

In and about Washington

October 2023
FREE—TAKE ONE



the “extreme” drought

Whistle installed

A whistle reminiscent of our days as a steamboat port has been installed at the town pavilion. It was funded by Washington State Bank. Above, town employees Michael Joubert and David Bell put up an information sign about its significance. The steamboat *Opelousas* blew the first whistle here in 1830, the last was on the *Warren* in 1900.

94 days straight!

Then still more 90-degree heat

On June 6 the high temperature at R&D Research, just east of town, was 87.5 degrees. On September 9 it was 89.5. In between those two dates – for 94 consecutive days – the afternoon high rose to 90 degrees or higher. It was 95 or more on 68 of the 94 days and 100 or higher on 24 of them. Until this summer, 10 days straight was uncommon.

The respite from 90-degree heat was brief. It returned on September 11 and continued for nearly every day for the rest of the month with heat indices often over 100.

Sporadic rain moderated overnight temperatures in September to something closer to normal, but it was not enough to keep south Louisiana from slipping from a “severe” into an “exceptional” drought. “Exceptional” is used by the weather service for the most intense droughts.

The Lake Charles weather office says the drought could deepen over the next several weeks; the longer term outlook is for a return to more normal temperatures late this month, with enough rain to alleviate, but not reverse, the drought.

THE WEATHER

September 1-27

High: 101, Sept. 7
Average High: 93.8
Low: 57, Sept. 19
Average Low: 68.4
Average Temp: 81.1
Sept. Rainfall: 2.22
Avg. for Month: 4.77
Rain for 2023: 35.58
Avg. Yearly: 42.43



Mural at pavilion

Aubrey Doucet and Jerome Ford have begun painting a steamboat mural on the Main Street side of the town pavilion. They expect to finish early this month. The project is funded by the St. Landry Tourist Commission.

Of Note

A FAMILY FALL FESTIVAL

from 10:45 a.m. to 5 p.m.

October 14 at the Recreation Center on Martin Luther King will benefit the center, Jacob Joubert Park, and Ethel Park. Vendors will offer a variety of goods, including a bake sale. Barbecue dinners will be served from 10:45 a.m. to 1 p.m. Sponsors include the Washington Citizens Group and Family Strong Foundation. Call 337 308-2442 for information.

THE FALL antique fair and yard sale at the Old Schoolhouse Antique Mall is scheduled for October 13-15.

THE AMERICAN LEGION post here has set up a GoFundMe account to help repair the Legion Home. The link is <https://gofund.me027782b8>. Donors may also send a check to American Legion, Jasper Neyland Post 209, P.O. Box 45, Washington, LA 70589

TRICKS OR TREATS will be the theme for the Main Street Market from 5 to 9 p.m., October 21, at the town pavilion.

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

Grave blessing, cemetery events October 28

The annual blessing of the graves and the Washington Cemetery Foundation's "Visiting the Past" program will begin at Cedar Hill Cemetery at 9:30 a.m., October 28. Father Matthew Higginbotham will bless the graves at 10 a.m.



At 11 a.m. the Sons of the American Revolution will dedicate a plaque at the nearby Old Church Landing (Yellow Fever) Cemetery honoring eleven Revolutionary War veterans who are buried there. They are Donato Bello, Michel Brignac, Laurent Tesson, Michel Cormier, Romanian de la Fosse, Joseph Lamirande, Andre Mondon, and Pierre Savoie.

Although Louisiana was a Spanish colony at the time of the Revolution, the men took part in a campaign led by Gov. Bernado de Galvez to drive the British from Baton Rouge, Natchez, and Pensacola.

Further information is on the cemetery foundation Facebook page.

Garden Club elects Anne Jones

Anne Jones has again been elected president of the Washington Garden Club. She previously served as president from 2013 to 2019.

Serving with her will be Becky Broussard, vice president; Sis Ortego, recording secretary; Mary Ann Huber, corresponding secretary; Pam Landreneau, treasurer; and Stephanie Tompkins, historian. Committee heads are Becky Broussard, conservation and environmental education; Susan Tinney, historic preservation and facilities management; Renee Daigle, social media, Ginger Fontenot, ways and means; and Anne Jones, memorials.



The club, founded in 1987, meets at 5 p.m. on the second Tuesday of each month, except July and August, at the old St. John's Episcopal Church, 308 North Church Stret. Membership is open to any interested adult.

Parish races, school millages on ballot

Washington voters will pick a clerk of court, district judge, state representative, and a handful of statewide officers October 14. St.



Landry voters will also decide on two school millage renewals and four statewide amendments.

The Washington voting place is Town Hall. Voting hours are from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.

You can download a sample ballot from the Secretary of State's office. Select St. Landry Parish,

Ward 00, Precinct 06.



