

July 4th Celebration at Bayou Plaquemine Waterfront Park
Festivities for the July 4th celebration include:

- ★ **9 a.m.-5 p.m.**—Plaquemine Locks State Historic Site – open with free admission
- ★ **4:15 p.m.**—Boat parade departs from boat landing across from parish jail and travels to the Bayou Plaquemine Waterfront Park. Grand marshals are past veterans and current military personnel. Boats are welcome to join the parade at no fee, but are encouraged to decorate in patriotic theme
- ★ **2-6 p.m.**—Free admission to Iberville Museum, Nautical knot tying demonstration
- ★ **3-8 p.m.**—Special boat motor demonstration by Old Engine Boat Club
- ★ **5-9 p.m.**—Activities, booths, food, and Children's Village open at Bayou Plaquemine Waterfront Park. Children's Village includes space walks, games, face painting and more...
- ★ **6 p.m.**—Unfinished Business performs
- ★ **7 p.m.**—Jitterbug dance contest
- ★ **9 p.m.**—Great fireworks display!

No ice chests permitted, bring lawn chairs. Vendors can call 687-3116 for booth information.

Parish to be picky in hiring hospital consultant

The next major step in building a new hospital for Iberville Parish is not finding the land or hiring the architect. It's hiring a hospital consultant who will be tasked with developing a plan that provides for a self sufficient medical facility, said Parish President J. Mitchell Ourso, Jr.

The parish will issue an RFQ (Request For Qualifications) for the project. The RFQ process will be guided by federal guidelines and the La.

Recovery Authority, because the parish will be funding the project with federal money received to recover from Hurricane Gustav.

"The consultant selected will need a very impressive resume and will have a critical job of determining if and how a hospital can be feasible for the parish," Ourso said. Because of that, the parish will advertise the RFQ not just locally, but in large cities in the South known for their medical facilities.

The consultant will be tasked with studying the demographics of the area, what the market will support, if a hospital is feasible, and what services the facility should offer.

"This is critical because the parish intention is to

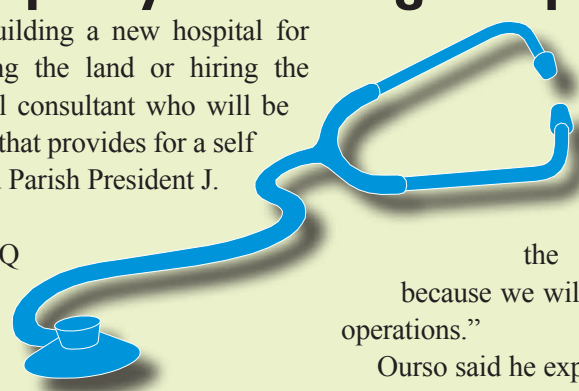
have a hospital board that will hire a company to run the hospital and oversee its operation," Ourso said. "Once we build and supply the hospital with equipment, which is estimated at \$20 to \$21 million, the hospital must be self-sustaining,

because we will not use or seek taxes to pay for its operations."

Ourso said he expects the consultant selection process to be complete by early September, and he is hoping the consultant selected will have a plan ready for review by the end of the year or early January.

"Establishing a new hospital for the parish is my top priority, and I will move this forward," Ourso said. "One of my duties is to provide for the safety and welfare of our residents, and I feel that without emergency medical facilities we are vulnerable. We are moving the parish in the right direction, and this new facility will not only be critical for our residents, it will also be an important economic development tool."

Meanwhile, the parish is looking for an appropriate site for the hospital. "We're looking for about a 10 acre tract in the Plaquemine area, but will not commit until the hospital consultant can provide input on a location."



COOLING OFF AT THE WATER SPRAY PARK... Kids have a great place to cool off this summer at the new Plaquemine Water Spray Park. Located at Plaquemine City Park off Belleview Road, the colorful spray park features a variety of water components that shoot, drop or spray water at various angles and intervals. The project was funded by the City of Plaquemine, and will be operated and maintained by the Iberville Parks and Recreation District.

