

UPCOMING EVENTS

Feb. 2 – Cloth Doll Workshop, WBR Museum

Feb. 4 – Chamber Annual Membership Banquet, Addis

Feb. 8 & 15 – Woodworking workshop, WBR Museum

Feb. 16 – Addis Volunteer Fire Depart. Mardi Gras Parade

Feb. 20 – Feathers art program, WBR Museum

Feb. 22 + – Wine-making workshop, WBR Museum

Feb. 23 – Krewe of Good Friends Mardi Gras Parade, Port Allen, 1 pm

March 2 + – Painting class, WBR Museum

March 21 + – Ceramics workshop, WBR Museum

April 3-5 – Kite Fest Louisiane, WBR Soccer Complex

April 17 – Live At 5 on the Westside, Addis

May 1 – Live At 5 on the Westside, Addis

May 15 – Live At 5 on the Westside, Addis

‘New look’ Parish Council takes office

The West Baton Rouge Parish Council has a new look, with seven of the nine Council members being new to the office.

The Council was installed in ceremonies on January 15. Also installed to his fifth term was West Baton Rouge Parish President Riley

“PeeWee” Berthelot. He took office in 2004.

The only two Council members who returned to the Council for this term are Kirk Allain in District 1, and Chris “Fish” Kershaw in District 2.

The Council elected Kirk Allain as Council Chairman and Carey Denstel as Vice Chairman at its first meeting after the swearing in ceremonies on January 15.

“I look forward to working with our new Parish Council to continue moving West Baton Rouge forward,” said Parish President Berthelot.

Shown at right are the 2020-2024 Parish Council members. Council photos by Westside Images.



Riley “PeeWee” Berthelot
WBR Parish President



Kirk Allain, District I
Council Chair



Chris “Fish” Kershaw, District II



Atley Walker, Jr.
District III



Caleb Kleinpeter
District IV



Kenneth Gordon
District V



Carey Denstel
District VI,
Vice Chair



Roger Alan Crowe
District VII



Craig “Moonie” Bergeron,
District VII



Gary “Shaq” Joseph
District IX

Great progress marked on new water line

The \$2.5 million project to extend a new 20-inch water line from the parish water plant to West St. Francis Street in Brusly is expected to be completed by the end of May. Phase II of the project, which extends the water line to the Addis water tower, will be bid soon, and is expected to be completed by the end of 2020. The larger water line will increase water volume and pressure in the southern part of the parish.

Meanwhile, construction of the parish’s new well is complete, but work is continuing on connecting the equipment needed for the well, and on construction of a pipeline to the parish’s water plant near the Intracoastal Waterway. The new water well is located near the Louis

Mouch Multipurpose Arena. It is expected to be fully operational by the summer.

While the parish has been installing the water line, it is also adding a natural gas main to provide better natural gas pressure at the end of the parish. And, rehabilitation of the Poplar Grove water tower is now complete. “These projects are part of our aggressive infrastructure improvements underway for several years now,” said Parish President Riley “PeeWee” Berthelot. Other projects planned this year include upgrading the water line to an 8-inch line on McLin, Maxine, Nolan David Streets and Andre Lane; and rehabilitating the water tower on Lobdell Road.

GOVERNMENT MEETINGS

WBR PARISH COUNCIL - Meets 2nd & 4th Thursday of month, 5:30 p.m., Parish Council Building, 225-383-4755, www.wbr council.org

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

WBR PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION - Meets 1st & 3rd Tuesdays of month, 5:30 p.m., Council meeting room, Parish Council Building.

WBR BOARD OF ADJUSTMENTS - Meets 3rd Tuesday of month. 5 p.m., Council meeting room in Parish Council Building.

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

CITY OF PORT ALLEN - Committee meetings - 1st Wednesday of month, 5:30 p.m. Council meetings - 2nd Wednesday of month, 5:30 p.m. Port Allen City Hall 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., Brusly Town Hall - 225-749-2909, www.bruslyla.com

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Upcoming activities at Museum

Feb. 2, Make It, Take It Cloth Doll Workshop, 2 – 4 p.m.
- Program for children, ages 6 - 12, to make a cloth doll to keep free of charge. Advanced registration required by calling 225-336-2422 x200. **FREE**

Feb. 8 and 15 - Basic Woodworking – Build a Foot Stool, 9 am - Noon -- a two day workshop using hand tools with master craftsman, Terry Landry. Advanced registration required by calling 225-336-2422 Ext. 200. **Fee: \$150**

Feb. 9, Old Time Music Open Jam, 3 – 5 pm – On second Sundays, come to play, listen, or dance to old country, bluegrass, and folk music with acoustic instruments. **FREE**

