

UPCOMING EVENTS

May 1 - National Day of Prayer,
WBR Community Center - pg. 2

May 9 - Rockin on Railroad,
5:30 pm - pg. 4

May 10 - Mother's Day crafts,
Main Library, 11 am

May 24 - P.A. Family Day in Park,
William & Lee Park, pg. 4

May 30 - Solar System
STEM, WBR Library Main, 10 am

June 11 - Presentation Wizard
of Oz, Main Library, 10 am

June 11 - Presentation of
Little Red and Big Wolf, South
Library, 2 pm

June 15 - Crescent City Circus,
PA Community Center, 10 am

June 16 - Animal Eventure,
Main Library - 10 am,
South Library - 2 pm.

June 18 - Yuck Show, Library
Main - 10 am, South - 2 pm

June 18 - TTM Project, Addis
Community Center, 10 am

June 15 - Magic Show,
Erwinville Comm. Center, 10 am

June 21 & 22 - Juneteenth,
William & Lee Park, pg. 4

Parish President addresses critical need for drainage renewal funding

To the Residents of West Baton Rouge Parish,
As you know, the renewal of the dedicated drainage tax failed
in a March election and is set to expire. We will again ask voters to
renew this tax in an upcoming election. **This is not a new tax; it is a
continuation of what has long supported our drainage efforts.**

Our dedicated drainage tax is critical to maintain, improve,
and expand the drainage systems that protect our homes, roads,
businesses, and public spaces from the increasingly severe impacts
of storms and flooding. With our unique geographic challenges,
a modern and well-maintained drainage infrastructure is not a
luxury—it is a necessity.

Without this renewal by you, we risk losing the ability to:

- Maintain and upgrade vital drainage canals.
- Respond promptly to emergency flooding situations.
- Plan and invest in long-term infrastructure that mitigates flood risks.
- Comply with state and federal regulations tied to storm water and
drainage management.

We have made substantial progress, including GIS mapping of
our drainage systems, and we are in the process of incorporating
flood gauges that will help us predict potential problem areas before
a major rain event occurs. There is more work to be done. Aging
infrastructure, heavier rainfall events, and increasing demands on our
systems require that we remain proactive and prepared.

**Let me be clear—failure to renew this tax would significantly
set us back, not just in the drainage area but all departments
of our parish because more limited drainage projects would
have to be funded out of our General Fund. It would delay
critical projects, reduce our responsiveness during storms, and
ultimately increase costs in the long term. Most importantly, it
would put homes, property, and lives at greater risk.**

I urge every resident to consider what's at stake and to make
your voice heard. This tax renewal is an investment in the safety and
future of West Baton Rouge Parish. With your continued support, we
can ensure that our drainage systems remain strong, reliable, and
capable of meeting the needs of our community for generations to
come.

Jason Manola
Parish President



Drainage projects throughout the parish.

GOVERNMENT MEETINGS

WBR PARISH COUNCIL - Meets 2nd & 4th
Thursday of month, 5:30 p.m., Parish Council
Building, 225-383-4755, www.wbrcouncil.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 1st
Tuesday of month. 5 p.m., Council meeting
room in Parish Council Building.

TOWN OF ADDIS - Meets 2nd Tuesday
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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National Day of Prayer

Thursday, May 1, 6 pm,
WBR Community Center

Family Day in the Park

Saturday, May 24, Noon - 7 pm
William and Lee Park



Juneteenth

June 21 Noon-7 pm & June 22 Noon-5 pm,
William and Lee Park



CITY MEETINGS:

City Hall, 3rd Floor,
5:30 pm
second Wednesday
of each month

Meetings aired live
on Facebook:
facebook.com/cityofportallen

CONTACT US:

225-346-5670
375 Court St.
PortAllen.org
Work orders can be
submitted on
website

WBR LIBRARY

Library to again ask for renewal of property tax

On March 29, 2025, voters rejected the RENEWAL of a 4.1 mill tax to fund the West Baton Rouge Parish Library. **This tax is the only funding for the library.** It funds all library operations, including the Bookmobile, Storytimes, public computers, books, magazines, newspapers, DVDs, and daily services to the public. Without this revenue, the West Baton Rouge Library will be forced to close.