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Grosse Tete

Grosse Tete gets \$2.7 million grant for new fire station

An approximate \$2.7 million grant from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) will fund a new, 9,205-square-foot fire station in the Village of Grosse Tete.

The ARRA funding comes from the Assistance to Firefighters Station Construction Grant program in the amount of \$2,763,080.

“The new station will include the latest technology including an exhaust removal system, a 200K generator, solar panels for electricity storage and a solar hot water supply,” said Grosse Tete Mayor Mike Chauffe.

The new station will also feature four bay areas for trucks, a training room, a kitchen and exercise room, offices and a sleeping area to accommodate up to four firefighters. It will be located on property immediately

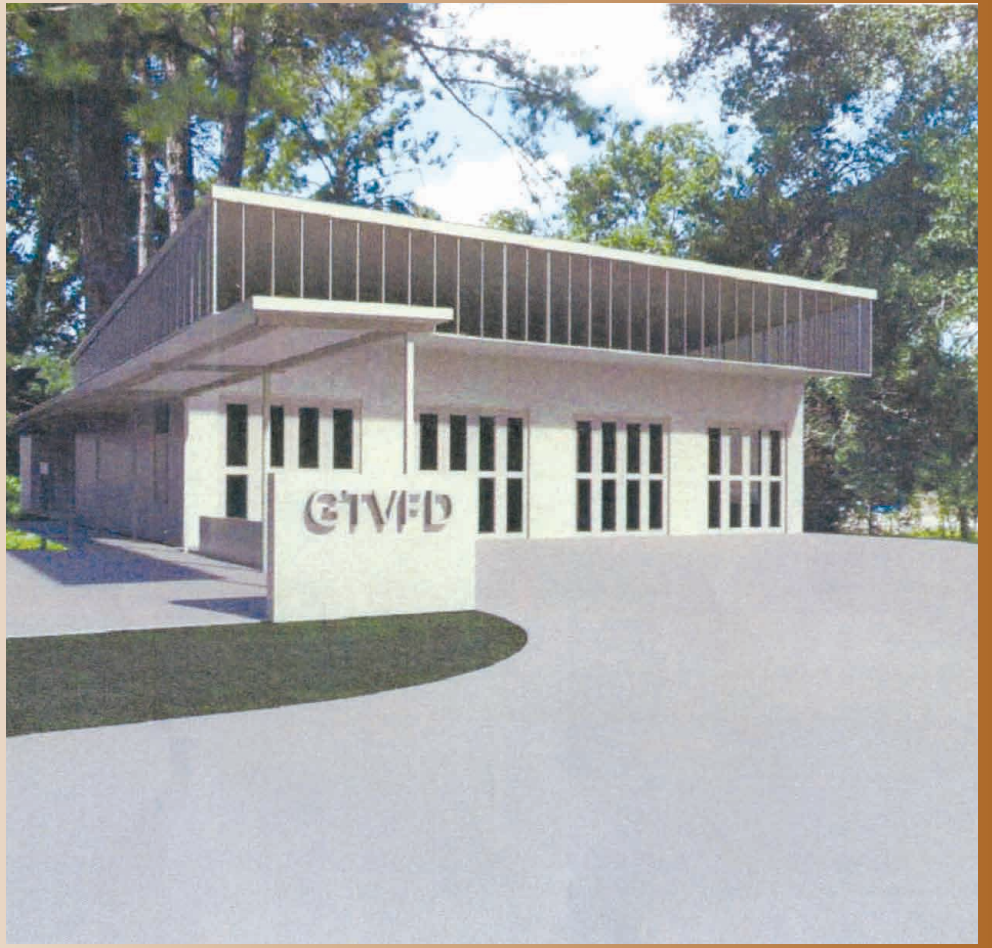
behind the current fire station on Willow Road.

Mayor Chauffe said he hopes to go out for bids on the project by the first week of August, with construction to be completed by May 2011.