Feb. 20, An Artful Evening: Feathers - Symbolism, Beauty, Art, 6 – 8:30 p.m. – Local artist Kellie Rountree presents a brief discussion, and participants create their own painting. Advanced registration is required. **FREE**

Feb. 22, 29, March 28, April 25, Sip into Spring: Mead and Berry Wine Workshop, 10 am – Noon – A four part mead and berry wine-making workshop. Advanced, paid registration is required. **Fee: \$100**

Feb. 26 and March 25, Historical Happy Hour – Join us every fourth Wednesday from 6 – 8 pm. Explore exhibits and enjoy changing monthly entertainment after hours. **FREE**

Feb. 29 and March 7, Basic Woodworking – Build a Tool Tote, 9 am - Noon – A two-day workshop using hand tools with master craftsman Terry Landry. Advanced registration required. **Fee: \$150**

March 1, Blast from the Past Summer History Camp Registration Opens. One-week sessions of camp for children ages 6 – 12 will be held June 8 – 12 and June 15 – 19. Advanced, paid registration is required. Residents and WBR Historical Association members, \$125, All other participants, \$150.

Mar. 2, 9, 16, 23, 30, Apr. 6, LSU OLLI Class, Abstract Acrylic Flow Painting, 10 a.m. – 12 p.m. - Use cups of paints to pour out amazingly beautiful abstract designs. \$25 material fee due first class. Sign up for this course is through the LSU OLLI program. Contact OLLI at LSU at 225-578-6763 to become a member. Course Code: OLAAFP(1) Course Fee: \$50 (early bird \$45)

Mon, Mar. 2, 9, 16, 23, 30, Apr. 6, LSU OLLI Class, Monday Wash Day: Fun with Watercolor Washes, 1:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m. –Contact OLLI at LSU at 225-578-6763 to become a member. Course Code: OLMWD(1) Course Fee: \$50 (early bird \$45)

March 21, 28, and April 4, Ceramic Basics: Throwing, Hand Building, and Casting, Noon – 2 pm – Led by West Baton Rouge artist Allen Martin, learn how to use three methods to create clay planters and pots. Advanced, paid registration is required. **Fee: \$100**



Artists at the opening reception of the Artists of West Baton Rouge exhibit.

New exhibit displays artists with tie to WBR

A new exhibition at the WBR Museum, Artists of West Baton Rouge, puts the spotlight on the many artists who have ties to West Baton Rouge Parish.

The exhibition was inspired by the recent designation of Port Allen as a Louisiana Cultural District. A public call to artists was issued for submissions and the museum's curatorial staff selected the various mediums on display, including original paintings, sculptures, and photographs.

The artists participating in the exhibit have ties to West Baton Rouge Parish and many of their works are inspired by the local environment. The Artists of West Baton Rouge exhibit runs through March 22.

Variety of programs set for fall season

CLOSURES:

Mardi Gras

The Library will be closed Monday, February 24, and Tuesday, February 25, for Mardi Gras. We will re-open Wednesday, February 26 at 8:30 a.m.

Good Friday & Holy Saturday

The Library will be closed Friday, April 10, and Saturday, April 11 for the Easter holidays. We will re-open Monday, April 13 at 8:30 a.m.

CLASSES & PROGRAMS:

COINS Computer Classes

The West Baton Rouge Library's weekly computer, Internet, and software classes provide basic lessons to adults with little or no computer experience. Classes are offered every Tuesday from 6 to 7:30 p.m. and every Wednesday from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. *For more information, call Adult Services Librarian Luis Interiano at (225) 342-7920 ext. 230.*

Saturday, Feb. 8: Mardi Gras Program

Create your own Mardi Gras umbrella and join the library's indoor parade! We will be creating umbrellas from 1:30 p.m. to 2:15 p.m., followed by the parade from 2:15 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Legal Assistance

A representative from Southeast Louisiana Legal Services will be available to answer your legal questions on Wednesday, February 12, Wednesday, March 11 & Wednesday, April 8 from 10 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. at the West Baton Rouge Library. Walk-ins welcome. Criminal cases will not be addressed.

Alzheimer's Caregiver Support Group

Alzheimer's Services of the Capital Area sponsor caring, non-judgmental meetings where families and friends share their experiences and learn essential information for coping with the disease. Caregiver Support Groups are free and meet the third Thursday of every month from 2 to 3 p.m. in the meeting room.

The next meetings will be held on February 20, March 19 & April 16. For more information, please

call Adult Services Librarian Luis Interiano at 225-342-7920, ext. 230 or email linteriano@wbrplibrary.us.