Director Tamie Martin stated that the Library is funded through 2025. She said that the Library will put the tax renewal back on the ballot on November 15, 2025. She said she will hold public meetings to answer any questions voters may have about the Library or the tax. Copies of the Library budgets, audits, and Board meeting minutes are available on the Library website, www.wbrpl.com.

When asked how much taxpayers contribute for the Library, Martin said a home with an appraised value of \$150,000 with the homestead exemption pays only \$30 per year to support the Library. She compared that figure to the cost of a single book or one month of streaming platforms.

Martin also said that she is available to speak to groups and for individual conversations with anyone who has questions or concerns about how the Library utilizes tax funds.

Some library summer programs, events

Visit with Therapy Dogs: Saturday, May 17, 10 am, Main Branch. See amazing dogs and learn about the incredible work therapy dogs do.

Squishmallow Painting: May 28, June 2 and June 4, 1 to 2 p.m. Squishmallow-themed painting. All supplies will be provided. Various ages for each session. Call for info.

Drum Life Percussion & Drum Circle Class: Friday, June 6, 10 a.m., Main Branch. Drum circles are a hands-on experience, everyone participates.

Library Feud: Saturday, June 7, 12 to 1:30 p.m., South Branch. Age 18 and up. To be a contestant, call the library at ext. 227. Register via our website to join the audience.

Didgeridoo Down Under: Monday, June 9, 10 to 11 a.m., Main Branch. Hear colorful sounds of the didgeridoo, learn about Aboriginal artwork.

Bright Star Theater Presents: The Wizard of Oz: Wednesday, June 11, 10 to 11 a.m., Main Branch. Delightful two-person adaptation of the Wonderful Wizard of Oz!

Paint & Collage Art, Inspired by Eric Carle, Friday, June 13, 1 pm, 2nd grade and up. Learn to make collage art. Space limited, Register online.

Nerf Book Battle Night: Friday, June 13, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m., South Branch. All materials will be provided. 18 and older. Registration required.

Sidekick Circuits: Tuesday, June 17, 1 pm, Main Branch. 6th grade and up hands-on workshop to build a working circuit. Registration required.



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Comments: ellie@peacockcommunications.com, or call 225-929-9661.



LIBRARY 225-342-7920
WEST BATON ROUGE www.wbrpl.com



WBR fire rating improves; helps property owner insurance costs

West Baton Rouge Parish's fire rating has improved to a Class 3! This means all property owners in the parish will receive savings on homeowners and commercial insurance!

This significant improvement was the result of several factors:

- consolidating all parish fire departments into one department. Individual department ratings were 4-6. The lower the rating the better.
- Improved water supply and hydrant flow capacity in various areas of the parish.
- Increased training

The parish-wide Fire Department has also resulted in better accountability to taxpayers, improved fire response, and data collection for future fire protection improvements. Had the individual fire departments continued, several would have had worse fire ratings in the coming years because of the stringent requirements of the comprehensive fire rating reviews.

Meanwhile, the WBR Fire Department EMS system is having remarkable success in responding to medical emergencies in the parish. "We are continually building improved response times and delivering critical advanced life support by paramedics, and the crossover training of our employees as firefighters has proved very beneficial," said Fire Chief Butch Browning.

The fire department EMS has transported 246 emergency patients between October 2024 and January, 2025, including numerous critical patients. It was operating two units a day, and as of March, is operating 3 units a day. Average response time is 9 minutes. Medic units have responded to seven structure fires, which added four firefighters for these fires due to cross-training.

