

President's Report
Council Meeting of Thursday, February 18, 2016

Good Evening Council Members Ladies and Gentlemen:

We recently surpassed the **30 day** milestone as a new Parish Administration and Council. In this start-up period, the administration has worked tirelessly to implement policy and sort out all organizational and operational challenges while incorporating long-term strategic planning towards the viable growth of our community. During this initial period, the Administration has discovered that there are as many “potholes” on the administrative side as on the Road Department side. Addressing issues early will allow us to move forward with operations and address other obstacles which can slow progress. We have all been aggressively working to streamline processes in all departments of Parish Government.

At a recent **PACE** Meeting (Parishes Against Coastal Erosion) St. John The Baptist President Natalie Robottom was named President of PACE. St. Tammany Parish President, Pat Brister and I were both named Vice President. I am honored to serve with other parishes to address the coastal erosion problems in Louisiana. A primary goal of PACE is to improve the existing dialog between the parishes, develop strategies to mitigate coastal erosion and continue to create public awareness of the problems.

Today I had an hour long meeting with Majority Whip leader, Steve Scalise and his staff. During our meeting, we discussed NFIP, the collapse of the price of oil and Wetland Restoration projects. At the beginning of the meeting, I presented Congressman Scalise with a newspaper from 1814 detailing the British burning of the building the Congressman currently works out of. This is the second meeting with Majority Whip Scalise since taking office in January.

Road Department – The Road Department has closed out 811 complaints and work orders since January. Road Department crews are focused on saving the parish monies by doing any work in-house that can be done. The Road Department recently repaired a 12” drain line at the corner of Montesquieu and Virtue Street in Chalmette. The repair work will improve drainage for residents and businesses in the area and has saved the parish monies. The parish appreciates the patience of its residents and businesses and apologizes for any inconvenience the work in progress may cause.

Community Development – The railroad tracks on Judge Perez was patched on Tuesday and the new asphalt project will start by March 1.

With regards to the Streetscape Project, Norfolk Southern Railroad has the right of entry prepared awaiting the Contractor's insurance. Once this has been processed, the Contractor will begin the Streetscape project. Their architects are coordinating with the railroad to address the scope of work and the limitations of Norfolk Southern with regards to the required 9' setback from the centerline of track.

Insurance Department – I am happy to report that Mr. Robert Barton, the new Safety Manager began work yesterday. Mr. Barton will be in charge of establishing policy and procedure designed to promote workplace safety and prevent accidents. He will do on-site accident investigations, apply corrective measures, and ensure that safety and health requirements are met and enforced throughout the workplace. The Parish Government has been self-insured since 1992 and although the program has been successful overall in comparison to a fully insured program, money spent on claims and related costs comes directly from the parish's operating budget. We look forward to working with Mr. Barton to implement Safety Programs which not only will have a direct impact on cost but also provide a safe environment aimed to improve employee morale, productivity and work quality. In today's environment and shortage of funds, the Administration is always looking for innovative ways to reduce cost which will ultimately affect the government's bottom line while at the same time, creating a work environment that attracts and retains good workers.

Housing & Redevelopment Office – The Department of Housing & Redevelopment announced the availability of funds dedicated to assist St. Bernard Parish residents who are eligible low income households with energy payments. Applicants will be seen by appointment and should call **1-888-332-2721** to receive an appointment. A dedicated, toll free service has been set-up to alleviate the incoming calls to the Housing & Redevelopment office.

Recreation Dept. – A groundbreaking ceremony was held yesterday for synthetic turf that will be installed at Val Riess Baseball Fields on Phase II. The project includes new turf on fields 5, 6 7 and 8 and will cost of total of \$600,000.

The St. Bernard Parish Recreation Department soccer games are scheduled to begin on Tuesday, March 1st. Children ages 4 to 14 have been practicing at the Hannan Facility in preparation for the games. With over **700 kids** registered and **55 teams**, the department has been busy with program organization and upkeep of the facilities.

Tourism Commission - The Meraux Foundation and the St. Bernard Tourist Commission are partnering with Rudy's Texas Redfish Series to hold a Captain's Dinner. There will be **40 teams** participating with **2 anglers on each boat**. The dinner will be held on Thursday, March 3 beginning around 5:30.

The Parish Historian, Transportation and Tourism Offices are working with the Los Isleños Heritage and Cultural Society to host their annual festival scheduled for March 5th and 6th. Los Isleños Heritage and Cultural Society will celebrate its **41st** annual Isleños Festival on March 5th and 6th on the grounds of the Los Isleños Museum Complex. The Isleño Historic Village, situated in the rear of Los Isleños Museum, will be the setting for an expanded series of living history demonstrations, featuring folk crafts, historic dialect, lifestyles and the cultural identity of the Isleño descendant's community in St. Bernard Parish.

Grants Department – The Finance Department continues to work on the internal coding system, capturing and tracking revenues and expenditures for each grant. We are also focusing on reimbursable administration monies to offset the government's operational cost of the various grants.

Since St. Bernard Parish, Louisiana is one of the parishes that was impacted by the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill, we are eligible for restoration grants under the RESTORE Act. St. Bernard Parish is in the process of applying for the Direct Component grant under the RESTORE Act.

The Regional Planning Commission and St. Bernard Parish will be holding its second **Complete Streets Workshop** on February 25th. The Meraux Foundation has generously provided us meeting space at Docville Farm for this event. The purpose of this second workshop is to begin the process of drafting a Complete Streets policy for the Parish. Registration will begin at 8:30 and the program will begin at 9:00 a.m. The first hour of the program will be geared to elected officials so we would like to encourage all of our Council Members to reserve time to attend this important training. Council action will eventually be required for adoption of a Complete Streets policy so we encourage Council Members to take advantage of this workshop in order to learn more about Complete Streets and what it can accomplish for St. Bernard.

The passing of the upcoming millage renewals on **April 9** is essential to the vital operations of this community. We are working to put together informational literature to educate the citizens of St. Bernard Parish, the business community, other governmental agencies and local leaders on the importance of these millage renewals. I trust the citizens of St. Bernard Parish will make the right choice by renewing these expiring millages. As a result of a lot of teamwork between Administration, the Council and Parish Employees and with the continued support of the Citizens of the community, this government is on the right track to a successful future.

Guy McInnis
Parish President