Library Book Club

The West Baton Rouge Library Book Club meets the third Saturday of every month in the Library's Meeting Room from 11 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. The group discusses a mix of fiction and non-fiction titles. Upcoming meetings are on February 15, March 21, and April 18. For more information, please call Adult Services Librarian Luis Interiano at 225-342-7920, ext. 230 or email linteriano@wbrplibrary.us.

Writing Workshop

Do you want to be a writer? Are you a writer looking for inspiration and support? Join the brand-new West Baton Rouge Library Writing Workshop on the third Saturday of every month from 1 to 3 p.m. For more information, please call Adult Services Librarian Luis Interiano at 225-342-7920, ext. 230 or email linteriano@wbrplibrary.us



is published quarterly as a cooperative endeavor of West Baton Rouge Parish government agencies to educate residents about projects, activities and services in the parish. It is produced by Peacock Communications, LLC. Comments can be sent to: ellie@peacockcommunications.com, or call 225-929-9661.

Enforcement of property maintenance ordinances ramped up

By Danny Rabalais
Code Enforcement Officer

A change is in progress in West Baton Rouge Parish. The Parish Administration is taking a stand for the continued improvement of the safety, health, appearance, and property values of our residents.

Thanks to the commitment of Parish President Riley "PeeWee" Berthelot and the support of the Parish Council, existing property maintenance ordinances are being actively enforced. These ordinances include violations on private property for tall grass, noxious growths, trash, junk, abandoned vehicles, zoning violations, and derelict structures.

West Baton Rouge Parish now has a dedicated Code Enforcement Officer to address these issues and to work with property owners to achieve compliance. A total of 16 structures were demolished, numerous abandoned vehicles removed, many other properties cleaned, and homes repaired or renovated to meet existing building codes in 2019.

Most of this work was done by the property owners once they were put on notice. In addition to these, a number of other properties have been voluntarily cleaned up and some are in the process of being cleaned up now.

This initiative will remain a priority and continued effort to improve our community. In other communities, long-term focus on enforcing these ordinances has proven to reduce crime, and has encouraged residents to take pride in their properties and ownership of the community.

Please continue keeping the Westside the Best Side by properly maintaining your property.

Registration for Westside baseball and softball leagues is now underway!

Register online at:

WestsideBaseballandSoftball.com



Shown are before and after photos of some derelict houses that were demolished under the parish's stepped up enforcement of property maintenance ordinances. Special thanks to the property owners for allowing the use of their pictures for this article.

Numerous improvements set for parish parks in 2020

The WBR Parks and Recreation Department is planning improvements at all of the parish parks throughout 2020. Below is a list of the projects planned:

- A dog park is coming to Port Allen. It will be located on the north end of the West Baton Rouge football facility behind Port Allen Middle School.
- New swing sets will be added at Alexander Park and Erwinville Park, including wheelchair swing bays.
- Upgrade to the north entrance of Rivault Park, and new parking lot lights on the south parking lot.
- Construction of an asphalt parking lot at Lukeville Park. It will extend to the school's newly renovated parking lot.
- Upgrading the security camera system, and the addition of permanent livestock perimeter fencing at the Louis Mouch Multi-Purpose Center.
- Improvements to the sound systems and projectors at all of the parish's community centers.
- Renovations to the meeting room and kitchen area of the Erwinville Community Center.
- Construction of a new asphalt parking area on the north side of William and Lee Community Center.



Residents asked to plan Love the Boot clean-up projects

West Baton Rouge residents are asked to participate in this year's Love The Boot Week April 20-26, in which organizations and residents organize and participate in a local beautification and/or litter cleanup event.

The event is spearheaded by Keep Louisiana Beautiful and Keep West Baton Rouge Beautiful. In order to participate:

- GO to LoveTheBoot.org to register to organize or volunteer at an event.
- PLAN to join a litter cleanup or beautification event in WBR.
- PROMOTE your event on social media using #LoveTheBoot.
- REPORT your outcomes for statewide recognition.

For more information on local events contact Keep West Baton Rouge Beautiful at 225.490.8549.

5th graders complete DARE, new additions help deputies

The 5th Grade class at Holy Family School has completed the DARE program, which has been expanded this year. The six-week program, taught by DARE Deputy Tiffany Wycoskie, helps kids make good decisions and teaches them about the dangers of alcohol and drug use and bullying. The WBR Sheriff's Office will be teaching the DARE program in several schools this year.

CHRISTMAS CRUSADE A SUCCESS... The Sheriff's Office annual Christmas Crusade provided Christmas toys to needy families for 102 children in December. The annual toy drive is conducted by the Sheriff's Office with the assistance of numerous businesses and individuals who make donations in the spirit of giving.



