



**PROGRESS
REPORT**

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St. John The Baptist Parish



Dear Fellow Citizens,

On behalf of St. John the Baptist Parish Government, I encourage you to review some of the projects and activities we have spearheaded to improve the quality of life in our parish.

Construction cranes, culverts and concrete trucks are common sights in St. John these days. Numerous public works projects are underway, while many others have been completed. Our water system continues to improve, unsafe bridges are being replaced and large-scale drainage enhancements are under construction.

Public safety efforts continue to be strengthened. Firehouses and libraries are being improved, recreational opportunities are increasing and community involvement with government has been enhanced.

Besides the many "brick and mortar" projects underway, our most important accomplishments may be the restructuring of local government and the implementation of substantial measures to ensure that government operates in an open, fair and transparent manner. For the first time, contracts, bid notices, requests for proposals and signed contracts are posted on the parish's web site. Every citizen has the opportunity to monitor the use of public funds. Uniform standards have been established for contract procurement, ensuring impartial and competitive practices.

Every day, gains are made toward our goal of operating government in an effective, efficient manner. Our budgets are being projected five years into the future to meet the anticipated needs of the 46,000 people who call St. John Parish home. Annual audits remain unqualified and characterized by sound financial practices.

I urge you to visit the parish's website at sjbparish.com and sign up for E-mail news alerts and public safety bulletins to keep you up-to-date on parish activities.

Please let me know with a visit, phone call or E-mail how parish government can continue to improve the quality of the many services provided to you and your family. Help us continue to move St. John the Baptist Parish forward.

Very truly yours,

Natalie Robottom

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Library Renovations/Expansions

The Reserve library has undergone renovations, enhancing its ability to serve the community. A major expansion is underway at the LaPlace library and collections are increasing at the Garyville and Edgard branches.



The newly renovated Reserve library is open for business.

Animal Control/Shelter

Three animal control officers round up stray dogs and cats and bring them to the parish animal shelter. Their efforts are supported by volunteers and The Rotary Club of LaPlace. Be a responsible pet owner and spay or neuter your pets.



Looking for a pet? Consider adopting one from our shelter.



The Walnut Street Fire Station has been renovated.

Reserve/Edgard Ferry Back in Service

After being closed for more than three years, the Reserve/Edgard ferry is back in service, much to the delight of residents who can now cross the river at that location.

The boat had been out of service since June of 2007, forcing residents to make a 40 or so minute detour to the Veterans Memorial Bridge linking Gramercy and Wallace.

Beginning at 5 AM each day, the ferry leaves Reserve at the half and top of the hour and departs Edgard at 15 and 45 minutes past. The final daily trip leaves Edgard at 8:45 PM. Negotiations are underway to secure a larger ferry for this route.



Parish Website/sjbparish.com

After several months of development, St. John the Baptist Parish's official website, sjbparish.com, is bigger and better than ever.

As part of our continuing effort to make parish government as transparent as possible, the parish website now has information on government contracts, finances and responsibilities of individual departments.



The number and scope of parish governmental services available over the Internet have increased. Users of the site can view maps, fill out forms, watch council meetings and explore numerous related links.

Check out the new and improved website at sjbparish.com and sign up for E-mail updates on parish news and public safety events. Please give us your feedback on how we can continue to improve our site.

Public Safety

The parish continues to work with our state and federal legislative delegations to build hurricane protection levees on both sides of the river. The parish has forged emergency shelter agreements with governments in North Louisiana in the event of an evacuation.

Local fire departments are now staffed by 43 full-time career firefighters who, supplemented by volunteers, stay ready to assist residents. The Walnut Street Fire Station in LaPlace, through a partnership with the parish public works department, has been renovated for 24-hour use. An expansion of the Mt. Airy station is moving forward.



Public Works/Capital Projects

Numerous public works projects are underway with a particular emphasis on drainage improvements.

Many of these jobs are funded by a bond referendum, including extensive cleaning of major drainage canals on the east and west banks of the parish. So far, 229,221 linear feet have been cleaned. These projects will dramatically improve drainage in areas that have historically experienced flooding.

Projects Underway or Completed:

Balsam Street Drainage Project- \$72,064

Will allow water to flow from the Haydel Canal to Lake Maurepas

Reserve Area Drainage Improvements- \$2.4 million (1)

Phase I - West 1st Street (Cornland to Railroad Avenue) and Parker Lane (LeBlanc Street to Railroad Avenue)

Phase II - 3rd Street (LeBlanc Street to Railroad Avenue) and Ram Alley

Phase III - West 6th Street and West 7th Street (St. Peter area)

Will help solve flooding problems by installing a new system of concrete culverts

St. Joan of Arc/Persimmon Street- \$1.53 million

Adding new culverts along Fir Street, West 5th Street and Spruce Street

Cleaning canal along railroad, installing new drainage pump station between Captain Bourgeois and Persimmon Streets to pump drain water to the river

Homewood Drainage Project- \$1.07 million

Installing a second culvert under Airline Highway and a second pump station to increase capacity and provide relief from Homewood to Central Avenue

