



St. George Leader

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City of St. George Inauguration Ceremonies

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Dustin Yates Is First Mayor

Mayor, Police Chief Are Joined by Five New Members of St. George Council

Woody Jenkins
Editor

CITY OF ST. GEORGE — After years of suspense, the new City of St. George finally has a new Mayor, Police Chief, and five members of the City Council.

In ceremonies Monday evening, June 10 at Woodlawn Baptist Church, Court of Appeal Judge Hunter Green swore in new St. George Mayor Dustin Yates, City Councilmen-at-Large Richie Edmonds and Patty Cook, and District Councilmen Steven Monachello, Ryan Heck, and Max Himmel.

New St. George Police Chief Todd Morris was sworn in by District Attorney Hillar Moore.

The new city officials were appointed by Gov. Jeff Landry to serve until their successors can be chosen in a special election.

The creation of the new city and appointment of its officials represent an amazing turnaround for a cause that seemed almost lost.

The voters of St. George turned out in record numbers in October 2019 to vote in favor of incorporation. However, since then, the proposed city experienced setback after setback from the 19th Judicial District Court and the Louisiana 1st Circuit Court of Appeal. Then

See **MAYOR** on Page 13



MAYOR DUSTIN YATES TAKES OATH OF OFFICE administered by Court of Appeal Judge Hunter Green, as wife Allison holds the family Bible and the couple's children Avery and Bennett look on. Yates is chief administrative office of St. George Fire Department.

Lawrason Act Will Govern St. George

BATON ROUGE — Like two-thirds of Louisiana's municipalities, the new City of St. George will be governed by the Lawrason Act, adopted in 1898. Residents of Baton Rouge may be surprised at the differences between the City-Parish form of government and a Lawrason Act municipality.

In the City-Parish system, the Mayor-President is clearly the executive and the Metro Council is clearly the legislative branch of the

local government.

- In a Lawrason Act municipality, the mayor is more powerful, and the lines between the executive and legislative are blurred.

- In St. George, the Mayor will preside over the City Council, but he can vote only to break a tie.

- In a Lawrason Act municipality, the Mayor proposes the City Budget, and the Council cannot amend it. They can accept it or reject it but not change it.

- The Mayor alone approves or rejects all contracts. As long as a contract is funded, the Council has no authority to reject it.

There are many other differences. You can learn more about a Lawrason Act municipality by reading La. R.S. 33:321-463.

In the future, St. George may consider adopting a home rule charter, which would allow it to vary from the Lawrason Act. That process takes a year or more.

Todd Morris Sworn in as Chief of Police

Major in EBRSO Named to Head St. George Police

CITY OF ST. GEORGE — Major Todd Morris of the East Baton Rouge Parish Sheriff's Office took the oath of office as the first Police Chief of the City of St. George Monday night, June 10.

Morris has 34 years' experience in law enforcement. He serves as the Chief of Crimes against Persons and Special Operations for East Baton Rouge Sheriff's Office. The Divisions he oversees include the Homicide/Violent Crimes Unit, General Detectives, Sex Offender Registration, Crime Scene, DNA Analysts, Rapid DNA, NIBIN Technicians, Intelligence, Evidence, Homeland Security, SWAT, Mobile Field Force, Marine Search & Rescue, EOD, and Aviation.



ST. GEORGE POLICE CHIEF TODD MORRIS takes the oath administered by District Attorney Hillar Moore during ceremonies at Woodlawn Baptist Church. Family members on hand were his wife Joanie, dad Jim Morris, granddaughter Maddy, and daughter Jordan Daniel.

Five City Councilmen Sworn into Office

Photos by Woody Jenkins of St. George Leader



COUNCILMAN RYAN HECK, wife Loredana, and children Isabella and Roman with Judge Hunter Green.



COUNCILMAN RICHIE EDMONDS with (left to right) daughters Stella and Ramsey, son Sully, and wife Holly.



COUNCILMAN STEVE MONACHELLO with wife Mary and Judge Hunter Green who administered the oath.

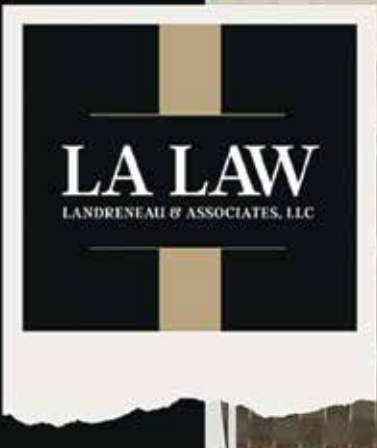


COURT OF APPEAL JUDGE HUNTER GREEN with new Councilman at-Large Patty Cook, daughter Jenny Cook, and husband Trey Cook at swearing in ceremonies held Monday, June 10, 2024, at Woodlawn Baptist Church in the City of St. George.



ST. GEORGE COUNCILMAN MAX HIMMEL takes the oath of office as his wife Michelle DeRousselle holds the Bible and family members look on. Administering the oath is Court of Appeal Judge Hunter Green. District Attorney Hillar Moore (right) looks on.

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St. George’s City Government in Place



NEW MAYOR, POLICE CHIEF, AND CITY COUNCIL FOR CITY OF ST. GEORGE — Shown after Inauguration ceremonies Monday night, June 10, 2024 were new St. George, Louisiana, city officials (left to right) Councilman at-Large Richie Edmonds, Police Chief Todd Morris, Councilman at-Large Patty Cook, Mayor Dustin Yates, Councilman Ryan Heck, Councilman Max Himmel, and Councilman Steve Monachello. The event was held at Woodlawn Baptist Church. Attorney Andrew Murrell served as master of ceremonies. The invocation was given by Dr. Lewis Richerson, pastor of Woodlawn Baptist Church. Photo by Woody Jenkins of the St. George Leader newspaper.

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Judge Kelly Balfour

Early Voting Sat., Oct. 18 thru Mon., Oct 29
ELECTION DAY TUESDAY, NOV. 5

ChamberEBR Hosted Discussion of City By Mayor Dustin Yates, Chief Todd Morris



NEWLY-APPOINTED ST. GEORGE MAYOR DUSTIN YATES (left) introduced himself and discussed the opportunities and challenges of the new City of St. George at the Chamber of Commerce of East Baton Rouge Parish meeting May 28. Mayor Yates stressed the need for reconciliation so that the parish can move forward and be successful. New City of St. George Police Chief Todd Morris (center) said he spoke with Sheriff Sid Gautreaux, and the sheriff assured him the Sheriff’s Office will continue to serve the people of St. George. At right, Clerk of Court Doug Browning (right) and St. George incorporator Norman Browning were on hand to hear the new mayor and police chief discuss their visions.

Chamber
of
Commerce
of East
Baton Rouge
Parish

Luncheon
May 28, 2024
Café
Américain

Photos by
Jolice Provost
Video by
Woody Jenkins
St. George Leader



ST. GEORGE LEADERS who gathered at the Chamber of Commerce of East Baton Rouge Parish included (left to right) new Councilman at-Large Richie Edmonds, St. George incorporator Norman Browning, Police Chief Todd Morris, Mayor Dustin Yates, and local architect Josh Hoffpauir, one of the early leaders in the St. George movement.

