

**A City Set on a Hill
 Cannot be Hidden.**

Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven. Matthew 5: 14-16.

Cited by President Ronald Reagan in his Farewell Address, Jan. 11, 1989



Voters Approved Incorporation on April 23, 2005

Central: 20 Years a City!

Central Voters Made Historic Decision by Voting to Incorporate By 63%-37% Margin

Woody Jenkins
 Editor

CITY OF CENTRAL — Twenty years ago on April 23, 2005, a hardy band of Central residents succeeded in doing what many saw as impossible. They were able to put on the ballot a simple proposition:

Shall the City of Central be incorporated?
Yes 5,126 63%
No 3,064 37%
Turnout: 48%
Saturday, April 23, 2005

After a vigorous campaign by supporters and opponents, voters responded with a resounding 63-to-37 victory for incorporation.

Central founder Russell Starns and a core group of 30 volunteers showed that with hard work, courage, resourcefulness, and determination, anything is possible.

Twenty years later, Central resembles a “Shining City on a Hill” envisioned in Matthew 5:14 and



CENTRAL FOUNDERS CELEBRATE — Central pro-incorporation leaders celebrate victory Saturday night, April 23, 2005, at the home of Louis and Becky DeJohn. Shown left to right are (1st row) Mildred Smith, Teresa Curtis, Sheri Morris, Wyndi Bonvillain, Russell Starns, and Claude Derbes; (2nd row) Aaron Moak and Jennifer Starns; (3rd row) Clif Richardson, John Green, Cristine and Len Ross, Janice Richard, Lucky and Juanita Ross, and Carolyn Patterson; (4th row) Ray Richard, Joan Lansing, Braxton Matherne (baby), Diana Richardson, Tommie Morden, Ralph and Carolyn Washington, Brenda Nixon, Kristen White, and Robin White; and (5th row) Marty Guilbeau, Kim Vince, Louis and Becky DeJohn, Jonathan Starns. Voters approved incorporation 63 to 37 percent with 5,126 for and 3,064 against.

by President Ronald Reagan in his Farewell Address. Central is:

- A city with safe neighborhoods and great schools

- Louisiana’s first privatized city with a population of 30,000 but only five city employees
- Perhaps the finest example of

- privatization in the United States
- A model of fiscal responsibility and conservative governance.

See **CENTRAL** on Page 2

April 21, 2005: A Newspaper Is Born

Central City News Was Born Out of Movement To Create a New City For Central Community

Woody Jenkins
 Editor

CENTRAL - The *Central City News* has consistently been named **Louisiana’s Newspaper of the Year** by the Louisiana Press Association, and it has won more than 200 state and national awards from Best News Coverage to Best Investigative Journalism to Best Advertising Design to Best Photography to Best Editorial Writing and more.

However, the awards we receive are really more a reflection of the great community we serve than any particular skill on our part.

How This Paper Came About. This is the “inside story” of how the *Central City News* came into

being. It may surprise you. The *Central City News* didn’t just pop up one day as a way to make money. It was years in the making and it had a very specific purpose which had little to do with money.

Central incorporated in 2005, but for me the battle to create a city in Central began in 1972, 33 years earlier.

In 1966, my future wife Diane and I launched the *North Baton Rouge Journal* as a community newspaper serving the north part of the parish, including Istrouma, Glen Oaks, Scotlandville, Baker, and Central. We were only 19 at the time. While covering Central, I developed many friendships.

In early 1972, I was elected to the Louisiana House of Representatives representing House District 66, the Istrouma area. Gov. Edwin Edwards had also just been elected. That year, he was able to pass legislation calling for a Constitutional Convention. Elections for delegate were held in the fall

See **PIVOTAL** on Page 3



SCAN QR CODE
 Central City News
 April 21, 2005



SCAN QR CODE
 Central City News
 April 28, 2005

Central: 20 Years a City!

Safe Neighborhoods, Great Public Schools Make Central Model For Cities across U.S.

Continued from Page 1

- A city that runs perpetual surpluses and has tens of millions of dollars in reserve
- A city that in its 20 years in existence has never raised taxes
- A blue collar city with the state's 3rd highest household income
- A city with arguably the best public school system in Louisiana
- A city where life is described as "Country Living in the City."
- Not just a place with a name over it but a **community** where people know one another and work together for the common good.

★★★

Russell Starns and his volunteers who adopted the name Northeast Baton Rouge Citizens for Incorporation worked very hard for more than two years prior to the incorporation election April 23, 2005.

It was an exciting time, mainly because everyone in Central knew the destiny of their community was at stake, but no one was really sure which way the vote would go.

Northeast Baton Rouge Citizens for Incorporation conducted a poll a week before the election. It showed 53 percent of voters sup-



ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING — Meeting in April 2005, some of the Central citizens working in the incorporation movement were (seated at table going clockwise) Pete Humble, Wyndi Bonvillain, Dr. Tony LoBue, R. J. Saucier, Capt. Wilson Reado, Al Shaffer, Carolyn Patterson, Clif Richardson, Lee Rome, and Joan Lansing. Those standing were employees of the City of Zachary who were providing information on their budget.

ported incorporation, while 11 percent opposed, 23 percent were undecided, and the rest wouldn't say or didn't plan to vote.

Most people who looked at the

poll felt it was much closer than that and that the undecided vote would probably vote no. However, it seemed likely pro-incorporation voters would prevail.

Several important things happened in the days leading up to the April 23 election:

• Central attorney Bob Raborn led the opposition. Raborn was an articulate spokesman for his cause. He raised many important issues that supporters of incorporation needed to confront and answer.

In retrospect, Raborn's opposition was a good thing because it helped galvanize people's thinking for and against incorporation. It also resulted in the supporters of incorporation making a commitment that the new city would not raise taxes. 20 years later, that is a commitment that has been kept.

• Another important thing was the role of Kip Holden in the process. It stands in contrast to the role played by Sharon Weston Broome in the incorporation of St. George.

As a state senator, Holden had co-authored the constitutional amendment to create the Zachary Community School District. Later, he told Central leaders that he would support a school district for Central if they first incorporated as a city. He was elected Mayor-President in 2004. Then just days before the April 23, 2005, referendum on incorporation of Central, he appeared at a forum at the Greenwell Springs Library and said he would not oppose incorporation of Central.

For more on the incorporation battle, read the May edition of the *Central City News*.

Commemorating City of Central's First 20 Years
Every issue of the Central City News remaining in 2025 will look back to the events of 2005. The official 20th Anniversary Edition will be in July 18, 2025. July 11, 2005, was the official date of incorporation.



Dr. Record & Staff
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Welcome
Dr. Ariel Brown
Back to the
City of Central



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MEET *Dr. Ariel Brown*

Dr. Ariel Brown joined the staff at Record Dental Center in October 2024 and is happy to be back in the Central area. Ariel was a 2007 Central High graduate where she enjoyed playing soccer, cheerleading, running track and playing in the marching band and concert band. She attended Zoar Baptist Church. Currently, she helps with cheerleading for The Upwards Sports program at Zoar.

After graduating from Central High, she continued her education and graduated from the University of Louisiana-Monroe with a Bachelor of Science degree and then received her Doctorate of Dental Surgery at the LSU School of Dentistry in New Orleans. She has practiced dentistry for 10 years and was excited to have the opportunity to join the Record Dental Center practice. Coming back home to Central and seeing so many familiar faces has been very rewarding already. Knowing that she can help her community with her skill set and knowledge is very special to her.

Dr. Brown and her husband Daryl are expecting their first child later this year. Gus and Sherby, their dog and cat respectively, will have to make room for the additional bundle of joy heading their way.

Come by and see Dr. Brown. The city might have changed a little, but the community and the friendships are still there. She's glad to be home.



Dr. Brown and her husband Daryl



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Pivotal Moment Came When Bob Raborn Said, ‘Give me one good reason Central needs a city’

Continued from Page 1

of 1972 with one delegate elected from each House district. I ran and was elected as the delegate from House District 66.

The plan for the convention was to convene in early 1973 and complete its work by early 1974.

The public referred to the convention as CC/73.

The reason I ran for delegate was to try to create a model constitution that would enshrine principles of liberty and put our state on a trajectory of freedom for generations to come. I asked to serve on the Committee on Bill of Rights and Elections.

★★★

Just before CC/73 convened, I received a call from Mr. Acie Belton, the president of the 2nd Ward Voters League in Scotlandville and one of the most prominent black leaders in the parish.

