



The Bayou Plaquemine Waterfront Park, with its beautiful new pavilion at far left, is lit up for the holidays. (Photo by Paul Bouy)

Medical center site gets environmental OK, activity abounds

The hustle/bustle of the holidays is also the pace of activity surrounding the new medical center for Iberville, as the parish pushes the project on several fronts.

Parish President J. Mitchell Ourso, Jr. said the parish has received the federally required environmental and geotechnical impact assessments of the proposed site, and they show the medical facility will cause no adverse impact to the area.

The parish is awaiting final clearance of these reports by the Louisiana Office of Community Development – Disaster Recovery Unit to obtain release of the federal funds for purchase of the property. Ourso said he hopes the land purchase will be completed in January.

The 27-acre site, located on La. Hwy 1 just past St. Louis Subdivision, is being purchased from Edward J. Gay Planting and Manufacturing Co., Ltd. for \$1,080,000.

In addition, the scope of services contract with Ochsner Foundation is currently being completed, and he expects to have that contract signed by the end of February.

“We are optimistic that we will begin construction of the new medical facility by the third quarter of 2012, and the facility will be operational by mid 2013,” said Ourso.

The Iberville Parish Council’s share of the \$44 million Hurricane Gustav recovery funds was \$22 million, with the rest going to municipalities. The parish will use its \$22 million, plus a \$3 million state appropriation, to build and equip the medical facility.

*You Are
 Cordially Invited
 To the Swearing In Ceremony
 Of Iberville Parish President
 J. Mitchell Ourso, Jr.
 and the Iberville Parish Council*

*Tuesday, January 10, 7 p.m.
 Iberville Parish Courthouse*

Outgoing Senator Rob Marionneaux will be the guest speaker. President Ourso will begin his fourth term as parish president. Council members to be installed include: Warren “T-Notchie” Taylor, Ed Reeves, Henry “Bucket” Scott, Leonard “Buck” Jackson, Salaris “Sal” Butler, Howard Oubre, Jr., Hunter Markins, Terry J. Bradford, Louis “Pete” Kelley, “Tim” Vallet, “Matt” Jewell, and “Bart” Morgan.

Upcoming Events and Activities

January 10 - 7 p.m.,
 Courthouse - Swearing-In ceremony of Parish President J. Mitchell Ourso, Jr. and the Iberville Parish Council

January 14 – Iberville 4-H Livestock Show at Mike Zito Multi-Purpose Center

January 16 – Martin Luther King Day holiday

Feb. 4 – Krewe of Cypress Mardi Gras Ball

Feb. 11 – Krewe of Okeanos Mardi Gras Ball

Feb. 18 – Krewe du Roi Mardi Gras Ball

Feb. 21 – Mardi Gras holiday

March 3 – 11 a.m., Grand opening and ribbon cutting of Pavilion at Bayou Plaquemine Waterfront Park

March 30 & 31 – Relay for Life

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\$676,000 in upgrades coming for Bayou Sorrel boat landing

The Bayou Sorrel boat landing will get a new look in 2012, thanks to a grant from the Atchafalaya Basin Program operated by the Louisiana Department of Natural Resources.

The project will include a large new parking area with lighting, a restroom building, a walkway and pier, a handicapped boat parking area, boat parking area and additional boat launch area to provide five additional boat lanes.

The plans and specifications for the project are complete, and the project will go out for bid in early 2012.

The upgraded facility will better accommodate local recreational and commercial fishermen, hunters, researchers and nature enthusiasts. The launch serves as an entry to the east side of the Atchafalaya Basin, which is America's largest river swamp. With growing demand for ecotourism, bird watching, canoeing, kayaking and other water activities, the project will not only help our residents, but will also be a tourism tool for the parish.

The parish had worked for more than 10 years with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to get the project underway, but after numerous delays Parish President J. Mitchell Ourso, Jr. began working with the state, the Atchafalaya Basin Program and State Rep. Karen St. Germain to have the project funded through the Basin program. That funding was approved in the summer, and the project has been on a fast track to construction since that time.



BIG IMPROVEMENTS COMING... Shown is an aerial view of the Bayou Sorrel boat landing during the flooding of 2009. The waterway at left is the Atchafalaya Basin and the waterway at right is Grand River. The housing around Grand River is a portion of the Bayou Sorrel community. The 2012 improvements to the boat landing will make it the best boat landing in the parish.

Thanks to Dow employees for \$500,000 donated to United Way!