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St. George
Mayor Yates.



SCOTT WILFONG (left) expresses the importance of having good judges in place and reminded everyone of the elections coming up this fall. ChamberEBR president Woody Jenkins (left center) asked Mayor Yates a question. At center, Metro Councilwoman Denise Amoroso spoke on garbage pick up changes. At center right, Ike Jackson spoke on the need for proper oversight of the Industrial Tax Exemption Program (ITEP). At right, City of St. George founder Chris Rials and wife Nancy.






LOCAL BUSINESS OWNERS AND MEMBERS OF THE MEDIA (left) packed into the Chamber of Commerce of East Baton Rouge Parish meeting to hear new St. George Mayor Dustin Yates and St. George Police Chief Todd Morris. At center, local attorney Janice Villarrubia and Republican activist Libby Adams came to support St. George. At right, architect Coleman Brown asked about St. George’s position on improvements to Airline Highway. Brown is chairman of the ChamberEBR’s Infrastructure Committee.

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The St. George Leader began as an occasional publication devoted to the proposed City of St. George in 2019. Publisher Woody Jenkins announced that it would begin regular publication when the court case on St. George was resolved. Since the City of St. George has officially become a city, the St. George Leader began monthly publication with the May 2024 edition.



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Photo by Woody Jenkins of St. George Leader

NEW MEDICAL SCHOOL — Dr. Leo Seoane, dean of the state's new medical school, the Xavier Ochsner College of Medicine in New Orleans, was in Baton Rouge promoting the new college. Xavier, the only Historic Black College and University affiliated with the Catholic Church, will receive its first class in 2026. Welcoming him was international attorney Saul Newsome of Baton Rouge. Both of their families fled persecution in Castro's Cuba in the 1960's.

The Plan Was Modeled After Texas and Its 1,200 Districts

EBR's Movement to Create Independent School Districts: 30 Years in the Making

After Baker, Zachary, And Central, Next Up Is No. 4 - St. George

Woody Jenkins
Editor

BATON ROUGE — By the early 1990's, I had represented Baton Rouge as a member of the Louisiana House of Representatives for 20 years, most of that time as a member of the House Education Committee. My colleague, Sen. Mike Cross, had served as mayor of the City of Baker before being elected to the State Senate. We represented nearby districts.

Both Sen. Cross and I were deeply concerned about the education our students in East Baton Rouge Parish were receiving. We met many times and did a lot of research and brainstorming. At that time, the parish had more than 110 public schools. Many schools were so neglected that no member of the school board had set foot in them. The system wasn't working.

EBR System Was Too Big. As we considered possible solutions to the problem of education in East Baton Rouge Parish, we came to agree on one thing above all others: The East Baton Rouge Parish School System was simply too large to be managed effectively.

We believed that most people want to live in a neighborhood with a great public school their children can safely walk to. Great **neighborhood** schools were our goal.

Texas Provided the Model. We looked about the nation and soon

found a model — Texas — which has 1,200 local independent school districts. Typically, each district represents a community whether rural, urban, or suburban with one high school, two middle schools, and a handful of elementary schools. Each district also has its own school board, answerable to the people of the community.

Independent School Districts for East Baton Rouge Parish. We envisioned a plan that would create at least seven community school districts in East Baton Rouge Parish. We could see people in Baker, Zachary, Central, Woodlawn, South Baton Rouge, Mid-City, and the Istrouma area wanting their own independent school systems.

We discussed the possibility of directing tax collections from the industrial areas of the parish and the major malls into a parishwide fund to provide a base of revenue for each of the seven districts.

The plan had to start somewhere, and Sen. Cross was especially concerned about the need to save the public schools in his hometown of Baker, LA. We researched how we could create independent school districts like those in Texas.

School Systems Were Locked into State Constitution. At that time, the Louisiana Constitution provided that there would be 64 public school systems in the state — one for each parish — plus city school systems in Monroe and Bogalusa, which were created in the early 1900's. To create a new school system would take a constitutional amendment. No new school system had been created in nearly 90 years.

The situation was complicated by the fact that East Baton Rouge Par-

ish was still under a desegregation order from the federal courts. As a result, district lines and attendance zones could not be changed. Nothing we did legislatively would go into effect until after the desegregation order was lifted at some unknown time in the future.

Creating a new school system was viewed by most at the Capitol as a practical impossibility.

With those hurdles in mind, Sen. Cross and I nevertheless introduced a constitutional amendment to create the Baker Community School System. What was there to lose?

Obstacles Were Enormous! We had to pass a constitutional amendment through the Senate committee, get a two-thirds' vote of the Senate, pass it through the House committee, and get a two-thirds' vote on the House floor.

After all of that, the proposed amendment had to appear on the election ballot statewide. We had to mount a statewide campaign to try to get a majority of voters to vote yes. Even more daunting, we had to convince the voters in East Baton Rouge Parish to approve carving Baker out the EBR school system. Finally, we had to get the voters of the City of Baker to approve a new school system.

The 'Impossible' Happened. To our great surprise and the surprise of many others, we were able to overcome all of these barriers. The legislature and the people approved the new Baker school system!

Then we began the wait. We had to wait from passage of the legislation in 1995 until the federal desegregation order was finally dissolved. Then and only then would the Baker School System be al-

lowed to begin operations. In 2001, the desegregation was finally lifted, and the Baker School System began operation shortly thereafter.

Baker Had Become a Different Place. Unfortunately, Baker was no longer the place it was when Sen. Cross and I began our quest. Faced with poor public schools, countless families had left Baker as had much of the business community. The city that Sen. Mike Cross had hoped to preserve was now a different place. The new Baker school system struggled. Yet, Baker was significant because it proved new community school systems could be created.

The fight to create new independent school districts was not put on pause in 1995 while we waited for the desegregation order to be lifted.

Second Independent School District Created in Zachary. By the late 1990's, many of us in the House began a movement to pass a constitutional amendment to create the Zachary Community School System. Rep. John Travis represented Zachary and agreed to author the bill. This proposal faced the same obstacles that Baker had. Nevertheless, we were able to pass it through the legislature and statewide in 1999.

By the time the desegregation order was lifted in 2001, unlike Baker, Zachary was still a healthy, robust community.

Under the leadership of Supt. Warren Drake, the Zachary Community School System officially began July 1, 2003. Progress came quickly. Within months, the new system was getting attention statewide.