PROJECT UPDATES

Court Street Sidewalk Project:

Project has been recommended by Parish to be split into two phases: Phase 1: 10' wide asphalt sidewalk starts near Court Street and LA 415 intersection and heads east before ending just east of S. 12th Street. Phase 2: 5' wide asphalt sidewalk starts at the end of Phase 1 and heads east across LA 1 to connect to an existing sidewalk on Court Street. This will be a 5' wide asphalt sidewalk. Phase 1 construction will begin by the end of 2025.

LA 1 Intracoastal Waterway Bridge Replacement:

The 970 day construction period began on April 14. Southbound traffic movements will stay the same. Northbound LA 1 to I-10 traffic will be moved from the existing northbound bridge to the new southbound bridge sometime in June. This means all LA 1 traffic will use the new southbound bridge for an extended period of time. Driver's will drive on temporary roadway sections to get onto the new bridge and to head east on I-10 to Baton Rouge.

New water well:

Construction of a 2nd water well located at the WBR Multipurpose Arena at 141 Turner is set to begin in June. Funding for the second well will come from a combination of ARPA funds and WBR Utilities budget. This new well will serve as a backup to Arena Well #1 currently in service now, and will provide redundancy in our water system infrastructure. The contractor, Layne Christensen, has a project construction time line of 450 days.

Recreation Department ramps up for busy summer

SUMMER CAMPS: Registration for the WBR Parks & Recreation

Department's popular summer day camp begins in May. The camp provides an excellent program for young children filled with guest performances, fun activities, and a weekly splash day. Open to boys and girls age 5-10, it is held Tuesdays – Thursdays (3 days per week) from 8:30 AM to 3:30 PM, and lunch is included. A session is one week, and cost is \$10 per session/per child (non-refundable). Camp t-shirts are available for an additional \$10.

SESSIONS: June 3-5 & June 10-12 in Port Allen (2 sessions); June 17-19 & June 24-26 in Addis (2 sessions); July 8-10 & July 17 in Erwinville (2 sessions).

SUMMER ENRICHMENT PROGRAMS:

Crescent City Circus, Wednesday, June 15, 10 am, Port Allen

Community Center: This vibrant performance troupe based in New Orleans is known for their dazzling blend of acrobatics, juggling, clowning, and theatrical flair. Their shows are packed with creativity, color, and crowd interaction. With gravity-defying stunts and moments of whimsy, Crescent City Circus delivers a one-of-a-kind experience that captivates audiences of all ages.

The TMM Project: Wednesday, June 18, 10 am Addis VMW Hall & Wednesday, July 9, 10 am at Erwinville Community Center. The "True Mission Matters" is a fun interactive program that features a live saxophonist, drums, step-dancing, & street dance. They will showcase and speak on the importance and positive impact of coming together to work hard and accomplish goals. Learn fun dance moves at end of this performance.

Mitch the Magician Comedy Magic Show: Wednesday, June 25, 10 am at Addis VFW Hall; Wednesday, July 16, 10 am at Erwinville Community Center. A 40-minute fun, fast-paced, interactive comedy magic show. Mitch the Magician creates silly situations that always end well with enormous laughs! Also included is "The Big Bubble Show" - learn how to make huge bubbles using only soap and water! Kids can go home and make big bubbles for themselves! Mixed in with the fun is a heavy emphasis on learning new things.

NOW HIRING CAMP STAFF: Applications are available at WBR Parks & Recreation office at the Port Allen Community Center, 749 N. Jefferson Ave., Port Allen, Monday-Thursday 8 am - 5 pm, and Friday 8 am - noon. For more information call 225-336-2423 or at wbrrecreation.org

SPEED & CONDITIONING CAMP: 6-week overall wellness program with a variety of strength and conditioning activities during hour-long sessions, including speed training, agility, calisthenics, and resistance training. Boys and girls age 5-14. Cost is \$10 per child. Program T-shirt is available for an additional \$10. Camp is June 3 through July 17 in Brusly & Port Allen - Tuesday & Thursday evenings. Registration begins in May.