The spirit of giving has thrived among Dow employees for more than 50 years. Again this year, the generosity and hard work of hundreds of Dow employees will result in critical United Way assistance to a multitude of area community organizations. Generations of great chemistry – it's in our culture at Dow.



Amerchol, ANGUS, Grand Bayou Operations, Louisiana Operations, St. Charles Operations, Weeks Island

I b e r v i l l e P a r i s h G o v e r n m e n t

Iberville Salute to Veterans



The Iberville Salute to Veterans, held on Veterans Day (Nov. 11), again drew a huge crowd of area residents. The Iberville Wall of Veterans, in its second year, now includes the photos and names of some 1,600 veterans with ties to Iberville Parish. The wall, which has been on display next to the Iberville Veterans Memorial since Veterans Day, will be dismantled at the end

of December. Shown are scenes from the event, at top, the Westside Honor Guard prepares for rifle salute; Parish President J. Mitchell Ourso, Jr.; and at bottom, presentation of the colors by military personnel, raising of the American flag by American Legion Post 167, and Cub Scouts looking at the Wall of Veterans. The event included comments by Congressman Bill Cassidy, guest speaker Maury Drummond, songs by local residents Emma Toorean and John Seneca, and patriotic music by the Iberville Math, Science and Arts Academy Orchestra. Of special note was the return to the ceremony by emcee James "Fry" Hymel and Johnny Wilbert, who played taps. Both local residents have been dedicated to honoring veterans for years and both returned after extended health issues. The event and wall are both sponsored by Parish President J. Mitchell Ourso, Jr. and the Iberville Parish Council.



\$3 million North Iberville Community Center nears completion



COMPLETE IN JANUARY... Residents of North Iberville received a great community Christmas gift. The North Iberville Community Center is now substantially complete, and a final punch list of items on the project is expected to be completed by the end of January. The \$3 million project will be completed on budget. The 10,000 square foot facility will include a raised stage, commercial kitchen, restrooms, offices, two meeting rooms and a covered entrance with 280 parking spaces. Of the \$3 million cost, \$2.25 million was funded by state grants obtained through the efforts of Senator Rob Marionneaux and State Rep. Karen St. Germain.

Enterprise Boulevard to get multi-use path

Iberville Parish has received a \$273,300 grant from the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (LDOTD) for construction of a multi-use path on Enterprise Boulevard, announced Parish President J. Mitchell Ourso, Jr.

The path will be on the east side of the road and will extend from Belleview Road (La. 75) to Bayou Road (La. 3066). Design work is expected to begin in early 2012 and will take about three to four months. The drawings must then be approved by LDOTD.

The multi-use path will be 10 feet wide and will be both a pedestrian and bicycle path. The funds were awarded through the Louisiana Transportation Enhancement Program.

Plaquemine

The new pavilion at the Bayou Plaquemine Waterfront Park is receiving rave reviews from both residents and leaders of other cities. The 10,000 square foot pavilion includes a meeting room, kitchen, restrooms, and barbeque and boiling areas.

It looks out onto the park and Bayou Plaquemine. The pavilion has already been used to host a meeting of mayors of cities in the Louisiana Energy Power Authority (LEPA), and the Iberville Chamber of Commerce membership Christmas party. It was also the site of the Children's Christmas Festival.

"We have been very pleased with all the positive comments we have

heard," noted Mayor Mark "Tony" Gulotta. "All of the other mayors were very impressed and the City of Vidalia is going to use our pavilion as a model for their facility. The feedback from the community has also been great, and we anticipate this facility being used regularly and for a wide variety of activities for many years to come."

Gulotta said all city non-profit organizations will be allowed the first use of the pavilion free of charge, and regulations for use of the facility are being drafted because it is receiving so many requests for its use. A formal ribbon cutting celebration is being planned at the pavilion for March 3.



CELEBRATING CHRISTMAS... Above and at left are scenes from the annual Children's Christmas Festival and Parade, sponsored by the Plaquemine Main Street Program and We Are The Difference, Inc. It was held on Dec. 3 at the new pavilion at Bayou Plaquemine Waterfront Park, and featured a visit by Santa Claus and a variety of children's activities.

City holds Facebook drawing

Plaquemine has ramped up its social media presence with an active Facebook site, and is holding a drawing for a 32-inch flat screen TV as a way to get local residents to "Like Us" on Facebook.

