

In and about Washington

May 2022
FREE—TAKE ONE



Town expected to annex 140-acre I-49 property

The Town Council is expected to approve annexation of a 140-acre site at Exit 25 on the east side of I-49 at its next meeting.

“This will be the largest area ever annexed since the town was established,” according to Mayor Dwight Landreneau. Washington was incorporated in 1835.

The site is already served by the town utilities system and is included in a plan by area economic developers to identify properties that have commercial potential.

The last annexation of any sort was about a year ago when the town took in a small piece of residential property that was already within the town’s incorporated area.

Another austere budget coming

The Town Council is expected to take up another austere budget for the coming fiscal year at its regular meeting on May 16.

Mayor Dwight Landreneau had hoped to introduce it at the April meeting, but details were still being worked out, particularly over police department funding. The current budget anticipates revenue of about \$1.4 million and the next one will likely be no bigger. The new fiscal year starts July 1.

A recent audit produced an “encouraging finding that we are making headway in addressing the town’s past due debt,” the mayor said earlier this year. Debt has been reduced from \$640,000 to approximately \$329,000. The town’s general fund had a small surplus at the end of 2021 after operating at a deficit for the five years before, but auditors cautioned that the town still has no money to spare and needs to keep pinching pennies,

Our dare

We dare anyone to claim that their town is even close to being prettier than Washington when Spring bursts out in April.



2--In and about Washington, May 2022

Of Note

A MONTHLY Washington Main Street Market featuring local vendors is planned to open May 15 at the town pavilion. Laura Wilson, 337-351-4244, has information.

CHARITY ANGELS will hold an open car show at the festival grounds on May 14. Proceeds will go to the Autism Society.

LARRY FONTENOT with E & L Produce will discuss the history of the sweet potato industry at the Washington Museum on May 7 at 10 a.m.

A YARD SALE will be held from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. May 7 at the town pavilion.

A CONCERT by Hunter Erwin will be featured at the 10:30 a.m. service at Washington Baptist on Sunday' May 1.

THE STEAMBOAT CITY Association is taking applications for \$750 scholarships for graduating high school seniors from Washington. Contact Jim Bradshaw, P.O. Box 1121, Washington LA 70589.

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

Send items for *In and About Washington* to
jimbradshaw4321@gmail.com.



Helping the bunny

Easter baskets were donated to the students of Washington Elementary by Shriners Al Jinn Temple #232 and Al Jinn Temple #215 and Judge Royal L. Colbert of the 15th District Court.

Walking tours taking shape

The Historic Washington Tour Committee is finalizing three tour routes: 1) pedestrian/bike friendly Historic Main Street Tour (appx. 1 mile); 2) pedestrian/bike friendly Steamboat Tour (appx. 1.6 miles); and 3) bike/vehicle friendly Discovery Tour (appx. 6 miles).

Project coordinator Hallie Coreil advised, "Be on the lookout for tour booklets and historic markers at sites along the trails in the coming months."

THE WEATHER



April 1-27

High: 86, April 21

Average High: 79.4

Low: 38, April 8

Average Low: 56.2

April Rainfall: 4.34

Avg. April Rain: 4.45

Rain for 2022: 10.57

Avg. Yearly Rain: 18.57



A puff too strong

Gusty winds on April 11 were too much for the storage building at the corner of St. John and Carriere. The building had been badly damaged by hurricanes and was scheduled for demolition when nature did the job. It was empty and nobody was hurt.



Cedar Hill entrance

A restored gateway arch has been installed at the entrance to Cedar Hill Cemetery. Cary Iron Works began restoration of the old archway in September. It will be repainted this month.

Association will administer festivals

The Town Council approved a resolution allowing the Steamboat City Association to take over administration of Washington's Christmas and Community Festivals.

The organization has provided support for the festivals, which have been organized by committees that were overseen by the Town. Mayor Dwight Landreneau said Washington's auditors and CPAs have advised the Town to "get out of the festival business."

The association's board of directors has approved the change. Committees will continue to be in charge of organizing and running the festivals and will need to comply with association accounting and reporting requirements, president Hallie Coreil said. The move gives the festivals greater flexibility in seeking and spending funds.

From Town Hall

THE MAYOR plans to ask for proposals for a columbarium at Cedar Hill Cemetery, which is a wall with niches to house crematorium urns. He said space is limited at the graveyard and more people are opting for cremation.

THE TOWN COUNCIL gave the mayor permission to sign an agreement with Sharon Hick to use property at Prescott and Vine streets to reopen Joubert Park, which has been closed for several years

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



Finding bargains

Nice weather brought good crowds to the antique fair April 8 through 10 at the Old Schoolhouse Antique Mall. As many as 200 vendors fill the campus of the old Washington High School during the twice-yearly event. The next one will be in October.

4-In and about Washington, May 2022

Long unidentified WWII soldier coming home to Washington

The remains of Army Pvt. Hillary Soileau, a World War II soldier killed in the Pacific nearly 80 years ago, will finally be returned to St. Landry Parish to be buried in Cedar Hill Cemetery. He will be interred next to family members May 21 following an 11 a.m. funeral service at Sibille Funeral Home in Opelousas.

He was the son of Odey and Leona Soileau, who were farming near Whiteville when he entered the Army in July 1942. He was assigned to the 27th Regiment, 25th Infantry Division.

One of the division's first combat operations was as part of an Allied effort beginning in December 1942 to clear the enemy from Guadalcanal in the Solomon Islands.

Hilary could not be found after a battle in a group of hills nicknamed Galloping Horse on January 14, 1943. He was declared missing in action on February 3, and was officially declared killed in action on December 13, 1945. He was 23 years old.

Two unidentified bodies from the 27th Infantry were recovered from the Galloping Horse battlefield a month after the fighting and were buried at the Army, Navy, and Marine Cemetery on Guadalcanal. Americans buried there were later exhumed and taken to Hawaii.

One of the two unknown soldiers was identified at that time, but Soileau was not. His unidentified remains were buried again at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific in Honolulu. His name was recorded on a wall of the at the Manila American Cemetery and Memorial in the Philippines, along with others missing from World War II.

On December 8, 2021, the Defense Department's POW/MIA Accounting Agency said scientists in Hawaii, using DNA, dental records, anthropological analysis, and circumstantial evidence, were finally able to identify Soileau's remains.



Ardoin's has new owners



New owners Wes and Ashley Walker took charge of Ardoin's Grocery and Meat Market in April. The store was opened May 26, 1955, by Russell and Bee Ardoin, who ran it until 1990, when Paul and Brenda Ardoin Bacque took ownership. They thanked customers and friends, saying, "The 67 years the Ardoin and Bacque families have been operating the store have been wonderful."

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