

In and about Washington

February 2022
FREE—TAKE ONE



Community festival March 19

The Easter Bunny will be among the visitors when the Washington Community Festival returns to Main Street on March 19.

The event is a revival of a Main Street event that was held in Washington each fall for a number of years.

Vendors will offer food and crafts from booths on the street, antique cars will be on display, cooks will compete in



a catfish gravy cookoff, and music will be featured all day, culminating in a street dance from 6 to 9 p.m.

The parish tourism commission has provided a \$2,400 marketing grant for the festival. Vicki Thibodeaux (337-351-2412) heads the planning committee.

Trails will show off town

The Town is planning to show off some of our beauty and history with walking paths through the community.

With the help of grants and the support of several local organizations, planners hope to develop three walking/biking tours, each beginning at Ethel Park across from Town Hall. The proposed routes include a Main Street Trail (about 1 mile), a Steamboat Turnaround Trail (about 1.6 miles), and a Discovery, Cemetery, and Church Trail (about 6.5 miles).

The Historic Washington Tour Committee, chaired by Hallie Coreil, plans to place markers at various sites on the trails. They will be funded primarily through a grant from the Atchafalaya National Heritage Areas. Letters are being sent to owners for permission to place the markers at several historic sites.

The committee is also preparing a grant application for funding from the National Historic Trust to pay for new street signs, which besides showing the street name, will designate it as part of Washington's historic district.

Pay utility bills online

The town is now accepting online payments for utility services. Payments can be made by going to the website townofwashington.la/, according to town clerk Halli Polotzola.

Once on the website you can pay the bill by going to the payment icon on the home page. Make sure you have your account number available.

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Of Note

KYLE WILLIAMS will speak at the 10:30 a.m. service at Washington Baptist on Sunday, February 20. The church's young people's program is held each Wednesday at 6 p.m.

IF YOU ARE artistically inclined and would like to donate time to create a sign or other pieces for Ethel Park, contact Hallie Coreil at 225.721.1209. or hallie.coreil@gmail.com

JOIN THE FACEBOOK group Friends of Washington, La for the latest on Washington revitalization projects, including Ethel Park, the Historic Washington Tour, and more.

GRADUATING high school students and enrolled college students from Washington are eligible for a \$2,000 scholarship awarded by the Louisiana Rural Water Association. Applications are due by March 4. Get information at 1-800-256-2591 or lrwa.org.

THE HEALTH BUGGY has resumed its free screening for blood pressure, blood sugar, and cholesterol on the Immaculate Conception parking lot from 8 to 11 a.m. each third Friday.



Students build benches

Carpentry students at the Washington Technical and Vocational School are building benches for Ethel Park across from Town Hall. The students, taught by Edward Harris, regularly contribute their skills to community projects.

Grant will pay for sewer work

State Rep. Dustin Miller has announced that Washington will receive a \$183,000 grant for sewer system improvements.

"This is exciting news," Mayor Dwight Landreneau said. "The grant will allow us to make long-needed repairs and improvements to the town's eleven sewer pumping stations and replace old and worn-out lift pumps."

The grant comes from the state's portion of federal funds available under the American Recovery Plan Act and is administered through the Water Sector Commission of the state Office of Economic Development.

Argument brought shooting

Keith Adam Joseph, 38, was shot dead in a New Year's Eve altercation in the 300 block of East St. Mitchell Street.

A 15-year-old was arrested on charges of second-degree murder and illegal possession of a handgun.

Joseph was shot once in the chest while arguing with someone about 11:30 p.m. December 31.

It was the first homicide in Washington in more than five years.

THE WEATHER



January 1-27

High: 89, Jan. 1

Average High: 61.3

Low: 19, Jan. 22

Average Low: 37.6

Jan. Rainfall: 1.30

Avg. Jan. Rain: 4.38

Rain for 2021: 84.17

Avg. Yearly Rain: 53.30

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Boat ramp improvements

The Louisiana Department of Wildlife & Fisheries helped with a facelift to the boat ramp area on the Washington festival grounds. Mayor Dwight Landreneau thanked Wildlife & Fisheries secretary Jack Montoucet for his assistance with this project.

Parish reconsidering voting places

The St. Landry Parish Council is looking again at parish voting precincts, but will probably not undo changes to Washington's voting places.