SENIOR SPIRIT DANCES: Senior Spirit Dances for age 50 and older are held at the Addis Community Center from 11 am until 2 pm. Admission is \$5, and lunch is provided from 11 am until noon. Live music from 11:30 am until 2 pm. No alcohol is served. Upcoming bands are: May 7 - Denver & Justin; June 11 - Tet Dur; July 9 - Iris Callaghan.

Low cost rabies vaccination

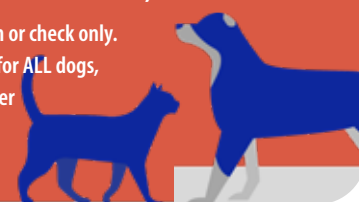
Saturday, April 26 • 9 am - Noon

WBR Shelter & Animal Control, 3183 Ted Denstel Rd., Port Allen

Rabies vaccinations - \$10
Rabies tag - \$7
Microchips - \$15
Dog heartworm test - \$15

Available while supplies last, cash or check only.
Rabies vaccinations are required for ALL dogs, cats, and domesticated ferrets over 3 months old.

Dogs must be on leash. Cats & ferrets must be in carrier.





Sheriff's Office launches new website

The West Baton Rouge Parish Sheriff's Office has launched a redesigned website to enhance public access to information and services. This upgrade reflects Sheriff Jeff Bergeron's commitment to transparency and community engagement.

Key features include:

- News & Alerts – Stay informed on public safety updates and announcements.
- Employment Opportunities – Explore career opportunities with WBRSO.
- Community Programs & Events – Learn about crime prevention and outreach initiatives.
- Extra Patrol Requests – Request additional patrols from our Uniform Patrol Division.
- Local Resources – Access information for law enforcement partners and WBR Parish Resources.

"Our goal is to make information more accessible and keep the community informed," said Sheriff Bergeron.

Visit the new site at www.wbrsheriff.org

Getting leadership training

The men and women of the West Baton Rouge Parish Sheriff's Office had the opportunity to attend leadership training led by Paul Butler, a 27-year law enforcement professional and internationally-renowned speaker.

Sheriff Jeff Bergeron emphasized the importance of leadership at every level, stating, "It is imperative that each of us continues to grow as leaders - not only in our professional roles but in our personal lives, as well."

Investing in leadership development strengthens our agency and enhances the service we provide to our community. Thank you, Paul Butler, for sharing your expertise and insight with our team!



Shown at the training are Paul Butler, Parish President Jason Manola and Sheriff Jeff Bergeron.

Autism Awareness Month

Throughout the month of April, some deputies have been wearing special autism awareness badges as a symbol of our commitment to understanding, acceptance, and support for individuals and families affected by autism.

"This initiative is an important step for WBRSO as we continue strengthening our connection with every member of our community. We want families affected by autism to know that we support them and we stand with them."

Autism Awareness isn't just about a month—it's about making a difference every day. We are honored to take part in this effort and remain dedicated to promoting awareness and acceptance.



TOWN OF ADDIS

Addis native John Foster shines on American Idol

Hometown pride soars as local makes Top 24

Addis native and resident John Foster is making waves on the national stage as a standout country music singer on American Idol. His rise through the competition has not only captured hearts across the country, but also casts a well-deserved spotlight on his hometown.

A recent feature on the show gave viewers a glimpse into Foster's roots, highlighting his upbringing in Addis. The piece included touching scenes from family gatherings, the town's iconic railroad, and Benoit's Meat Block — the family business that's been part of the community fabric for years.

As of press-time for this newsletter in mid-April, Foster had advanced to the Top 24, an impressive milestone given the show's original pool of tens of thousands of hopefuls. Notably, he's the first contestant from the Westbank area to make it this far.

