



St. Bernard Parish Government

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Louis Pomes
Parish President

March 5, 2023

To the St. Bernard Parish Council and Residents:

I hope this message finds you well. I'd like to provide an update, along with a brief overview of the numerous projects currently in progress in our Parish.

The St. Bernard Parish Public Works Department completed Phase One of the Parish-wide Miscellaneous Drainage Improvement Projects, covering 10 streets from Chalmette to Violet. This phase involved cleaning and videoing pipes to assess which ones require lining or replacement, and we are currently awaiting those results. Phase Two is set to commence in mid-March.

The Canals and Drainage Department initiated the cleaning of overgrown canals throughout the parish, clearing debris and weeds from the 20 Arpent near the Valero refinery, along with six miles of the Bayou Terre Aux Boeufs Canal.

Additionally, work on the Delambert St. Pump Station is on track and nearly complete. Concrete is being poured atop the wet-well and sidewalks, with the anticipated completion of this project by month-end.

Also, Phase One of the W. Judge Perez Sidewalks Project was finished in front of the Village Square Shopping Center, while Phase Two, extending from Village Square to the Government Complex, is slated to begin in August 2024.

Recently, our Water and Sewer Department completed upgrades and replacement on 1,100 feet of sewer line in Chalmette, in efforts to improving our drainage and sewer flow.

Another notable project is the Guerenger Canal Bridge installation, which commenced recently. This project is funded by Entergy for electrical system enhancement in Arabi, and is currently in progress.

Lastly, I am pleased to note the completion of two new playgrounds on Lena Drive and Francis Avenue. These were part of a larger park renovation and installation project, which began with the dog park in Arabi, and includes the upcoming installations at Vista and Patricia Parks, scheduled for

mid-May 2024. Additionally, construction of a new playground on Reunion Drive in Violet began in late February.

Other upcoming projects include; the replacement of artificial turf at Val Reiss, construction of a new public library, and drainage updates and repairs in Old Arabi on Mehle, Angela, and Friscoville streets starting next week.

On the Coastal Front, I'm very pleased to announce progress on four major coastal restoration projects under the Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection and Restoration Act (CWPPRA). In the Pontchartrain Basin: the Biloxi Marsh Shoreline Protection project and the Hopedale Marsh Creation project have been voted as top priorities. Similarly, in the Breton Basin: The East Lake Lery Shoreline Restoration project and the Wood Lake Marsh Creation project have secured top spots. These projects, which aim to protect vulnerable shorelines and create or nourish marshes, will undergo further review by the CWPPRA Technical Committee with agency voting scheduled for April 4, 2024.

I'd like to express my appreciation and gratitude to the St. Bernard Parish Coastal Division, along with our federal and state partners, for advancing these vital projects. The Biloxi Marsh project aims to safeguard 16,000 linear feet of shoreline with an estimated construction cost ranging from \$25 to \$30 million. The Hopedale project involves marsh creation or nourishment across 400 acres with an estimated construction cost of \$10 to \$15 million. In the Breton Basin, the Lake Lery project intends to create or nourish approximately 380 acres of marsh and protect over 7,000 linear feet of shoreline, with an estimated construction cost of \$20 to \$25 million. The Wood Lake project aims to create or nourish over 430 acres of marsh with an estimated construction cost of \$30 to \$35 million.

Also of note, are several new businesses that obtained occupational licenses in our Parish this month; Boss Lady Boutique, Buffalo's, Chalmette Wellness Clinic, Costa Oil, Edward D. Jones & Co, G&G Fashion Boutique/Spa, Go Metro, Harbor Freight Tools, InTouch Wireless, J Smothers & Crew, JBR Enterprises (St Bernard Magazine), Manino's Body Shop, Parish Plumbing Services, Pedro Hames Construction, and The Topsy Tiger.

These businesses enhance our local amenities, boost our economy, and are a vital component to the continued growth and development of St. Bernard Parish. I gladly welcome them to our community, and wish them success in their future endeavors.

I'd also like to address the severe rain event yesterday, March 4, 2024, that impacted all areas of the parish. I'd like to assure the residents that our drainage system and infrastructure are well maintained, properly functioning, and closely monitored at all times. As we approach Spring and its inevitable rain, proceeded by hurricane season's potential for severe weather events, this is a timely reminder that it's crucial to be proactive in mitigating flood risk on your own property as well. I cannot overstate the importance of frequently inspecting and maintaining the storm drainage system and stormwater runoff areas on and around your property, protecting and clearing the storm drains from debris such as grass clippings and/or leaves when needed, or calling Parish Government at 504-278-4200 to report issues promptly. By taking these preventative measures and with the support of our parish's robust drainage and canal system, we can navigate any challenges that may arise with resilience and readiness.

It's important to understand that these sudden, unexpected rain events do happen, especially this time of year, and especially in Coastal South Louisiana. Our pumps and drainage system, along with all parish departments working under my direction, are suited and prepared to mitigate this risk. To be more specific, our pumps are capable of water intake at a rate of 1in/hr for the first 3 hours, but if the rainfall rate exceeds that figure, there could be street flooding until the pumps catch up. In a rain event like yesterday, with heavy rainfall over a very brief amount of time, the pumps have the potential to get overwhelmed, and streets could flood to some degree. This does not indicate an issue with the pumps or failure anywhere else in the system. The pumps have limits, therefore it's vital that we mitigate stormwater in other ways too. Our drainage department is constantly, effectively managing things on their end, our road department is out clearing catch basins and other debris, our pumps are operational and up to the task... and together we stand ready at all times for potential weather threats.

Finally, I want to acknowledge another successful year of celebrating our Parish's rich history and cultural heritage at the Los Isleños Fiesta. This annual community event was held last weekend on the grounds of the Los Isleños Museum Complex. Through the combined efforts of the Los Isleños Heritage and Cultural Society and countless dedicated volunteers, along with other Parish agencies and entities, including our Office of Tourism, this vibrant two-day event brought an estimated 10,000 attendees to lower St. Bernard Parish. Another cultural highlight of the festival is always the visitors it hosts from the Canary Islands. This year, 28 ambassadors from Tenerife were hosted by the Isleños Society to take part in the weekend's festivities. The Fiesta is one of our most treasured and highly attended events in lower St. Bernard Parish, and I'd like to express my appreciation and gratitude for all who make it possible.

There's so much to see, do, and enjoy here in our Parish, and we have so much to be proud of. I have been diligently and tirelessly working to maintain, protect, and improve our beloved St. Bernard Parish, working every minute of the day to ensure its continued growth and success. It is my hope that these regular reports and updates will inform and engage the residents of St. Bernard, providing transparency, inclusion, and open communication. I am confident that together... through cooperation, communication, and dedication, we will forge ahead to prosperity. I remain focused and committed to safeguarding and enriching our beloved St. Bernard Parish, just as I know most of you are. Each one of us plays a vital role in its preservation and growth.

Thank you,



Louis Pomes
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