Zachary Zoomed to No. 1. In

See THREE on Page 9

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Sheriff Sid Pledges to Continue Serving City of St. George After Incorporation

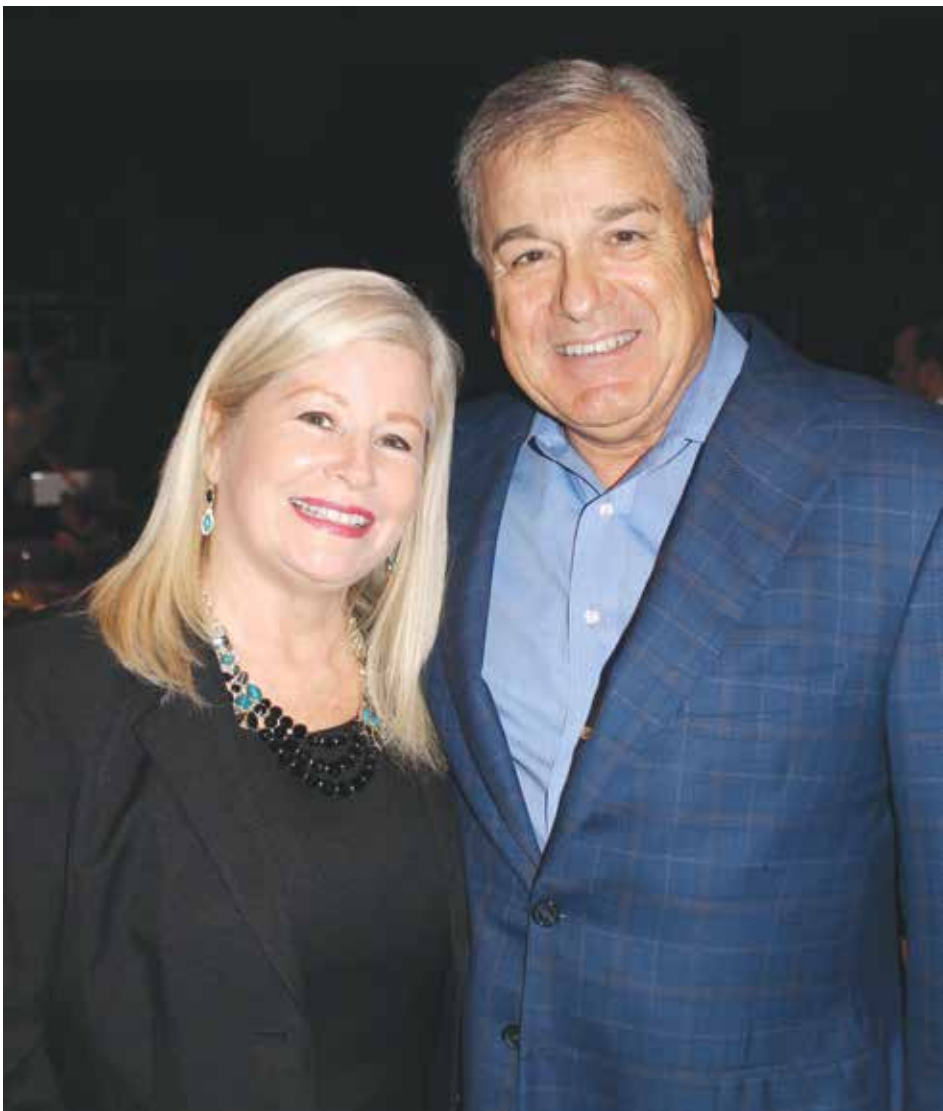
Like Central, New City of St. George Pays Taxes for Services of Sheriff

CITY OF ST. GEORGE — Sheriff Sid Gautreaux has made clear that the incorporation of the City of St. George will make no real change in the service provided to the people of St. George by the East Baton Rouge Parish Sheriff's Office.

Several years ago, the Sheriff was criticized for providing a "sweetheart deal" to the City of Central by providing services he did not provide in other areas.

The Sheriff took issue with that charge and said, "The people of Central pay the same parishwide property tax as everyone else in the parish. We're providing the same law enforcement services in Central that we did before incorporation. The creation of the City of Central has not changed anything from our standpoint. We receive the same tax and we provide the same services as before."

The Sheriff said he informed Central officials early on that if they want additional services from his office, they would have to pay for those services. He reported



Sheriff Sid Gautreaux and wife Suzi

that Central has requested such services and pays for them.

The City of Central currently pays the Sheriff's Office several hundred thousand dollars a year for extra patrols and other services.

The City of Central has its own police department, which it pays for. The Central Police Department has increased patrols in Central and also now works traffic accidents in Central, releasing the Sheriff and State Police from that responsibility almost entirely. In that sense, the Sheriff's office is performing one less job in Central than before incorporation yet is able to provide better overall service.

Sheriff Gautreaux has made it clear that his policy toward St. George will be consistent with his policy in the rest of the parish.

As a result, if St. George wants additional patrols, the city will have to pay for those expenses.

Gov. Jeff Landry has appointed one of Sheriff Gautreaux's most trusted leaders — Major Todd Morris — as St. George Police Chief. Morris will continue to work at the Sheriff's Office while serving as interim Police Chief.

That appointment is likely to insure a close relationship between the Sheriff and the City of St. George as the new city decides to what degree it will develop its own police department.

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Council at-Large Patty Cook



Council at-Large Richie Edmonds



Councilman Ryan Heck



Councilman Max Himmel



Councilman Steve Monachello

Meet the New St. George Council

CITY OF ST. GEORGE — Gov. Jeff Landry has appointed the five new members of the interim St. George City Council. His selections are Patty Cook and Richie Edmonds as Council members at-large, and Ryan Heck, Max Himmel, and Steve Monachello from the three single-member districts for the Council.

The role of the interim Council members will be to create and establish the foundation of St. George by enacting the city’s ordinances, planning, zoning, and permitting. They will also work on St. George’s Master Plan, which will govern future development in St. George.

Gov. Landry said, “Each of these folks have been heavily involved with the incorporation effort and are dedicated to ensuring the success of the city of St. George. I am confident in their leadership and am looking forward to the work they will accomplish alongside Mayor Yates and Police Chief Morris.”

Steven Monachello
Steven retired in 2018 from a ca-

reer in criminal justice with over 40 years of service. He served as a full-time deputy with East Baton Rouge Parish Sheriff’s Office, then continued his career with the Louisiana State Police. After five years with LSP, Steven became a special agent with the Drug Enforcement Agency. He finished his career and retired from the DEA as a group supervisor. After his retirement, he began a second career with the US Department of Homeland Security as a special agent assigned to a FEMA Fraud Task Force.

Today, he serves as a federal background investigator where he does work with the Department of State and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms. Steve received his B.S. in criminal justice and MPA from LSU. He and his wife Mary have three daughters, six grandchildren, and one great grandchild.

Councilman Monachello said, “I’m honored to be selected for this appointment. I’m very excited to play a role in the formation of my

new City of St. George. I see the task as starting from ground zero on a previously untraveled road in an effort to move our city forward. I look forward to working in an environment of like-minded individuals where a team effort will be required for all of us to succeed.”

Ryan Heck
Ryan served as a member of the Metro Council from 2012 to 2016. He is an entrepreneur and an investor in a number of startups. Ryan received his B.S. in construction management and his MBA from LSU. He and his wife Loredana have been married for 17 years and have two children.

Councilman Heck said, “I’d like to thank Governor Landry for the appointment, and I look forward to getting to work.”