Mr. Belton said, “Rep. Jenkins, Scotlandville is an unincorporated area. We are not receiving city services from the City of Baton Rouge, and we want the right to incorporate as a new city in order to control our own destiny. However, the Louisiana Constitution of 1921 provides that there can be only three municipalities in East Baton Rouge Parish. We would have to amend the Constitution in order to have a city. Would you help include our right to incorporate in



STOLE THE SHOW — These young Central residents stole the show on the evening of Thursday, April 21, 2005, at a public meeting on incorporation. Incorporation opponent Bob Raborn had just asked the meeting, “Give me one good reason to incorporate!” Russell Starns responded, “Here’s one!” And the children marched in at just the right moment. They are Thomas Simmons, son of Jon and Christi Simmons; Taylor Prudhome, daughter of Dr. David and Debbie Prudhome; Kelli Caraccioli, daughter of Kahne Caraccioli, and Kellie Watts, daughter of Wes and Jodie Watts.

the new constitution? This may be our only chance.!”

I told Mr. Belton I would research the matter and get back to him as soon as possible.

My research proved him right. The 1921 Louisiana Constitution had been amended in a very unusual way. While state law allowed citizens in every part of the state the right to incorporate new munic-

ipalities, there was one exception. The Constitution provided that in East Baton Rouge Parish, only the cities of Baker, Baton Rouge, and Zachary were allowed to exist!

★★★

I spoke with Mayor-President Woody Dumas, and he told me that he was responsible for amending the constitution to put in that language. He sternly told me that if I

tried to take it out, he would make sure I was defeated if I ever wanted to run for reelection to the House or anything else!

Undeterred, I asked other delegates what they thought. Should other cities someday be allowed to exist in East Baton Rouge Parish?

Delegate George Dewey Hayes of Scotlandville and other black delegates said they shared Mr. Belton’s views.

When I reached out to Delegates Gary O’Neill and Harvey Cannon, who represented parts of Central, they told me that some residents of their district were already saying Central should consider having its own city. Gary said Central wasn’t ready yet but that they would be someday.

I spoke to the Central Jaycees, and they were enthusiastic about the idea.

Later during the convention, the four delegates from the northern part of the parish — Hayes, Cannon, O’Neill, and I — offered an amendment removing the exception for East Baton Rouge Parish and thereby allowing the incorporation of new municipalities in any part of the parish. That provision was part of the Louisiana Constitution of 1974 when it was approved by the voters of the state.

This change allowed the incor-

See **THE GOAL** on Page 9

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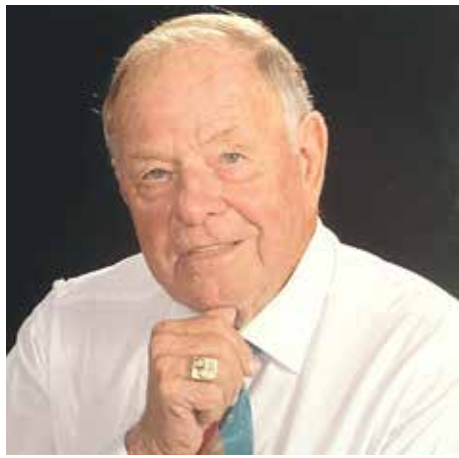


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A Great Man Has Passed from Among Us

Legendary Businessman Bill Simon



William "Bill" R. Simon, Sr.
August 16, 1936 - March 28, 2025

EDITOR'S NOTE: He was the ugliest woman on TV but the Best Man in the City! Bill Simon, a strong Christian family man, nearly 60 years in business in Baton Rouge, his job was to keep us all moving, a faithful friend, he entered a room and brought laughter and good cheer, he never knew a stranger, he would tell you the truth good or bad, encourage you, give you the shirt off his back, tireless, loved his fellow man, never said No, could not possibly be replaced, you could see Christ in him! He did it his way! — Woody Jenkins

CENTRAL — The man, the myth, the marketing legend! William Raymond (Bill) Simon, Sr., was 88 years young with more to give when he was tragically torn from his family in Central at dawn on March 28, 2025, his first morning of retirement.

Founder and owner of Simple Simon Tires for 60 years, Bill was a powerhouse. Whether for work, pleasure, or spiritual uplift, he

didn't know how to stop doing all he loved. His voice and laughter were one of a kind and will live on in the memory of all who loved him.

The fifth of nine children born to Henry and Barbara Simon on August 16, 1936, in Elk City, OK, Bill grew up on a cotton and wheat farm. Things were tough and got tougher when Bill was nine and his dad died. His mama worked hard to keep the family together and instilled strong values and work ethics in all her children. Growing up, Bill worked the farm and attended school in a one-room schoolhouse.

He went to work in the oil fields of Kansas until 1959 when he was drafted into the army. On weekends, he would sometimes visit his brother Vincent in Pampa. On one of those visits, he went on a blind date, and it led to marriage. When released from the army in 1961, they were a family of three, and then five.

Bill was determined to have his own business. He worked a string of jobs before he had the opportunity to lease an Esso station in 1966. In the early days, if work was slow, he'd take off on foot down Choctaw until he found someone who needed an oil change or flat repair. He'd deliver the vehicle back to its owner and find another car in need of repair. He worked 15-hour days, saved up, and bought the two lots next to the station. He saved more, borrowed some, and in 1975, opened the first Simple Simon.

The business flourished as his signature commercials—featuring crazy antics and a slew of characters

that he invented and portrayed, often an ugly woman—hit TV screens across Baton Rouge. Bill married Peggy in 1978. She has played the supporting role in his life and business for almost 50 years.

For decades, Bill made an annual trip to Manresa for a silent retreat to reflect and pray. He always returned feeling warm and fuzzy and excited to share his latest revelations. If you wanted anything, now was the time

to ask! He belonged to the EBR Lions Club and loved being a Lion—giving back by sponsoring children for the Lions summer camp, maintaining the camp vehicle. He too was once the child who had needed but couldn't afford medical help.

To relax, he loved fishing or digging in his vegetable garden. One of his most cherished traditions was hosting Christmas Eve. It was

See **BILL SIMON** on Page 15



BILL SIMON at the beginning of his 59-year career in business in Baton Rouge as owner of Simple Simon Car Care (left) and in the U.S. Army (right).



BILL AND PEGGY SIMON (left) and doing one of his crazy commercials (right)

Happy Anniversary City of Central!

20 Years Strong: Honoring the Past, Building the Future



Brian Wilson

Join me in celebrating a milestone — 20 years since incorporation of the City of Central! What began as a vision of a few dedicated volunteers has blossomed into a vibrant and thriving community we are all proud to call home.

Over the past two decades, we've seen Central grow, evolve, and become stronger. By creating our own city and our own community school system, we seized the future and became masters of our fate. We have learned that much can be accomplished when free people work together to achieve high goals.

This anniversary is a testament to the people of Central — moms and dads, hardworking businesses, churches, and many organizations that make our city a great place to live, work, and raise a family. Your involvement and passion make Central very special.

As we celebrate this significant milestone, we look forward to an even brighter future. Together, we will build on our successes, embrace new opportunities, and ensure that the Central community thrives for generations to come.

Let's celebrate the past 20 years and raise a toast to the great years ahead! Stay tuned for anniversary events and opportunities to celebrate this milestone together.

Warmly,

Brian Wilson

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The Leader was founded April 30, 1998. The Central City News was founded April 21, 2005. They merged May 4, 2006. The South Baton Rouge Journal began publication in 1989. It resumed publication as the Capital City News on Aug. 16, 2012, with Vol. 21, No. 1. It has become the St. George Leader. The North Baton Rouge Journal began on August 11, 1966 and went on hiatus in 1976. It resumed publication as the Istrouma Journal on April 6, 2017.

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SEN. BLAKE MIQUEZ spoke to the Ronald Reagan Newsmaker Luncheon last week on the Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature which began Monday. Miquez focused on the need for insurance reform. He was hosted by Central City News editor Woody Jenkins. To watch his speech, click here:



The People Clearly Said, “We Don’t Trust You!”

Amendment No. 2: The People Asserted Their Authority over State Government

The Message: Don't Insult Our Intelligence, Keep It Simple, Don't Mess with Churches

Woody Jenkins
 Editor

BATON ROUGE — All four proposed amendments to the Louisiana Constitution went down to defeat March 29 by a landslide. The most important was Amendment No. 2, which was heralded by Gov. Jeff Landry as “fiscal reform.” Actually, the 115-page constitutional amendment, the longest in state history, was a hodge-podge of good and bad.

