



St. George Leader

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Louisiana Supreme Court Recognizes

The City of St. George

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

Woody Jenkins
Editor

CITY OF ST. GEORGE — Nearly five years after the voters of the proposed City of St. George voted to incorporate, the Louisiana Supreme



Read Supreme Court Decision On St. George

Court gave them a historic victory. On Friday, April 26, 2024, in a 4-3 decision, the high court dismissed the suit filed by Mayor-President Sharon Weston Broome and ruled orga-

nizers of the proposed city had met all legal requirements for incorporation. The city now exists, and members of the St. George Transition District created by the legislature are working to make it a reality.

On Monday, April 29, leaders of the St. George incorporation movement met the media and local residents for a news conference at St. George Fire Dept., 14100 Airline. It was an emotional event, which celebrated 13 years of hard work, personal sacrifice, ridicule, and unwavering determination, especially by the two incorporators, Norman Browning and Chris Rials. Browning and Rials also serve as chairman and vice chairman respectively of the St. George Transition District.

Other speakers included St. George spokesman Andrew Murrell. See ST. GEORGE on Page 3



Photo by Jolice Provost of St. George Leader

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

Five Reasons We Need St. George

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

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

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

2-Cent Parish Sales Tax Will Simply Transfer to City

City of St. George Won't Need New Taxes

Central Has Huge Budget Surpluses

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

The official said, "The population of St. George is four times greater than Central, but the tax base is about 10 times greater. Central is basically a residential community, whereas St. George has a strong commercial and retail

base. St. George will be able to cover all of its expenses and have a very larger surplus left over. I assume that surplus will be used in part to improve the roads and streets in St. George. But there is little doubt there will be a tax surplus and certainly no need whatsoever for a tax increase."

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

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

See ST. GEORGE on Page 4



Photo by Jolice Provost of St. George Leader

ST. GEORGE CO-FOUNDER CHRIS RIALS holds a Request for Proposals the City could use to find a master contractor to provide St. George's privatized city services.

What City Will Look Like When New Mayor Sworn in

Facts About New City of St. George



Map of New City of St. George, Louisiana

Things to Know About Louisiana's Newest City

Population: 86,000 • **Rank in LA:** 5th largest after New Orleans, Baton Rouge, Shreveport, and Lafayette. St. George is larger than Monroe, Lake Charles, Alexandria, Kenner, and Houma

Land Area: 60 Sq. Miles • **Location:** Southeast portion of East Baton Rouge Parish, Louisiana

Median Household Income: Mid-\$90,000 • **Median Income Rank in LA:** 1st or 2nd in State. Others are Youngsville in Lafayette Parish (\$95,395). Next: Zachary (\$85,949), and City of Central (\$83,947)

Demographics: 79 percent white; 12 percent black, 8 percent Latin, Asian, and other (2018)

Voter Registration: 27,124 Republicans, 13,375 Democrats, 14,141 other party or no party
54,680 Total Registered Voters (2018)

City Officials: Mayor, Police Chief, and 5 to 7 members of City Council (Lawrason Act)
Initially appointed by the Governor • Special election to be held within six months.

Estimated Tax Revenue: \$57-58 million • **Source of Revenue:** Existing 2% parish sales tax plus existing occupational license fees • **Estimated Expenses** \$36 million • **Estimated Surplus:** \$21 million

Law Enforcement: East Baton Rouge Parish Sheriff's Office will continue to provide law enforcement (funded by existing property tax millage)

Fire Protection: St. George Fire Protection District will continue to provide fire protection (funded by existing property tax millage)

Roads and Streets: Existing parish roads will be allocated between the Parish of East Baton Rouge and the City of St. George by an intergovernmental agreement between the two. St. George will assume maintenance of an estimated 354 miles of city roads allocated to it. The State of Louisiana will continue to maintain state roads located in the City of St. George.

Drainage: Existing waterways, bayous, creeks, and other drainage will be allocated between the Parish of East Baton Rouge and the City of St. George by an intergovernmental agreement. St. George will assume maintenance of waterways allocated to it.

Public Works, Planning and Zoning, Building Codes, Issuances of Permits, and Occupational Licenses: Will be administered by the City of St. George.

Garbage & Trash, Sewer Fees, Animal Control, and Mosquito Abatement: Will be unchanged

St. George Leaders React to 4-3 Decision By Supreme Court on City of St. George

Media Bias Against City of St. George Has Been Intense For Past 13 Years

Continued from Page 1

rell, Dustin Yates, and Metro Councilman Dwight Landry. Murrell and Yates also serve on the transition district board.

While some decisions can now be made by the transition district, most of the major decisions will have to await the appointment of the Mayor, City Council, and Police Chief by Gov. Jeff Landry. The governor is accepting recommendations now and could announce his appointments at any time.

Those appointed will serve until a special election is held. That could happen this fall. However, the legal deadlines for calling the election are fast approaching. One pending issue is what are the boundaries of the city.

After the petition for incorporation was filed, the City of Baton Rouge annexed several important properties, which were inside the proposed city limits of St. George. The City of St. George is expected to contest those annexations, and the result would affect the boundaries. On the other hand, all of the annexed properties are commercial, and reportedly no registered voters reside in the area affected.

The remaining plaintiff in the suit against St. George, City-Parish Mayor Pro-Tem Lamont Cole, has announced he intends to ask the Supreme for a rehearing on the case. While that is a legal option, the chances of success in this case seem remote. Even if a rehearing were granted, it would not likely result in an injunction to keep the new city from functioning.

The St. George Transition District reportedly has a well defined plan of action, which it intends to



Photo by Jolice Provost of St. George Leader

ST. GEORGE LEADERSHIP FACES MEDIA, PUBLIC — Leaders of the St. George incorporate movement faced the media and members of the general public on Monday, April 29, 2024, to react to the Louisiana Supreme Court 4-3 ruling recognizing the incorporation of the City of St. George. Shown (left to right) are Chris Rials, Dustin Yates, Norman Browning, Andrew Murrell, and Metro Councilman Dwight Hudson.

“ Obviously, the City of St. George is not breaking away from the City of Baton Rouge. It’s not part of the City of Baton Rouge. We’re talking about the unincorporated areas that the City of Baton Rouge never wanted to annex. Suddenly, the fact that the people there want to have their own city is ‘dividing us.’ How ridiculous! St. George is going to be right next door to Baton Rouge. It will still be in East Baton Rouge Parish! Everyone will travel from one city to the other freely and seamlessly. There won’t a 10-foot-high wall or checkpoints. Having a great new city right next to Baton Rouge can only make Baton Rouge better. ”

follow.

A major tenet of the organizers of St. George is privatization. Depending on who the governor appoints as Mayor and members of the City Council, that model seems likely to be followed to one degree or another. The City of Central, which incorporated in 2005, is the only privatized city in Louisiana.

The day-to-day work of managing the City of Central has been done from the beginning by private contractors. Currently, the master contractor is a non-profit, IBTS.

Organizers of the City of St. George say they will consider dividing the city into three districts, which each district being served by a master contractor that provides most city services.

Besides Central, organizers have studied Sandy Springs, GA, the first major city in the country to be privatized.

One advantage of using one or more private contractors is major cost savings.

The campaign against incorporating the City of St. George began almost as soon as the movement itself began. In January 2014, then-Mayor-President Kip Holden spoke to the Baton Rouge Rotary Club.

Holden condemned supporters of the proposed City of St. George and described them as a “small group of people.” He made that statement even though more than 10,000 people had already signed St. George petitions as he spoke.

Since then, the propaganda campaign against the proposed City of St. George has continued in earnest. The campaign has been led by the **Baton Rouge Advocate** newspaper, which has published scores of false and misleading articles and columns. *The Advocate* has been joined by the far-left group Together Baton Rouge, organized by Saul Alinsky’s Industrial Areas Foundation. Also strongly opposing St. George have been the Baton Rouge Area Chamber and the Baton Rouge Area Foundation, which critics say “never met a tax they didn’t like.”