Foster, who began performing gigs in 2021 and writes his own music, has struck a chord with audiences thanks to his heartfelt performances and authentic style.

"We are thrilled with John's success, and the limelight he has placed on our town," said Addis Mayor David Toups.

"The show airs on ABC on Sunday and Monday nights — please tune in and vote for John!"

The show finale is on May 18.



These images of John Foster in his hometown of Addis have aired on the ABC TV's American Idol.



Slight increase in sewer service fee required by sewer grant program

Brusly residents will see a small \$1.16 increase in their sewer service fee beginning with the June bill. The town was required to increase all sewer customer fees due to the \$4.5 million in grants the town received for major upgrades to the wastewater system.

Rates for residential customers will go from a flat rate of \$20.84 to a flat rate of \$22. The town also increased rates for commercial customers.

"These federal grants now require municipalities to have a rate analysis performed to show that the rates charged can sustain the wastewater system over time, and if the rates are not sufficient the town must increase them to match the recommendations of the analysis," explained Mayor Scot Rhodes. "In the past, the government had been providing these big grants to municipalities to upgrade their wastewater system, and after they got the upgrades the municipalities weren't maintaining the systems because they weren't charging enough, so they just got into disrepair again."

Brusly's rate analysis by the La. Rural Water Association was conducted in October of 2024, and it recommended a rate increase to meet the required sustainability factor. The Town Council approved the rate increase at its March meeting.

The town is spending a total of \$5.7 million on upgrades to the wastewater system in three phases of work with \$4.5 million of that coming from grants, and the town adding \$1.2 million. Two phases have been completed, and Phase 3 will be underway before the end of 2025.

"The wastewater system dates back to the early 1980s, and this is the first major upgrade of the system since that time," said Mayor Rhodes. "The good news is that we are being told that with these improvements, the town's wastewater treatment system should not need another major overhaul for 20 years."



Sewer system improvements listed

The town wastewater treatment improvements include:
Phase 1: Adding a second force main to the sewer treatment facility: The Live Oak Lift Station is the drainage catch all for the entire Town of Brusly. All sewerage and rain infiltration go to this station and

is pumped almost one mile west to the sewer ponds. A second force main was added to help get sewerage out of town and into the sewer pond quickly.

Phase 2: Upgrading 2 lift stations: The South LaBauve lift station and Bourgeois Street lift station have been upgraded to new Smith & Loveless above ground pumps, along with all the electrical stations. These pumps will be easier to maintain, and the town will no longer have to hoist submersible pumps from the raw sewerage to work on them, providing a much more sanitary and maintenance-free system.

Phase 3: Replacing the old duckweed system at the sewer treatment facility: The entire surface of Cell 3 will get a new modular cover system that will help with heat retention, odor control, algae elimination, TSS removal and wildlife mitigation. This will replace the LEMNA duckweed that crews must manually remove three to four times a year.

With the cover, the town will no longer spend 80 work hours quarterly harvesting duckweed, and will not have constant repair on an antiquated boat used for that purpose. In addition, two LEMNA polishing reactors will be installed between the effluent of Cell 3 and the chlorine contact chamber, which effectively removes ammonia and polishes BOD, two things the town must sample every week.

WBR CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU

Conference Center gets rave reviews for corporate, organization events

The WBR Convention Center will have an additional new parking lot and more parking area lighting soon, thanks to on-going improvements at the center. Bookings for the center are back up to pre-Covid numbers, with many companies and organizations using the facility for meetings, conferences, parties, employee celebrations, and other events.

Complete with on-site professional catering, chairs, tables, modern technology and more, the center also offers five rooms with varying capacity from large crowds of over 400 to small groups of 50 or less. The professionalism and experienced staff consistently draw rave reviews.

Call 225-344-2920 or email telson@wbrcvb.com for more information!



Shown above is a reception being held in the Conference Center ballroom.