All voters need is one reason to vote against a proposition on the ballot. They had many reasons to vote against No. 2 but perhaps the most significant was that it removed constitutional protection against property taxes being imposed on churches and other non-profits.

| Shall We Amend La. Const. to Adopt Amendment No. 2 | | |
|--|--------|-----|
| Yes | 18,840 | 25% |
| No | 56,742 | 75% |
| East Baton Rouge Results Saturday, March 29, 2025 | | |

What lessons should legislators learn from the landslide defeat of Amendment No. 2?

- Don't assume voters are stupid. The reality is that voters tried very hard to understand Amendment No. 2. However, it was almost impor-

tant. It was far, far too long to read and understand. Legislators should realize that if they don't have time to read a constitutional amendment, it is unreasonable to ask voters to.

- Keep it simple. Give us one concept at a time to vote on. Each proposed amendment should have one clear object and no more.

- Remember that we don't trust you! And you've earned it!

- Repeat: Don't ask us to “trust” the legislature and put important safeguards in the statutes. We don't trust you! Keep important safeguards in the Constitution.

- Don't even think about doing anything to jeopardize our churches,

our homes, our families, our businesses, or our taxes. We will vote it down and may vote you down too!

- Be humble. Don't tell us we're stupid when we vote against what you want. Remember this: As long as an election is free and fair, the people are always right, because it's their government.

Rep. Dixon McMakin Attempts to Take Over Republican Party of East Baton Rouge Parish

HB 200 Would Name Himself, Legislators, Statewide Officials to Govern Local GOP

BATON ROUGE - In an unusual move, Rep. Dixon McMakin of Baton Rouge has introduced a bill to name himself, other legislators, statewide officials, and members of the Public Service Commission and Board of Elementary and Secondary Education to the East Baton Rouge Republican Parish Executive Committee.

The bill is an attempted coup or take over of the party by legislative fiat rather than by the Republican voters of the parish. It is reminiscent of President Franklin Roosevelt's attempts to “pack” the U.S. Supreme Court, when he wasn't getting his way with the nine-member Supreme Court at the time.

McMakin's bill applies only to East Baton Rouge Parish and has no effect on the parish Executive Committees in the other 63 parishes.

The bill will be heard by the House Committee on House and Governmental Affairs at 9:30 a.m. on Wednesday, April 23 in House Committee Room 2 of the Capitol.

Currently, recognized political parties in the state are governed at the parish level by a Republican or Democratic Parish Executive Committee. Members of the committee are elected by grassroots Republican and Democratic voters respectively. The election occurs during the state's Presidential Primary in March every four years.

Five members of the PEC are elected at-large parishwide, and one member is elected from each Metro Council district or police jury district in the parish. In East Baton Rouge Parish, there are 12 Metro Council districts.

As a result, the East Baton Rouge Republican Parish Executive Committee has five at-large members and 12 members representing Metro Council districts.

The current members of the East Baton Rouge Republican Parish Executive Committee were elected by voters in March 2024. Their current term ends in March 2028.

However, under the terms of McMakin's bill, the people named in his bill would take office upon signature by the governor. As result, barring a legal challenge, the people handpicked by McMakin would serve alongside and have an equal vote with those elected to serve..

If HB200 is passed and a legal challenge is filed, the bill could face serious legal and constitutional issues. Both federal and state courts have repeatedly ruled that political parties are private organizations and not subject to control by government. For example, in the case

of *Republican Party of Louisiana v. Governor Mike Foster*, Foster had passed through the legislature a bill to change the membership of the Republican State Central Committee. The Louisiana Supreme Court struck down the rules Foster had passed and ruled that the Republican Party of Louisiana is a private organization and not subject to control by the State of Louisiana.

HB 200 is also noteworthy because it purports to apply to the Democratic Party as well as the Republican Party. This means the Republican-dominated Louisiana Legislature would dictate the membership of the East Baton Rouge Democratic Parish Executive Committee.

Republican State Party chairman Derek Babcock has expressed his strong opposition to HB 200. “The legislature has no business attempting to dictate the officers of our local Republican Party. If they want to be members of the PEC, they need to run for it like everyone else,” Babcock said.

On Tuesday, the East Baton Rouge Republican Parish Executive Committee voted unanimously to oppose HB 200.

Republican parish chairman Woody Jenkins said, “This bill is undemocratic. It attempts to take away control of the local Republican Party from rank-and-file, grassroots Republicans and turn it over to the politicians. Rep. McMakin can't just name himself and his hand-picked cronies as officers of the Republican Party.”

“If this is such a good idea, why is he doing it only in East Baton Rouge and not the rest of the state?”

“This won't happen, and if we have to go to court, we will.”

Ronald Reagan Newsmaker Luncheon
Tuesday, May 13, 2025

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SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION FUNDING RENEWAL



Proposed Fine Arts Wing at High School



Proposed New Pre-K Building at Bellingrath Hills Elementary



Proposed Renovations for the Intermediate and Middle school libraries

Central Community Schools is asking voters to approve the renewal of a 23.65 school funding millage that has been on the books since 2009.

Early voting is April 19-26.
Election Day is May 3.

This is not a new tax. Voting 'YES' will simply continue the existing millage rate that local property owners have been paying for the past 15 years – with NO increase.

The renewal will allow Central Schools to invest \$35 million in the following projects:

Bellingrath Hills Elementary School —

- New Pre-Kindergarten classroom building
- New carpool lane off Keystone Avenue
- Renovations to the school’s offices and library

Tanglewood Elementary School —

- Playground improvements
- New HVAC unit

Central Intermediate & Central Middle Schools —

- Major renovations to the libraries and interior hallways
- Safety improvements to the courtyard
- New furniture to replace old, worn items

Central High School —

- New Fine Arts wing with welcoming frontage on Wax Road
- Repurposing of campus space for:
 - ✓ Enhanced Career Tech Education programs
 - ✓ Additional athletic space
 - ✓ Improved baseball complex - press box and concessions
 - ✓ New courtyard between the main building and STEM Academy



Scan for video to learn more

Vote April 19-26 or May 3
FOR A STRONGER COMMUNITY

Coach Sid Takes Stock of His First 100 Days

Murder Down 23%, Other Shootings 33% In 1st Quarter of 2025: Mayor Sid Edwards

Public Safety, Blight, Homelessness Still Top Agenda Items for Sid's Administration

BATON ROUGE - Mayor-President Coach Sid Edwards commemorated his first 100 days in office under the banner "100 Days of Momentum," a theme that reflects the administration's progress in addressing East Baton Rouge Parish's most pressing challenges.

In just over three months, Mayor-President Edwards' administration has worked tirelessly to deliver real, measurable results in public safety, homelessness, and blight—three cornerstone priorities of his vision to build a stronger, cleaner, and more compassionate parish.

"Our team didn't waste a single moment," Edwards said. "From Day One, we got to work on what matters most to the people of East Baton Rouge Parish. And we're not slowing down."

Public Safety: Safer Streets, Stronger Communities

Through strategic coordination with law enforcement and commu-



Coach Sid Edwards
Mayor-President

nity partners, the City-Parish has significantly improved public safety. As of the end of the first quarter of 2025:

- Homicides are down 23 percent compared to Q1 of 2024.
- Non-fatal shootings have dropped 33 percent compared to 2024.
- "These reductions are more than just numbers," Edwards noted. "They represent lives saved, families spared, and neighbor-

hoods strengthened."

Addressing Homelessness with Compassion and Coordination

During a historic winter storm earlier this year, the Mayor's Office led an emergency response effort that transitioned 30 individuals off the streets and into safe shelters. This critical effort underscored the administration's commitment to providing a pathway to lasting support.

The Mayor's Office also launched the Community Outreach Partners Committee (COPC), an innovative initiative aimed at streamlining services and enhancing coordination between the City-Parish and local organizations dedicated to serving those experiencing homelessness.

Blight Reduction: Cleaner, Safer Neighborhoods

In its first 100 days, the Edwards Administration has made visible progress in the fight against blight:

- 14 condemned structures have been demolished
 - 141 properties were abated for trash and overgrown vegetation
- "We know that blight affects quality of life, property values, and public health," Edwards said.

"That's why we're taking aggressive action and holding the line on property standards."