In that first speech in January 2014, Mayor-President Holden poured out a litany of carefully-crafted cliches designed to end the discussion about incorporating the City of St. George:

- It will break up Baton Rouge.
- It will impose a burden on future generations.
- It will bankrupt our future.
- It will cripple one of the stron-

“ Yes, big companies may put an office in Baton Rouge, but where are employees going to live? You can bet that, unless something changes, they will be headed to Livingston and Ascension! But St. George will provide people with a great place to live right next door to the City of Baton Rouge in the southern part of THIS parish — in a city that will have good schools and safe neighborhoods. ”

Interim Leadership City of St. George

— Incorporators —

Norman Browning
Chris Rials

St. George Transition District

Created by Act 361 of 2020 Session

Norman Browning
CHAIRMAN

Chris Rials
VICE CHAIRMAN

Dustin Yates
APPOINTEE OF SEN. BODI WHITE

Andrew Murrell
APPOINTEE OF REP. RICK EDMONDS

Position Never Filled
APPOINTEE OF MAYOR-PRESIDENT

A Tale of Two Cities

2018 Data

City of Hammond, LA

Founded: 1818

Population: 20,000

Annual Budget: \$30 million

Deficits: Struggles to avoid a

deficit of \$500,000 a year

Number of Employees: 325

Number who may someday

retire at taxpayer expense: 325

A Traditional City, much like

others founded in the 1800’s

City of Central, Louisiana

Founded: 2005

Population: 27,000

Annual Budget: \$8 million

Surplus: \$1-2 million a year

Cash Reserves: Over \$40 mil-

lion

Number of Employees: 3 full-

time, 13 part-time police officers

and dispatchers.

Number who may someday

retire at taxpayer expense: 3

A Fully Privatized City, built

on a 21st century model

City services are provided

by IBTS, a non-profit organiza-

tion established by the National

Governors Association. IBTS

has about 20 of its employees

assigned to the City of Central.

gest economies in the nation.

- It will divide us.
- It will take a major financial toll.
- It will take Baton Rouge taxes.
- They’d have to provide police, fire, garbage, and public works.
- They would have to elect city officials.
- It would duplicate existing government services.
- Duplicating services means duplicating costs.
- It will mean higher taxes!
- It will mean loss of funding for the D.A. and other officials.
- It will hurt public safety.
- It will hurt our bond rating.
- We’re being held hostage in a disagreement over schools.
- It will turn back the clock on racial harmony.

Only One Thing Was True. Every single thing the Mayor-President told the Rotary Club about the proposed City of St. George was false, except for one thing: If the

See CREATION on Page 16

Working with Volunteers and Without Big Money

St. George Is a Citizens Movement

Tax Base of New City Sufficient to Cover All Reasonable Costs

Continued from Page 1

“On its face, it’s so illogical,” Browning said. “The very purpose of St. George is to get out from under the high tax, big government policies of Baton Rouge and allow our citizens to keep our tax dollars in St. George. This is the most prosperous part of the parish with the strongest tax base. The existing tax structure is more than sufficient to fund the City of St. George and provide a strong surplus. Where do you think you are more likely to have a tax increase — Baton Rouge or St. George? That is obvious.”

Organizers of St. George say one of the most important results of incorporation will be the eventual formation of an independent community school system. Using Zachary and Central as their model, St. George could end up having one of the best school systems in the state, if not the best. The big push to create a new school system is likely to come within a year or two after the incorporation.

St. George is a citizens movement composed of volunteers and no big backers. They have been opposed by *The Advocate* newspa-



(Left to right) Sign waving for St. George, signing a petition, delivering petitions, and delivering withdrawals.



ST. GEORGE LEADERS — Those delivering 4,630 additional petition signatures during the first petition drive were Sen. Bodi White, Lionel Rainey, Norman Browning, Dustin Yates, and Josh Hoffpaur.

per, BRAC, BRAF, and big money interests in Baton Rouge.

It’s a case of David vs. Goliath. Suddenly, David is winning!

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IAN JAMES
Financial Advisor



Ian E. James
CRPC AAMS BFA
FINANCIAL ADVISOR



Congratulations
 May the City of St. George be like
 a shining city on a hill!
 You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill
 cannot be hidden. MATTHEW 5:14

Ian James is the go-to guy for your retirement
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Photo by Jolice Provost of St. George Leader

STRONG SUPPORT FOR ST. GEORGE — Local businessman Eddie Risponse (right) has been a strong backer of St. George since 2014. He is shown here with St. George Leader editor Woody Jenkins (left). Risponse resides in St. George.

How a Prominent Civil Rights Leader, Acie Belton, Set in Motion St. George

State Constitution Was Changed in 1975 to Allow Incorporation of Scotlandville, Central

Woody Jenkins
 Editor

BATON ROUGE - People in Baton Rouge should open their minds to the idea of incorporating the new City of St. George, especially when we realize how it all got started.

In Louisiana, any community of 300 or more people anywhere in the state outside an incorporated municipality has the right to file a petition calling for an election to form a new city. But it hasn't always been that way.

In 1971, the federal courts ordered that the Louisiana House of Representatives and Senate should be reapportioned into single-member districts. In the elections that year, both blacks and Republicans were elected in significant numbers for the first time since Reconstruction. I was 23 years old and ran for the new House seat from North Baton Rouge — north of Choctaw, east of Scenic, and inside the Airline Highway. It was a vigorous campaign, and I was elected, as was Edwin Edwards, the new governor.

During the 1972 regular session of the legislature, Gov. Edwards proposed and the legislature approved calling a constitutional convention to consider drafting a replacement for the Louisiana Constitution of 1921. I ran and was elected a delegate. Our deliberations began in early 1973.

Soon after my election as a delegate, I got a call from Mr. Acie Belton, the president of the Second Ward Voters League. He was one of the most respected civil rights leaders in our parish and indeed in the state.

He was a big, imposing man, who might bring fear to anyone who didn't know him. In person, he was more like a teddy bear, warm and kind. I had only met Mr. Belton a couple of times before he called me. "Rep. Jenkins," he said, "I have a favor to ask. There's a provision of the Constitution I'd like you to try to change."

He said, "There's a provision of the 1921 Constitution that forbids Scotlandville from incorporating, and we would like the right to incorporate."

I was incredulous. "Mr. Belton, how does the Constitution prevent Scotlandville from incorporating?" I asked.

He said, "The Plan of Government for East Baton Rouge Parish provides that there shall only be three municipalities in the parish. It forbids any others. Some years ago, Mayor Woody Dumas had a provision placed in the Constitution of 1921 that ratifies that part of the Plan of Government and elevates it to the constitutional level. This convention may be our only chance in our lifetime to change it!"

Mr. Belton said, "I believe the people of any area should be able to incorporate themselves into a new city and provide protection of their city and services to enhance life. The people of Scotlandville should not be discriminated against in this way!"

I told Mr. Belton I would research the matter and call him back, which I did the next day. In that conversa-

LOUISIANA CONSTITUTION OF 1921

East Baton Rouge Plan of Government - Section 1.05 Adopted in 1949 (made part of the Louisiana Constitution)

The incorporated town of Zachary and the village of Baker shall be parts of the rural area as defined in section 1.08 and shall continue in existence as municipalities subject, except as specifically provided in this plan of government, to the general laws of the state relating to incorporated towns and villages respectively, and may enlarge their boundaries as provided in such laws. **No additional city, town or village shall be incorporated in East Baton Rouge Parish.**

LOUISIANA CONSTITUTION OF 1974

Louisiana Constitution of 1974
Article VI §8. Home Rule Parish; Incorporation of Cities, Towns, and Villages
Section 8. No parish plan of government or home rule charter shall prohibit the incorporation of a city, town, or village as provided by general law.

tion I pledged my support. Soon George Dewey Hayes, the delegate from Scotlandville, and Delegate Mary Wisham were on board. We went to the Committee that was drafting the Local Government provisions of the new constitution and were met with a stone wall. There was no way to pass it in committee. We would have to go to the floor of the convention and have a floor fight.