NEW K-9 DOGS - Residents may see the Sheriff's Office's two new K-9 dogs out for a variety of investigations. Maverick is being trained to sniff out narcotics, and Reich (shown at left) is trained for a variety of purposes.

TASERS NOW IN USE - Deputies are now carrying tasers for use to control suspects in volatile situations. "Our deputies are trained to use restraint in handling situations and suspects, but they are now armed with tasers and will use them when necessary," said Sheriff Mike Cazes. Presently 30 deputies are armed with the tasers.



CORRECTIONS POSITIONS AVAILABLE - The Sheriff's Office is now taking applications for corrections positions at the Parish Prison & Detention Center. Applicants must apply in person at the Sheriff's Office in the WBR Parish

Courthouse located at 850 8th Street in Port Allen or at the Detention Center, located at 1150 Northwest Dr. in Port Allen.

SAFETY COURSES COMING - The Sheriff's Office will be offering public safety courses this Spring. For more information, like and follow the Sheriff's Office facebook page: facebook.com/West Baton Rouge Parish Sheriff's Office.



Holy Family School 5th graders show off their DARE certificates.



Stop easy car burglaries

Vehicle burglaries are crimes of opportunity. Follow these tips to keep your property safe:

- Remove all valuables from your vehicle.
- Take your keys with you. Never leave your car running.
- Lock your doors every time you leave the vehicle. Most vehicle burglaries involve vehicles that were not locked, making them easy targets.
- Report suspicious activity or crimes to law enforcement authorities as soon as possible.

2020 project list heavy on infrastructure

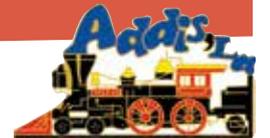
The Town of Addis has several infrastructure projects planned for 2020, according to Mayor David Toups. Among them are a road improvement project, sewer improvements, a drainage improvement plan, and town hall renovations.

Officials have budgeted \$425,000 for road improvements, and roads are presently being evaluated to determine which roads will get overlays this year. The La. Department of Transportation and Development (LDOTD) recently completed the overlay of Main Street from La. Hwy. 1 to the railroad tracks. This was a state road, but under an agreement with LDOTD, after the road was overlaid, it was turned over to the town. The town also will receive road credits with LDOTD for future maintenance of the road.

The town will continue lift station and wastewater treatment plant improvements that were begun in 2019. It is also having a master plan developed to provide for comprehensive and systematic drainage system improvements.

Finally, officials have decided to renovate town hall rather than replace the building. Town hall presently has a lot of wasted space and the age of the building is not conducive to the technology advances required today.

Mayor Toups said an architectural firm is presently developing plans to completely renovate the interior and add space for a new police station on the south end of the building. "We're going to take care of the police department first, and then renovate the town's administrative space," said Toups, adding he hopes construction can begin by the end of 2020. "These changes are overdue to help us operate more efficiently," he said.



Work was underway in January by LDOTD crews to overlay Main Street.

COMING EVENTS

Sunday, Feb. 16 - Addis Volunteer Fire Dept.
Mardi Gras Parade - 1 pm

LIVE AT 5 ON THE WESTSIDE:

Friday, April 17 Friday, May 1 Friday, May 15

Brusly plans infrastructure improvements, new park in 2020

The Town of Brusly was one of the first municipalities in this region to start a bike share program in 2019, and now it is planning to add a small park and parking to augment that program. The 1.5 acre park will be located at the intersection of River Road and Main Street, below the bike share rack area on the Mississippi River levee.

Mayor Scot Rhodes said the small park will include a playground, landscaping and a small parking area. The town has budgeted \$200,000 for the project, and is awaiting drawings from its landscape architect for the project.

INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS:

The town has both road and drainage projects planned for 2020. A total of \$100,000 has been allocated for the road overlay project. Streets to be overlaid include all or parts of Blanchard St., Landry St., Live Oak Dr., St. Matthew St., and St. John St. The town allocates funds annually for road improvements.

The drainage projects set for 2020 are also a continuation of an overall drainage improvement plan, with \$150,000 expected to be spent this year. The work includes cleaning out ditches and installing new culverts where needed. The town also has a drainage study underway in order to provide a comprehensive, long-term plan for improvements.

New business, residential rings in year

The town's newest business, Lit Pizza, opened in January, providing residents with another restaurant off La. Hwy. 1. In addition, new homes are coming. The property is being developed for six homes off Gleason Street; and 20 zero lot line homes are being developed in River Mill Subdivision. The zero lot line homes, in which the home structure comes close to the edge of the property line, are the final phase of the Brusly Oaks development that includes the shopping center and residential development behind it.