Looking Ahead

As Mayor-President Edwards and his administration look beyond the first 100 days, the focus remains clear: continuing the momentum and delivering on the promise to serve every resident with integrity, energy, and purpose. "We are proud of what we've accomplished, but we are not satisfied," Edwards said. "We are just getting started. The best is yet to come."

The Past 20 Years At Your Fingertips

CENTRAL — Did you know the past 20 years of Central's history since the **Central City News'** first edition is all online and waiting for your visit? The **Central City News'** archives — all 498 print editions — plus the **St. George Leader**, **Istrouma Journal**, and other publications are online and searchable absolutely free. To visit, go to

www.centralcitynews.net and type in any topic or name. For thousands of articles in a traditional website format, go to www.centralcitynews.us

Happy Birthday 20 Years City of Central!



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Can you believe its been 20 years! How blessed we are to live in a wonderful community with great people and great schools! We love living and working in Central, our hometown and our haven. Happy Birthday, City of Central! Here's to many more years of growth, prosperity, and a bright future for all of us!

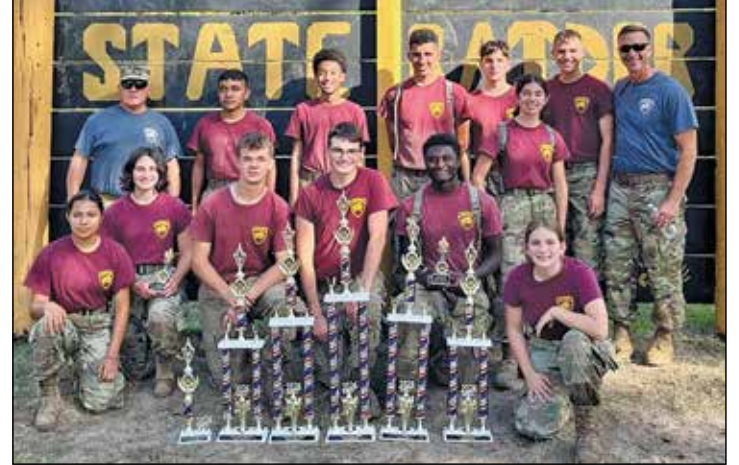
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Gil and Michelle Matherne

Wildcats Awarded Honor Unit of Distinction Gold Star

Central JROTC Earned 98% Rating



NEW BATTALION COMMANDER ABIGAIL SHERLIN takes command in ceremonies at Central High School. At center, the Central JROTC color guard. At right, the Central JROTC won 1st Place overall at the state Raider meet in November 2024. The color guard marched in the Central Christmas Parade and at the State Championship football game.




CENTRAL HIGH JROTC cadets adopted a highway — Wax Road in Central. At right, the Central JROTC volunteered at the Tanglewood Elementary Math and Science Night.

CENTRAL - The Central High School Jr. ROTC program is completing a successful year. The unit won 1st Place overall at the state

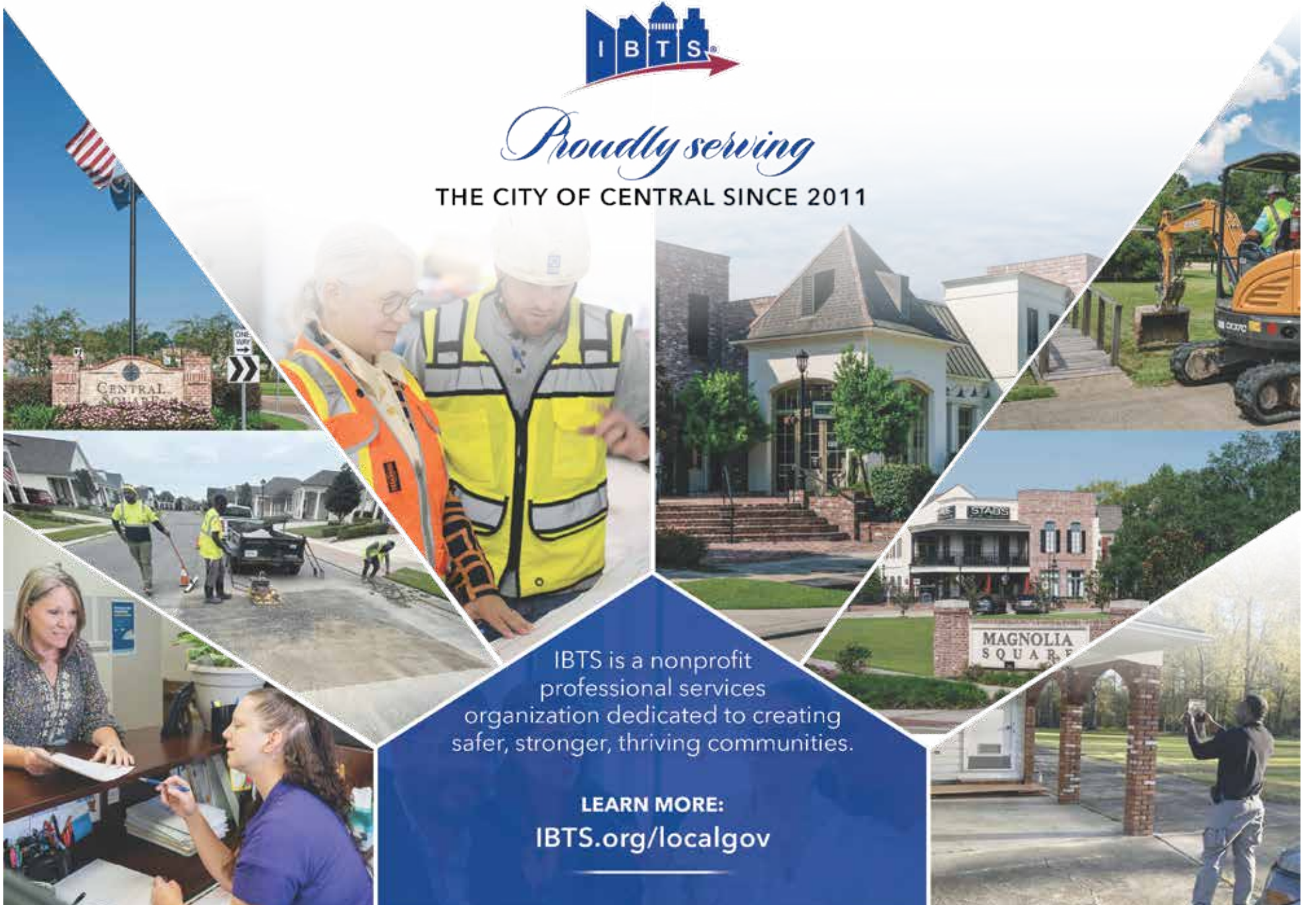
Raider meet in November 2024. Jon Jones, the outgoing battalion commander, and Abigail Sherlin, the incoming commander, were

chosen to represent Central in the "ultimate Raider" competition. Col. Joshua Germann and Sgt. Timothy Dubois serve as instruc-

tors. In February, Army representatives visited Central High to inspect the JROTC program. The unit's awards ceremony was held Tuesday.



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The Goal Was to Duplicate Texas System Of Independent School Districts in EBR



AN ORGANIZATION MEETING of Northeast Citizens for Incorporation in April 2005 included (left photo, clockwise from left side) Rodney Bonvillain, Rusty Jacobs, R.S. Saucier, Russell Starns, Pete Humble, and Tim Craig. Sitting across the table (right photo) were Clif Richardson, Aaron Moak, Steven Stockstill, and Joan Lansing. Starns, the incorporator of Central, later served as school board president. Humble, Moak and Lansing later served on the City Council. Richardson was elected state representative, and Stockstill was the first city clerk.



MAYOR-PRESIDENT KIP HOLDEN (left) listened to a question from R. J. Saucier at an informational meeting before the vote on incorporation in 2005. Holden promised not to oppose Central incorporation. Listening to Saucier and taking notes is *Central City News* editor Woody Jenkins. At right, Russell Starns, Rusty Jacobs, Clif Richardson, and Bobby Watts.

Continued from Page 3
poration of Central in 2005 and St. George in 2024.

★★★

In 1974, I drove out to Central to have supper with Donald Ray and Mona Kennard. My purpose was to ask Donald Ray to consider running for the Louisiana House from Central area in the 1975 election. He agreed to run and was elected.