Max Himmel
Max started Himmel Architectural Door and Hardware Company in 1973. This company is a top five architectural door supplier in the US. He sold the business in

2016 but remains an advisor to the company. Max and his wife Micelle have two sons and a daughter.

Councilman Himmel said, “One of my main goals in the very beginning is we need a better infrastructure of our roads and drainage before we can allow any more subdivisions. This is especially true on Hoo Shoo Too Road, which is 8” too narrow. Tiger Bend is the same along with Elliott Road. I have been out here for 25 years and have not seen any changes in the width of the roads or the intersections. A complete overlay of the roads is needed after the road problems are taken care of. I am very happy to work with anyone and we can all work together.”

Richie Edmonds
Richie is a dedicated business owner and leader in the community. He spends much of his time working to grow his company, Vertical Construction. Richie is also a licensed contractor with the Louisiana State Board of Professional Engineers.

See MEET on Page 17

Congratulations St. George!

Best Wishes for a Prosperous Future

RE-ELECT
JUDGE CARSON
MARCANTEL
CITY JUDGE



JUDGE CARSON MARCANTEL

Early Voting Sat., Oct. 18 thru Mon., Oct 29
ELECTION DAY TUESDAY, NOV. 5

Reprinted from October 2019 St. George Leader

St. George Vote Is Really a Showdown Between Liberals and Conservatives

Woody Jenkins
Editor

BATON ROUGE — There is really no mystery about whether the proposed City of St. George will be a success, and there is certainly no mystery about whether the proposed Southeast school district will be a success.

We don't have to guess whether incorporating a new city and creating a new school system in this parish can work. We have real-life models right here in East Baton Rouge Parish — the City of Central and the independent school districts in Central and Zachary.

The City of Central (pop. 28,000) was created by the voters in 2005. It is now celebrating its 14th birthday. Central is the only

“The opponents of St. George raise baseless fears. Their arguments are absurd. ‘We want to all stay together!’ they chant, as though the unincorporated areas of the southeast part of the parish were somehow part of the City of Baton Rouge and were ‘breaking away’ from the City of Baton Rouge. The unincorporated areas are NOT part of the City of Baton Rouge, and they are not breaking away from anything. They are forming their own city at their own expense, in order to improve their lot, just as anyone has the right to do under Louisiana law.”

fully-privatized city in the State of Louisiana and one of the very few in America. It was created on a 21st century model — not a 19th century model — and it is working beautifully. It has only three

city employees (compare Hammond, pop. 20,000, with 325 city employees). Central contracts out everything and runs the city on 25 percent of the cost of the City of Hammond. Central has a \$1-2 mil-

lion a year surplus and \$40 million in the bank.

The Zachary Community School System began in 2003. It has had the No. 1 school system in the state for 15 of the past 15 years. The demographics are 50-50 black-white. The Central Community School System was created in 2007 and quickly became the No. 2 school system in the state.

Central has no industry and no large businesses except a Wal-Mart. Yet, it is a model of fiscal integrity and sound business judgment.

Is there any doubt that St. George, which has perhaps the highest per capita income in the state, will be able to have a successful city?

No, there is no doubt. The opponents don't really say that. They raise baseless fears. Their arguments are absurd. “We want to all stay together!” they chant, as though the unincorporated areas of the southeast part of the parish were somehow part of the City of Baton Rouge and were “breaking away” from the City of Baton Rouge.

The unincorporated areas are not part of the City of Baton Rouge, and they are not breaking away. They are forming their own city at their own expense, in order to improve their lot, just as anyone has the right to do under Louisiana law.

On the other hand, the proposed Southeast independent school system would greatly strengthen public education by bringing 10,000 or more students back into the public schools. Many of them would be white, and the proposed Southeast school system is projected to be 60-40 white-black.

But that is bad. The opponents of St. George think the current East Baton Rouge Parish School System, which is a one-race school system (nearly 90 percent black), is wonderful, but a racially diverse school system like St. George will be is somehow a great evil.

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“Today, conservatives are supporting the St. George incorporation movement and liberals are fighting it. In fact, defeating St. George has become a cause célèbre for the far left in this state. The reality is, St. George has the potential to bring tens of thousands of people back to this parish and prevent it from becoming another Detroit or News Orleans. And therein lies the explanation of why the far left hates St. George so much: They know Zachary, Central, and St. George will prevent this parish from tipping over the edge and becoming a mecca for the far left.”

Three Ways the City of St. George Could Have Its Own Independent School System

EBR Currently Has Two of Best Systems In State of Louisiana: Zachary and Central

Continued from Page 5

2004, students in the Zachary school system scored No. 1 in the state on the LEAP test. Some people said it was a fluke. In any case, it didn't count because a school system has to take the LEAP tests at least two years in row in order for its schools to be rated statewide.

But in 2005, Zachary again blew the top off the LEAP tests and claimed its position as the No. 1 school system in the state, a position it held for at least the next 10 years. Zachary still vies for first place almost every year.

Zachary Is Highly Diverse. Zachary's achievement was especially noteworthy because the population of the school system has been and remains roughly 50-50 black and white. It is for all practical purposes the most "diverse" school system in the state.

In 2004, the movement to incorporate the City of Central got underway. The chief reason given by organizers was so that Central could eventually have its own community school system.

Central was incorporated in 2005, and in 2006 Sen. Bodi White and Rep. Donald Ray Kennard introduced a constitutional amendment to create the Central Community School System.

This proposal too had to overcome all the obstacles that Baker and Zachary had faced with one major exception. Since the desegregation order had been lifted, there was no federal barrier to the creation of a new school system in Central.

Central Went Through Same Process. After approval by the legislature, the constitutional amendment went to the voters in Nov. 2006, and it was overwhelmingly approved statewide, in East Baton Rouge Parish, and in Central.

On July 1, 2007, the Central Community School System came into existence, and the people of Central took over the schools there.

Three years later, Central was rated the No. 2 school system in Louisiana. Ever since then, Central has been at or near the top of Louisiana's school systems.

EBR Has Two Top-Performing School Systems. It is fair to say that today, East Baton Rouge Parish has two of the top-performing school systems in the state in Zachary and Central. This is especially noteworthy since both are blue collar communities.

In 2012, the St. George movement began with a goal of creating a new school system in the southeast part of East Baton Rouge Parish. Sen. Bodi White was by then representing a Senate district that included both Central and much of current-day St. George. Sen. White introduced legislation to create the Southeast Community School System.

This effort to start a new school system evolved into the St. George movement which has now been successful in creating the new City of St. George.

So today, the system of independent school districts for East Baton Rouge Parish that Sen. Mike Cross and I envisioned nearly 30 years ago has three districts in place — Baker, Zachary, and Central.

Zachary and Central prove St. George could rapidly become one of the best school districts in the state, if not the best.

What would it take to create a community school district for St. George? That is the question that many St. George residents are asking today.