 [Facebook.com/BruslyTownHall](https://www.facebook.com/BruslyTownHall)



Lit Pizza opened in Brusly in January. It is the newest business to open in town.



USBSA
WESTSIDE
BASEBALL & SOFTBALL
REGISTRATION
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REGISTER ONLINE AT
WestsideBaseballAndSoftball.com

Sewer project to improve drainage in Westside Village over 65% complete

The massive \$375,000 sewer improvement project at Westside Village is expected to be complete by the end of February. The project includes moving and enlarging the lift station, deepening it, and re-routing a larger sewer line from the subdivision to the pump station. All of that work is expected to alleviate the back-ups in the subdivision during heavy rains.

Mayor Richard Lee said the main streets impacted in heavy rains are Harry Brown, Gladiolus and South 14th Streets. The back-ups have caused stopped up toilets and backed up man holes.

The city has focused on a comprehensive sewer improvement program over the past few years. Work has included upgrading the sewer lift station on La. Hwy. 1 near Court Street, repairing cracks and breaks in aging pipelines from the Avenue D lift station to the city's wastewater treatment plant, and massive improvements to the Avenue D lift station. Those upgrades included replacing two pumps, installing larger pipelines to the city's wastewater treatment plant, building improvements and site drainage work.

Dirt work begins on new development

The developers of the proposed Westview Crossing residential development have begun dirt work for the first phase of the subdivision. The City of Port Allen annexed the area of the development in 2019 - approximately 200 acres of property adjacent to Court Street - into the city limits at the request of the developers.

The first phase of the new development has been approved by the Zoning Board, and will include 76 home sites, but the development will provide substantial growth for a number of years, with more than 100 home sites planned by developer Nolan McKay, LLC.



Work progressing on Westside Village sewer improvement project.

Lighting, benches coming for Whitehead Trail

The Whitehead Boulevard Walking Trail is getting a lot of use now that it is complete, and more improvements are coming. With funds from the WBR Convention & Visitors Bureau, the city will add lighting and benches to the trail this year. The walkway extends from the entrance of Rivalt Park at Oaks Avenue to Avenue A, and is the first phase of a 3/4 mile recreation greenway that will join Rivalt Park with the Old Ferry Landing Park and Centennial Park. The second phase of the project will extend the walkway from Avenue A to South River Road.

Road project coming

The city has budgeted \$375,000 for road improvements in 2020. Roads to be overlaid include Melissa Dr., Maryland and Georgia Streets and a small section of La. Avenue near the railroad. The road work is expected to be done this Spring. The city budgets funds annually for road improvements.

Festivals, events keep crew busy

After a very successful 2019, the West Baton Rouge Convention & Visitors Bureau staff is now planning 2020 activities and events, said Bureau Director Kathy Gautreau. "We are working on our marketing plan for 2020, and will begin traveling to tourist shows by March," she said. West Baton Rouge is represented at numerous shows throughout the year that cater to tour companies, tourists and senior citizens planning trips.

Meanwhile, upgrades to the Convention Center grounds will continue in 2020, with more landscaping, sidewalks, signage and benches. Events on tap for the Spring and summer include Kite Fest Louisiane, April 3, 4 and 5 (April 3 is Student Day) and the 4th Fest on the levee of the Mississippi River.

The Bureau is making an extra effort this year to get West Baton Rouge school children more involved with Kite Fest this year. "We encourage teachers to contact us to plan field trips for the event on April 3, when it is open only to school groups," Gautreau said. "Every year we have bus loads from other parishes, and fewer kids from our parish. We want to make sure our local kids have the opportunity to enjoy all we offer for Kite Fest." For more information, call 800-654-9701.



A scene from the Westside Christmas Festival held at the WBR Tourist Information & Conference Center in December.

Free Admission
 Kite Flying "Just for fun"
 Kite Design Competitions
 Children's Kite Making Workshop
 Indoor Kite Flying
 Louisiana Food Booths
 Professional Kite Flying Teams
 Extreme Inflatables
 Classic Sounds by Jude
Fireworks on Saturday night!

2020 Kite Fest Louisiane

**Saturday & Sunday
 April 4-5, 2020**

West Baton Rouge Soccer Complex
 3383 Rosedale Road
 in Port Allen

For event information:
 800-654-9701
www.westbatonrouge.net

LOUISIANA
 Feed Your Soul.

SPONSORS: LAMAR, ADVOCATE, PLACID, Entergy, Coca-Cola, EMCO, BEARC-M, WBRZ, and others.