The old fire station will be relocated to the Cedar Street Extension after the new station is completed. The old fire station will act as Grosse Tete’s second station and will provide coverage on the west side of the railroad.

“Our goal is to have firemen on duty for 24 hours and to lower our fire rating,” Mayor Chauffe said.

The architect for the new station is Jay Chase of the Chase Design Group in Lafayette, and the grant writer for the project was Keith Davidson.



BE Grateful 4 Kind

By Ellie Hebert, Peacock Communications, LLC

Have you noticed lately how good it is to have water? How it refreshes and cleans us? Have you cursed the green grass that flourishes here because you have to mow it? Have you fallen into bed after a long, hectic day and felt a rush of relief?

For most of us, these activities are taken for granted as we struggle through our daily lives. We don’t even consider for a moment what it would be like to go without a shower, or a bed, or the green grass. It usually takes a major life event (most often something deemed bad) to wake us up from the harried sleepwalk that we take through life.

What if we changed from taking for granted to enjoying with gratitude? And what if we decided to lighten up on ourselves and others a little more – to be more kind? What does it help by being judgmental and demanding? The biggest legacy we all will leave is how we lived and treated others.

I was reminded recently that we have no guarantees to be here tomorrow. So, I’ve made this my mantra: Be grateful, be kind. If you make the effort, you’ll be surprised at how many things a heart of gratitude will find to be thankful for, and how much choosing kindness will uplift us all. Be grateful, be kind.

Government meetings and contacts:

Following is a schedule of meetings of Iberville governmental agencies. All meetings are open to the public.

- Iberville Parish Council** third Tuesday of each month, meetings begin at 6:30 p.m.
Parish of Iberville office - 225-687-5190
- Iberville Parish School Board** second Monday of each month, meetings begin at 6 p.m.
School Board office - 225-687-4341
- City of Plaquemine** second and fourth Tuesday of each month, meetings begin at 6:30 p.m.
Plaquemine office - 225-687-3116
- City of St. Gabriel** third Thursday of each month, meetings begin at 6 p.m.
City of St. Gabriel office - 225-642-9600
- Town of White Castle** second and fourth Monday of each month, meetings begin at 6:30 p.m.
Town of W.C. office - 225-545-3012
- Town of Maringouin** first Monday of each month, meetings begin at 6 p.m.
Town of Maringouin office - 225-625-2630
- Village of Rosedale** second Tuesday of each month, meetings begin at 6 p.m.
Village of Rosedale office - 225-648-2333
- Village of Grosse Tete** second Thursday of each month, meetings begin at 6 p.m.
Village of Grosse Tete office - 225-648-2131
- Sheriff’s Department - 687-5100**
- District Attorney - 687-5210**

Give us your feedback

This publication is funded by local government agencies, and is coordinated through the Iberville Chamber of Commerce. It is written and designed by Peacock Communications for these agencies.

Comments or suggestions can be made by calling Peacock Communications, L.L.C. at 225-929-9661 or emailing Ellie Hebert at ellie@peacockcommunications.com

Parish maintenance facility gets major overhaul

The Iberville Parish maintenance facility next to the parish jail is currently undergoing a \$3.5 million overhaul following major damage from Hurricane Gustav.

The work includes the consolidation of two separate buildings into one updated facility in the rear of the complex. The building will include a storage unit, mechanic and welding shops, offices, an inventory room, and new equipment, such as an overhead crane, and new lifts that will be able to accommodate large trucks and other heavy equipment for repairs.

Constructed in the late 1970s, buildings at the maintenance facility will also be painted, and will get new roofs. Additional concrete work will also be completed.

The previous fuel pumping system is being expanded and moved to the corner of the property, where vehicles will have an easier time entering and exiting the complex to fuel up. The fuel pumping system will also be computerized, and mileage and engine codes will be checked on vehicles as well.



The new facility will include a crane and two lifts that will be able to accommodate trucks and heavy equipment.



The maintenance facility project includes new concrete and the consolidation of two buildings in the rear of the complex to one facility.