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
 Inflatables
 Waters Edge playing 4-8pm
 Nite Flight followed by Fireworks!

20TH ANNIVERSARY
2025 Kite Fest
Louisiane

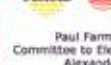
Saturday & Sunday
April 26-27, 2025



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

Saturday 11am till
fireworks at dark
Sunday 11am - 4pm

West Baton Rouge
Soccer Complex
3383 Rosedale Road
in Port Allen



Educators to get new tools for kids in trouble at school

District Attorney Tony Clayton is continuing a multi-pronged approach to helping young people before they get into serious trouble by committing crimes.

His most recent effort is offering free on-line courses for students who are being put in detention, are causing disruptions in class, or have been truant. The courses are being developed now and will be offered to all Pointe Coupee, Iberville, and West Baton Rouge schools for next school year in August.

They will include courses on conflict resolution, effective decision making, anti-bullying and hazing, vaping/drugs, and financial responsibility. The DA's Office is working with Justice Learning Systems (JLS) to develop the courses.

The DA's Office hosted a luncheon with the education leaders of all three school districts and private schools in January to explain the program and get their feedback.

"We have made all of our juvenile-focused courses, such as anti-bullying, vaping and truancy education, available to the DA's office to offer to schools, but we are also working on constructing a new course that will be specifically for the schools in the 18th JDC," said David Burton of JLS. "This course will have elements of conflict resolution and effective decision making, but will also feature more regional materials such as videos of local mentors talking directly to the students."

" Giving our educators tools that will help our youth before they get into trouble with the criminal justice system is a pro-active approach to reducing youth crime and violence."

DA Tony Clayton



District Attorney Tony Clayton

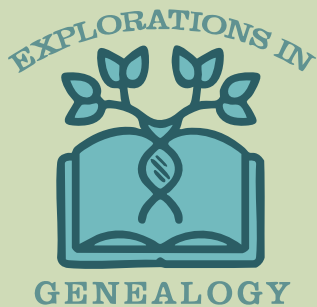
"We are thankful to have another resource we can use to educate our families on the importance of attendance in student academic success," said WBR Schools Superintendent Chandler Smith. "These courses can be incorporated into our alternative learning program, as well as other school level programs."

Funding for this program was made possible by the DA's Office sales tax that voters approved last year. He promised before the tax election to use a portion of the proceeds on programs to reduce youth crime. He has already provided \$50,000 to Families in Need of Services (FINS), \$25,000 to the 18th Judicial District Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) Program, and \$25,000 to the Child Advocacy Center.

"We will continue working to help our youths and direct them to positive lives and futures. It helps them and our communities!" said DA Clayton.

WEST BATON ROUGE MUSEUM

WEST BATON ROUGE MUSEUM UPCOMING PROGRAMS & EVENTS



May 10
10:30 AM - 12 PM

WITH
Dr. Joy Banner
Co-Founder & Co-Director of
The Descendants Project

Discussions:
Environmental issues
Creole culture
Genealogy

FREE



Kamp Krewe
Kouri-Vini Immersion Camp

FOR ALL AGES LEARNING
LOUISIANA CREOLE
(ALSO REFERRED TO AS KOURI-VINI)

June 2-6

9AM - 4PM DAILY

A 5-DAY WORKSHOP FOCUSED ON LOUISIANA
CREOLE FOLKTALES, MODERN MYTHS, ART, AND
STORYTELLING, AS IS HIGHLIGHTED IN THE WEST
BATON ROUGE MUSEUM'S SUMMER EXHIBITS

WITH

Louisiana Creole
LANGUAGE ACTIVIST



CLIF ST. LAURENT

FREE

SPACE IS LIMITED. ADVANCED REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED.

Kafé Krèyol-la

FEATURING AWARD-WINNING
Chef Charly Pierre

On how Haitian and Creole Culture
intertwine, especially through food

June 7

10:30 AM - 12 PM

Charly Pierre is the owner of Fritai,
a Haitian cuisine restaurant in New
Orleans, and was on Food Network's
Chopped and *Top Chef*.