Keep up with coming events in WBR:
[Facebook.com/WBRCVB](https://www.facebook.com/WBRCVB)

WBR CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Chamber Board for 2020

The West Baton Rouge Chamber of Commerce proudly announces our 2020 Board Officers and Directors:

EXECUTIVE OFFICERS:

- Sandra Hughes, Chair, Lofton Staffing & Security Services
- Patrick Hobbins: Chair-Elect, Placid Refining Company, LLC
- Glen Daigle: Chair Ex-Officio, Business First Bank
- Arron Pierre: Treasurer, A. Wilbert's Sons, LLC
- LeAnn Stelly: Member-At-Large, Cox Business

BOARD MEMBERS

- Mary Arrasmith: Project Lead the Way
- Abby Cook Barden, The Dow Chemical Company
- Branden Barker, Barker Real Estate & Management Services, LLC
- Adam Beatty, GIS Engineering, LLC
- Paula Bernard, Western & Southern Life Insurance Company
- Bryan Casebonne, Shintech
- Nick Cicero, Peak Performance Physical Therapy
- Ashley Coco, Commerce Title
- Ben Graham, Stirling Properties
- Jason Hammack, Court Street Café
- Desiree Lemoine, PC Electric
- Heath Morris, Sugar West, Inc.
- Katreena S. Moses, Baton Rouge Community College
- Ash Patel, Tower Investments Group, LLC
- Rawlston Phillips, III, Sun*Plus, Inc. / Beau-lieu Plantation
- Chris Reeves, Edward Jones
- Dennis Smith, Entergy
- Brittany Weaver, State Farm Agent
- Kevin Durbin, West Baton Rouge Parish Government representative



The West Baton Rouge Chamber of Commerce
 CORDIALLY INVITES YOU TO THE

2020 Annual Membership Banquet

*Installation of Officers and Board of Directors
 Presentation of 2019 Best of West Baton Rouge Awards
 & Celebration of the Chamber's 25th Birthday*

Tuesday, February 4th, 2020
 Addis Community Center - 7520 Highway 1 South, Addis
 6:00 P.M. Social and Silent Auction- 7:00 P.M. Dinner

Tickets \$50 - R.S.V.P. Required by January 26th, 2020
 225-383-3140 or email anais@wbrchamber.org

COMPIMENTARY BEER AND WINE **SPONSORSHIPS AVAILABLE
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Apply for exemptions now to avoid property value increases in 2020 from revaluation

West Baton Rouge property owners should make sure they apply for eligible exemptions in 2020 to avoid property valuation increases from revaluation, noted Assessor Barney "Frog" Altazan.

Property values will be revalued in 2020, and property owners may face increased property values, resulting in higher property taxes. The following property tax exemptions are available for property owners who qualify, noted Assessor Altazan. The popular exemptions that helps more than 780 West Baton Rouge elderly property owners is the property value freeze, listed below.

SPECIAL ASSESSMENT FOR ELDERLY & DISABLED:

The Louisiana Special Assessment Level program allows for residents who are:

- those 65 years old or older
- disabled, or
- disabled veterans with 50% disability

to have the assessed value of their homes frozen for tax purposes. This means their homes would not be subject to revaluation and the assessed value of their homes would remain the same no matter if property values increase.

To be eligible property owners must:

- live in the home and claim homestead exemption,

- be disabled,
- be a disabled veteran,
- be 65 years or older,
- have a combined adjusted gross income of \$77,030 or less in 2020.

EXEMPTION FOR UNMARRIED SURVIVING SPOUSES OF MILITARY, LAW ENFORCEMENT & FIRE PROTECTION OFFICERS:

Act 678, which was approved by state voters, became effective December 1, 2016. It establishes a total ad valorem property tax exemption for the unmarried surviving spouse of a member of the U.S. Armed Services, the Louisiana National Guard, the Louisiana State Police, or a law enforcement or fire protection officer killed in the line of duty.

EXEMPTION FOR UNMARRIED SURVIVING SPOUSE OF FIRST RESPONDER:

Act 427 became effective January 1, 2018. It provides for a property tax exemption for the total assessed value of the homestead of an unmarried surviving spouse of a person who died while performing their duties as an emergency medical responder, technician, paramedic, volunteer fire fighter or law enforcement or fire protection officer.