“We are making major improvements to the maintenance facility,” said parish finance director Randall Dunn. “There was no sense in rebuilding it back to what it was before.” The entire project will be completed in October.

The funding for the project comes from a variety of sources including \$600,000 from insurance, \$300,000 from FEMA and tax revenues.

Director Hank Grace. “Having just gotten back from the largest retail conference in America, and having the opportunity to introduce potential retailers to the Enterprise Boulevard project, I am optimistic that the opportunities to expand our retail/commercial base will be enhanced because of the Enterprise Boulevard expansion.”

The parish hired Billy Aguiard

as the contractor for the extension project. The contract with Aguiard calls for a 270 calendar day timeline to complete the project. However, the contractor hopes to have the contract completed within 180 days, weather permitting, according to parish officials.

Funding for the extension project comes from leftover money from the original 4.5 mile section of En-

New Iberville Visitors Center: An “International” draw

Dubai, Australia, Austria, Germany, Israel. These all may seem like exciting, far off international locations, but these exotic points of origin are actually the hometowns of visitors who traveled across the globe to visit Louisiana—and the new Iberville Visitors Center—last month.

In fact, in the month of May alone, the new visitors center, located in Grosse Tete just off the Interstate 10 exit, attracted an impressive 847 visitors. And, while many of the curious tourists were from Baton Rouge and the surrounding area, the new visitors center was also a big draw for numerous international visitors who dropped in to get information about the many attractions Iberville Parish and Louisiana have to offer.

“Since we opened, the people who have come through the visitors center have been so interesting,” said Kathy Sparks, Iberville Visitors Center Supervisor. “We had the cutest couple in from Australia the other day. We had a jar of Tootsie Rolls on the counter, and they had never seen them before. While we were making them hotel and restaurant reservations, they stuffed themselves on the Tootsie Rolls.”

Wherever visitors are from, Sparks and her team are ready to help make every tourist’s traveling experience memorable, including helping a group from Vienna, Austria get tickets to see Keith Urban in concert.

In addition to having visitors from every state in the nation, Sparks has also seen numerous visitors from Quebec, Canada, who are visiting Louisiana to discover more about the rich Acadian history in the region.

“We also had two ladies in recently from Switzerland who were driving along the interstate and happened to see the visitors center and pulled off,” Sparks said. “When people come across the Atchafalaya, once they get to the other side, they are glad to be on dry land. They usually aren’t used to going over that much water, so they are thrilled to stop and get their feet back on the ground.”

Enterprise Boulevard extension project launches

The Enterprise Boulevard extension project has officially started, and once completed, is expected to attract new retail businesses to the parish.

“When completed, the expansion of Enterprise Boulevard could perhaps become the best opportunity for retail expansion in the Plaquemine area in many years,” said Iberville Chamber of Commerce Executive

terprise Boulevard. Additionally, the state authorized the remainder of the funds from the initial part of the project to be used for the final portion of Hwy 3066 (Bayou Road) to Hwy 75 (Bellevue Road).

The Enterprise Boulevard extension will be located south of Plaquemine. It will essentially create a loop around the city and will also serve as an alternative evacuation route.

St. Gabriel

St. Gabriel works to expand housing programs for residents

St. Gabriel residents may have an easier time qualifying for a home loan through the USDA rural development program, which would make it easier for them to purchase homes in new St. Gabriel subdivisions.

Mayor George Grace is working in collaboration with the USDA and HUD to resolve a current restriction that makes it more difficult for residents to qualify for home loans through the existing program. Under the current formula, a family of five in Iberville Parish must have a maximum income level that is \$10,000 less than the required income level in neighboring Baton Rouge and Ascension and Livingston parishes, Mayor Grace said.

“This makes it much more difficult for our residents to qualify for a loan, and it puts people at a disadvantage,” he added. Currently, the average income for St. Gabriel residents is \$28,900, he said.