Gratuit

Historical Happy Hour WITH
BEAUSOLEIL

JUNE 20 • 6 - 8 PM



Known as the best Cajun band in the world,
BeauSoleil is famous for a range of Louisiana
French music, from traditional to modern

**CHRISTMAS
IN JULY
CARD PARTY**

**\$30
ENTRY FEE**

July 28
10 AM - 3 PM



Registration is open for the WBRHA's
annual fundraiser to be held at the
Port Allen Community Center

For more information, please call (225)-300-4674



Why are Assessor's Office employees on my property?

If you've recently started or completed a new home or commercial building, or done an addition to your home or commercial building, it is likely you have received or will receive a visit from a Deputy Assessor employed by the West Baton Rouge Parish Assessor's Office.

Why? "The Assessor's Office is required by Louisiana Statute RS 47:1958 to make site visits to every taxable property or tract of land in the parish. These site visits afford our office the opportunity to collect the information necessary to fairly and equitably assess all properties in the parish," explained Assessor Chris Guerin.

Property owners are typically required to obtain a permit from the parish or municipality where the property is located before starting a new construction or addition project. The Assessor's Office is notified by the parish and municipalities of the permits issued by those agencies. "In the past our Deputy Assessors made site visits to new construction and addition projects only in the spring and fall, but with the increased level of construction activity in the parish they are now visiting project sites on a year round basis," Guerin explained.

Barry Brewer and Alex Angrisano hold the positions of Deputy Assessors responsible for collecting the necessary data in the field enabling the Assessor's Office to fairly and equitably assess all properties in the parish. "They go on site to every project with laptops and tape measures in hand, collect the exterior dimensions of the homes and/or commercial buildings as well as many other attributes of the project (#stories, #baths, building height, etc.) and report the information back to our office," Guerin said.

It is standard procedure for the Deputy Assessors to knock on the door of the property upon arrival and identify themselves, but because these site visits are done during working hours many times no one is home. If no one answers, they will collect as much data on the property as possible and leave. Additionally, if no one is home or if the Deputy Assessors are unable to access a property due to locked gates, protective dogs, etc., they may leave a door hanger on site requesting the owner of the property contact the Assessor's Office.

Assessor Guerin says the Deputy Assessors travel in a well-marked white Ford Ranger truck, carry picture ID cards identifying them as staff of the Assessor's Office, and wear reflective vests with "WBR Assessor" prominently displayed on them so property owners can be assured they are properly authorized and on official business.

"Because of our work schedule and the timing of construction projects, it may be some time after a project is completed before our Deputy Assessors can make their site visit," Guerin said. "This sometimes surprises property owners, but if anyone has questions about our presence on their property, please contact our office at 225-344-6777."



Deputy Assessors Alex Angrisano and Barry Brewer.

Check us out online:
www.wbrassessor.org

VIEW YOUR PROPERTY ASSESSMENT
See your property on digital aerial maps!
Learn about tax exemptions,
get forms & more!

PORT OF GREATER BATON ROUGE

LOUISIANA'S DEEP DRAFT PORTS UNLOCKING TRADE POTENTIAL **REPORT**

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS CAN LEAD TO MARITIME SUCCESS.

A recent report commissioned by Louisiana's five deep draft ports titled "Lower Mississippi River Commodity Analysis," highlights strategies to boost trade along one of the world's key waterways. Strategic partnerships, innovation, and emerging markets are central to Louisiana's maritime growth.

"This report validates the direction our port has been going in," said Jay Hardman, executive director of the Port of Greater Baton Rouge, "and points to more opportunities that can be pursued."

Identified growth markets include biofuels, LNG, wood pellets, cement, fertilizers, and container shipments. The report encourages continued cooperation among ports. Hardman cited the Baton Rouge-Port NOLA partnership, which moves containers from the capital to New Orleans for export, as a successful example.