EV charging station

Pat Vidrine and Mayor Dwight Landreneau put the finishing touches on an electric vehicle charging station next to the police headquarters. The station was donated by CLECO and will be formally unveiled at 10 a.m. October 12. Washington will be the first small town between Opelousas and Alexandria to offer EV charging.

Christmas in Washington December 9

Plans are well under way for the annual Christmas in Washington celebration, scheduled for December 9.

Events will include live music, visits by Santa, games, and a number of activities for children. Vendors will offer craft items, food, hot drinks, and T-shirts. Brenda Pitre heads the planning committee. Her number is 972-754-7755.

Legion home now in cultural district

The Historic Washington Cultural District has been officially expanded to include the American Legion Home just outside the town limits.

The Town Council voted in June to include the home, and the state department of culture approved the change in September. Inclusion will help the Legion find grants for maintenance of its headquarters.



New flags

Dwight Ledoux with Opelousas Chapter #47 Woodmen Life presented Mayor Dwight Landreneau with American flags to be flown at the museum on Main Street, Town Hall, and Cedar Hill Cemetery.

From Town Hall

ONLY ROUTINE matters were on the agenda for the September Town Council meeting.

THE TOWN is no longer using the firm Avenu to process occupational licenses and beer and liquor permits. They will be handled at Town Hall.

UTILITY CUSTOMERS are reminded that bill payments are due on the 17th of each month and that payments received after 3 p.m. are posted on the next business day. A \$10 late fee is charged if the bill is not paid on time. A \$50 delinquent fee is assessed and utilities will be disconnected if the bill is not paid by the 22nd of the month.

REGULAR MEETINGS of the Town Council are at 6 p.m. on each third Monday at Town Hall. This month's meeting will be on October 16.



Take pride in your town.

Stash your trash.

4-In and about Washington, October 2023

Luck and location help with hurricanes

Washington has usually been spared the worst of it when hurricanes come to Louisiana. Part of that has to do with luck, part of it with location. One coming ashore at Cameron has to travel more than 100 miles to get here. One hitting near Morgan City is 120 miles away. That's why they are usually weakened by the time they get here. Also, many of the significant Louisiana storms – Hilda (1964), Betsy (1965), Juan (1985), Katrina and Rita (2005) – moved well to our east or west.

One of the earliest that we know about struck in August 1831. "Gale winds" were felt as far inland as Opelousas. Six years later, in October 1837, a gale "raged and did considerable damage" in Opelousas and probably here.

The *Opelousas Courier* reported that the infamous Last Island hurricane in August 1856 "blew with a violence never known in this parish, since the great storm of twenty-seven. . . . [driving some] frightened inhabitants up into their garrets and on the house tops." "The storm of twenty-seven" refers to one that hit Louisiana in September 1827 and was apparently felt here.

One that landed on the west Texas coast in 1875 brought the worst loss of life and property recorded in the United States up to then, but was a weak tropical storm by the time it reached here. One that landed near Morgan City in August 1879 toppled the St. John church steeple in Lafayette, but the worst damage involving St. Landry, according to the *Courier*, was to crops and to steamboats caught on the Mississippi. The *Trenton* sank eight miles from Baton Rouge. The *Fanchon* lost both chimneys.

A big 1918 storm that blew hard in Lake Charles stayed west of us. An incredibly wet one in August 1940 flooded Crowley, Gueydan, and Lafayette, but only low areas were affected in St. Landry.

Opelousas got 80-mile-per-hour gusts that ripped up roofs when Audrey devastated Cameron Parish in June 1957. Washington presumably got a good wallop, too, but the only mention of it in the *Daily World* is that Washington High was not damaged.

Danny, one of three hurricanes to strike Louisiana in 1985, "left a mess" of uprooted trees and broken limbs in mid-August, but no substantial damage. Slow-moving Juan deluged the state at the end of October, backing Bayou Carron into Washington streets. The third storm, Elena, went elsewhere.

Andrew veered away from Washington in late August 1992, bringing only downed limbs and a power outage. Lili was a tropical storm when it reached Washington in October 2002, but still had enough strength to damage roofs and trees. Gustav delivered a direct hit in September 2008. It had dropped to just barely hurricane strength by the time it got here, but still damaged roofs and caused a power outage. Harvey's rains that drowned Houston in August 2017 poured all around us, but left us mostly dry.

in 2020, Louisiana's busiest storm season ever, Marco missed us completely on August 24, but only three days later Laura caused gusts over 50 miles per hour and five inches of rain. Delta's gusts knocked out power for 48 hours in early October. We barely felt it when Zeta hit on October 28.

We got rain but hardly any wind from hurricanes Ida and Nicholas in 2021.



Looking Back

In and About
Washington

is underwritten by

Member
FDIC