The TV, donated by a local business, will be drawn from everyone who "Likes" the City of Plaquemine Facebook page between now and 11:30 a.m. on Tuesday, January 24. It's simple – just go to [www.facebook.com/The City of Plaquemine](http://www.facebook.com/TheCityofPlaquemine) and Like Us.

St. Gabriel

St. Gabriel team works for citizens

St. Gabriel Mayor Lionel Johnson was new to daily politics when he assumed office in July, but he quickly realized that a team approach to governing was the right fit for his constituents.

"I wanted to have an aggressive,

long-term program," Johnson says. "I needed strong people to help focus on the day-to-day tasks. I believed they should be from the community and know the people, understand their plights."

With that in mind, he tapped

Lloyd Snowten to take over as Public Services Director and Shantel Zander to serve as Special Projects Coordinator. Both are St. Gabriel natives and residents who Johnson has known for years.

Snowten came to the job from the Carville Job Corps Center. Johnson calls him a "jack of all trades" who effectively oversees the city's facilities, parks, roads, sewage system and code enforcement, to name a few of his responsibilities.

Asked why he took on the huge task, Snowten shares that he wants to give back to his friends and neighbors.

"I love touching the community in which I live," he says. "I thrive on seeing things one way and then a few days later, seeing it in a different way."

In the past couple of months, Snowten has spearheaded renovations at City Hall, which includes a landscaping project, installation of a new sign and redesign of work space

for the city's administrative workers.

Zander, who served under the previous mayor for seven years, also has a wide array of duties. From overseeing the city's Community Center and the Senior Center to securing and administering grants and working closely with the City Council, Johnson admits that "everything and anything that needs to get done, she does."

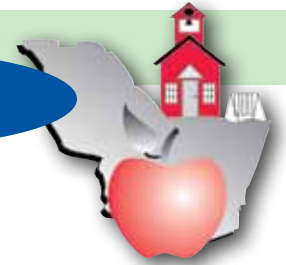
"I plan public forums, senior field trips, set up Zumba classes or organize summer camps for children," she explains. "Pretty much, every day is different."

Her experience at City Hall gives her the insight to help citizens, while Snowten brings a fresh outlook to city government, Johnson says.

"We really do have the best interests of St. Gabriel at heart," he shares. "That's what keeps us bonded. We have our differences of opinions from time to time, but ultimately it's what's best for our citizens."



St. Gabriel Mayor Lionel Johnson (center) meets with his Special Projects Coordinator Shantel Zander and Public Services Director Lloyd Snowten in a team approach to running city government.



Career education and dual enrollment giving students a "jump start" to college

New Capital Area Technical College-Westside to be constructed near PHS

The new Capital Area Technical College Westside will get underway soon as architectural plans have been completed (see illustration, at right) by Coleman Partners. The new \$3.6 million facility is immediately adjacent to Plaquemine High School, affording numerous opportunities for high school students to begin early enrollment. However, the Iberville Parish School System is not waiting for the new facility but has stepped up its dual credit programming this school year as well.

Working together to make this new facility a reality are Iberville Parish President Mitchell Ourso, Iberville Parish School Superintendent P. Edward Cancienne, Jr. and the Iberville Parish School Board; Louisiana Community and Technical College System President Dr. Joe D. May and the LCTCS board; and Senator Rob Marionneaux and State Representative Karen St. Germain. The new facility also received a generous donation of \$1 million from Dow Chemical Company, a longtime industry leader committed to education and community outreach.



Career courses offer students opportunities for college credit and job opportunities

How does a high school student register for a course that gives them dual credit (high school and college)?

- Talk to your high school guidance counselor or Education for Careers instructor - Registration is 6 weeks prior to the start of classes
- Get the free brochures online and in the Counselor's Guidance office at your school
- Go to ipSB.net for the free brochures

Benefits of enrolling in college level courses while in high school

- Students who begin while in school finish earlier and on time
- Students who begin while in high school get better grades
- Students who begin while in high school find greater job opportunities
- Students who begin while in high school save money on tuition

Courses Offering both High School and College Credits Iberville Parish School System and Capital Area Technical College-Westside

HS Course Code	High School Course	HS Carnegie Credit	CATC Course Code	CATC Course	College Credit
HEALTH SCIENCES					
090238	Nursing Assistant (CNA)	2	HNUR 1211	Nursing Fundamentals I	4
			HCOR 1212	Skills Application1	
			HMDT 1170	Medical Terminology	1
			HCOR 1120	Basic Body Structure2	
CNA Credits					8

