success!

Congratulations and recognition were given to WBR Parish Superintendent David Corona, who received the Pride of West Baton Rouge award and Yvonne Terrance with American Gateway Bank, who was named the Chamber Volunteer of the Year at the WBR Chamber of Commerce's Annual Banquet.

A silent auction and social hour were enjoyed by all before Chamber members and guests were served a delicious meal prepared by Cashio's 360 Catering. The presenting sponsor was The Dow Chemical Company, and the gold sponsors included Allied Waste Service of Baton Rouge, American Gateway Bank, Dow Louisiana Federal Credit Union, Lofton Staffing & Security Services, Placid Refining Company, LLC, and Turner Industries Group, LLC. Secretary of State Tom Schedler swore in the 2014 Chamber officers and board and LABI's President Stephen Waguespack was the keynote speaker.



2014 Pride of WBR winner David Corona, WBR School Superintendent



2014 WBR Chamber Board of Directors



2014 Chamber Volunteer of the Year Yvonne Terrance



Scenes from the banquet



DID YOU KNOW?

The West Baton Rouge Chamber's mission is to be the voice of business while promoting growth and a high quality of life in West Baton Rouge Parish. The Chamber works on economic development daily to help local businesses expand their existing businesses and works with prospects interested in bringing or re-locating their businesses to WBR Parish. WBR has an Louisiana Economic Development certified site located in Port Allen, which means it is shovel ready for an industry/business looking to locate here.

Working to bring economic development projects to WBR are, from left, Parish



President Riley Berthelot, Brusly Mayor Joey Normand, Interim Port Allen Mayor Lynn Robertson, WBR Chamber Board Chairman Juan Carrillo, WBR Chamber Executive Director Kathy Stuart, Addis Mayor David Touns, and Port of Greater Baton Rouge Director Jay Hardman.

2014 Legislative Session: CONTACT OUR DELEGATION!



The old adage: "There's strength in numbers" really does apply when the legislators are in session! Here is a listing of our legislators. Contact them – they depend on all of us to let them know what bills effect, help or harm our businesses!

- Sen. Troy Brown District 2: Napoleonville brownte@legis.la.gov
Sen. Rick Ward District 17: Port Allen wardr@legis.la.gov
Rep. Regina Barrow District 29: Baton Rouge larep29@legis.la.gov
Rep. Karen St. Germain District 60: Plaquemine larep060@legis.la.gov
Rep. Major Thibaut District 18: New Roads thibautm@legis.la.gov



WELCOME TO THE PARISH The Jambalaya Shoppe 245 N Alexander Ave., Port Allen

UPCOMING CHAMBER MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS:

RESERVATIONS ARE REQUIRED!

255/383-3140 or bonnie@wbrchamber.org

April Meeting



Jamie Setze

Executive Director

CRPC: Captial Region Planning Commission

Let's talk La. 1 traffic!

Wednesday, April 30, Addis Community Center 7520 Hwy. 1 South, Addis

11:30 AM: Registration/Networking 12 Noon: Program Begins

May Meeting



Tom Schedler

Secretary of State

Election Reform

Wednesday, May 28, Addis Community Center 7520 Hwy. 1 South, Addis

11:30 AM: Registration/Networking 12 Noon: Program Begins