Donald Ray and I became close friends. We were both conservatives, and the philosophy of our districts was very similar.

In 1980, we and other conservative lawmakers worked together to pass the Private Education Deregulation Act, which legalized home schooling in Louisiana and removed all regulations from private and Christian schools. Soon there were more than 300 private schools in the state.

Louisiana was the first state to legalize home education, and it too began to take off. There are currently 20,000 children in home school in Louisiana.

By the 1990's, many members of the legislature from East Baton Rouge Parish were looking for solutions to the parish's declining public school system.

Most of us felt the best path was to duplicate Texas' system of having small independent community-based school districts, each with its

own elected school board and tax base.

Baker School System

Sen. Mike Cross of Baker and I took the lead by introducing a constitutional amendment to create the City of Baker School District.

Before his election to the Legislature, Sen. Cross served as Mayor of Baker and he was eager for Baker to escape from the East Baton Rouge Parish School System and have its own schools.

The constitutional amendment passed the Louisiana Legislature by a 2/3rds vote and then was approved by vote of the people state-wide and in Baker.

Unfortunately, the East Baton Rouge Parish School System was under a federal court order, and the federal judiciary refused to allow the new Baker school system to go into effect.

The case of Baker dragged on for years. In the course of that period, thousands of residents fled the City of Baker and it was left a shadow of its former self. When the courts finally allowed the Baker School District to go into effect, the city was mired in poverty.

While the fate of the Baker school district was languishing in the federal courts, members of the East Baton Rouge Parish legislative delegation continued to work to find solutions.

Zachary School System

Our next step was to create the Zachary Community School District. Rep. John Travis took the lead and introduced a constitutional amendment to place before the voters.

Rep. Donald Ray Kennard and I worked hard for the new school system. Surprisingly, we were joined by Sen. Kip Holden, who agreed to co-author the constitutional amendment.

Once again, our attempt to create new independent school districts in East Baton Rouge Parish ran headon into the federal courts. They delayed the plan, and it was beginning to look hopeless.

Then there was a breakthrough! After more than 45 years, the federal courts lifted their control of schools in the parish.

In 2003, the Baker and Zachary school systems were allowed to go into effect. For Baker, it was late coming, but for Zachary, the new school system came just in the nick of time.

The new Zachary Community School District immediately rose to be the No. 1 school system in Louisiana, a place it has held almost continuously for the past 22 years.

First Central Petition Drive

The creation of the Baker and Zachary school systems gave hope

to the people of Central that they could have their own city and their own community school system.

In 2003, Russell Starns and a group of volunteers formed an organization to promote creation of an independent school system in Central. However, at the State Capitol, they were told by key legislators such as Sen. Kip Holden that they must first create a city.

Holden told them that while there was no legal requirement that a new school system be created around an existing city, that he would not support a new school system unless Central first had a city in place.

As a result, Starns and his group shifted gears and focused on creating the City of Central. They filed a petition with the Secretary of State officially starting a petition drive to put the issue on the ballot. State law required that they get the signatures of 25 percent of the registered voters inside the proposed city limits within six months of filing the petition.

The incorporation movement soon got the required signature, and the Registrar of Voters certified the petition as complete.

However, Gov. Kathleen Blanco determined that the petition did not state that the boundaries of the city were contiguous. She refused to

See CENTRAL'S on Page 19

Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall



VIETNAM VETERANS (left) were among volunteers who assembled the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall at Life Tabernacle Church in Central. At center, St. George Mayor Dustin Yates



VIETNAM VETERANS (left) point to names of men they served with. Mayor Dustin Yates of St. George with his father, Mayor Wade Evans



OPENING CEREMONIES (left). Judge Darrell White and Alabama Chief Justice Roy Moore discuss the New Testament published by the U.S. government during



THE WALL WAS BREATHTAKING especially at night. The monumental sacrifice of those listed was difficult to grasp. At center, everyone who helped assemble The Wall gather

SCAN QR CODE
The Wall That Heals
March 20, 2025

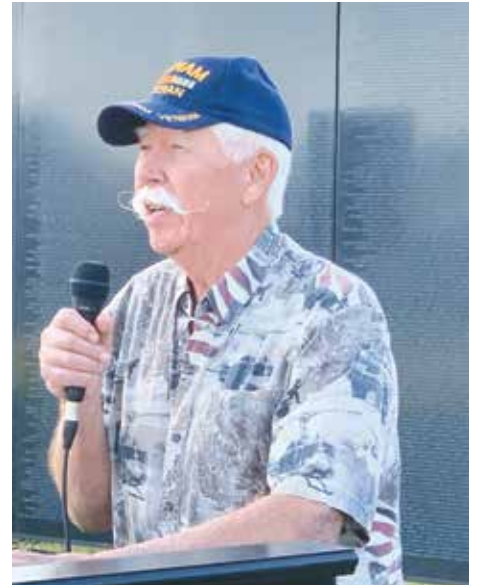


Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall
Photos by Woody Jenkins and Jo

Visits Life Tabernacle in Central



s and his father move a portion of the wall into place. Professor Michele Ghetti. James Lee. At right, Vietnam Veterans Wall chairman Jeannie Spell and Alabama Chief Justice Roy Moore.



of Central, and Mayor-President Sid Edwards of East Baton Rouge Parish. Rev. Tony Spell who hosted The Wall with ROTC soldiers from LSU.



WWII. Chief Justice and Mrs. Roy Moore, Mr. and Mrs. Jeff Wittenbrink, and Rev. and Sister Tony Spell. Claston Bernard with Judge Moore. The Lon Vicknair family



red for a photo. It took them six hours. At right, Connie Hair of the Freedom Caucus touches the names, and Jolice Provost of the *Central City News* rubs a name to help remember.

Wall • City of Central, Louisiana
Jolice Provost for Central City News



SCAN QR CODE
Ceremony
March 21, 2025

Central Tops Parkway in Regionals



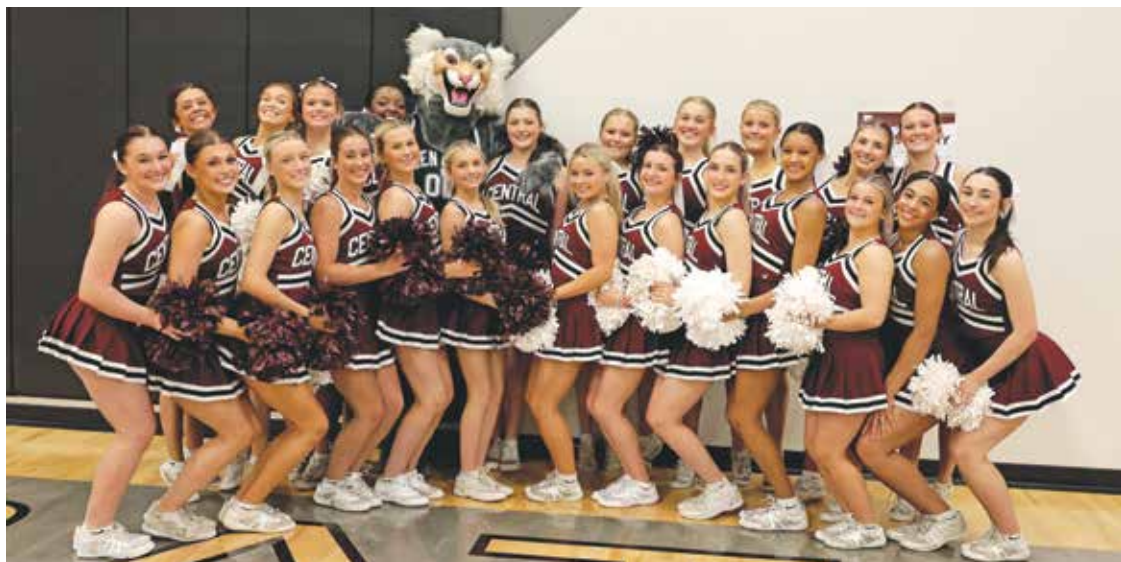
CENTRAL'S JACE CONRAD #5 with a slam dunk as players marvel at the feat of Conrad's two-point score.



#23 MARKELL SAMPSON scores for the Central Wildcats in their home game against Parkway High School.



THE CENTRAL WILDCATS pull off the win against a determined Parkway team. Willie the Wildcat at center with the "W" win sign. #24 Kead Franklin (right) scores!