GENERAL STUDIES					
080401	Education for Careers1		SPPR 2991	Special Projects I1	
			SPPR 2993	Special Projects II	2
			SPPR 2995	Special Projects III	3
College Transition Credits					6

BUSINESS, MANAGEMENT & ADMINISTRATION					
040400	Business Computer Applications	1	CPTR 1320	Spreadsheets2	
			CPTR 1310	Database Management2	
			ISYS 1440	Word Processing	2
			ISYS 1400	*Windows Applications	2
Business Credits					8
040306	Principles of Business	1	BUSE 1030	Business English3	
			BUSE 1045	Business Communication	3
			OSYS 1100	Records Management3	
			CSRV 1000	Customer Service	3
Business Credits					12

MANUFACTURING – INDUSTRIAL MAINTENANCE					
110742	Welding I3		WELD 1110	Orientation & Safety3	
			WELD 1120	*Basic Blueprint, Metallurgy2	
			WELD 1140	*Electrical Fundamentals	2
			WELD 1210	*Oxyfuel Systems	2
			WELD 1410	*SMAW – Basic Beads	2
			WELD 1411	*SMAW – Fillet Welding3	
110747	Welding II	3	WELD 1412	*SMAW – V-Groove/BU3	
			WELD 2110	*FCAW – Basic Fillet Welding3	
			WELD 2310	GMAW – Basic Fillet Weld	3
			WELD 2230	*GTAW – Aluminum Multi-Joint	3
Welding Credits					26

TOTAL HIGH SCHOOL CREDITS	11	TOTAL COLLEGE CREDITS	60
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*Articulated Credit – credit earned upon enrollment with CATC after exiting high school



Shown at left are PHS students who are enrolled in the Capital Area Technical College -Westside Campus Nursing Assistant course and healthcare nursing professionals from Comfort Care Hospice, who recently donated equipment for the nursing course. Left of patient Amber Rachel are students Marie Rinehart, Seth Tharpe, with Comfort Care nurse John Barbee; and right of patient are Dynasty Rowe, Jernecia Jenkins, and Comfort Care nurse and school board member Michael Barbee. The course is taught by Jennifer Cabrera.

MSA West and East Programs

Applications for Math, Science and Arts Academy West and East programs in Iberville Parish are now available and can be picked up at any area school administrative office.

Math, Science and Arts Academy Important Events

- | | |
|-----------------------|--|
| January 17-January 20 | Math, Science and Arts Academy Awareness Week in Iberville Parish Schools |
| January 18, 6 p.m. | MSA West Open House, LA 1, Plaquemine MSA- West, 57955 St. Louis Rd. (LA 1, South) |
| January 19, 6 p.m. | MSA East Open House, 1825 Hwy 30, St. Gabriel, LA |
| January 23 | MSA Academy Applications Due to school offices |
| February 7, 6 p.m. | MSA Lottery held at the Op Center, Plaquemine |

Maringouin

Maringouin gets \$475,000 for new smart water readers

A new computerized water meter reading system will save the Town of Maringouin money and be better for the environment. “We’re coming out of the dinosaur age and adopting new technology,” says Mayor John Overton. “It’s called progress.”

The Automatic Meter Reader/Advanced Meter Infrastructure (AMR/AMI) system will be paid for with a \$475,000 Environmental Protection Agency grant designed to spot water leak detection and upgrade water meters.

According to Project Engineer David Colson of Professional Engineering Corp., the smart meters are much more efficient and will be a cost-savings to the town.

For example, the town currently has about 1,200 residential water customers. It now takes town employees three to five days to drive to

and manually read each meter. With the new AMR/AMI system, the meters will operate with a hand-held device that uses radio, internet or cell phone technology to send readings to a computer at Town Hall – a task that fewer employees can complete in one day.

“This allows them time to do other required repairs and maintenance,” Colson explains. “But, not only will this save time, it will save on gas and pollution.” In addition, he says, the system provides constant monitoring of water usage and will sense leaks or water theft and provide on-demand reading of the meters.

“The town will be able to monitor meters in real time, keeping water loss to a minimum. When someone flushes a toilet, the town will know,” he says. “It’s state-of-the-



art communication between the meter and town hall.”

Inventory is now underway to determine whether the current water meters can be interfaced with the new system. Some may have to be changed out, - “minimal cost that would be recouped quickly,” Colson says. The next step will be to write

a custom software program for the system. The project should be completed in the second quarter of 2012.