Legally speaking, I see at least three different paths to a new school system for the Southeast:

1 - Amending the Louisiana Constitution to create the St. George Community School System. This is the traditional ap-

proach. It would require a two-thirds' vote of the House and Senate and approval by the voters of the constitutional amendment statewide, in East Baton Rouge Parish, and in St. George.

2 - Amending the Louisiana Constitution to allow the legislature to create new school districts by statute. Creation of new school districts would still require a vote in East Baton Rouge Parish and in St. George. This was the approach of SB6 by Rep. Emily Chenevert in the recent legislative session.

3 - Expanding the boundaries of the Central Community School System to include the City of St. George. The boundaries of the Central school system are established by law, not by the Louisiana Constitution. Those boundaries can

be enlarged by act of the legislature without a constitutional amendment. Central and St. George are contiguous, united by a narrow sliver of the Amite River. Theoretically, the boundaries of the Central School System could be changed to include St. George. This could be the easiest route to become part of a new school district. The question is, why would Central want to do this? Also, would the new combined system itself be too large and defeat the concept of local community control.

One thing is certain: If the people of St. George truly want their own independent school system, it will take a lot of hard work, wisdom, and determination. Personally, I am eager to see if you can do it!



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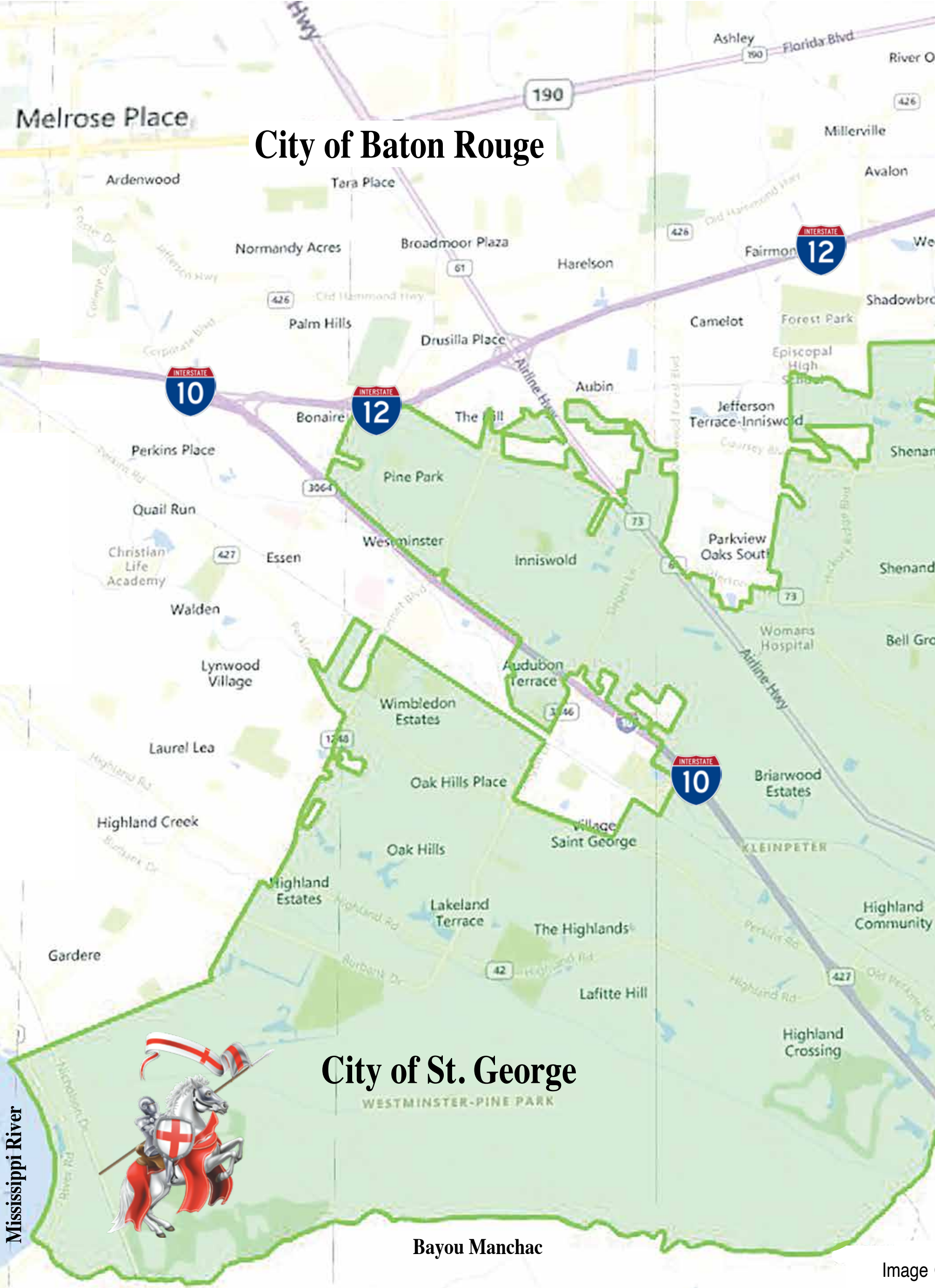