Additionally, Mayor Grace is targeting three new housing subdivisions in St. Gabriel where residents could purchase homes more easily should the existing loan income level restrictions be lifted. The subdivisions include:

Spanish Lakes, a 160 unit single family home community with homes priced between \$170,000 to \$199,000;

Ravier Place, a 98 unit single family home community with homes priced at \$149,000;

Magnolia Springs, a 100 unit single family home community with home prices starting at \$149,000. This development plan calls for an eventual 400 units, including some multi-family dwellings.

“We would like our residents to be able to take buy homes in these new subdivisions that are being built in the community. That is why it is so important the loan income levels are changed,” Mayor Grace said.

St. Gabriel is also working hard

to clean up the city, including getting rid of trash, old cars and abandoned homes, in preparation for an upcoming home construction and rehabilitation project. “If a qualifying low-income resident’s existing home can’t be rehabbed, the resident may be eligible to have the home rebuilt, depending on funding,” Mayor Grace said. Contact the city of St. Gabriel for more details on the housing programs.



The new Spanish Lakes subdivision is a 160 unit single family home community.



The Ravier Place community will include 98 single family homes.

Rosedale

Equipment purchased for village maintenance operations

The Village of Rosedale recently purchased several key pieces of equipment for a total of \$103,053 with sales tax funds dedicated to capital improvement projects.

“These are items bought in the last few months that were purchased with proceeds of the one percent sales tax, which we promised the voters of Rosedale that we would use for capital improvement projects,” Rosedale Mayor Lawrence “Football” Badeaux said.

The equipment includes a 2010 Chevrolet Pickup Truck for \$19,248; a 2010 equipment trailer for \$4,235; a Kubota Excavator for \$52,074; and a culvert cleaner for \$27,495.

“This equipment will help us work more efficiently and effectively in our capital improvements and maintenance projects,” Badeaux said.



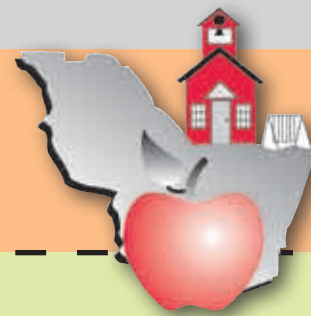
The newly purchased culvert cleaner.

Maintenance Supervisor Ken Patin and Mayor “Football” Badeaux check out the new Kubota excavator and equipment trailer, which were purchased with sales tax funds.



I b e r v i l l e S c h o o l S y s t e m

Iberville public school students and teachers in the spotlight



JAG awards

Students participating in the eighth grade JAG program at Crescent Junior High School captured state honors at the conference held recently. **The highest award went to Ms. JAG-Louisiana, Samantha Nugent, and to Craig Kelley, Most Improved JAG participant.**

Attendance rates up; suspensions down

A recent presentation to the school board highlighted the huge success of the Positive Behavior System and its design to reduce suspensions by as much as 52% from last school year. It has also lowered expulsions markedly and boosted attendance. The four schools that presented their dramatic results were White Castle, Crescent, Dorseyville, and the Op Center.

Iberville teacher advances in 2010 Teacher of Year competition



Emily Weathers-Hunt

To say that Emily Weathers-Hunt is passionate about words is an understatement. That's just one reason why she has advanced to the next level of the state competition for the Louisiana Teacher of the Year. Emily

teaches English to 10th graders at MSA-West. She is a National Board Certified teacher and has captured numerous awards and honors for service, professional development and inspirational teaching.

School construction update

Construction projects continue to move forward in the District with the new **Early Learning Center & Gymnasium at Iberville Elementary** now in its final stages of comple-

tion. The new Center has 16 classrooms, special recreation areas, and a learning center for parents, too.

The **Plaquemine High School Athletic Facility** is nearing completion and should open in August for the fall athletic season. New weight equipment and furnishings were approved by the school board at its May meeting. Locker rooms, weight rooms, meeting rooms, and coaches offices for girls and boys athletics are included in the facility.