Delegate Gary O'Neill from Central contacted me and said some people in Central also wanted the right to form a city someday.

I drafted the amendment to provide that the right of incorporation in East Baton Rouge Parish would be the same as in the rest of the state. We introduced the amendment and began lobbying the delegates of the convention to support it. Mayor-President Woody Dumas came to the convention, which was meeting at Independence Hall near the State Capitol. He was on a

tear! He was lobbying hard against the proposal. He found me and told me if I didn't withdraw it, he would defeat me in the next election.

When the proposal came to the floor, I offered the amendment and spoke in favor of it. The transcript of that debate is online in the archives of the Louisiana Constitutional Convention of 1973, or CC/73. Our coalition of delegates worked hard and prevailed. The convention voted for the amendment, meaning that municipalities could be incorporated anywhere in the state.

Mayor-President Dumas was so angry that he went to Gov. Edwards and threatened to oppose the entire constitution unless that provision were removed. However, Gov. Edwards refused to try to remove it.

When the proposed Louisiana Constitution of 1975 went before the voters of the state, the amendment allowing the people of East Baton Rouge Parish to incorpo-

See AFRICAN on Page 7

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Congratulations!

**City of
St. George,
Louisiana**



We Are Proud Citizens of St. George!

My wife Cindy and I would like to send a sincere thank you to all the people of our great city who worked so hard and made the sacrifices necessary to make the City of St. George possible!

I would like to encourage all citizens to become involved in the coming weeks and months as we navigate the next leg of the journey. Bring your ideas and gifts and talents to help our city be the best it can be!

As your senator, I am committed to helping the citizens of St. George make your dream of a great city a reality!

Sen. Rick Edmonds

Republican • District 6
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13440 Magnolia Square • Suite D1
Baton Rouge, LA 70818
225-272-1324



**Sen. Rick
Edmonds**
District 6

African American Delegates to CC/73 Pushed to Allow New Cities in EBR

Continued from Page 5

rate new cities, if they choose, was intact. The constitution was approved by the voters, and today it remains the law of our state.

The late Rep. Johnny Jackson of New Orleans, who served as a delegate and worked tirelessly for the Scotlandville amendment, said on the 40th anniversary of the new constitution that the passage of our amendment on incorporation was his proudest moment in the Constitutional Convention.

He said, "One of our biggest victories of the Constitutional Convention for African American delegates was protecting the right of local governments to incorporate. It was the biggest fight I personally had, and we were able to expand the right of certain areas such as Scotlandville to incorporate!"

The reason it was such an important issue across the state was that there had been efforts to stop the incorporation of some majority black cities in such diverse areas as Plaquemines and Caddo parishes.

Ironically, despite the passage of the new constitution, the Plan of Government of East Baton Rouge Parish remained unchanged, still saying that there will only be three municipalities in the parish.

When the people of Central voted to incorporate their new city in 2004, attorney Bob Raborn filed suit to challenge the incorporation of the city. One of his legal argu-



Photo by Woody Jenkins

Late Rep. Johnny Jackson fought for right of people to incorporate.

“One of our biggest victories of the Constitutional Convention for African American delegates was protecting the right of local governments to incorporate. It was the biggest fight I personally had, and we were able to expand the right of certain areas such as Scotlandville to incorporate!”

— The late Rep. Johnny Jackson of New Orleans speaking of his experience as a delegate to the Louisiana Constitutional Convention of 1973

ments against incorporation was the fact that the Plan of Government article limiting to three the number of municipalities in the parish was still on the books.

On appeal, the Louisiana Supreme Court upheld the incorporation of the City of Central. Among other things, it ruled that the Plan of Government provision was repealed by the new constitution. That was obvious, but their ruling nevertheless removed that argument from the table in the future.

It is ironic that the opponents of the incorporation of the City of St. George have repeatedly alleged that the incorporation is a racist act designed to discriminate against African Americans.

In reality, the right to have additional cities in East Baton Rouge Parish came directly from civil rights leader Acie Belton who be-

lieved that "...Any area should be able to incorporate themselves into a new city and provide protection of their citizens and services to enhance life. The people of Scotlandville should not be discriminated against in this way!"

The truth is that incorporation is a normal function of government in Louisiana. The people of St. George have the legal right to propose a new city. If they can get the required number of signatures and win the referendum, then it is right and proper to recognize and respect the new City of St. George and the people it will serve.

Of course, that is exactly what happened. Now, five years after the people voted to form the new City of St. George, the Louisiana Supreme Court has ratified their actions. Justice is slow, but in this case at least, the system worked!

Watch NAACP, St. George

Download QR Reader



Congratulations to the City of St. George!



Congratulations to everyone who supported this effort, signed the petition, voted in favor, fought the good fight, and kept the faith for 13+ years. I look forward to working along side of you to build the City of St. George!

Laurie White Adams

Most Issues in Any Legal Challenge To St. George Were Already Settled

Woody Jenkins
Editor

BATON ROUGE — The decision by the 1st Circuit Court of Appeal, written by Judge Robert Downing, in the challenge to the incorporation of the City of Central, addressed most of the issues likely to be raised in any challenge to the incorporation of the proposed City of St. George.

The case, *Devall v. Starns*, was decided Dec. 11, 2006, by the 1st Circuit. The ruling was upheld by the state Supreme Court.

In that case, attorney Yigal Bandner made some of the same racial claims against the City of Central that he made later against the proposed City of St. George.

Some of the key language from that decision is as follows:

• **Residents Outside the Municipality Have No Right to Vote on Incorporation.** “We hold... that plaintiffs failed to sustain their burden of proving that the incorporation procedural statutes were unconstitutional or that the persons living outside of the area of incorporation were deprived of their right to equal protection or their right to vote, and uphold the validity of the incorporation of the City of Central.”

• **City-Parish Plan of Government, Which Attempts to Prohibit Additional Cities from Incorporating, Is Contrary to Louisiana Constitution of 1974.** “It is evident that after 1984, Section 1.05 of the

Plan of Government prohibiting the incorporation of any additional city or town in the Parish of East Baton Rouge was superseded by the general law enacted by the legislature in Title 33 authorizing the incorporation of an area in excess of two hundred inhabitants. Moreover, Section 1.05 violated the constitutional ban on any provision of a parish plan of government prohibiting the incorporation of a city or town as provided by the general law. Thus, as of 1984, Section 1.05 was no longer a viable and enforceable provision.”

• **Louisiana Law on Incorporation Is Not Unconstitutional on Its Face or as Applied.** “We find that plaintiffs failed to prove that any of the provisions of La. R.S. 33:1-7, which provide a procedure for incorporating areas with two hundred or more residents to petition the governor to hold an election on the incorporation issue, are facially unconstitutional. Nor have plaintiffs demonstrated how those provisions are unconstitutional as applied. Plaintiffs failed to offer competent evidence in support of their claim that the boundaries of Central were purposefully drawn in a racially discriminatory fashion or were chosen to deprive black citizens in the area of their right to vote.”

• **No Evidence That Services Could Not Be Provided or That Other Municipalities Would Be Adversely Affected.** “Plaintiffs failed to establish that the petition was fatally defective, or that there

was a deficiency in the certification of the registrar of voters. Instead, Mr. Starns offered evidence showing that the preliminary requirements for incorporation were in fact met. Additionally, Mr. Starns offered evidence demonstrating that public services are being provided to the citizens of Central, and nothing in the evidence indicated that such services would not be provided in the future. Moreover, there was no evidence suggesting that the incorporation would have any adverse effects on other municipalities in the vicinity, nor was there any evidence demonstrating that the incorporation of Central was unreasonable.”