“This innovative program will be specifically designed for the Town of Maringouin, and it will certainly be more efficient than the old-fashioned one,” Colson adds.

Grosse Tete

Grosse Tete Ushers in Holidays with Christmas on the Bayou

More than 400 citizens launched the festive holiday season during the Village of Grosse Tete’s Sixth Annual Christmas on the Bayou celebration on Dec. 3.

Santa Claus made his way upstream along Bayou Grosse Tete to the Iberville Welcome Center in an antique boat as lights wishing “Merry Christmas” and “Happy



Annelise Bergeron, Evangeline, is accompanied to Christmas on the Bayou with Santa’s elves. Pictured with her (from left) are Daniel Griffin, Noah Sanchez, Noah Morgan and Brayden David.



Santa Claus makes his way to the Christmas on the Bayou celebration with the assistance of Tom Pirie (back) and Hugh Pirie (front).

Holidays” illuminated his path. He was accompanied by Evangeline, Annelise Bergeron of Plaquemine, and his elves.

Mayor Michael Chauffe was on hand to greet the celebrities upon their arrival. Children were encouraged to have their photos taken with Santa and share their wish lists. Again this year, the tradition of the lighting floating Christmas

trees in the bayou was celebrated, followed by a display of fireworks on the banks.

“We’re so grateful to everyone who braved the weather and the water to make the display possible,” Chauffe said. “I’d personally like to thank Steve Carroll, Ouda David, Jude David, Jake David, Brennan David and Ethan Lacombe, and wish everyone a Merry Christmas.”

White Castle

White Castle sees bustling activity in 2011

Since White Castle Mayor Gerald “Jermarr” Williams assumed office on New Year’s Day in 2011, the town has seen a flurry of activity and events. “The last two months, especially, we’ve had much that has benefited our citizens,” Williams says. “But, it really has been an active year.”

On Oct. 8, nearly 200 White Castle residents and friends celebrated Pink Day with a Breast Cancer Walk

to benefit the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation. Williams estimates that about \$1,000 was raised for the cause. A highlight of the event was the appearance of Tiffany Carlin of BET Network’s Gospel Competition and Sunday’s Best. The White Castle native was on hand to encourage supporters.

The walk was led by several cancer survivors, including keynote speaker 84-year-old Mary Frances

Lewis of White Castle. The White Castle Kings and Queens Youth Football Association, Dorseyville Middle School and White Castle High School also participated in the charitable event.

About 500 children enjoyed the town’s “Boo on Bowie” Halloween celebration at the White Castle Community Center on Oct. 31. Forty displays featured goodies and treats provided by local social and civic organizations, as well as White Castle High School alumni and the Police Department.

On Thanksgiving, the town served more than 250 needy and elderly residents with a holiday feast. For those unable to attend the event at the Community Center, dinners were delivered to their homes. Contributing to its success were Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, the White Castle Kings and Queens, the White Castle High School Class of 1984, town officials, Omega Psi Phi Fraternity and local

caterers, according to Williams.

Other highlights during the year included a Health Fair, the Summer Enrichment Project, the White Castle High School Parade of Champions, a Juneteenth Celebration and renovation of Town Hall.

“It was a challenging, yet fulfilling year. The budget was tight, but we were able to maintain our administration and staff and still provide for our citizens,” Williams says.

Williams forecasts that 2012 will be just as eventful. He plans to focus on economic development with the support of Alderwomen Barbara O’Bear and Dionne Lewis, Aldermen Garnell Young, Jonathan Green and John Barlow and Chief of Police Mario Brown. Their goal is to secure grants for improvements to the town’s parks, educational programs and elderly programs. They are also planning the town’s first Sugar Cane Festival for the fall of 2012.

Tiffany Carlin of BET Network’s Gospel Competition and Sunday’s Best was on hand at the White Castle Breast Cancer Walk to cheer on participants.



Rosedale

Project to enhance Rosedale’s gateways, cemetery

Visitors and citizens alike will benefit from the Village of Rosedale’s new Gateway Enhancement Project for enhancement and beautification.

“This project will be a welcome addition to Rosedale,” says Mayor Lawrence “Football” Badaux. “It will give a facelift to three various parts of our village.”

The project will be funded with an \$183,700 grant from the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development.

Rosedale’s historical public cemetery, located at Louisiana Highways 76 and 77, will get new landscaping and sidewalks. Ditches located on the cemetery’s north side will be filled in, culverts will be installed and sidewalks will be constructed.