COLLIN VERRETT #12 (left) at the free throw line. Varsity cheerleaders pose with Willie the Wildcat. Central fan (right) celebrates the Mardi Gras night win!

Central High Win Over EA Secures Spot in Final Four State Tournament



#23 MARKELL SAMPSON (left) at the opening tip. #24 Ked Franklin (center) keeping East Ascension from scoring. #32 Scott Smith up with two points.



#1 STEVEN RANEL (left) in action. #5 Jace Conrad getting one up for the Wildcats. #1 Steven Ranel fights for the ball. #23 Markell Sampson (right).



CELEBRATING (left) #10 Karson Perrin and #5 Jace Conrad. At center, head coach Scott Osborne cuts down the net with his wife. Celebration!

Kolbe Campbell Elected Youth Legislature Governor

17 Central Middle Students Learned Legislative Process At Old State Capitol

CENTRAL - Youth Legislature is a two-day mock legislative session held at the Old State Capitol in Baton Rouge. Each year more than 1,800 middle school students from across Louisiana come together to learn the legislative process through hands-on experience.

This year 17 Central Middle students participated in the program and one of them, Kolbe Campbell, was elected Governor.

During Youth Legislature, students take part in the process and procedures of the Louisiana state government. This program allows students to learn the legislative process first hand.

Students run for and elect Governor, Speaker of the House, and Senate President. Through Youth Legislature, students have the opportunity to participate in the entire legislative process. Students write, sponsor, and debate bills. They lead and serve on legislative committees and speak publicly before an audience.

Student reports gather and report information about bills, senators, and the governor's cabinet, while photo journalists document



LA Youth Legislature Governor Kolbe Campbell of Central Middle

the proceedings through photography and videography.

Youth Legislature provides students with the experience that supports and solidifies information studied in the classroom. Youth Legislature promotes and encour-

ages youth leadership, participation, cooperation and teamwork among peers. This event gives the students the confidence they need to go on to participate in leadership roles in high school and their community.

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Agatha Christie's Murder on the Orient Express Comes To Central's Sullivan Theater April 25 to May 4 Nightly

CENTRAL - Based on Agatha Christie's classic novel, *Murder on the Orient Express*, is a thrilling adaptation by Ken Ludwig that brings the Queen of Mystery's most famous detective, Hercule Poirot, to life on stage.

The play takes audiences aboard the luxurious Orient Express in the 1930s, where a murder is discovered just after midnight. With the train stranded due to a snowdrift, Poirot must interrogate an eclectic cast of passengers each harboring secrets and motives to uncover the truth before the killer strikes again. Twists, red herrings, and suspense abound in this stylish and fast-paced whodunit.

With a clever script and a dazzling setting, *Murder on the Orient Express*, delivers an unforgettable theatrical experience that will



AGATHA CHRISTIE'S Murder on the Orient Express, April 25 to May 4

keep audiences guessing until the very end.

About the Theater. Sullivan Theater first opened in June 2023 and performed four shows in its inaugural year. As a community theater, all performers are local volunteers from the Central community and surrounding areas. Later in 2025, Sullivan Theater will stage the classic Rodgers and Hammerstein musical *Oklahoma!*, the outrageous theatre company comedy *Noises Off*, Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest*, and end with the holiday blockbuster *Elf the Musical*.

Show Info: *Murder on the Orient Express* runs April 25 through May 4 with a 7:30 p.m. curtain Thursday-Saturday and a 2 p.m. matinee on Sundays. Tickets are on sale now for \$25 each at www.sullivantheater.com/tickets.

Sullivan Theater is located at 8849 Sullivan Road, Baton Rouge, LA 70818. Box Office 225-778-8990. Website: www.sullivantheater.com. Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/sullivantheater>.

Cast: Hercule Poirot – Knick Moore, Monsieur Bouc – Jon Allen Russo; Mary Debenham – Delilah Lee Guilbeau Michel; The Conductor/Head Waiter – Oreoluwa Onasanya; Hector MacQueen – Adam Marks; Princess Dragomiroff – Margaret Lipscomb; Greta Ohlsson – Debbie Upton Carr; Countess Andrenyi – Brooke Frost; Helen Hubbard – Carole Moore; Colonel Arbuthnot – Justin Rogers; Samuel Ratchett – Mike Sager

Bill Simon: Unforgettable Inspiration for BR

Continued from Page 4

a production—seafood gumbo, toddlers, a bonfire, fireworks, gifts! But the main event was the hayride. Dressed as Santa, Bill drove a green tractor hitched to a long trailer he decorated himself. With lights twinkling, and Carols blaring, he pulled the trailer through nearby neighborhoods as the family threw candy canes to whoever came out to watch and wave. Of course, Bill would stop and personally wish them a Merry Christmas.

Bill is predeceased by his mother Barbara Greteman Simon, father

Henry Peter Simon, son William Raymond (Billy) Simon, Jr., son Gregory Scott (Greg) Simon, ex-wife Meloda Ann McCrary (Melody), brother Vincent Simon, brother John Simon, sister Mary Simon Church, and brother Carl Simon.

Bill is survived by his wife Peggy Morel Simon, daughter Angela Simon (Angie) Swanford, son Christopher Nicholas (Chris) Simon (Herpreet), grandchildren Jennifer Anne Long, Heather Long Boudreaux (Jake), Rebekah Leann Strickland, Megan Nicole Swanford, William Michael (Will)

Simon, Adam Mitchell Simon, Desmond Emerson Singh Simon, Lakshmi Aleah Kaur Simon, and nine great-grandchildren.

He was a cherished husband, father, grandfather, and great grandfather. Our hearts are broken, but we couldn't be prouder of who he was and all he accomplished.

Visitation took place on April 9 at Rabenhorst Funeral Home, 11000 Florida Blvd. Visitation was held at St. Alphonsus Church, followed by a KC Rosary and Mass. Burial was at Green Oaks Cemetery.

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Bank of Zachary Announces Key Promotions

ZACHARY - Bank of Zachary has announced the promotions of Ashley Boudreaux to Assistant Branch Manager (Main) & Bank Officer, Haley Davis to Assistant Vice President, and Michael McLin to Bank Officer. These advancements underscore the bank's commitment to recognizing and nurturing exceptional talent within its ranks.

According to a statement from Bank of Zachary, Ashley Boudreaux has consistently demonstrated growth and leadership potential. With her experience managing the innovative in-school Bronco Branch and mentoring staff at the Main Branch, combined with her operational expertise and problem-solving acumen, Ashley is a natural fit for the role of Assistant Branch Manager.

Haley Davis's promotion to Assistant Vice President is a testament to her exemplary leadership as Main Branch Manager. Her strategic vision, dedication to customer service, and proven track record of driving results have played a pivotal role in the branch's success. Haley's ability to lead, inspire, and execute will be invaluable in her new position.

Michael McLin has earned his promotion to Bank Officer due to his commitment to the "Bank of Zachary Way." During his time in the IT Department, Michael has demonstrated exceptional interpersonal skills, growing banking knowledge, and a proactive approach to learning. His ability to bridge the gap between IT and banking operations, coupled with



Ashley Boudreaux
Asst. Branch Manager



Haley Davis
Assistant Vice President



Michael McLin
Bank Officer

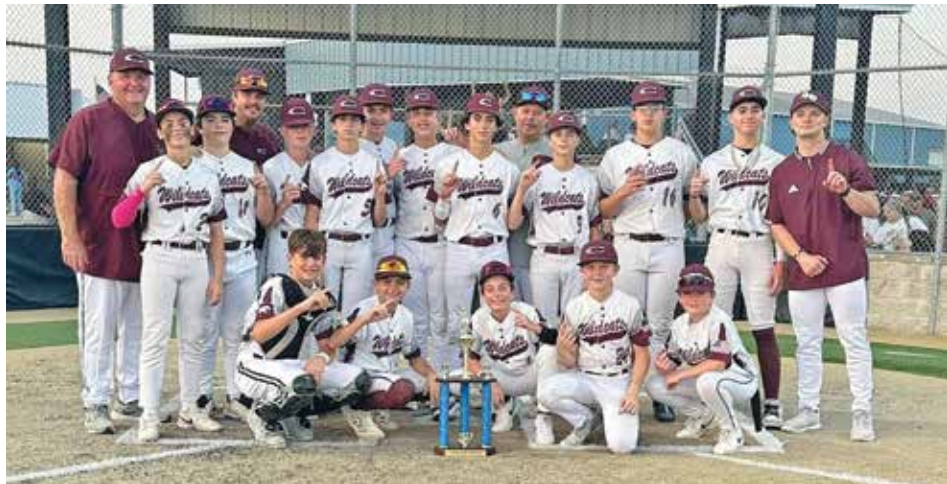
his attention to compliance, will enhance the bank's operational efficiency and customer service.