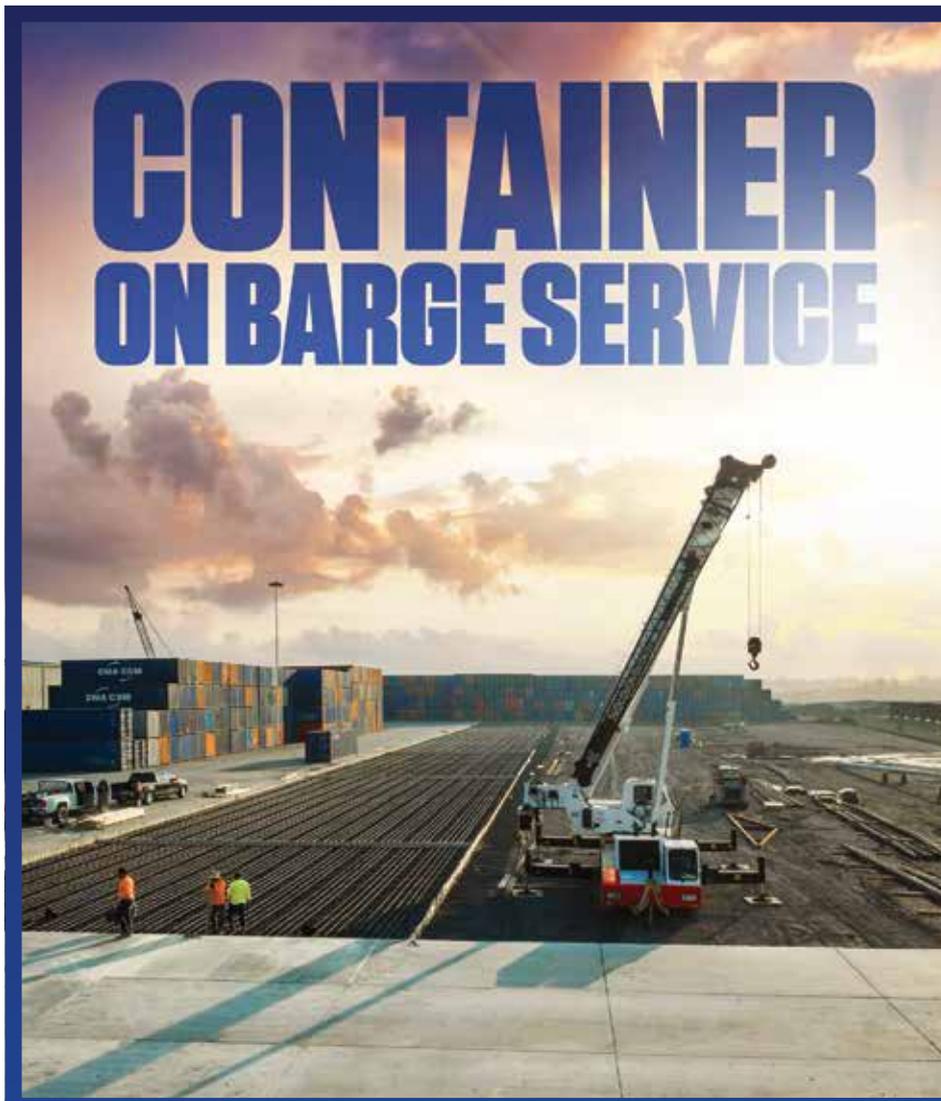
EXEMPTION FOR VETERANS DISABLED IN SERVICE:

Veterans with a service-connected disability rating of 100 percent unemployability or totally disabled by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs are exempt from additional property taxes, an exemption approved by West Baton Rouge voters in 2011. This exemption provides an additional \$75,000 exemption to property owned and occupied by veterans with a service-connected, 100 percent disability. It also extends to their surviving spouse. This exemption increases the total exemption for these veterans to \$150,000.

Assessor Altazan urges any property owners who qualify to complete the application at the WBR Assessor's Office in the West Baton Rouge Parish Courthouse in Port Allen. Bring proof of income and personal identification.

**WEST BATON ROUGE PARISH
ASSESSOR'S OFFICE**
West Baton Rouge Courthouse
850 8th St., Port Allen
225.344-6777
www.wbrassessor.org

PORT OF GREATER BATON ROUGE



CONTAINER ON BARGE SERVICE

Success of SEACOR AMH, LLC's container-on-barge services at the Port leads to major expansion of container storage capacity.

The public/private partnership between the Port of Greater Baton Rouge and SEACOR AMH, LLC continues to produce increases in the number of containers handled at the Inland Rivers Marine Terminal at the Port's North Line Road facility. In 2017, SEACOR AMH, LLC handled 8,018 containers there, and in 2018 a total of 13,685 containers were handled at the IRMT.



Due to this increase in container movement, the Port has undertaken an expansion of the Inland Rivers Marine Terminal's container storage yard. The expansion is estimated to cost approximately \$4.5 million and will include 3.5 acres of concrete poured to expand the Port's container storage capacity.

Port Executive Director Jay Hardman said, "We are excited about the success of the COB service and the opportunity to expand our capacity. Every container that goes down the Mississippi River to New Orleans for export is one less 18-wheel truck on our roads and bridges."