A 200-foot American flag and lighting will also be mounted at the highway intersection next to the cemetery.

Located across from Town Hall, the cemetery dates back to the mid-1800s and was donated to the village by Charles Dickerson. His

grandfather, Joseph Erwin, an early settler in the area, deeded it to him and some of his descendents are buried in the cemetery, according to Badaux.

“We think it’s important, due to the historical value of the cemetery, to enhance it,” he explains. “It was given to us as a non-sectarian burial place for the people of Rosedale.”

The project also includes the installation of two welcome signs at the village’s key entrances. One will be placed at La. Highway 76 and the parish/city limits, near the new North Iberville Community Center. The other will be located at the southern entrance to the village on La. Highway 77.

Badaux learned that the grant had been funded in November, and believes the project enhancements will proceed quickly.

The next step is environmental clearance, engineering design and DOTD approval of drawing and specifications, followed by the bid process, according to John Chumba

of International Consulting Group LLC, which specializes in grant management and worked with Badaux in securing the grant.

Chumba estimates that phase of the project will be accomplished by April, and construction will be completed by next December.



The tomb of the Erwin family (to the left) is located in the historic Rosedale Cemetery, which is slated for improvements that include lighting, sidewalks and the placement of an American flag.



Iberville Sheriff's Office gets \$600,000 worth of emergency response equipment

Whether it is a natural disaster or an act of terrorism, the Iberville Parish Sheriff's Department now has nearly \$600,000 of new equipment to combat a disaster situation. The equipment was donated to the parish by the Port of Greater Baton Rouge through a \$6 million Homeland Security grant.

"These are tremendous assets for our parish," says Sheriff Brent Allain. "During these times, we never know what to expect as far as emergencies. With this new equipment, we're better prepared to handle a variety of situations – terrorism on the river or another hurricane like Katrina."

The equipment was received by the Sheriff's Office on Dec. 5 during a dedication of the Port's new Maritime Security Operations Center, adds Major Johnny Blanchard, head of the Sheriff's Special Operations Division.

"This is all new, state-of-the art equipment, including a \$248,000

boat," Blanchard adds. "We were extremely equipped before, but this brought us over the top. It's all aimed at providing security along the Mississippi River and the Intracoastal Waterway. And, it doesn't cost Iberville Parish one dime."

The list of emergency response equipment includes dozens of items

"It's all aimed at providing security along the Mississippi River and the Intracoastal Waterway. And, it doesn't cost Iberville Parish one dime."

Major Johnny Blanchard, head of the Sheriff's Special Operations Division



Sheriff Brent Allain (left) and Maj. Johnny Blanchard check out an iSatPhone that was donated to the Iberville Parish Sheriff's Office by the Port of Greater Baton Rouge, thanks to a Homeland Security grant.

like a 2011 Chevrolet 3500 Silverado, a 2011 Ford F-150 and the SeaArk 2072 River Runner. High-tech binoculars with night vision, all weather clothing and chemical agent detectors are also part of the extensive cache.

It is now housed in a parish-owned warehouse, where it is easily accessible to carry out response efforts to natural and man-made disasters. In emergency situations, the gear might be used to patrol the river and woods, board suspicious boats, inspect docks surrounding chemical plants, travel along levees or perform rescues in the water,

Blanchard explained.

Allain said that the donations result from months of working together with the Joint Task Force 7 (JTF 7), a partnership of seven local sheriff's offices comprising 125 deputies in Iberville, East and West Baton Rouge, East and West Feliciana, Pointe Coupee and Ascension parishes. Although each of the parishes received similar supplies, some may have gotten a little more while others got less, depending on their size and exposure to potential hazards.

"We first came together with the other departments to decide what kind of equipment we needed to accomplish with crisis situations," Blanchard adds. "It's all about emergency response. The collaboration is focused on ensuring that residents are safe. A lot of people don't realize that Baton Rouge has the seventh largest port in the world and how important it is. If it or the area's chemical plants are ever targeted, we want to be prepared."

Allain credits Pointe Coupee Sheriff Beauregard "Bud" Torres for pulling the task force together and acquiring funding for the emergency gear.

"Sheriff Torres spearheaded this whole operation and has worked on it for about three years," Allain notes. "We're grateful to him and the Port of Greater Baton Rouge for allowing us to be a part of it."



Maj. Johnny Blanchard (left) and Sheriff Brent Allain board the SeaArk 2072 River Runner that was included in a long list of equipment donated to assist in emergency operations.