"We are thrilled to announce these well-deserved promotions," said Mark Marionneaux, Bank of Zachary president and CEO. "Ashley, Haley, and Michael have shown unwavering dedication,

strong leadership, and a deep understanding of our values. Their continued contributions will be instrumental in driving the bank's success and supporting our community."

Founded in 1904, Bank of Zachary is the oldest State chartered bank in East Baton Rouge

Parish serving residents, businesses and communities. Bank of Zachary is locally owned and operated. Hometown banking is Bank of Zachary's mission and specialty. The FDIC Standard Maximum Deposit Insurance Amount (SMDIA) for deposits is \$250,000 per depositor, per insured financial institution. For more information, visit www.bankofzachary.com or call (225) 654-2701.



MIDDLE SCHOOL CHAMPIONS - With a final score of 4-1, the 7th grade Central Middle Wildcat baseball team defeated Northwestern to become the 2025 middle school champions with an impressive 12-2 season.



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Devall Family to Cyprus



THE DEVALL FAMILY Garrison, Malana, John Hayes, Eric, & Jameson Devall

CENTRAL — Eric Devall, a lifelong resident of Central, along with his wife Malana and their sons, are heading to the Middle East to serve as missionaries. They will establish a missions base on the Middle Eastern island of Cyprus.

There they will serve in a local Cypriot church, train missionary interns, and support missionaries and indigenous leaders in neighboring countries across North Africa and the Middle East.

“The Middle East is part of

the 10/40 Window, an area of the world with over five billion people, most of whom have never heard the gospel,” Eric said.

“The 10/40 Window has the fewest Christians, the fewest missionaries, and the least amount of funding for missions. So the need is great.”

If you would like to contribute to their mission, go to www.1040hope.org/donate and select “Missionaries: Devall Family.” For more information, email Eric Devall at ericdevall@1040hope.org.

DeLaughters to Malaysia



DAVID AND JAMIE DELAUGHTER

CENTRAL — David and Jamie DeLaughter, along with their three children are now in Malaysia relieving a family who serves

there, so they can take a needed break. They will return to Central in three months.

Photo by Woody Jenkins

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Blackwater Community Center Offers New Martial Arts Training Program

Mark, Wendy Jones Have Many Years of Training in Kung Fu, Other Martial Arts

CENTRAL — A new martial arts school has started at the Blackwater Community Center. Instructors Mark and Wendy Jones have a combined 80 years of training in various martial arts such as traditional Shaolin Kung Fu, Southern Hung Gar Kung Fu, Wing Chun and Qi Gong. They also studied Karate, Judo, traditional Japanese Jujitsu and self-defense.

Mark is an 8th degree black belt in the “Sigung” (style head) of White Dove Kung Fu.

Wendy is a 4th degree Black belt and a full instructor in White Dove Kung Fu. In addition, their



Mark and Wendy Jones

son, Chas Jones is a black belt instructor in the school. Chas started his training at the age of 8 some 40 years ago.

Both Mark and Wendy are Keichu Black Belt Hall of Fame mem-

bers and they have been ranked members of the United States Karate Alliance.

Wendy served the United Methodist Church as the Administrative Assistant to the Baton Rouge District Superintendent and also served at the Louisiana United Methodist Conference office.

In 1984-1985, Mark worked on the security team for the musical artist Prince during his Purple Rain Tour, along with some of his fellow Kung Fu practitioners.

Mark is a ministry assistant at Blackwater United Methodist Church. All of their instructions are in a Christian atmosphere. Mark is a former recipient of the “William T. May” award. This award is given to businessmen of high moral and ethical standards by the Louisiana Moral and Civic Foundation at the Governor’s Prayer Breakfast.

For more information about the Martial Arts programs, email sigungwhitedovekungfu@gmail.com or just come by during class times.

The newly-remodeled Blackwater Community Center at 10000 Blackwater Road will host a variety of activities for Central and surrounding communities.

During the day, it will have a large homeschool and after school care program with many activities for children. In the evenings, there is volleyball league on Wednesdays and Sundays and Martial Arts every Monday and Thursday. There is also a Qi-Gong (Chinese therapy) class on Wednesday nights in the Blackwater Fellowship Hall at no charge. There will also be basketball, baseball and pickle ball.

It is said that the most wonderful journeys begin with one step. Mark and Wendy invite you to step into The Blackwater Center and begin your journey! For more information, call Blackwater United Methodist Church at 225-261-4646.

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Education and Experience

- Bachelor’s degree in HR, Business Administration, or related field. HR certification (e.g., SHRM-CP, PHR) preferred.
- Minimum five years’ HR experience, including two years in a managerial role, preferably in banking or financial services.
- SHRM-SCP, SPHR, or similar certifications are a plus.
- Key Responsibilities
- Lead recruitment, staffing, develop job descriptions and manage onboarding/offboarding.
- Create and implement HR policies and procedures.
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- Manage employee relations, ensuring a positive workplace environment.
- Ensure compliance with current federal, state, and local labor laws.
- Monitor and report HR metrics (turnover rates & hiring trends) to senior management.
- Support an inclusive workplace culture and represent the bank in community affairs.

Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities

- Strong knowledge of employment laws (FLSA, ADA, FMLA, EEOC, and others).
- Excellent recruiting, conflict resolution, and performance management skills.
- Proficient in Microsoft Suite (Excel, Word), payroll, and benefits software.
- Strong written and verbal communication with attention to detail.
- Effectively prioritize and complete multiple tasks.
- Confidentiality and professionalism are essential at all times.

Working Conditions

- Office-based with periodic travel to branches, training locations and community events.
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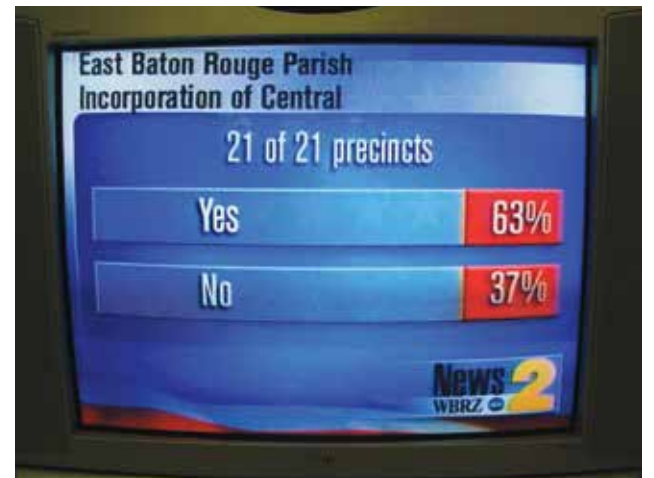
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Central's Victory at Polls Ushered in A New Period and a New Newspaper

Continued from Page 9

call the election.

Second Central Petition Drive

So it was back to the drawing board for Starns and his group. They started a second petition drive and this time made sure that there were no problems with the boundary lines. Once again, Starns' group got the required signatures from 25 percent of the voters in the proposed city, and those names were certified by the Registrar of Voters.

Until this point, most of the public debate in Central revolved around the need for its own community school system. The need for a new city was not high on people's agenda. Creating a city was seen as necessary only because some powerful people at the Capitol were demanding it.

Most people were happy to be part of a beautiful rural community without its own government if they could have a school system.

Campaign Runs into Problems

Gradually the narrative of the incorporation movement began to change. Russell Starns and other leaders began to talk more and more about the need for a city and less and less about the need for a school system. As they did so, public support for incorporation seemed to be declining, at least in my estimation.

It was at this point that I got involved in the fray. I was no longer in the Louisiana Legislature. I had completed my 7th four-year term in the House in 2000 and decided not to run for reelection.

In early 2004, I got a call from former Rep. Tony Perkins. Tony had worked with me at WBTR-TV and had been my seatmate in the House of Representatives. Tony had decided not to run for reelection in 2004 and he too was now out of elective office.

Tony asked that I call Russell Starns and offer to help with the campaign for incorporation. The next day I received a call from my friend Rep. Donald Ray Kennard also asking me to get involved in the pro-incorporation campaign.