A groundbreaking was recently held for a new **Welding Center at Plaquemine High School**. The welding program has received high marks from students during its first year of implementation. The new facility will be larger, offering high quality specialized training with new equipment for both welding and pipefitting. The project is expected to go out for bids this summer and to be completed in 2011.

Also beginning construction this summer will be the **PHS Classroom Addition** which consists of 23 classrooms, computer labs, chemistry lab, and an open courtyard, with an opening date of fall 2011.

The concrete driveway and building pad for the **new Math, Science and Arts Academy East** is under construction and plans continue for the next phase of work. The school is expected to be completed in the fall of 2011. On the west side, major renovations are underway at the **MSA West** in Plaquemine. It includes phased new construction and renovation projects that are now underway. This coming year, the school will get major renovations under its roof, new science and technology labs, new entrance and driveways, new parking, and a new gym. Additional renovations will continue the following year.

The new **White Castle gymnasium** repair and renovation has been completed and graduation was held there in May. The gym's wood floor was refurbished, a damaged wall from Gustav was repaired, and new lights and fixtures were added.

New principal named at East Iberville

Dr. Michael Eskridge was recently welcomed as the new principal for East Iberville Elementary and High School, joining the administrative team on June 1. Dr. Eskridge holds a Doctorate of Education from Seattle University and was formerly with Advance Baton Rouge. He has years of experience as an administrator and in working with at-risk students.



Students learn about major crops of Louisiana

Ag in the classrooms

Agriculture Literacy Day was celebrated with farmers and agriculture professionals speaking to all 3rd and 4th graders on the importance of agriculture in the parish. A special thank you is extended to Farm Service Agency County Director Joel Ducote, farmer and Iberville Farm Bureau President Cecil Ramagos, farming advocates Katie Ramagos and Sally Ramagos, District Conservationist Jerry Hall, cattle and sugar cane farmer Clayton Hurdle, A. Wilbert's Sons' Ed Reeves, Dean Deslatte, Vick Blanchard, and farm loan manager Martin Fontenot.

DUKE scholars named

Twelve outstanding students from MSA West and MSA East were named to the prestigious Duke Talent Scholars program, based on scores on the PSAT tests, an early predictor of college readiness and academic success.

www.ipsb.net
687-4341

2010-2011 School Calendar

August

- 9 & 10 Teacher Development and Work Days (No Students)
- 11 **First Full Day of Classes for Students**

September

- 6 Labor Day-Holiday

October

- 15 Staff Development (No students)

November

- 11 Veterans Day-Holiday
- 22-26 Thanksgiving Holidays

December

- 16, 17, 20, 21 Half days for students only, Exams
- 21, Half day for teachers
- 22 - 31 Christmas Holidays

January

- 1, 2, 3, 4 Holidays
- 14 Staff Development-No Students
- 17 MLK Day Holiday

March

- 4 Half day for students
- Teacher Staff Development
- 7,8 Mardi Gras Holidays
- **23, 24 Student Testing, Phase I**

April

- **11, 12, 13, 14, 15-Student Testing, Phase II**
- 22 - 29 Easter Holidays

May

- 20 Graduation/Final Exams/ Half day for students and teachers
- 23, 24, 25 Half days for students only, Exams
- **25 Last day for students**
- 26 Teacher Workday

White Castle

White Castle town landmarks get fresh look

If you've taken a look around White Castle lately, you may notice that certain town landmarks look even brighter these days.

These improvements have been made recently thanks to a city beautification project that has just been completed. The beautification project included repainting town hall, the addition of new trees and lighting at the Council on Aging building, and town park improvements, including repainting tennis and basketball courts.

"We are giving the town a new look and a different look," said White Castle Mayor Maurice Brown. "We wanted to give it a more advantageous look to promote the

Town of White Castle as well as giving our citizens and children a greater sense of pride, well being and safety in the community."

The beautification project was funded by the town, Mayor Brown said. Town officials are also planning other town improvements, including the overlay of Adams Drive, Francise, Gleason, Graham Streets and several other streets. This \$500,000 project will be paid for through bond funding. Other future projects on deck are further downtown development efforts, a walking trail, and a new town hall, the mayor said.

