



# *St. Bernard Parish Government*

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**Guy McInnis**  
*Parish President*

## **President's Report Council Meeting of Tuesday, January 26, 2016**

### **Good Evening Council Members Ladies and Gentlemen:**

It is with honor that I present to you today my first report as Parish President. I would like to again thank everyone who attended the inauguration. It was heartwarming to have the support of so many residents of St. Bernard who came to support the council members and myself as we were sworn into office. I would also like to thank St. Bernard Parish School Board Superintendent, Doris Voitier, Sheriff James Pohlmann and Parish Government employees for their efforts in helping to make the inauguration a memorable event.

Traveling to Washington to meet our congressional delegation and officials with federal agencies such as FEMA and the Corps of Engineers was one of my first priorities upon taking office. Councilmembers Kerri Callais, Nathan Gorbaty, Executive Director of Coastal Operations, John Lane, Special Projects Coordinator, Michael Bayham and myself personally met with US Senators David Vitter and Bill Cassidy, House Majority Whip and First District US Representative Steve Scalise, Sixth District US Representative Garret Graves, and officials with FEMA and the US Army Corps of Engineers. Issues covered at the meetings included accelerating the parish's closeout of recovery projects, lowering flood insurance rates, and utilizing dredging material for rebuilding St. Bernard's coastal wetlands. Building a good relationship between our parish and the people who make important decisions that impact our community is essential. The meetings were successful and I believe our group effectively communicated our priorities and concerns to our representatives on Capitol Hill and key personnel in the federal government. St. Bernard's leadership must be engaged with federal officials to ensure that our interests are represented and protected.

The last two weeks have been extremely busy as we implement policy and initiatives in the development and organization of a high performing team of directors, managers, supervisor and employees aimed at providing exceptional services to the citizens of St. Bernard Parish in addition to creating an ethical workplace that reflects vision, mission and values and one that empowers employees to have a service focus. We are working to ensure the fiscal integrity of the parish finances through an extensive system of internal checks and balances and accountability.

Employees within the Administration Office have been logging many long hours, organizing, training, implementing and moving policies forward. There have been many tough decisions, not all pleasant ones, as we lead this government to becoming the premiere Parish Government in the State of Louisiana.

A few changes made in the last week include changes in Administrative Department hours from 8:30 am - 4:30 pm. for all parish buildings to include this Parish Government Complex, Auditorium, Recreation, Public Works, Water and Sewer, Tourism and Housing. Parish residents should know that all Parish Government building hours are consistent and will operate later for their convenience. All St. Bernard Parish Government employee cell phones and vehicles were collected, inventoried, and are in the process of being reissued. The number of cell phones and take home vehicles issued will be reduced.

Another significant change is the consolidation of the Recovery Department to include the HMG Program and much of the Community Development Block Grant Program into and under the Department of Public Works and its Director, Keith LaGrange. The CAO and the Department of Public Works will take a much more significant role in the project management of all the remaining and upcoming projects under Parish Government.

The *Department of Human Resources* has been handling employee transitions, posting job openings and handling many responses. Tyrone Ben is working on bringing the government up-to-date with regards to the 2016 Labor Law compliance notices. Weekly meetings have begun between members of the Council and Administration with regards to reviewing the Archer Plan and pay scales. The department will also begin work on updating department flow charts.

We are pleased to announce the establishment of a *Grants Department*. The Grants Department will be supervised by Jessica Snyder, our former Personnel Director, assisted by Deborah Fagan, Grants Coordinator Consultant. The department will operate under and as an arm of the Finance Department Director, Blair Ellinwood. The goals of this department are to consolidate all grants into one

department and to move projects to completion more efficiently by ensuring that all grants are properly managed and are readily available in order to provide information on all projects to the Administration, Council and the public. Also, to position ourselves to receive additional funding by improving grant performance.

The ***Finance Department*** is preparing for the busiest time of their year. Auditors will be here from April – June 30<sup>th</sup> doing the core work of the 2015 audit. The department is reevaluating and reviewing the 2016 budget while keeping a close eye on the declining sales tax, severance tax and road royalties, all of which are declining due to the struggles in the oil and gas industry. Finance will begin the process of finalizing the 2015 budget within the next two months and closing out the 2015 books. The department is in the middle of performing a vehicle audit that will be completed by the end of the month.

The ***Road Department*** has made changes to the employee organizational chart to be more responsive and accountable and has implemented new policies to ensure that all drainage, grass, trees, pot holes and streets will have crews addressing complaints daily. Work activity sheets are being completed daily in order to document any and all work performed by the Road Department. The crews have been working tirelessly under the direction of Keith LaGrange and Louis Pomes. As of January 21, 2016, the Road Department has closed out approximately 200 of over 800 complaints outstanding from 2015.

The ***Knights of Nemesis Parade*** will be held on Saturday, January 30<sup>th</sup> beginning at 1:00 p.m. The parade will follow the traditional route starting on West Judge Perez Drive at the intersection of Dr. Meraux Boulevard; traveling East on Judge Perez Drive to Campagna Drive; it takes a U-turn on Judge Perez Drive and travels West to Jean Lafitte Parkway. Parish and personal vehicles should be moved from the parking lot between the Cultural Center and the Government Complex by the end of the day on Thursday, as the floats for Nemesis Parade will arrive Friday morning.

In preparation for the Knights of Nemesis parade, the Road Department has been organizing an employee clean-up crew. They have been cutting grass and spraying the neutral grounds, ordering extra dumpsters, coordinating a “trustee” cleanup crew with Sheriff Pohlmann. We are arranging for street sweepers from Progressive Waste, and the State Department of Highways. We will create a positive image and perception by improving the physical appearance of our community.