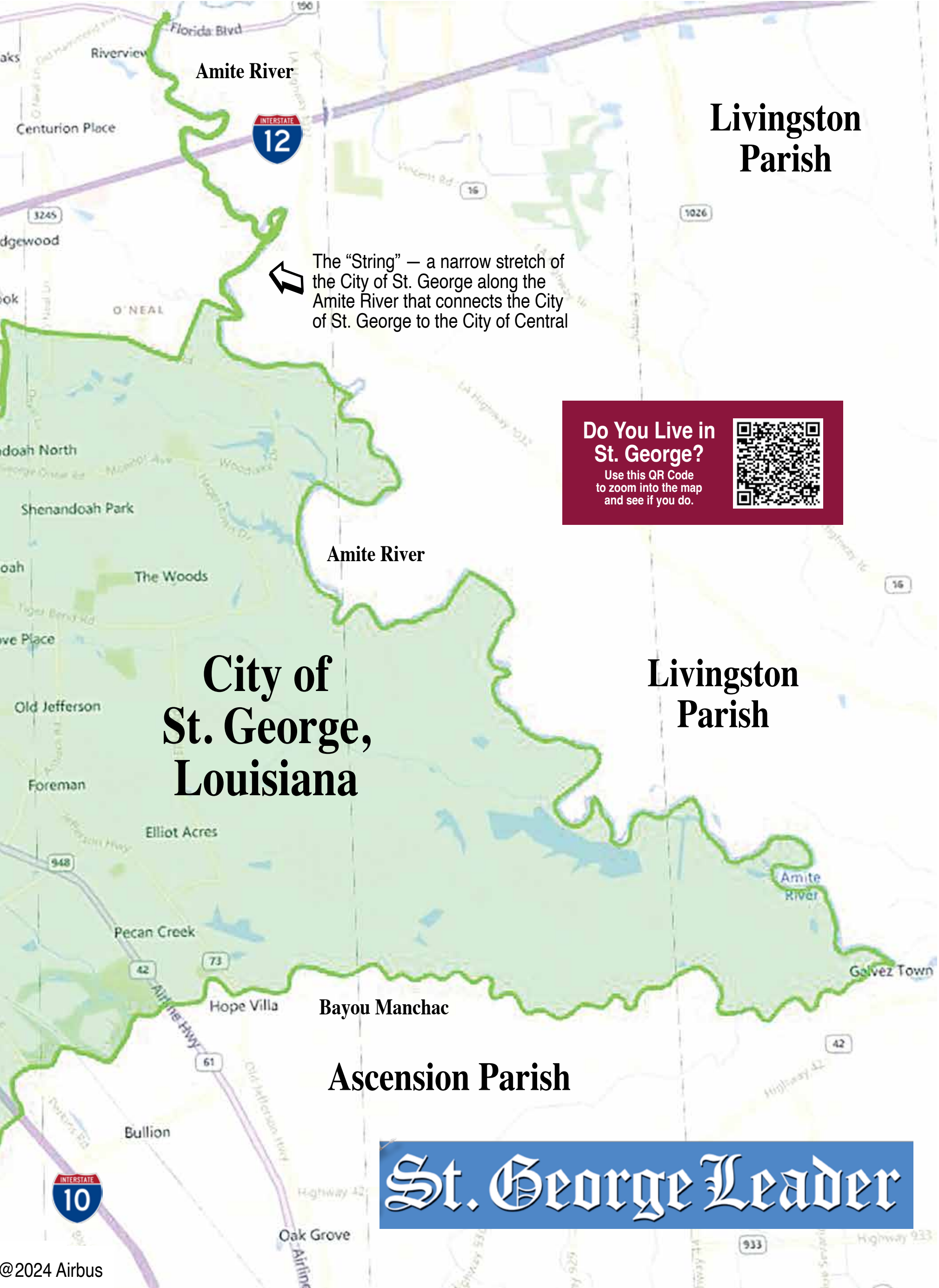




Map of City of St. George • June



June 2024 • Population 87,000 (est.)



GOP Caucuses at Jefferson Baptist Elected Trump Delegates to RNC



METROCOUNCILMAN DWIGHT HUDSON AND DAUGHTER SARAH (left) attending the Greater Baton Rouge Republican Caucus March 19. Posing for a photo (center) are Dianne Cashio of the Attorney General’s office, Lynn Coxe Graham, Debbie Kuehne who was elected as a delegate from Congressional District 6, and Linda and Eddie Rispone. Monique Appeaing (right) signs one of the voting boxes after inspection. The Risponses were key supporters of the St. George incorporation movement.



MICHAEL VINCENT, GREATER BATON ROUGE CAUCUS DIRECTOR (left/center) inspected the voting boxes prior to the start of the election. Councilman Dwight Hudson (center/right) checks behind the folds of the box to ensure nothing was present in the box before giving his signature. Each district’s box was inspected, resealed, and signed by three to five people witnessing the inspection.




EAST BATON ROUGE REPUBLICAN CHAIRMAN WOODY JENKINS (left) with Greater Baton Rouge Caucus Director Michael Vincent. Jenkins will be representing Congressional District 2 as a delegate to the Republican National Convention. Former Secretary of State Kyle Ardoin (center) poses for a photo with his grandson and friend, Dru Lea. Republican PEC member Barbara Thomas (right/center) volunteered at the caucus. Sarah Hudson (right) had the privlidge of engaging the process and witnessing the box inspection.



CAROL THOMAS AND VICKIE DAVIS (left) getting a little help from Vickie’s granddaughters! Dwight Hudson and attorney Todd Gaudin (left/center). Todd is the son of the late E. Clark Gaudin, the first Republican legislator from EBR Parish. Woody Jenkins with Durk and Laura Krone. Old friends at the caucus (right), Cindy Edmonds and Diane Jenkins.

East Baton Rouge Parish Republican Caucus • March 19, 2024 • Jefferson Baptist Church





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EBR Republican Women volunteering at the caucus included Amber Thomas, Dru Lea, Carol Thomas, Lynn Coxe Graham, Dianne Cashio, Jill Dyason, and Debbie Kuehne.



Mayor Dustin Yates, Chief Todd Morris with Republican activist Liz Dent Sumrall



Chief Todd Morris with Dr. Lewis Richerson of Woodlawn Baptist Church

Mayor, Chief Have Long Careers in Public Service

Continued from Page 1

on April 26 of this year, the Louisiana Supreme Court voted 4-3 to overturn the lower courts’ decision and ratify the incorporation vote.

On May 23, Gov. Jeff Landry announced the appointment of the interim Mayor and Chief of Police for the City of St. George.

Gov. Landry said, “Chief Morris and Mayor Yates have the experience needed to fill these roles—especially during this important time of transition. I look forward to the work they will do to ensure St. George is a safe and thriving community.”

Mayor Dustin Yates responded, saying, “I am extremely humbled

to be appointed by Gov. Landry to lead this newly-created city as the interim Mayor. Our goal will be to ensure a timely transition that will set up the City of St. George for long-term success.”

Chief of Police Todd Morris said, “I would like to thank Gov. Landry for this appointment and for trusting in me. I am honored and humbled by the opportunity to serve as the first Chief of Police for the City of St. George. I have called this community home for the past 40 years. I am excited to bring my 34 years of law enforcement experience to serve the citizens of St. George.”

“I am committed to working

collaboratively with our residents, business owners, Sheriff Gautreaux and the East Baton Rouge Sheriff’s Office, as well as community leaders to ensure St. George is a safe, welcoming, and thriving city for all.”

Mayor Dustin Yates

Dustin Yates, 44, was born and raised in New Orleans where he graduated from Jesuit High School and UNO earning a B.A. in education. He taught and coached in public school for four years before entering the fire service with the St. George Fire Department.

The new mayor is currently serving his 19th year with the Fire Department where he has held the

positions of Firefighter/Operator, Lieutenant, and Chief Administrative Officer. He continued his education with an Associate’s Degree in Fire Science, and also graduated from the Executive Fire Officer Program at the National Fire Academy in Maryland.

He has been involved with the City of St. George beginning with the original petition drive in 2013. He has been married to Allison for 18 years, and they have two children, Avery, 16 and Bennett, 14. They are parishioners at St. George Catholic Church.

For more on Police Chief Morris, see story on Page 1, “Todd Morris Sworn in as Police Chief.”

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May God Bless the City of St. George!



The creators and supporters of the City of St. George are living examples of American courage, perseverance, and the desire for self-governance. Now, let's pray that other good people will create their own safe communities that can properly educate their children.

M. Janice Villarrubia
American Citizen

What Issues Will New City Have To Address in Next Few Months?

Photo by Woody Jenkins of St. George Leader



DECISIONS — Chief Todd Morris, Sen. Bodi White and residents of St. George who will face many decisions as they organize a new city government from the ground up.