"By working together," said Hardman, "we're not just moving cargo—we're building Louisiana's economic future, one shipment at a time."



WWW.PORTGBR.COM



At left is a rendering of the new Cohn Elementary School building. Below is the Cohn campus showing the new facilities that will be built on the site.

School Board begins transformation of Cohn campus; PA Middle to become Early College Academy

The WBR Early College Academy is now in the works for students who plan on attending college to earn an Associate's Degree in Humanities or Sciences while still in high school, and at no cost to the students.

The Academy program began in 2024-25 school year, with the freshman class taking dual enrollment credits at their home campuses. They will begin taking their college courses at the Early College Academy for their 11th and 12th grade years.

The creation of this Academy includes moving Port Allen Middle School to the Cohn Elementary site and raving the site into Cohn Elementary and Middle School, while converting Port Allen Middle into the Early College Academy.

All work, including the Cohn project and the improvements at the other schools, is projected to cost \$32 million, and will be funded with a bond issue. **Taxpayers will not be asked to pay any additional tax for these improvements, or other improvements being planned at other schools.**

Work on the Cohn campus will begin this summer with a major construction project, including the following new facilities: elementary building, middle school building, library/media center, gym, and practice field. In addition, the cafeteria will be renovated and old buildings demolished. The projected opening of the new Cohn elementary wing will be August of 2026.

Port Allen Middle students will move to the Cohn Middle campus in January of 2027, and the Early College Academy will open in August 2027. The conversion will require some minor renovations to Port Allen Middle for the Early College Academy, and they will be done between January and August of 2027.

"The Early College Academy is another great opportunity for our students," said WBR Schools Superintendent Chandler Smith. "Students can get up to two years of college credit while in high school - at no cost. In addition, statistics show that the more dual enrollment credits a student has going into college, the more likely that student is to be successful and graduate from college. We are offering a spectrum of career opportunities to our students with the Early College and Career Academies. They have many opportunities to get ahead and move into successful careers faster with these programs."

Smith also noted that the Early College Academy was needed to provide the dual enrollment courses. "An organizational review of our system highly recommended combining the Cohn and Port Allen Middle campuses due to the low enrollment at those schools. By doing that and making Port Allen Middle the Early College Academy we provide benefits for all these students, and it allows us to hire the teachers needed for the Early College Academy courses. There is no way we could have done that at each high school in the parish."

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS PLANNED FOR SCHOOL CAMPUSES:

In addition to the transformation at Cohn, the School Board will also be implementing improvements at school campuses across the parish, including:

Brusly Upper Elementary - Summer 2025 - replace doors and windows; Summer 2026 - move office and other upgrades

Port Allen Elementary - Summer 2025 - roof replacement, multi-purpose floor replacement, upgrades to cafeteria, kitchen and multi-purpose space; Summer 2026 - office renovation

Brusly High & Port Allen High - Summer 2025 - conversion of fields to turf

Port Allen High - Fall 2025 - athletic facility improvements

Brusly Middle School - Summer 2025 - roof replacement

Lukeville Elementary - Fall 2025 - gym/cafeeteria improvements



Career Academy enrollment jumps

West Baton Rouge Schools' new Career Academy has taken off, with the number of students enrolled doubling each year. Following shows this increase in student enrollment:

2023-24 school year: 98 students enrolled

2024-25 school year: 237 students enrolled

2025-26 school year projected enrollment: 350 to 400 students

Located next to the WBR School Board offices, the Career Academy offers hands-on learning in a variety of fields including welding, carpentry, medical assistant, nurse assistant, drafting, cosmetology, ProStart, electrical, EMR, heavy equipment operator, and robotics. For the 2025-26 school year, new courses are being offered - medical terminology, human body systems, culinary occupations, and industrial electronics.