The Council on Aging building also got spruced up with the addition of trees, plants and lighting, as part of the beautification project.

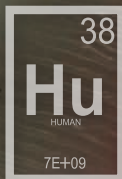


The White Castle Town Hall received a new paint job as part of the town beautification project.



The tennis court at Sciortino Park got a fresh coat of paint as part of the project.

THE STRENGTH OF THE HUMAN ELEMENT



Addressing challenges of sustainability and global economic conditions, The Dow Chemical Company called upon its employees – the Human Element – to affect change. Because of their innovation and determination, **Dow is stronger and better - a competitive force** here and throughout the world. **When the Human Element is empowered, innovation becomes boundless, inevitable, ingenious.**



Plaquemine

Kids enjoy cool fun at new water spray park

Kids squealed with delight, ran from one water element to another and were all smiles as they enjoyed the cool fun of the new Plaquemine Water Spray Park. Plaquemine Mayor Mark “Tony” Gulotta and Selectman Mickey Rivet even got into the water



fun during the opening of the facility on June 5.

The colorful water spray park includes numerous water features such as the Plaquemine water tower that drops water, a ground piano that shoots water up when the keys are stepped upon, and four other water components that shoot or drop water at various angles and intervals. “It’s a fun environment and way for kids to cool off and get some exercise, and it’s free,” said Gulotta.

The Iberville Parks and Recreation District will operate and maintain the water spray park. Extensive planning has been done to make sure the park is safe and fun for various ages of kids. Summer supervisors will be on site at all times to monitor activities. Children under 12 must have adult supervision with them at all times at the water spray park. It is open from 10 a.m. until 8 p.m.



“The supervisors are trained,” Gulotta said, “and depending on the ages of the kids using the park, the supervisors may have groups of kids rotate in and out of the water area.

Our goal is to keep it safe and fun for all these ages. We don’t want younger children to be intimidated by older children.”

The addition of the 12,000 square foot water spray park at Plaquemine City Park also includes the addition of restrooms and change rooms in the old Council on Aging building. Gulotta said kids from across the parish are welcome at the park, and special water days are being planned to bus kids to the site from other areas of the parish.

The \$350,000 project makes the park one of the most active parks in the parish. Located on Belleview Road in Plaquemine, it also includes a skateboard park, walking trail, playground, barbeque areas, two baseball fields and three basketball courts.

Maringouin

Maringouin gets new police vehicle



Maringouin is sporting a new police unit – a Chevrolet Pursuit Tahoe SUV completely outfitted with police gear. “It is the first SUV in the Maringouin fleet of four police units,” said Mayor John Overton.

The town received a \$25,000 grant from the state for the unit, thanks to the assistance of Senator Robert Marionneaux and State Rep. Karen St. Germain. The unit is equipped with

a state-of-the-art computer system, radar system, communications with a variety of agencies, a video cam system to record video both in the unit and outside the unit, traffic lights and a prisoner bar screen.

“Our police department is well equipped with good vehicles,” said Mayor Overton. “Keeping our community safe is a primary concern and this will help us in that effort.”

GOING HOUSE TO HOUSE... Census workers have taken to the streets, going house to house among those who did not send their U.S. census forms back by mail. In the photo at right, census workers get training on how to canvas homes by the U.S. Census Bureau. The demographic data from the census determines how \$400 billion in federal funds are distributed and how local sales tax revenues are divided.



Calls for service high for Sheriff's Department



From January through May of this year, Iberville Parish residents sought assistance from the Iberville Sheriff's Department at a constant pace, as the department fielded 1,854 calls for service—or an average of 370 calls a month—from residents who needed help during the first five months of 2010.

"I think residents would be surprised at the volume of calls we receive on a regular basis," said Major Johnny Blanchard. In addition to the volume of 911 calls, the Sheriff's Department made 616 arrests during this same time period, or an average of 123.2 arrests per month. "If you look at number of arrests compared to the number of calls, compared to other areas, we feel we are on top of the criminal problem," Blanchard said.