CITY OF ST. GEORGE — Since February 2020, the St. George Transition District has made significant progress in planning the transition of services from the City-Parish to the City of St. George. Based on interviews with St. George leaders, some of the recommendations include:

- District maps for three district City Council seats and two at-large City Council seats
- Organization chart with roles and responsibilities as defined in the Lawrason Act
- Code of ordinances
- Plans for a future City-Manager position similar to Greenville, South Carolina
- First-year and full-year operating budgets

- Bank evaluations and recommendations
- Public Works scope of services including street maintenance, drainage, grass cutting, weed control, bridges, and traffic signals
- Planning and Zoning Commission structure, including roles and responsibilities
- Request for Qualifications and Proposals (RFQP) document to be submitted to contractors to bid on providing city services for residents and businesses

None of these recommendations have the force of law. They are simply that — recommendations for consideration by the new Mayor

and City Council of St. George.

Some of the decision points the new Mayor and Council will face over the coming weeks and months:

- Enter into agreement with a banking institution to receive revenues from the City-Parish and make payments on behalf of St. George
- Approve the first-year operating budget
- Determine the amount of an interim loan to bridge the 75-day delay in sales tax revenues being remitted by the City-Parish
- Formally issue the Request for Qualifications and Proposals to contractors to provide services to St. George residents and businesses for a five-year term
- Work with East Baton Rouge Sheriff's Office to determine the cost and timing of additional safety and security services beyond the Sheriff's current obligations
- Negotiate financial and fixed equipment assets to be transferred to St. George (such as reserve fund balances and equipment)
- Quantify the statutory financial liabilities to the City-Parish, such as the Employee Retirement System and other post employment benefits
- Work with the City-Parish to align service fees associated with Animal Control, Alcohol Beverage Control, and new construction sewer capacity impact
- Develop a joint proposal with the City-Parish to the Environmental Protection Agency for a separate Storm Water Management Plan.

City of St. George Interim Officials

- Mayor —
Dustin Yates
- Police Chief —
Todd Morris
- Council-at-Large —
Patty Cook
Richie Edmonds
- Councilmen —
Ryan Heck
Max Himmel
Steven Monachello

St. George Transition District

Created by Act 361 of 2020 Session

- CHAIRMAN
Vacancy
- VICE CHAIRMAN
Norman Browning
- INCORPORATOR
SECRETARY
Andrew Murrell
APPOINTEE OF SEN. RICK EDMONDS
- TREASURER
Chris Rials
INCORPORATOR
Jim Talbot
APPOINTEE OF REP. CHENEVERT
- William Potter
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Sheriff Sid Gautreaux, D.A. Hillar Moore Take Questions

Sheriff, District Attorney Address Crime At Republican Women of EBR Luncheon



EAST BATON ROUGE PARISH SHERIFF SID GAUTREAUX (left) addressed the EBR Republican Women at Drusilla Seafood May 23. Joining the Sheriff was District Attorney Hillar Moore (right). The two updated attendees on crime in the parish. Sheriff Gautreaux expressed the need for a new jail and both talked about mentoring youth so gangs don't draw them in. At center, Clerk of Court Doug Welborn, Sheriff Sid Gautreaux, Baton Rouge Police Chief Thomas Morse, and District Attorney Hillar Moore with club officers.



CLERK OF COURT DOUG WELBORN AND STAFF MEMBERS (left) attended the luncheon. Dining with them is Judge Michael McDonald. After the meeting adjourned, new Baton Rouge Police Chief Thomas Morse, Jr. (right) stopped in to visit with Sheriff Gautreaux and District Attorney Hillar Moore.



REPUBLICAN WOMAN LYNN COXE GRAHAM (left) with new recruits to the club including Susan Pellegrin and Kelly Messina. At center, Carol Thomas, Cindy Edmonds, *Central City News* and *St. George Leader* editor Woody Jenkins and his wife Diane Jenkins. Carol and Cindy are holding the popular :) *St. George Leader* newspaper. At right are Jamie Tairou, Gwen Smith, Crystal Smith and Joyce James.



REPUBLICAN WOMAN RECORDING SECRETARY GLORIA WALL (left) asks D.A. Hillar Moore a question. Joyce James (left/center) speaks with Hillar Moore. Sharon Jenkins (center) talking with Police Chief Morse. Clerk of Court Doug Welborn with parliamentarian Dru Brock Lea and Carol Thomas. Sen. Rick Edmonds' wife Cindy Edmonds (right) with Sheriff Gautreaux and Chief Morse.

St. George Councilmen Speak Out



ST. GEORGE COUNCILMAN MAX HIMMEL (left) discussed the future of the City of St. George at the Chamber of Commerce of East Baton Rouge. Councilman at-Large **Richie Edmonds** (center) talks about the potential of the newly-formed City of St. George. **Steve Monachello** of St. George City Council Dist. 3 (right) says he is excited to get started. All councilman agreed they will not raise taxes.



BATON ROUGE CITY JUDGE CARSON MARCANTEL (left) led the Pledge of Allegiance and later announced he plans to run for reelection. At center/left, attorney **Janice Villarrubia** asked a question of the new St. George Council members. The guest at center/right expressed support for the Republicans. At right, **Woody Jenkins** asked about taxes.

Ronald Reagan Newsmaker Luncheon • June 11, 2024 • Café Americain

Photos by Jolice Provost • Video by Woody Jenkins for the Central City News

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Congratulations and thanks goes out to the newly appointed St. George leadership. This group of exceptional leaders have a big task ahead of them as St. George gets its start. Please join me in praying for them as they begin their work.

Sincerely,
Councilman
Dwight Hudson

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COUNCILMAN DWIGHT HUDSON

EBR PARISH
METRO COUNCIL
DISTRICT 9

NOVEMBER
2024
ELECTION

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Gub with Garret at MePa’s Diner

Photos by Jolice Provost



CONGRESSMAN GARRET GRAVES, CENTRAL MAYOR WADE EVANS (left) at MePa’s Diner in Central. Citizens joined Congressman Graves for a round table discussion that lasted over an hour and 45 minutes. Topics discussed included the recent ruling by the Supreme Court to use a Congressional map with two majority-black districts, the high cost of insurance, VA benefits, Social Security, police training, crime, education, autism, flooding and the Comite Diversion Canal project. There was also a discussion of bills in the House pertaining to Alzheimer’s and its effect on patients and families. Christopher de Pierne (right) talked about the rising cost of insurance and the fact that middle class people like him will never retire because of the burdensome price of insurance. Congressman Graves stayed a little longer to shake hands and pose for pictures with citizens including former Baton Rouge Police Officer Mike King.



Meet New Members Of St. George Council Named by Governor

Continued from Page 7

ana State Board of Contractors and a licensed real estate agent. He and his family are active members of Healing Place Church. Richie and his wife Holly have three children. Councilman at-Large Edmonds said, “I am humbled and honored to be appointed by Gov. Landry as interim Councilman for the City of St. George. It will be my No. 1 goal to serve all of the wonderful residents of St. George and work tirelessly with Mayor Yates, Chief Morris, our new council, and transition team to make the City of St. George the next great American City! What a great day for Louisiana and East Baton Rouge Parish! St. George is open for business. Let’s get to work!”