• **A Plaintiff Who Loses Will Have to Pay Attorney Fees and Court Costs.** “For these reasons, we find that plaintiffs failed to sustain their burden of proving any of the grounds upon which the validity of the incorporation of the City of Central was challenged. In accordance with La. R.S. 33:4(E)(1), we enter judgment declaring the City of Central to be incorporated as of July 11, 2005, and having those boundaries as set forth in the legal description of the area to be incorporated in the petition for incorporation. In light of this ruling, all requests for relief raised in plaintiffs’ answer to this appeal are denied as moot. Trial court costs and costs of this appeal are assessed to plaintiffs/appellees.”

As a result of this decision, any challenge to the incorporation of St. George was unlikely to succeed.



St. George Leader To Use St. George Knight as Symbol

ST. GEORGE — In honor of St. George, the patron saint of England, the *St. George Leader* has adopted as its symbol a St. George knight who carries a shield bearing the St. George Cross.

When East Baton Rouge Parish was settled, the first Catholic parish was St. Joseph Catholic Church in downtown Baton Rouge. The second Catholic parish, which encompassed the remainder of East Baton Rouge Parish, was St. George.

So the first name for the southeast part of East Baton Rouge Parish was indeed St. George, which is why the founders of the City of St. George chose the name St. George.

The *St. George Leader* is owned by Community Press, LLC.

Key personnel for the newspaper are Woody Jenkins, editor, and Jolice Provost, business manager.

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Congratulations St. George!



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I believe in listening to the people, and it is encouraging that the legal system worked and respected their voice. Now it is up to all of us to build a city we will be proud to call home, a beautiful city that is safe to raise our families and enjoy life. We want a city that attracts new citizens and new businesses, where there is opportunity for all.

One day soon we will be a city with its own school system where all of our children can attain a top quality education!

I am honored to represent you at the State Capitol. I am always open to your thoughts and concerns. Please contact me whenever I can be of assistance.

Rep. Emily Chenevert



Why BRPD Officers Live Outside Baton Rouge: They Seek Good Public Schools, Safe Streets

The Ungarnished Truth: Working Families Move Where Crime is Low and Public Schools Are Good; That's Not Baton Rouge!

Woody Jenkins

Editor

Statistics from the Baton Rouge Police Department show that 58 percent of all police officers live in Central, Zachary, or parishes other than East Baton Rouge Parish.

Many people complain that many police officers live outside Baton Rouge but no one seems to want to ask why? In reality, only 20 percent of the force actually resides in Baton Rouge. But Why?

When you say the words, "middle income working people," that describes virtually every member of the Baton Rouge Police Department. They work for a living. They are not abjectly poor, but they certainly don't make a lot of money. Even with husband and wife working, few Baton Rouge Police officers can afford to send their children to private or parochial schools. Yet, they want a good education for their children.

So like most of the rest of the "middle income working people," in the Capital region, they live in Central, Zachary, Livingston, and Ascension parishes, where crime is low and public schools are good.

The problem really began back in the 1960's and 1970's during integration. In the late 1960's, the parish had a system of neighborhood schools. Some were overwhelmingly white, some overwhelmingly black, and quite a few were racially mixed. However, Federal District Judge John Parker, unhappy with the rate of integration, ordered cross-town forced busing in order to achieve a targeted racial balance in each school.

His court orders, which extended more than three decades, left the East Baton Rouge Parish school system less integrated. Today, almost 90 percent of students in the system are black. We have *de facto* segregation if not segregation by law. Now the EBR school board is once again pursuing neighborhood schools. There is no longer forced busing, although there are plenty of buses crisscrossing the parish.

The current EBR school board inherited a Byzantine system of magnet schools, gifted and talented, charter schools, and neighborhood schools.

This system insures that most neighborhood schools will be failing or near failing schools. Why? First, the magnet schools pull away the best students (and often the top leaders) from the neighborhood schools. The gifted and talented programs pull out most of the other top students. Then many parents who pay attention to their options sign up for charter schools.

That leaves the rest of the kids — who have been left out of the sweepstakes — to attend their neighborhood school. There are of course a few good neighborhood



LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS from many jurisdictions honored a fallen comrade. Few police officers live in Baton Rouge.

schools in this parish but very few.

The thing to realize about Baton Rouge is that things are not "normal" here. They are not normal because we are missing one important segment of the population — "middle income working people with children." They are not going to send their children to poor public schools and they can't afford private schools. So they don't live here. A few do, but not many.

East Baton Rouge Parish, but especially the City of Baton Rouge, consists of retired people, poor people, wealthy people, students, single people, and married people without children. But what's missing is "middle income working people with children." It's not that there's an exodus going on. They already left! Long ago.

That's why only 20 percent of the Baton Rouge Police Department lives in the City of Baton Rouge. You could take a cross section of any other category of "middle income working people" and probably find about the same percentages.

How can we bring those middle income working families back to East Baton Rouge Parish?

You will never do it with the current Byzantine structure of schools in East Baton Rouge Parish where neighborhood schools are deprived of the top 50 percent or so of their students.

But there IS a way to bring "middle income working people" back to East Baton Rouge Parish — a way that is almost certain to work!

But you may not want to hear it. We KNOW how to do it because it's already been done — in Zachary and Central, the No. 1 and No. 2 school systems in Louisiana.

An analysis of enrollees in the Central school system shows that *more families move to Central from Livingston Parish than from Baton Rouge!* They come back to East Baton Rouge Parish for the good schools in Central!

Who are the people who have moved to Central from Livingston Parish? Mostly, they are former residents of Central who moved to Livingston for good public schools. They didn't want to be in Livingston. They wanted to be in Central.

So when Central got control of its schools and it became one of the top school systems in the state virtually overnight, people started returning to Central.

That's what the proposed City of St. George is all about. It's about returning people to public schools in East Baton Rouge Parish by creating a city with its own new *independent community school system* — a system like Zachary and Central, which are free of the Byzantine structure of schools in the EBR system where true neighborhood schools are virtually impossible.

It's not about "dividing" the City of Baton Rouge. The City of St. George is exclusively in unincorporated areas of the parish that the City of Baton Rouge doesn't want and never annexed!

The new Southeast Baton Rouge School System will bring people back to this parish from Livingston and Ascension by the tens of thousands, because our former residents would rather be in EBR, *if the schools are good!*

So, yes, most Baton Rouge Police officers do not live in Baton Rouge. It's because of high crime and poor public schools. But offer good public schools here, and people will pour back into this parish, *especially to St. George where crime is low.*

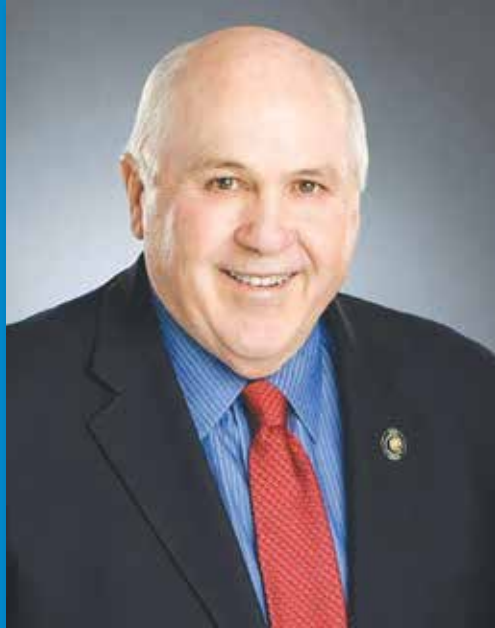
Like Zachary and Central, the proposed Southeast Community School System will bring middle income working people with children back to the parish and make it once again a "normal" community. Police officers will come too!



FEW EAST BATON ROUGE PARISH sheriff deputies live in the City of Baton Rouge.

Congratulations!

CITY OF ST. GEORGE!