The **Department of Water & Sewer** is working on numerous projects. This week employees will be attending training on Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition, (SCADA).

The ***Civic Center***, managed by Maurine Liuzza, booked 25 new events last year which brought in over \$177,000. They are preparing for their first Bridal Festival at the Sigur Center to be held on Sunday, February 21, 2016. They are in full swing for Mardi Gras season with events such as Nemesis, Amon Ra, Zulu-Ambassador Choctaw Ball, Zulu Mr. Big Stuff, King Arthur, Satyricon, Our Lady of Lourdes, Young Men Twenty Club and they will finish the Mardi Gras Season with Armeninus on Saturday, February 6th.

The ***St. Bernard Parish Office of Tourism*** is currently finalizing the Old Arabi Cultural District 2015 Annual Report that is due to the Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism by the end of January. The report is used to monitor and evaluate the Cultural District program; to report to the legislature every other year; to evaluate individual districts and communities for compliance with the Cultural District criteria; as well as to help direct program improvements and initiatives. Members of the Cultural Arts District will have the ability to apply for state historic tax credits for revitalization projects and to conduct sales of original art exempt from state and local tax. The Cultural District Committee meets on the second Wednesday of every other month. The St. Bernard Parish Office of Tourism is preparing for springtime events, advertising and marketing. The office coordinates the St. Bernard Seafood and Farmers Market, the Islenos Fiesta, and works with the Old Arabi Association for “Sippin’ in the Sunset”.

In ***Recreation***, clinics begin for soccer today, Tuesday, January 26<sup>th</sup> through Thursday, January 29<sup>th</sup> from 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. at the Hannan fields. Men and Women Adult Leagues for softball met on Monday, January 25<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 p.m. and cabbage ball met for 7:00 p.m.

Many of you may have seen the recent NOLA article regarding the St. Bernard Parish Sports Hall of Fame. LSU football legend Billy Cannon will be a guest speaker for the Hall of Fame’s 21<sup>st</sup> annual induction banquet being held on April 9<sup>th</sup>. The Hall of Fame promotes sports in St. Bernard Parish, helps young people develop and has been inducting St. Bernard athletes and coaches into the Hall of Fame since 1994. There have been 47 inductees into the Hall of Fame since its inception. The event will be held at Val Riess Park and tickets for the event are \$50 each. The group will also recognize an outstanding male and female athlete and present awards for those who made significant contributions to sports. Proceeds from events benefit various athletic organizations, schools and sports groups within St. Bernard Parish.

*Parish Historian, Bill Hyland* is working with the Los Islenos Heritage and Cultural Society initiating plans for 2016 Los Islenos Fiesta scheduled for March 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>. On behalf of the St. Bernard Parish Government, Mr. Hyland presented historical addresses to the Nunez Community College during the Battle of New Orleans symposium and the Daughters of the British Empire ceremony at the de la Ronde Ruins.

The *Office of Homeland Security* has started to revise their Critical Transportation Needs (CTN) list. St. Bernard Parish residents with special needs are eligible for assistance in evacuating should a mandatory evacuation be called due to a hurricane or any other type of emergency which may arise in the parish. We urge those who need help evacuating to register with the Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness by calling 504-278-4268.

As part of the employee wellness program, the *Insurance Department* will be hosting CVT, Cardiovascular Screenings for all employees and spouses who participate in the group health insurance. There is no cost to the employee. The screenings will be held on February 2<sup>nd</sup> at the Government Complex; February 3<sup>rd</sup> at the Public Works Office and on February 4<sup>th</sup> at the Road Department. Any employee interested in participating should contact the Insurance Department for scheduling information.

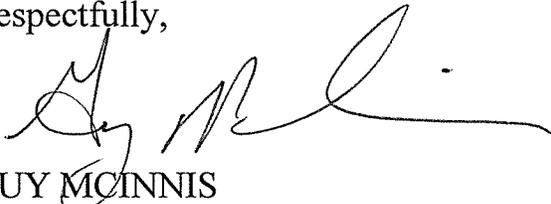
The *Fair Housing Office* will be coordinating the annual Fair Housing Training which will be held in April in the Council Chambers. There are three First Time Homebuyer Education Clinics planned this year. We will continue to market St. Bernard as a great place to live and buy homes. Annual Reports to the Department of Justice are ongoing as well as the monitoring and intake of any Housing Discrimination & Complaints. The community will remain abreast with press releases regarding Fair Housing Office activities and collaboration with Family Resources, St. Bernard Project and Greater New Orleans Fair Housing Action Center (GNOFHAC). The Rental Land Grant Program application process will continue and will be stewarded by the Fair Housing Office with committee based on input for scoring eligible applicants.

The *Department of Community Development* is working on the Arabi Streetscape Project. Phase I ground breaking will be held next month. The \$800,000 grant will provide lighting and landscaping. The Department of Transportation & Development is working on a bike lane and will be repaving St. Claude from Arabi to Paris Road. Phase II is a \$2m grant for improvements in Old Arabi. There is a new "GIS" Geographic Information System Department funded by a two year grant which will map out ownership of every parcel of land in St. Bernard Parish.

I am excited to announce that the new **Wal Mart Marketplace** is scheduled to open on Wednesday, January 27<sup>th</sup>. I encourage all residents to utilize the convenience of the new grocery.

I look forward to serving the residents of St. Bernard Parish and enhancing community awareness of Parish Government and its services. Our government strives to provide a high quality of life and increased economic opportunities. My Administration promotes a partnership in governance through a mutually supportive relationship between the Parish President, Administration and the Council. **“IT’S TIME”** we work together for the community we all love. **“IT’S TIME”** we strive to implement governmental policies and operate through strategic planning, organization and accountability.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Guy McInnis', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

GUY MCINNIS  
PARISH PRESIDENT