The 10 most common types of calls 911 dispatchers received from residents during the first five months of this year were:



Supervisor Emma Blanchard (left) and Dispatcher Shiwanda Jones utilize the latest in computer technology to record, monitor and keep track of calls for service in Iberville Parish.

	Number of calls	Calls per month
1. Miscellaneous	276	55.2
2. Traffic accidents	242	48.4
3. Alarms	199	39.8
4. Theft	198	39.6
5. Domestic	84	16.8
6. Disturbing the peace	70	14
7. Remaining on premises	68	13.6
8. Disturbing the peace fight	65	13
9. Simple battery	54	10.8
10. Drug violation	52	10.4

While alarm calls are a top 911 call to the Iberville Sheriff's Department, Major Blanchard says many of these calls are due to false alarms.

"We respond to one or two alarm calls a day," Blanchard said. "Sometimes, the alarms can be set off by thunder or lightening. If an alarm is going off in a home or business two to three times a week, the owner should have the alarm company come out and have the system checked."

Major Blanchard also cited an increase in the amount of DWI calls during the first five months of this year. The Sheriff's Department received a grant from the state to pay overtime to provide extra enforcement for DWI crimes, he added.

911 hang-up calls also ranked high on the list of service calls from January to May, for a total of 38 calls, or an average of 7.6 calls per month. Major Blanchard said many of these calls are actually glitches in the wiring system and originate from numbers that don't exist.

Harassing phone calls was also a prevalent call for service from residents, with 47 calls over five months, or an average of 9.4 calls per month. Major Blanchard said many of these are harassing text messages that residents receive, not actual calls on the telephone.

Advanced Technology

Every 911 call that comes into the Sheriff's Department is recorded by 911 operators who are on duty 24 hours a day. Additionally, today's advanced computer technology allows multiple agencies to participate on the 911 calls as needed, such as state police or ambulance services. And the Sheriff's Department computer system provides for tracking the name and number of the caller, the address of where the call was made, the type of call and the status of the call.

"Computer technology helps us keep track of every call," Blanchard said. Additionally, the advances in cell phone technology and the fact that many drivers now have GPS systems in their vehicles can help the Sheriff's Department locate a stranded motorist who may have broken down on the side of the road without knowing their exact location.

911 Calling Tips

Major Blanchard offers these helpful tips for residents when calling 911:

- If a resident is calling in about suspicious vehicle, it is best for the caller to get the general description of the vehicle first, such as color and model of the car. "A lot of times, people try to get the whole license plate number, which is the smallest thing on the vehicle to see," Major Blanchard said. "It is best for people to get a general description of the vehicle and maybe one or two of the license plate numbers."
- If a resident sees an accident, they should call 911 if they don't see an emergency vehicle already at the scene. "Even if we received previous calls, they may have seen something that other callers didn't," Major Blanchard said.
- If a resident has a piece of property stolen, such as a bike from a garage or a cell phone from a parked vehicle, it should always be reported, even if the resident thinks the item is too small or insignificant to call about. "If the item is recovered, it can be returned to the owner if they report it," Major Blanchard said.
- Keep track of items with serial numbers and tell 911 operators the serial number of a stolen item during the call. If an item with a serial number is stolen, the serial number is registered on a national database and can be tracked. With items that don't have serial numbers, record and communicate any distinguishable marks or personal initials on the item so police can more readily identify it if it is later recovered.
- Don't call 911 if you locked your keys in the car. The Sheriff's Department will unlock your vehicle, but remember, don't call 911 for unessential calls. "911 calls need to be a true emergency," Major Blanchard added.
- Don't call one of the parish substations directly for 911 emergency calls. Call 911 instead, as calls to the substation will be rerouted.
- Finally, if there is bad weather, the 911 system generally gets flooded with calls from residents. "If there is something serious going on, you should call," Major Blanchard said. "But if you are just calling out of curiosity about something, please wait to call. You will get information."