BODI WHITE
Representative • 2004-2012
Senator • 2012-2024

LOOKING BACK AT HISTORIC TIMES

- In the early 1990s, several East Baton Rouge Parish legislators came to believe that we should pursue the Texas model and have independent community school districts in East Baton Rouge Parish. They were successful in creating the Baker school system and the Zachary Community System, which is the No. 1 school system in the state. We have continued that effort in Central and St. George...
- In 2004, I was elected to the Louisiana House representing the Central Community.
- April 2004 - I introduced a bill to create the Central Community School System - It failed. Other legislators told me that, while it was not a legal requirement, they would only support creating a school district for Central if Central became a city first. Our community decided that we should incorporate, not only to have a school system but for the many benefits that it could bring to an unincorporated area.
- 2004 - I worked with Central leaders to organize a petition drive to create the City of Central - This effort failed when the courts found the petition invalid.
- Feb. 2005 - Worked with people of Central on a second petition to create the City of Central - This petition was ruled valid and a referendum was called.
- April 2005 - Central voters went to the polls and approved creation of the City of Central.
- May 2005 - Suit was filed to block creation of the new city,

and we opposed that suit.

- June 2005 - Rep. Donald Ray Kennard and I recommended to the governor those to be appointed mayor, city council, and police chief of City of Central.
- July 2005 - Swearing in of new Mayor, Council, and Police Chief of the City of Central and beginning of the city's day-to-day operations. Mayor-President Kip Holden refused to transmit sales taxes collected in Central to the new city until the suit was resolved. In a compromise, 10% of sales tax collections were transmitted to Central, which allowed the city to operate on a limited basis.
- February 2006 - I introduced a Constitutional amendment to create the Central Community System.
- May 2006 - The legislature approved by a 2/3 vote sending a Constitutional Amendment creating the Central School System to the voters in November.
- November 2006 - The Constitutional amendment to create the Central Community School System was approved by vote statewide, in East Baton Rouge Parish, and in Central.
- December 2006 - Governor Kathleen Blanco appointed the seven initial members of the Central school board.
- January 2007 - The new Central school board was sworn in and began the process of searching for a superintendent.
- February 2007 - Central Community School Board named Coach Sid Edwards as first employee and Mike Faulk as first superintendent.
- March 2007 - The Central school system began hiring teachers and support staff.
- July 2007 - Members of the Central community were allowed into the five EBR public schools in Central to begin the process of cleanup and renovation. All were volunteers.
- August 2007 - The Central school system began its first year of operation. Within three years, it was named the No. 2 school system in the State of Louisiana.
- March 2008 - The Louisiana Supreme Court ruled that the City of Central was lawfully incorporated. The city began to receive 100% of its rightful sales taxes and started full operations.

- March 2008 - The City of Central became the first city in the state to be fully privatized.

- Central has only a handful of employees and operates with large surpluses.

- Since Central was incorporated in 2005, there have been no tax increases for the operation of city government.

- The Central Community School System remains one of the best school systems in Louisiana.

- In 2011, I was elected to the Senate. The new district included Central and St. George. People in St. George expressed their desire to have a community school system and a new city.

ST. GEORGE

2012 - I introduced a Constitutional amendment to create the Southeast Community School District - It failed.

2012 - I introduced a bill to create Southeast Community School District - It passed, contingent on the passage of a Constitutional amendment in the future to authorize the district.

2018 - The people of St. George began a petition drive to launch the City of St. George - The petition was invalidated.

October 2019 - After a successful petition drive, the people of St. George went to the polls and voted to create the City of St. George.

2020 - I introduced legislation to create the St. George Transition District, in order to smooth the transition if the Supreme Court approved the City of St. George.

2019 - Mayor-President Sharon Weston Broome and Councilman Lamont Cole sued to stop incorporation of the City of St. George.

- District Court ruled against incorporating City of St. George.

- First Circuit Court of Appeal ruled against incorporation.

- April 2024 - Louisiana Supreme Court upheld the incorporation of the City of St. George.

- The next step will be the appointment by the governor of the first mayor, city council, and police chief of the new St. George.

The rest of the story will be written by you! It is your city! Make the most of it.

Remember: Never give up!

Have You Wondered Who Paid for The Attacks on City of St. George?

Here Are Donors Who Paid for the Negative Attacks

BATON ROUGE - According to campaign finance reports filed with the Louisiana Board of Ethics, here are some of the donors to the anti-St. George campaign that kept the attack pieces coming in the mail and on TV day after day:

- Future PAC (Baton Rouge Area Chamber) - \$2,500
- Forte & Tablada - \$1,500
- Craig Gehring - \$1,500
- Huval & Associates - \$1,000
- Ari Kocen - \$1,500
- Lipsey's (gun wholesaler) - \$5,000
- Premier Geotech & Testing - \$2,000
- Walters, Papillion, Thomas, Cullens - \$2,500
- Compliance EnviroSystems - \$2,500
- Emergent Method - \$1,000
- Daryl Gessel - \$2,500
- Haynie & Associates - \$1,000
- Jim Bailey - \$5,000
- CST Land Developers - \$1,000
- John Enquist - \$10,000
- Future PAC (Baton Rouge Area Chamber) - \$10,000
- KB PAC - \$1,000
- Kevin Reilly (Lamar) - \$10,000



- Ross Reilly - \$5,000
- M. A. Roth - \$2,500
- Hans Sternberg - \$2,500
- Elizabeth (Boo) Thomas - \$1,000
- James Usher - \$3,000
- Sen. John Breaux - \$1,500
- Gulf Coast PAC - \$5,000
- H&E Equipment - \$25,000
- John Noland - \$10,000

H&E Equipment is headed by John Enquist.

John Noland is a key player in the Baton Rouge Area Foundation.

For more on the Baton Rouge Area Foundation, go to https://www.theadvocate.com/baton-rouge/news/article_1f4d082f-1c67-5f38-83ae-4ebd2833ff98.html.

The article in the March 10, 2015, edition of the Advocate is entitled, "Who's BRAF? Meet the powerful, wealthy, secretive group steering much of Baton Rouge's success — and failures — Baton Rouge Area Foundation behind many of city's endeavors — both successes, failures"

For a more complete list of donors who supported the anti-St. George attack mailings, including some scurrilous personal attacks, go to the Louisiana Board of Ethics website for campaign finance reports.

St. George Leader

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Campaigning for City of St. George



Campaigning for St. George in 2019



Joshua Hoffpaur, an early leader of St. George



The incorporation campaign was a family affair.



Signs were everywhere — even giant billboards. Everyone wanted to have his say.

CONGRATULATIONS ST. GEORGE



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Filling the Gap: The Leader to Provide News, Advertising

BATON ROUGE — Former Rep. Woody Jenkins served in the Louisiana Legislature for 28 years, representing Baton Rouge longer than anyone in history. He graduated from Istrouma High, the LSU School of Journalism, and the LSU Law School.

As a delegate to the Louisiana Constitutional Convention of 1973, Jenkins succeeded in amending the Constitution to allow the incorporation of new cities in East Baton Rouge Parish. That change made the cities of Central and St. George a legal possibility.



In the House, he authored constitutional amendments that created the Baker and Zachary school systems. Later, as editor of the *Central City News*, he helped create the City of Central and the Central Community School System.

Jenkins said, "Texas has more than 1,000 school systems, each with a high school, a middle school, and two or three elementary schools. For many years, my goal has been to break the East Baton Rouge Parish School System down into seven community school systems, more like those in Texas. Smaller systems are more governable and provide a better education for students."

A lifelong journalist, Jenkins is founder and editor of the *Central City News*. He has covered events surrounding the incorporation of Central and creation of the Central school system for the past 19 years. The *Central City News* has been named the outstanding community newspaper in Louisiana for six of the past nine years. Jenkins has volunteered to work at his alma mater, Istrouma High, for many years. He was named the Volunteer of the Year in the EBR Parish School System for 2018.