Patty Cook

Patty is an active member of the community. She spends time as a substitute teacher at the LSU Lab School. She was previously the office manager for the Louisiana Parent-Teacher Association. Patty received her B.A. in English from LSU. She and her husband Trey have been married for more than 30 years and have two daughters. Councilwoman at-Large Cook said, “I am honored and humbled to have been chosen to serve on the interim council for St. George. My goal is to help achieve our vision of being a city in which we can be proud to live and raise our children and grandchildren. We need to keep our families here with less crime and a better sense of community.”

Congratulations City of St. George!

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St. George Leader Fact Sheet

Louisiana Supreme Court Recognizes

The City of St. George

5 Years after Voters Approved New City, State Supreme Court Okays Incorporation

Woody Jenkins
Editor

CITY OF ST. GEORGE — Nearly five years after the voters of the proposed City of St. George voted to incorporate, the Louisiana Supreme Court gave them a historic victory.

On Friday, April 26, 2024, in a 4-3 decision, the high court dismissed the suit filed by Mayor-President Shreve and ruled in favor of the proposed city. The decision means that the City of St. George is now an official part of Louisiana.

On Monday, April 29, leaders of the City of St. George met to celebrate their great victory. See Page 3.

Celebration
May 7, 2024

OVERCOME WITH EMOTION — After 13 years of hard work, personal sacrifice, ridicule, and unwavering determination, Norman Browning (left), the chairman of the St. George Incorporation movement, was overcome with emotion. This moment came during the news conference Monday, April 29, when leaders of the movement discussed the decision by the Louisiana Supreme Court recognizing that the incorporation of the City of St. George was lawful. Speaking was Mayor-Candidate Dwight Hudson (right) with St. George spokesman Andrew Murrell. St. George (population 87,000) is now the 5th largest city in Louisiana and 10th largest in the South.

Five Reasons We Need St. George

BATON ROUGE — During the campaign for incorporation, Chris Riels and Andrew Murrell, two leaders of the St. George movement, reviewed efforts to create the City of St. George at a meeting of the Greater Baton Rouge Civic Association. At the meeting, they voiced five major reasons to create a new city:

- Fight crime
- Hold down taxes
- Improve drainage
- Create a great school system
- Bring people back to East Baton Rouge Parish

Murrell said Baton Rouge had one of the highest murder rates in the country. Riels said 23 new taxes had been passed in the parish since 2003. Spending at the parish had grown more than New Orleans, Shreveport and Lafayette combined. The public schools are some of the worst in the state. Drainage has not improved significantly since 2016. And people continue to flee the parish, St. George can help solve all those problems, they said. For more, see Page 15.

2-Cent Parish Sales Tax Will Simply Transfer to City

City of St. George Won't Need New Taxes

Central Has Huge Budget Surpluses

BATON ROUGE — A high-ranking official of a company that administers privatized cities such as the City of Central says a computer model his firm uses indicates the revenues of the proposed City of St. George would be more than sufficient to cover its expenses without the need for additional taxes.

The official said, "The population of St. George is four times greater than Central, but the tax base is about 10 times greater. Central is basically a residential community, whereas St. George has a strong commercial and retail base. St. George will be able to cover all of its expenses and have a very large surplus left over. I assume that surplus will be used in part to improve the roads and streets in St. George. But there is little doubt there will be a tax surplus and certainly no need whatsoever for a tax increase."

His statement came just as opponents of St. George launched a campaign to convince voters that creation of the City of St. George will raise taxes.

Meanwhile, pro-St. George incorporation leader Norman Browning said St. George opponents are using fear tactics and targeting elderly voters with false claims that St. George will raise taxes.

See ST. GEORGE on Page 4

- Facts about City of St. George, Louisiana**

Date of Incorporation: Friday, April 26, 2024

Newest City in United States

Population: 87,000 (5th largest city in state)

Household Income: \$95,000 (Highest in Louisiana)

Model: City of Central, Louisiana's 1st privatized city

Media: St. George Leader newspaper
- Facts about St. George Leader**

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The Juan Diego Procession Route Began in Brownsville, TX

National Eucharistic Pilgrimage Event



Altar servers during the procession with the Blessed Sacrament



SACRED HEART welcomed the National Eucharistic Procession's Juan Diego Route to Baton Rouge for the Solemnity of the Sacred Heart. Thousands of faithful Catholics gathered for the two-mile procession to St. Joseph's Cathedral. In his homily, Fr. Joshua Johnson (center) challenged all to go forth and proclaim the Good News to all the world.



THE KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS HELPED MAKE THE DAY POSSIBLE — 82-year-old Tonita Baland Robertson Poche (left/center) made the pilgrimage! Fr. Joseph Bre-sowar (left/center) of Immaculate Conception sings during the procession. Bishop Michael Duca (center) with the media team for the National Eucharistic Pilgrimage. Parishioners from Most Blessed Sacrament (right/center). Stephen Lumpkin (right) of St. Alphonsus.



Fr. Paul Yi pastor of St. George during the procession.



PILGRAMS ARRIVE AT ST. JOSEPH CATHEDRAL (left) where Bishop Duca spoke and participated in Eucharistic Adoration. St. Patrick's Deacon Alec Campbell (center) with his wife Lindsey and children Kolbe, Kolin and Claria. Find out more about the National Eucharistic Revival at eucharisticrevival.org. The fire is spreading, follow the National Eucharistic Pilgrimage at eucharisticpilgrimage.org. Plan for the National Eucharistic Congress at eucharisticcongress.org.

First EBR Athletic Hall of Fame



MRS. BILLY CANNON “DOT” (right) was in attendance to accept the Hall of Fame award on behalf of her husband who won the Heisman Trophy. Cannon represented Istrouma. Other honorees included Harvey Adger, legendary head basketball coach at Glen Oaks for the past 53 years, former LSU/MLB baseball player Ryan Theriot of Broadmoor High, former professional basketball player Seimone Augustus, a graduate of Capitol High, Danielle Scott-Arruda, Olympic volleyball player of Woodlawn High), and Eddie Robinson III, grandson of Coach Eddie Robinson. At right, Woody Jenkins, Cannon teammate Earl Phillips, Dot Cannon, EBR schools Supt. Adam Smith, and Istrouma head coach Sid Edwards.



Honoree Ryan Theriot
LSU Baseball and 12 Years MLB
Broadmoor High School



Honoree Bob Pettit • BR High
Legendary NBA Basketball Player
LSU • Milwaukee/St. Louis Hawks



Honoree Danielle Scott-Arruda
Olympic Volleyball Player
Woodlawn High School



East Baton Rouge Parish Schools
Superintendent Adam Smith

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Congratulations Citizens of St. George!

It's been my privileged to serve the families of District 6 and East Baton Rouge Parish, to ensure every child receives a high-quality education.

Our new City of St. George offers great promise to every family and the future they hold most precious — their children and grandchildren.

We must continue to champion small government and the highest degree of accountability to ensure St. George grows and serves our citizens.

— Nathan Rust

NATHAN RUST
DISTRICT 6 • SCHOOL BOARD