That night I called Russell Starns, and we spoke for over an hour. I gave him my perspective on how to win the campaign. My most important point was that the movement should refocus once again on the need for a new school system. Even though people would be voting on incorporation of a city, their real goal was a school system. I emphasized that focusing on schools

would motivate people to go vote.

Listening to Central Leaders

Russell liked my idea and asked that I come out and meet the next day with his 30-member organizing committee. I came to a meeting at the Greenwell Springs Library and met the leadership of the incorporation movement including Russell Starns, Louis DeJohn, and others.

I sat through the meeting taking notes and without saying much. I attended a second meeting and then a third meeting.

Listening to the leaders of the incorporation movement, I learned how much they loved Central and what great ideas that had for the future of their community.

It made me realize what an incredible opportunity was opening in Central. Not just an opportunity to start a new city and a community school system. Those are very big things that can change a community for generations to come. But there was even more to it.

The Chance for a Model City

I saw in the incorporation of Central the opportunity to create a city based on traditional conservative Christian values that could be a model not just for Louisiana but for the entire nation.

I saw in the proposed school community system the opportunity to create high achieving schools that would go back to basics and restore the values in our young people that have been systematically removed from public schools. I saw that this new school system, representing the people of Central, could also be a model for the nation.

During my third meeting with the organizing committee, Russell Starns asked me to stand and say a few words about what direction their movement should take.

As I stood to speak, my mind focused on the opposition and misinformation the committee was facing. The opposition was playing on peoples' fear of the unknown and they seemed to be winning. The media in Baton Rouge were very hostile to the incorporation of Central, and there was no objective source of information to tell the truth about the need for incorporation and the need for a new school system.

Until that moment, I had given little thought to the need for a newspaper in Central. I hadn't been in the newspaper business since we sold the North Baton Rouge Journal in 1969. I had been in the TV business. We launched WBTR-TV in 1987 and sold the station early in 2005.

I started by saying, "It's been an honor to sit here for the past three meetings and listen to all your hopes and dreams for Central. I came with some skepticism. However, after hearing how passionate you are and how much you love this community, I wholeheartedly agree that you do need a city, and you certainly do need a school system."

"Legislators have said you must have a city in place before you have a school system, and they are right. That's because it is of utmost importance that you have control over planning and zoning. Otherwise, your new school system can

be destroyed almost overnight."

"Yes, you need a city and a school system. However, there's something you need even more than a city or a school system. **You need a newspaper!** With a newspaper, you have a voice. With a newspaper, you can get yourself a city or a school system, because you can inform and motivate public opinion. Right now, everything in Central is rumor and hearsay. You have no authoritative source of information to let people know the truth. You certainly can't depend on the Baton Rouge media, which oppose what you are doing. You need your own newspaper; yet, it needs to be independent of you. That's because if you win these battles and get your own city and your own school system, many of you will be in the government, and you will need someone to watch you too!"

There was some applause and nodding of heads. Russell said, "Great idea! When is your first edition?"

"What do you mean?" I asked.

Russell said, "It needs to be done, and you're the only one we have who can do it!"

After the meeting, my wife Diane and I talked long into night.

I was no longer in the legislature. We had just sold WBTR-TV and had a little money to work with. What intrigued me was what could Central become? What could we be part of? Could Central be that shining city on a hill? Could it be a role model for what communities could do anywhere in America?

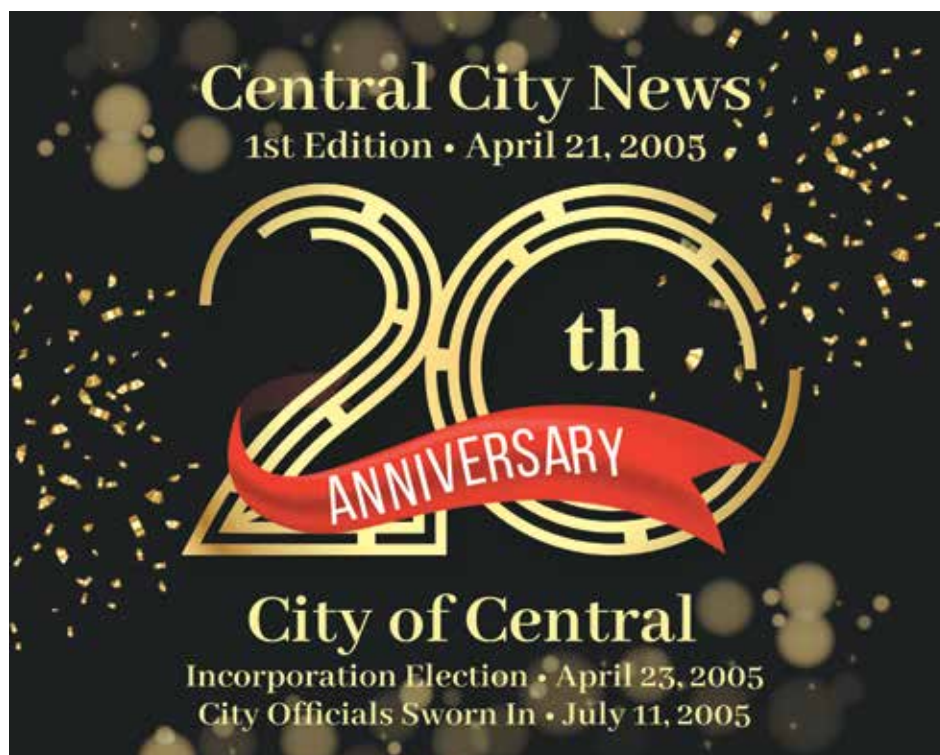
The News Hits the Street

Four weeks later, on Thursday, April 21, 2005, 10,000 copies of the First Edition of the **Central City News** hit the streets! It was just in time to give the people of Central the facts on incorporation. Two days later, the people of Central went to the polls and voted overwhelmingly to incorporate Central as Louisiana's newest city. The rest is history!

Today we celebrate the 20th anniversary of the First Edition of the **Central City News**. In June, we will publish our 500th edition!

Over the next few issues of the newspaper, I will write more about what happened in those early days after incorporation and more about the City of Central and the **Central City News'** role in covering the incredible events of the past 20 years in Central.

The 20th Anniversary Edition will be July 18, 2025.





20 Years of Great Memories

Thank You to the City of Central & Central City News



1st District Title in 31 years



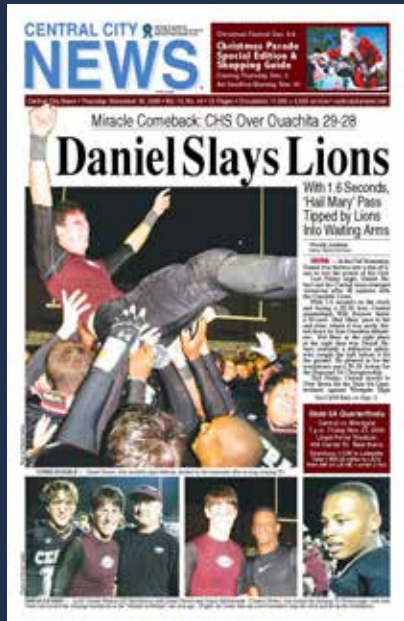
1st Win against W. Jeff in 59 years



The Miracle in Metairie



Louisiana's 5-A Coach of the Year



The Miracle in the Cathouse



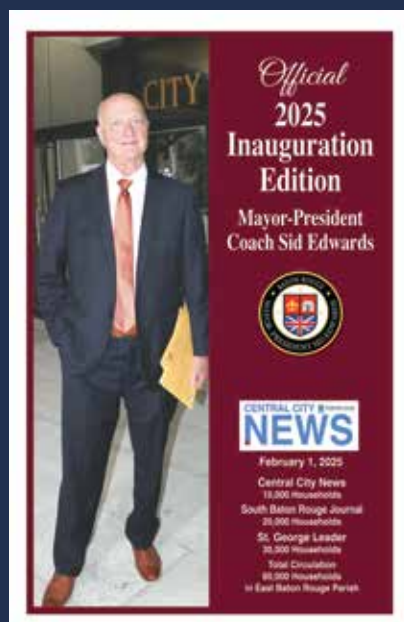
Cinderella Wildcats Challenge No. 1



Coach Sid Takes on Obesity



Coach Sid: A Coach's Coach



Our New Mayor-President



Mayor President Coach Sid Edwards