In 2019, Jenkins launched the *St. George Leader* as way to provide badly needed, objective news coverage of the St. George community and especially the St. George incorporation movement. Today, the *St. George Leader* is the only news organization or advertising medium in St. George.

Jenkins said, "While The Advocate does provide some coverage of what happens in St. George, it is mostly very negative toward the new City of St. George. People in St. George simply don't trust them."

Since the St. George incorporation movement gained ballot status in 2019, the *St. George Leader* has been an "occasional publication," issuing an edition or two a year.

"We have been awaiting a final judgment from the Supreme Court. Now that it has come, the volume of news and information will explode, and the news for a newspaper in St. George will be indisputable. We are ready to expand our coverage and produce the *St. George Leader* on a regular basis. Assuming we get advertising support from businesses in St. George, we plan to be here to serve the St. George community for years to come."

Reprinted from Nov. 2019 St. George Leader Yes for St. George!



A JOYOUS VICTORY — Local realtor and former school board member Jim Talbot celebrates victory for City of St. George at City Café on George O'Neal Road in the newly-created City of St. George. Volunteers like Talbot donated their time for the past 11 years to build support for creating the City of St. George. With a population of 86,000 people, it will be the 5th largest city in the state.

FOR 17,421 • AGAINST 14,864

Woody Jenkins
Editor

ST. GEORGE - Voters in the southeast part of East Baton Rouge Parish went to the polls in near record numbers on Saturday, Oct. 12, 2019, and gave a resounding 'Yes' to a proposal to create the new City of St. George. A total of 32,285

voters cast their ballots and gave a 54-46 victory to incorporation. For volunteers who have dedicated years of their lives to build public support to create a new city, it was a time of joy and celebration.

The returns have been certified, and the volunteers who made it possible are organizing committees to plan all aspects of creating a new city government. The public

is awaiting a decision by the governor on who he will appoint as the interim Mayor, Council, and Police Chief.

Opponents of incorporation, including Mayor-President Sharon Weston Broome, have threatened to file suit to stop the incorporation.

Reprinted from the November 2019 edition of *St. George Leader*.

Historic Victory for St. George



CELEBRATING AN HISTORIC VICTORY — Leaders of the St. George incorporation movement and volunteers celebrated on election night Saturday, Oct. 12, 2019, when voters approved the incorporation of the City of St. George by a 54-46 margin. Shown (1st row, left to right) are Nancy and Chris Riels, Joshua Hoffpauir, attorney Sheri Morris, St. George incorporator Norman Browning, Lorraine Beaman, Lisa Walton, Stacy and Dwight Hudson, Patty Cook, and Montez LeGrande. (2nd row) Trey Cook, Dustin Yates, Lee West, Pam Doran, Allen Beaman, Henry Grace, and Rebekah Gibson. (3rd row) Glenn Kelley, Tommy Doran, and Dr. Lewis Richerson. (4th row) Donnie Walton, Matthew and Abigal Gibson, and Clay LeGrande.

Jenkins has more than 55 years in journalism. He has been a newsmen at WLCS radio and WAFB-TV, founder and general manager of WBTR-TV, and editor and publisher of the *Central City News*.

He was inducted into the LSU Journalism School Hall of Fame. Jenkins and his staff have won more than 200 awards for excellence in journalism, including outstanding community newspaper in Louisi-

ana for six of the past nine years. The staff has won 1st Place for Best News Coverage and many others.

For information on advertising in the *St. George Leader*, email centralcitynews@hotmail.com.



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Leaders Outline Reasons For Creating St. George

BATON ROUGE - During the campaign to incorporate St. George, Chris Rials and Andrew Murrell, two leaders of the St. George movement, explained the goals of incorporating the new city.

Murrell cited the top five reasons for the City of St. George as:
 1) **Fighting Crime.** The 193 murders in 2017 and 2018 were the highest two-year total in East Baton Rouge Parish history. St. George will increase East Baton Rouge Parish Sheriff's office coverage of St. George.

2) **Holding Down Taxes.** A total of 23 new taxes have passed in the parish since 2003. That totalled \$53 million in additional taxes in 2018 — more than the total proposed budget of St. George. Since 2009, Baton Rouge has increased spending by more than the cumulative total budget increases of Lake Charles, Lafayette, New Orleans, Alexandria, and Shreveport. In 2017, JP Morgan identified Baton Rouge as the 5th most over-leveraged city in the U.S. They said the city must raise taxes 24 percent to meet its 30-year liabilities. There are no documented plans by the administration or the Baton Rouge Area Chamber to address this financial reality.

Rials said Central has not raised its taxes since they incorporated in 2005, and neither will St. George.

3) **Improving Drainage.** The City-Parish administration would not prioritize \$2 million in a nearly \$1 billion budget to obtain \$255 million in federal monies secured by Congressman Garret Graves. The City-Parish administration asked the governor and state tax-

payers to pay for East Baton Rouge Parish drainage improvement. Look at your ditches — overgrown with grass, trash, sediment-filled culverts. The City of St. George will address drainage.

4) **Creating a Great New School System.** The East Baton Rouge Parish School System ranked 58th out of 70 statewide school districts, with the lowest performance scores among large municipalities. There have been five school closures since 2014, while surrounding school districts have expanded their schools and economies. St. George's future majority minority school district will compete with Zachary and Central.

5) **Reversing the Unprecedented Exodus from the Parish.** Residents have been voting with their feet. There are 6,000 fewer residents in East Baton Rouge Parish now than in 2016. An East Baton Rouge Parish School System study forecasts a further loss of nearly 20,000 residents by 2030. An EBR Parish Land Use Study confirms that by 2030 there will be fewer residents in EBR Parish, residents over 60 years of age will increase by 50 percent, and residents over 70 will double.

However, Rials and Murrell agreed that the City of St. George will turn this around and grow the city and East Baton Rouge Parish.

JEFF CROUERE LIVE
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Congratulations St. George!



We have entered a new season to move forward with a PURPOSE to PROGRESS!
 I look forward to being involved in the coming days to proudly make our city the best it can be!

Monique Appeaning

Creation of City of Central Provides

Continued from Page 3

new city is created, there will be an election for Mayor, Police Chief, and City Council. That's true!

The other things he said were simply talking points but they were not true, and he could not back them up then or now. Since 2014, the opponents of St. George really haven't come up with a single new argument against St. George

A Basic Principle of Our Law. The basic principle at issue here is that people living in unincorporated areas of Louisiana have the right under Louisiana law to organize a new city (La.R.S. 33:1 et seq). Furthermore, the Louisiana Constitution of 1974 has a specific provision (Art. 6 §2), which repealed a part of the City-Parish Plan of Government, which had prohibited the formation of new cities in East Baton Rouge Parish.

The law is clear — people have a right to file an incorporation petition with 25 percent of the registered voters and then vote on whether to incorporate. If the ayes have it, the incorporation can still be challenged but the likelihood of such a challenge being upheld is extremely small.