For more information, contact Greg Johnson:
225-342-1660.



2425 Ernest Wilson Drive • P.O. Box 380 • Port Allen, LA 70767-0380
PH: (225) 342.1660 • FAX: (225) 342.1666 www.portgbr.com

District, schools move up in state school improvement scores

The West Baton Rouge Parish School District and most WBR schools made jumps in their district and school performance scores issued by the La. Department of Education in November.

As a whole, the district made a big jump from a C grade of 73.3 in 2018 to a B grade of 78.6 in 2019. In addition, three WBR schools jumped letter grades - Brusly Middle School, Devall Middle, and Port Allen High School.

Port Allen High made a huge gain, moving from a 67.1 grade in 2018 to 81.4 in 2019. Brusly High was the only school to earn Top Gain status, moving from an 86.2 grade in 2018 to a 88.9 grade in 2019.

"We are very excited about the improvements at most of our schools," said Superintendent Wes Watts. "Almost every school saw growth in student performance. Of course, there is always room for improvement and we have areas to improve. We will continue to work toward our goal of becoming a top 10 school in the state by providing the tools, training and programs our teachers need to help our students succeed."

WBR DISTRICT PERFORMANCE SCORE

2019 score	2018 score	Increase
78.6 (B grade)	73.3 (C grade)	5.3 points

- Increase is the 2nd highest in the state!
- WBR moved up 15 spots in state to #28!
- With its 78.6 score, WBR beat the statewide score of 77.1

WBR GRADUATION RATE

2018 graduation rate is highest in WBR history!

YEAR	2014	2016	2017	2018
WBR	73.7	77.7	74.3	82.6
BHS	81.5	84.2	79.1	86.3
PAHS	67.0	68.4	67.0	78.6

SCHOOL PERFORMANCE SCORES

SCHOOL	2018	2019	Change
Brusly Elem	69.9 C	67.8 C	- 2.1
Brusly Middle	71.5 C	78.8 B	+7.3
Brusly High	86.2 B	88.9 B	+3.7
Chamberlin	78.0 B	74.2 C	- 3.8
Devall Middle	74.4 C	75.7 B	+1.3
Cohn Elem	61.5 C	62.1 C	+0.6
Lukeville	69.9 C	67.8 C	- 2.1
PA Elem	61.5 C	62.1 C	+0.6
PA Middle	65.7 C	67.8 C	+2.1
PA High	67.1 C	81.4 B	+14.3



Shown are two of the 30 trees donated by Drax BioMass to the WBR School Board. In the inset, at the donation are employees of the WBR Parks & Recreation Department, which assisted with delivering and planting the trees, Jason Robertson of Drax Biomass, and Superintendent Wes Watts.

Drax makes tree donation

Drax Biomass donated 30 trees to the West Baton Rouge School Board last fall as part of a successful project to reduce waste from its production process. Drax partnered with the LSU Ag Center to use its wood pellet dust as a substrate component for potting soil to plant and grow trees. It has led to an opportunity to expand the program to LSU Coastal Roots program, which helps schools build nurseries to produce trees for planting coastal areas.

"At Drax, we strive to promote positive change in our communities with a focus on education and environmental stewardship. We are happy we were able to donate trees to the school system. The project was a great fit for us and we hope the trees will beautify and add value to schools for years to come," said Drax Communications Officer Annmarie Sartor.

UPDATE:



Caneview School opening "wows" students, parents



The new Caneview School opened in January to rave reviews by parents and awed looks by students. The new K-8 school replaced Devall and Chamberlin Schools. Laree Taylor, who was principal at Chamberlin, is principal of the new Caneview School.

The new state-of-the-art school includes 77,000 square feet with 36 classrooms, a resource center, computer center, band room, art room and other amenities. Construction on the parish's massive school improvement program has surpassed the halfway mark. Six of the ten projects are complete. Following are the remaining projects:

BRUSLY MIDDLE SCHOOL: Brusly Middle will become Brusly Elementary when the new Brusly High School opens. This project will bid out in Spring and will be complete in July 2020.

BRUSLY HIGH & MIDDLE SCHOOLS: Construction of the new high school is on track to be complete in July and open for the 2020-2021 school year in August. The existing Brusly High School will become Brusly Middle School. This project will bid out in the Spring and construction will be complete by July, 2020.

PORT ALLEN MIDDLE SCHOOL: This project has gone out for bid and will be completed by July. The project consists of a new roof on main building, interior renovations of existing main building with new windows, painting, new ceilings and flooring where applicable, exterior painting of main building and gym, CAT 6A computer wiring throughout, and a new intercom system.

