

In and About

Washington

March 2026

FREE – TAKE ONE

Panel recommends appointed police chief

A citizen's commission has recommended amending Washington's Home Rule Charter to make the chief of police an appointed position and has suggested other changes to the town's basic governing document. The amended charter will be on the ballot for the June 27 general election.



The current charter has been in effect since November 2010. It provides for an elected chief who lives in town. Under the proposed new one the mayor will hire and fire the chief with Town Council approval. The chief must be a certified Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) law enforcement officer or have at least five years' law enforcement experience and get the POST certification within a year. The mayor would negotiate a contract with the chief, including pay that must be "within the budget approved by the Town Council."

The new document also changes how the mayor's pay is set. The old charter fixed the mayor's salary at \$2,458 per month. The new one removes a specific number. The salary will be set by the Town Council, which will have the power to "increase or decrease the mayor's compensation." The charter leaves the pay for the four district council members at \$600 per month and the council member at large at \$800.

It also sets qualifications for the Town Clerk and Public Works Director that are not in the old charter. The new one requires that the clerk should be a CPA "or have a minimum of five years' experience in an administrative, legal secretary/paralegal, accounting, or other equivalent executive capacity." The Public Works Director must have five years' experience in public works, civil engineering, or related fields, with supervisory or management experience." Both current appointees meet those requirements.

The new document substantially streamlines the original, removing unnecessary sections and strengthening some others so that they guarantee "effective home rule free from legislative interference in the structure and organization [of] local government, and ... the power and authority to manage ... local affairs." The commission appointed by the mayor included Alonzo Harris, Ricky Ducote, Pat Fontenot, Angela Leday, Marilyn Jones Smith, Claudia Blanchard, and Donna Dardeau.

Festival will offer food, music, cars, fun

The day-long Washington Community Festival March 21 will feature live music, food, crafts, a plant sale, and activities for children. Horace Trahan & The Ossun Express and Don Fontenot et Les Amis De La Louisiane will provide live music

More than 150 cars will compete for prizes in the popular car show, and teams will vie for prizes and bragging rights in a catfish cookoff.

The Steamboat City Association, underwriters of the festival, is offering several sponsorship packages that include tickets to a VIP event and other benefits. Information is available at info@steamboatcity.org or from association president Ron Rona (504) 251-1739. Contact Greg Doucet (337) 945-1531, or Ricky Ducote (337) 945-3426, for car show details. Anyone interested in becoming a vendor can contact Anne Jones at town hall (337) 826-3626 or ajones@townofwashingtonla.net.



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Of Note.

STATIONS OF THE CROSS will be held at 5:30 p.m. each Friday during Lent at Immaculate Conception Church, followed immediately by Mass.

AMERICAN LEGION Post 209 will be among the March 21 festival vendors, offering jambalaya and Happy Birthday America yard signs.

THE FAMILY Healthcare clinic in the Community Center on Veterans Memorial provides wellness visits, school physicals, immunizations cholesterol care, diabetes and asthma care, physicals, and. Call (337) 826-7702.

VOLUNTEERS helping to maintain Ethel Park meet at 8:30 a.m. each first and third Saturday at the park across from Town Hall.

YOU CAN DONATE to the Washington Cemetery Foundation via the Venmo payment app or by check to P.O. Box 42, Washington LA 70589.



Herbs, houseplants, and more

The Washington Garden Club will sell cuttings of native Louisiana plants, several varieties of Louisiana irises, herbs, and houseplants from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. in conjunction with the Washington Community Festival March 21. The booth will be in Ethel Park.

Festival schedule

Here is the schedule for the Washington Community Festival on March 21 centered at the Town Pavilion and Ethel Park.

10 a.m. – Opening ceremony, plant sale at Ethel Park, car show judging begins

10:30 a.m. – Cajun/Creole jam session with Mark Ardoin, pavilion stage

1 p.m. – Don Fontenot et Les Amis de la Louisiane, pavilion stage

2 p.m. - Car show winners announced, car show tent

3:30 p.m. – Catfish Cookoff winners announced, pavilion stage

4 p.m. to 6 p.m. – Horace Trahan and The Ossun Express, pavilion stage

Steamboat City launches website

The Steamboat City Association has launched a new website, www.steamboatcity.org to offer updates on Washington's work toward becoming a Main Street community, information on the Washington Historic District, and projects, and events. Business owners can join a registry. Send questions to info@steamboatcity.org.

WASHINGTON WEATHER

Rainfall for the last six months is nearly 11 inches below average.

February 1-27

High: 83, Feb. 19

Avg. High: 68.7

Low: 18, Feb. 1

Avg. Low: 47.3

Avg. Temp: 58.0

5-Year Avg: 56.1

Feb. Rainfall: 1.85

20-year Avg.: 4.68

Rain for 2026: 4.96

20-Year Avg: 8.56

Bridge closed

The Bayou Carron bridge on Main Street will be closed until September 9, according to an updated announcement from the state highway department. The department first estimated that the replacement project would take only until April.