Washington residents who voted at Town Hall for years will now have to go to Washington Elementary because of a parishwide reduction in precincts. Most residents had no idea that the changes were afoot until they received new registration cards in the mail in August.

In 2019, the state urged local governments to consolidate precincts with fewer than 300 voters to save money. As a result, the parish council cut St. Landry voting places from 92 to 53. Town Hall was cut even though it has more than 300 residents who voted there. In the mayor's election in November 2020, 539 people voted, 57% of eligible voters.

After a parishwide outcry, council members began considering a plan to restore some of the consolidated precincts, but it is not clear whether Washington will be affected. At any rate, any revisions will not go into effect this year.

No quorum at Council meeting

There was no Town Council action in January because of the lack of a quorum at the regular meeting. Council members Beau Wilson and Tanya Doucet were present. Mona Wilson, Rogers Malveaux, and Wilbert (Bobby) Ledet were absent. Three members must be present for any action.

From Town Hall

TOWN OFFICIALS are again reminding residents that they must place address numbers on their houses and businesses where they can easily be seen.

"It is very hard for first responders, and delivery services such as FedEx and UPS have a hard time finding the correct address," police chief Latoya Trent said. "As for first responders like the ambulance service and police officers, it makes it harder to find the residence where they need to be, making the response time longer," she said.

EFFECTIVE with the new year, Avenue Insights & Analytics will handle all the Town of Washington occupational licenses. Letters were sent from the agency for renewals. The town will continue handling beer and liquor permits.

WASHINGTON property taxes will no longer be collected at Town Hall. The Sheriff, who is the St. Landry Parish Tax Collector, will now collect Washington taxes.

CREDIT CARDS CAN now be used to pay all town bills after an upgrade in software and Web links at Town Hall. There will be a small transaction fee attached to card payments.

REGULAR MEETINGS of the Town Council are at 6 p.m. on each third Monday at Town Hall.

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2021 Washington's wettest in 80 years

Last year was Washington's wettest probably since 1940, when many south Louisiana communities set records that still stand.

The difference was that the 1940 records were set by a hurricane-related deluge that caused major flooding across the area. Rainfall in 2021 was caused by a year-long pattern of storms and the water drained away without significant flooding.

Washington averages a little more than 50 inches of rain each year. That much fell in the first six months of 2021. At the end of June nearly 60 inches had been measured at the St. Landry airport, two miles south of Washington. More than 15 inches fell in April alone, more than 13 inches fell in May, and over 17 inches were recorded in June.

The total grew to 84.17 inches by the end of the year – 30 inches above average. This is likely not the town's wettest year ever. Washington data is

Washington Rainfall	
Jan	1.81
Feb	4.57
Mar	6.41
Apr	15.30
May	13.91
June	17.08
July	7.91
Aug	2.58
Sept	7.73
Oct	1.37
Nov	0.48
Dec	4.02
Total	84.17

not available for 1940, but records are available for Opelousas, which got nearly 90 inches that year, and for Grand Coteau, which got 105 inches. Washington was probably in that range.

As in 1940, the damp weather was felt across south Louisiana. More than 86 inches fell at the New Orleans airport, compared to an average of about 63. Baton Rouge got nearly 80; its average is 62. Lake Charles got 72, about 12 inches above average.

During the first months of the year, "it just rained and rained and rained and rained," according to state climatologist Barry Klein. He said early in the year south Louisiana saw an unusually high number of wet fronts coming from the west.

That pattern changed about mid-May, but we continued to get a normal (wet) pattern of rain during the summer, with heat that made for uncomfortable days.

"Once we got to the middle of May, the fronts just quit coming to south Louisiana, which is why we stayed in that really hot regime from about mid-May all the way until mid-September," he said.

The heat didn't completely dissipate even then. Washington closed out the year with one of the warmest Decembers of recent record, with a high of 80 degrees on Christmas and 83 on New Year's Eve. That heat wave was interrupted by a frigid front early in the new year. Temperatures at the airport fell from 73 degrees at midnight on January 2 to 28 degrees at 6 a.m. on January 3 – a drop of 45 degrees in 30 hours.

Despite that chilly start and two cold snaps in January, long-term weather forecasters predict a relatively mild winter here, but one that could again be wetter than usual.



Looking Back

In and About
Washington

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