Country Club Drive Bridge Replacement- \$324,000 (2)

Greenwood Drive Bridge Replacement- \$877,000 (3)

Historic East Street, Garyville- \$646,700 (4)

Total reconstruction and overlay paid for with a \$548,000 Louisiana Community Development Block Grant and \$98,700 in parish funds

NW 2nd Street, Reserve- \$625,200

Reconstruction and overlay of street paid for with another Community Development Block Grant of \$564,000 and \$100,200 in parish funds

Riverland Heights Drainage Improvements- \$1,191,348 (5)

Enhancing current system and installing new pumps to lessen high water in the Chatsworth, Welham Loop and Parlange Loop areas

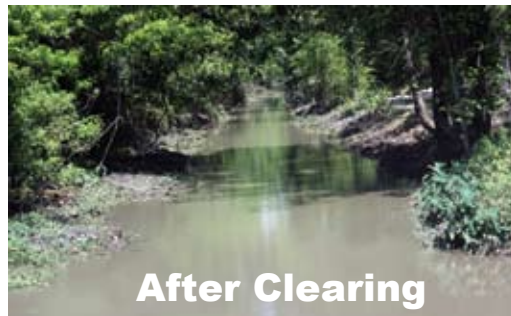
Water Improvements

Three generators have been installed to provide an alternate source of power for the Ruddock water system. The units were elevated above flood level to assure continuous operation should there be a power failure.



The capacity of the Reserve water plant is being greatly increased to handle future demands as the parish grows. Repairs have been made to the Edgard water plant clarifying system to ensure clean water continues to flow to West Bank residents.

A \$1.36 million, low interest loan with the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality has been approved to fund infiltration repair work to the wastewater collection system. These repairs will benefit residents in LaPlace and Reserve who have suffered for years with sewer problems during heavy rain and will reduce the load on the River Road Treatment Plant.





Recreation

Enhancing our parks and providing increased opportunities for recreation and fitness activities promotes healthy lifestyles in our community.

Among the many recent improvements in recreational facilities are:



Reserve Canal Boat Launch – \$540,000 for rebuilding piers, walkways and boat launches, as well as beautifying parking areas, improving the entrance and dredging the launch area



REGALA Park – \$2.2 million for a gymnasium with seating for 250 spectators

The building will also house parish recreation offices, a conference room and feature a concession stand that can accommodate both indoor and outdoor events.

West Bank Park – \$280,890 to build a walking path, new entrance, parking lot and improve drainage

This year, another round of improvements will feature construction of an “airnasium” – or open-air gym and additional restrooms at a cost of \$498,000. New playground equipment will also be installed.



Image by Google Earth

Economic Development

There is great promise that the national economy will improve. Parish government is working hard to support existing businesses while attracting new ones. “We will continue to focus on diversifying industries, creating new jobs and providing opportunities within the parish,” President Robottom said.

The Economic Development Department continues to streamline the permitting/licensing process for businesses and to fill vacant commercial sites. Assistance and funding is available from grants and bank programs for small business start-up and growth.

“We want the world to know that St. John is a good place to do business,” President Robottom said.

The three River Parishes and the Port of South Louisiana work together to market our region. Recently, national site selectors visited and gave St. John an “Award of Excellence,” for available, affordable sites for businesses development. Our outstanding transportation network of airports, highways, water and rail lines and location between two major metropolitan areas make our parish an ideal place to locate an emerging or expanding business.



Government Restructuring

In an effort to make parish government more responsive, President Robottom formed eight advisory committees in 2010 and charged each with analyzing government and delivering a written report on how certain areas of government can be improved.

Governmental ethics, finances, community development and neighborhoods, employment and economic development, human resources, infrastructure and capital improvements, public safety and recreation, health and human services were all covered. The findings are available at sjbparish.com.

These diverse teams of citizens, employees and parish leaders outlined specific changes that will directly impact citizens. The recommendations are being utilized to establish government’s strategic direction and implement new procedures to better serve residents.

Human Resources

The parish employee handbook has been revised, with some departments being re-organized to clearly define employee responsibilities. Job postings and applications are now listed on the parish website.

Quarterly “all-staff” meetings allow employees to interact in person as work shifts do not always allow meetings. These gatherings reinforce the fact that all employees are on the same team and working together can accomplish much for the good of St. John.



Community Service

Members of parish government work to better our community by being a part of our community. Throughout the year, we participate in many events that help make St. John an even greater place to live.



March of Dimes Fundraiser



Easter in the Park



Reserve 150 Sesquicentennial Time Capsule Burial



Martin Luther King, Jr. Day



St. Peter Altar Society



Governor's Luncheon



Relay for Life



Adoption Awareness Celebration



West Bank Brown Bag Lunch



Clean Sweep St. John



Veterans' Day/Luncheon



Thanksgiving Food Drive



Leon Godchaux Accelerated Program



Night Out Against Crime



Special Olympics Torch Run



Garyville Park Picnic



Christmas Toy Drive





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