Consecration Mass

The town was consecrated to God at a Mass at Immaculate Conception Church on January 24. Shown are Bishop J. Douglas Deshotel, Mayor Dwight Landreneau; Father Corey Campeaux; Lilian Pierce the International Director of Consecrations from the Mission for the Love of God Worldwide; and servers. To hear how the mission began assisting in consecrations visit: <https://tinyurl.com/m4sht4ae>.

Races set for May 16 primaries

Four Republicans are seeking the party's nomination to challenge incumbent Democrat Cleo Fields in the 6th Congressional District that includes Washington. Voting in the party primaries is set for May 16, runoffs will be on June 27, and the general election will be November 3.

Fields was the only Democrat to qualify and will be his party's nominee under Louisiana's revamped primary election system. Republican hopefuls are Monique Appeaning of St. George, Larry Davis of Denham Springs, Chris Johnson of Greenwell, and Peter Williams of Lettsworth.

In the U.S. Senate race, incumbent Bill Cassidy is being challenged by state treasurer John Fleming, U.S. Rep. Julia Letlow, and Mark Spencer of Belle Chasse in the Republican primary. Nick Albares and Gary Crockett, both from New Orleans, and Jamie Davis, from Ferriday qualified for the Democratic primary.

St. Landry voters will also decide on a 9.9-mill property tax increase proposed by the parish school board.

Under the old open primary system, all candidates appeared on the same ballot, and any voter could choose any of them. Under the new system Republicans and Democrats will be able to vote only in their party's primary. No-party voters will be able to pick which primary they want to vote in.

From Town Hall

THE TOWN'S online payment processor for utility billing is changing, and the site will look different. The updated link will remain on the Town of Washington website, and utility customers should always use that website for online payments. Call town hall, (337) 826-3626, if you have questions.

UTILITY bill payments are due on the 17th of each month. Payments 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.

MAYOR Dwight Landreneau and Council member Erick Fontenot have been appointed director and alternate director to represent the town on the board of directors of the Louisiana Municipal Gas Purchasing and Distribution Authority.

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

Submit items for *In and About Washington* to Jim Bradshaw, P.O. Box 1121, or e-mail ..

Washington remembers Bobby Ledet

Washington residents are remembering Wilbert (Bobby) Ledet as an unselfish educator and public servant who led by example. He died on January 27 at the age of 87 at his home in Washington.

He served on the Washington Town Council for more than forty years and was also the town's representative for many years on the Louisiana Municipal Gas Association board of directors. The Louisiana Municipal Association honored him in 2022 for his long service.



He taught and coached basketball at Sunset High School, was assistant principal and basketball coach at Palmetto High School, and was principal at Melville Elementary and Melville High School.

Mary Ann Lavergne, who succeeded him on the council in 2023, said, "He was a man of God and everything a community could ask for. He led with kindness and purpose." Mayor Dwight Landreneau remembered him as a friend, mentor, and a man who loved zydeco music. "I leaned on Coach Ledet," he said. "He would just come and sit with me, and we would sit, joke, and laugh. And I'm sure a lot of people know this, but I'll say it anyway – that man could dance."

Funeral services were held February 7 at Immaculate Conception church Burial was in Cedar Hill Cemetery. His wife, Rosa Lee Ledet, died in April 2021. He is survived by four sons, two daughters, and many grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Mark these dates for events in St. Landry

- Here's the Beef Cookoff, 8 a.m. to noon March 7, Yambilee building, Opelousas4
- Exit 11 Yard Sale, 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. March 21, throughout Sunset
- Crawfish Étouffée Cookoff, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. March 28, West Community Center, Eunice
- Rendezvous in the Prairie, 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. each Thursday, Prairie Acadian Cultural Center, Eunice
- Zydeco Capital Jam, 1 to 3 p.m., second Saturday, St. Landry Visitor Center, I-49 exit 2
- Zydeco Dance Lessons, 6 p.m. each Wednesday, Holy Ghost Church cafeteria, Opelousas
- Dulcimer Jam, 10 a.m. each Wednesday, St. Landry Visitor Center, I-49 exit 23
- Jammin' on the Bayou, 1 p.m. each third Saturday, St. Landry Visitor Center, I-49 exit 23
- Farmers Market, 6:30 to 9:30 a.m. each Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday, East St. Landry, Opelousas
- Farmers Market, 8 a.m. to noon, each Saturday and Wednesday, Second Street, Eunice
- La Table Française, 9:30 a.m. each Wednesday, Eunice Depot Museum, C.C. Duson Street
- La Table Française, 8:30 a.m. last Wednesday, Orphans Museum, Vieux Village, Opelousas
- La Table Française, 9:30 a.m. last Saturday, NUNU Art & Culture Collective, Arnaudville
- La Table Kreyol, 2 p.m. second Saturday, NUNU Art & Culture Collective, Arnaudville
- French Table, 2 p.m. each third Sunday, St. Ann Church, Mallet



Come see us today!

**St. Landry Visitor Center
978 Kennerson Road
(I-49 exit 23)**

**337.948.8004
cajuntravel.com**