Virtually all of the issues which

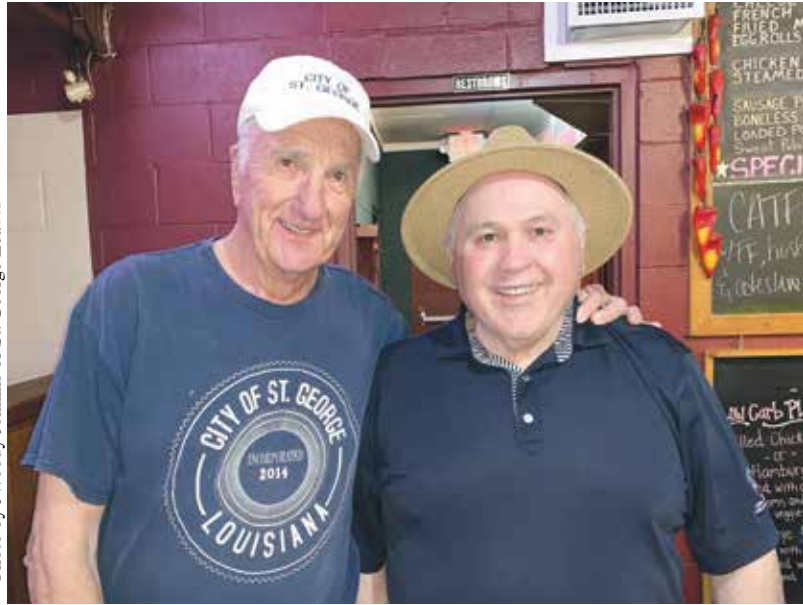


Photo by Woody Jenkins of St. George Leader

CELEBRATING SUPREME COURT DECISION — Upon hearing the Supreme Court had upheld the incorporation of St. George, some of the city's loyal supporters gathered to celebrate at George's including Jim Talbot, Bodi White, Norman Browning, and Darnell Browning

are likely to come up in any legal challenge to the incorporation of St. George have already been decided by the courts. One of the most important cases is *Devall v. Starns*, which challenged the incorporation of the City of Central.

For example, the notion that voters outside the proposed city should get to vote on the incorporation of

a new city was dealt with in *Devall* and disposed of as without merit. For a more detailed explanation of the legal issues, see Page 8.

A Tale of Two Cities. Instead of trying to go through the Mayor-President Holden's ill-advised and over-the-top remarks one by one, there is something to realize.

We don't have to guess how in-

corporating a new city in East Baton Rouge Parish would work. It's already been done! The City of Central (population 29,000) was incorporated in 2005. We know that the City of Central has NOT raised taxes since it was incorporated in 2005. In fact, it doesn't even impose a city property tax. It has had budget surpluses year after year and has an accumulated surplus of \$70 million. This success can be attributed largely to privatization of city services — the same plan proposed by the leaders of the St. George.

St. George will not be run the way Baton Rouge is run. It will be run on a 21st century model of privatization.

The simple way to understand what is being proposed is to compare two cities right here in our area — the City of Hammond (pop. 20,000) and the City of Central (pop. 29,000). They are two nice cities but they were founded on two very different models of government. Hammond was founded in 1818 and follows the same model as cities in the 1800's. Central was founded in 2005 and follows a 21st century model.

In Hammond, with a population smaller than Central, city government costs four times as much! There are 325 employees in Hammond, compared to five full-time and 19 part-time employees in Central. Privatization and Central's frugal government are why Central has a surplus of \$70 million on hand, which can be used for capital improvements and emergencies.

Central: A Conservative, Cost-Conscious City Government.

City Employees. With only five employees, the City of Central has no bureaucracy, and the public is not accruing vast unfunded liabilities for hundreds of city employees who may want to retire in the future. This obligation simply doesn't exist in Central.

Law Enforcement. Like other residents of East Baton Rouge Parish, the people of Central pay a law enforcement tax to fund the Sheriff's Office. Before Central was incorporated in 2005, the East Baton Rouge Parish Sheriff's Office was the primary law enforcement agency. Now 19 years after incorporation, the Sheriff is still the primary law enforcement agency in the City of Central. The tax has not been increased, and Sheriff Sid Gautreaux says he has no additional costs because of the City of Central. Logically, why would he? He's providing the same services he has in the past.

Sheriff Gautreaux said, "If the City of Central wants additional patrols or services over and above, then they have to provide the funding." In recent years, the City of Central has paid the Sheriff's Office for additional patrols.

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a Road Map for Creating St. George

The City of Central has no reason to create its own full-time police department. That would duplicate the services already provided by the Sheriff. But Central does have a part-time largely volunteer Central Police Force which assists the Sheriff's Office. They function similar to Reserve Sheriff deputies. Every police officer in the Central Police Department is fully certified. Central police patrol neighborhoods and work traffic accidents, freeing the Sheriff from that responsibility. They are also available for any emergency that may occur.

Sheriff Sid Gautreaux has said he will continue to provide the same level of law enforcement protection after incorporation of St. George that he did before incorporation. He also said that if the city wants extra patrols or other special services, it will have to pay the Sheriff's office the expense of doing so.

Fire Protection. Before incorporation, the people of Central funded the Central Fire Protection District through property taxes. The district was providing excellent service. So there was no reason to create a new duplicatory fire department in the City of Central. Similarly, the St. George Fire Department will be unaffected by the incorporation of St. George. It is a completely separate governmental agency.

Sewer Services. Central was part of the parish sewer system before incorporation, and it still is. The people pay the same sewer user fees as residents of Baton Rouge. The same is true in St. George.

Garbage Collection. Garbage collection is parishwide. So the people of Central receive the same garbage service that they did before incorpo-



ST. GEORGE TRANSITION DISTRICT members gathered for a news conference Monday, April 29 — Chris Rials, Dustin Yates, Norman Browning, and Drew Murrell.

ration, and they pay for it with the same monthly user fee as in Baton Rouge. So will St. George

Parks and Recreation. Parks and recreation in Central are provided by BREC which levies the same property tax in Central that it does in Baton Rouge. So the incorporation of Central made no change in parks. That will be true in St. George as well.

Not Complex, Not Duplicatory. Not Expensive. The creation of the City of Central was really quite simple — not complex or duplicatory — with respect to police protection, fire protection, sewer, garbage col-

lection, and parks. All those services are the same now as they were before incorporation. The only difference is that Central has added a volunteer Central Police Force to supplement the Sheriff's Office.

What Did Change in Central? Three major areas did change: 1) public works, 2) planning and zoning, and 3) plan review, permits, inspections, and Code enforcement. These are very important areas of local government, and all require considerable expertise. However, these services can readily be contracted out to private providers.

The City of Central contracts with IBTS, a non-profit organization established by the National Governors Association to provide these city services, along with a variety of other things, such as personnel to answer citizens complaints and problems.

IBTS provides the Public Works Director for the City of Central, engineering services, personnel to staff the planning and zoning commission, clerical staff, and building officials to do inspections.

Unlike inefficient local governments, which may send out four or five inspectors to one job site, IBTS sends a Certified Building Inspector — one person who performs all inspections, including building, plumbing, mechanical, and electrical.

In addition to the 20 employees that IBTS provides to staff the Central Municipal Services Center, IBTS contracts with general contractors to repair potholes and provide street overlay. It uses sub-contractors who work at pre-negotiated prices. Some services such as lot cutting are done at a fixed rate per linear foot, rather than by the hour.

Taxes. Municipal taxes in Central have NOT gone up with incorporation. In fact, they are LESS than municipal taxes in Baton Rouge. For one thing, the Central City Council has staunchly refused to levy a municipal property tax. However, since the city is run so efficiently and is compiling large surpluses, there is no thought of a tax increase by the City of Central. Instead, the city fathers have been considering where to use some of its accumulated surplus for capital improvements without the necessity of acquiring debt.

Experts in privatization we inter-

See FAMILIES on Page 19


CONGRATULATIONS, ST. GEORGE!

Congratulations to everyone who worked so hard to create the new City of St. George! It has been a long and interesting process. To me, the great thing is that our system worked. Everyone got to have his say and ultimately, the majority ruled and the courts did their job of making sure everything was done in accordance with law. Now we have new city — a city with tremendous potential. I see my job as your Metro Council member is to do my best to make sure it all works out for the people of Baton Rouge, St. George, and the rest of the parish. Ultimately, we are all in this together. So it's time to unite and build a great future! My late husband Buddy always believed we must listen to the people and respect their desires. So he would be very happy that their vote has been honored. Whether you live in St. George or Baton Rouge or somewhere in between, please call on me when I can be of service!

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Denise Amoroso
Metro Councilwoman
District 8



Late Councilman, Buddy Amoroso
1956-2018

Congratulations!

Welcome to St. George!

Bravo to the citizens of St. George! You've done it! You can all proudly say, "Welcome to St. George!"

At the Assessor's Office we are ready to serve you and we are excited for the future of East Baton Rouge Parish!

Our closest office is conveniently located at 10500 Coursey Blvd., Room 106 Baton Rouge, LA 70816 225-389-3901



Brian Wilson, Assessor



BRIAN WILSON
EAST BATON ROUGE
PARISH ASSESSOR

Families Seek Safety, Good Schools

Continued from Page 17

viewed estimated that the City of St. George could run the entire city with fewer than 20 employees, while utilizing a private contractor such as IBTS to provide city services. They estimate the contractor would need to utilize roughly 50 staff members and certainly no more than 70 to provide the services that citizens will expect.

Charges That St. George Is Breaking Away, That It Is Divisive, or That It Is Racist. These allegations are intended to inflame passions but have nothing to do with reality.

Obviously, the City of St. George is not breaking away from the City of Baton Rouge. It's not part of the City of Baton Rouge. We're talking about the unincorporated areas that the City of Baton Rouge never wanted to annex. Suddenly, the fact that the people in St. George would want to have their own city is "dividing us." How ridiculous! St. George is going to be right next door to Baton Rouge. It will still be in East Baton Rouge Parish! Everyone will flow from one city to the other freely and seamlessly. There won't be a 10-foot-high wall or checkpoints.

Truly, having a great new city right next to Baton Rouge can only make Baton Rouge better. Yes, big companies may put an office in Baton Rouge, but where are the employees going to live? You can bet that, unless something changes, they will be headed to Livingston and Ascension! But St. George will provide people with a great place to live right next door to the City of Baton Rouge in the southern part of THIS parish — a city with good schools and safe neighborhoods.

The real racism in this debate has been the knee-jerk reaction against



CITIZENS OF ST. GEORGE gathered at St. George Fire Dept. Monday to discuss city.

St. George. Somehow if an area is majority white, conservative, and Republican, it shouldn't be allowed to incorporate and have a city. That is a racist position to take.

It is also racist to assume that blacks and whites are looking for something totally different in a city. Will blacks, Latins, and Asians want to live in St. George? Of course they will!

A few years ago, a black political leader from Baton Rouge made a statement on WAFB-TV about what a racist community Central is. At the *Central City News*, we believed that was false but we wanted to find out what the black people living in Central thought about the Central community. We wondered if they saw it as a racist place to live.

So members of our newspaper staff went to the Central Wal-Mart to survey black customers as they came out of the store. The first question we

asked was, "Do you live in Central?" If they said no, we thanked them and ended the interview. If they say yes, we proceeded with the next question, which was, "Since you have lived in Central, have you experienced any acts of racism or been made to feel uncomfortable out here?"

We got looks of puzzlement, laughter, and a lot of "Are you kidding? We love it out here! People treat us great!" Out of 100 interviews, not a single black resident of Central said they had been discriminated against or felt uncomfortable in Central because of race.

We then proceeded to the next question, which was "Why do you live in Central?"

Here were the top three answers: 1) Great schools: "We want a good education for our children, and we couldn't get it in Baton Rouge!" 2) Low crime: "Out here we can let our children play in the yard without fear

of anything happening to them!" 3) Rural setting: "We love the country atmosphere." "It makes us feel at home!"

But the most interesting part of our survey was yet to come. We decided to poll the white people coming out of Wal-Mart and ask them the same question: "Why do you live in Central?"

Amazingly, the whites answered the question the same — good schools, low crime, and country atmosphere. And in exactly that order!

The black people and the white people wanted the same things!

The opponents of St. George who holler "Racism!" are doing such a grave injustice to this community and to its people. St. George isn't about race. It's about creating a city where people of ALL races can go to public school and get a good education and where people of ALL races can live in their home or shop at the store without fear of being robbed or murdered. It's about creating a city where the people control their own destiny, and decisions are not made from afar.

I have a challenge to the people who are opposing St. George based on accusations of racism. The challenge is this: Go out to Central and ask black people how they enjoy living in Central and having their children attend the Central School System. Then maybe you will be able to speak with some authority about what having its own city and school system will mean to St. George.

The bottom line is, it was up to the people of St. George to decide if they wanted a city or not. And the decision should be based on the truth, not ridiculous lies and distortions.

The people made their decision, and the Supreme Court upheld it.

Congratulations! CITY OF ST. GEORGE

Best wishes for a bright and prosperous future! May the passion and drive that gave birth to this new city lead to great success! You have many assets and many opportunities. Make the most of them! If you can achieve your goals, generations ahead will thank you.



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Republican • District 16

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Governing Body for Republican Party of EBR Parish

Republican Parish Executive Committee

Republicans Elect Six New Members To Leadership of EBR Parish GOP

BATON ROUGE — Under state law, the Republican Party is governed at the parish level by the East Baton Rouge Republican Parish Executive Committee.

Louisiana law provides that the committee will be composed of 17 members — five elected parish-wide and 12 elected from the 12 Metro Council districts. Members are elected by Republican voters at the time of the Presidential Primary every four years.

On March 23, Republican voters chose the following members of the committee for the next four years: At-Large Businessman Jerry Brouillette; CPA Cecil Cavanaugh; Women’s Republican leaders Lynn Coxe Graham and Jamie Pope, and political consultant Scott Wilfong.

District winners were: District 1 Metro Councilman Brandon Noel; District 2 TV executive Edress Landry; District 3 contractor Richie Edmonds; District 4 businessman Lon Vicknair; District 5 pro-life leader Barbara Thomas; District 6 **Central City News** editor and former Rep. Woody Jenkins; District 7 Women’s Republican leader Christy Haik; District 8 Rev. Tommy French; District 9 businessman Jay Lindsey; District 10 former Rep. Shirley Bowler; District 11 former Sen. Dan Claitor, and District 12 farm director Danny Hoover. They will serve for four years.

REPRESENTING PARISH AT-LARGE *Newly elected • Sen. Claitor served previously



Jerry Brouillette* Cecil Cavanaugh Lynn Coxe Graham* Jamie Pope* Scott Wilfong



Brandon Noel Metro District 1 Edress Landry Metro District 2 Richie Edmonds Metro District 3 Lon Vicknair Metro District 4 Barbara Thomas Metro District 5 Woody Jenkins Metro District 6



Christy Haik* Metro District 7 Tommy French Metro District 8 Jay Lindsey Metro District 9 Shirley Bowler Metro District 10 Dan Claitor* Metro District 11 Danny Hoover* Metro District 12

GOP Re-elects Woody Jenkins As Parish Republican Leader

Party Names Leaders, Takes Stand on Issues

BATON ROUGE — Fresh off their election during the Presidential Primary, members of the Republican Party’s Parish Executive Committee met Sunday, April 28 to elect its leaders for the next four years and take a stand on some current issues.

The 17-member body unanimously re-elected former Rep. Woody Jenkins to his fourth four-year term as Parish Republican chairman.

Other officers elected were:
• Former Sen. Dan Claitor, vice chairman
• Political consultant Scott Wilfong, secretary
• Crisis pregnancy center leader Barbara Thomas, treasurer

The committee took positions on a number of issues facing the state.

- These included resolutions:
- Supporting State Supt. of Education Cade Brumley on his stand against the Biden’s administration’s radical rules attempting to accommodate gender identity in schools.
 - Congratulating the City of St. George on the Supreme Court decision recognizing its creation.
 - Supporting Rep. Emily Cheney’s HB 6, which could speed up the Southeast school district.
 - Supporting reapportionment of malapportioned judicial subdistricts in the 19th Judicial District.
 - Opposing HB 800, which calls for a “drive-by” Constitutional convention.
 - Opposing the Congressional reapportionment plan passed by the legislature to remove a Republican seat and add a Democratic seat.
- The public is invited to the Ronald Reagan Newsmaker Luncheon at 12 noon on the 2nd Tuesday at Café Americain, 7323 Jefferson.

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CPIA & Medicare Specialist