



ATCHAFALAYA CHATS

City of Patterson, Louisiana

Quarterly Newsletter - May 2018

Patterson Appoints Female Interim Chief of Police

On Monday, April 16, 2018, the Patterson City Council voted to appoint Janis Merritt (formerly an officer with the police force) as Interim Chief of Police. Chief Merritt will fill the remaining term of now retired Chief Patrick LaSalle, whose last official work day was Thursday, March 29, 2018.

Chief Merritt was selected by an interviewing team appointed by Mayor Rodney Grogan where prepared questions and scenarios were asked of each candidate. At the end of the process, Janis Merritt was the interviewing team's choice, whom the Mayor presented to the council as candidate for the Chief's position pending majority vote. With a vote of three yeas to two nays, Janis Merritt became Patterson's first female Chief of Police.

Chief Merritt possesses an undergraduate degree in Criminal Justice, served 25 years with the Morgan City Police Department and currently has five years with Patterson Police Department. She is married to Robert Merritt, and is a mother and a grandmother. Chief Merritt's motto is, "Embracing the past as we transition into the future."



Chief Merritt sworn in by City Attorney, Cremaldi



Interim Chief Merritt is Joined by Fellow Officers and Patterson Consultant, Pamela Washington

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City Employees Presented with Quarterly Certificates of Recognition



Mayor Grogan, Council & Chief Merritt Congratulate Certificate Recipients at Mthly Meeting

Seven City employees were presented certificates at May's monthly council meeting in recognition for meritorious job performance given during the previous quarter. According to Sharon Gillum, Supervisor of the Water Plant, the employee chosen for this recognition "Goes above and beyond" what is expected to perform his/her job, and is someone that "You can depend on." When asked what receiving this certificate means to her, Kim Guarisco, main office Billing Clerk, made the following statement. "It's an honor to receive this certificate. I love my job; and I feel very privileged to know that my hard work is recognized."

Recipients of the quarterly certificates are pictured from left to right: Sharon Gillum (standing in for Lionel Stackhouse Jr., Water Plant); Ryan Aucoin, PVFD; Kim Guarisco, Administration; Laura Campbell, Gas Department; Ashley Hebert-Compton, PPD; Billy Washington, Streets & Drainage; Nigel Gilium, Water Department; Monica Harvey, PPD (not pictured).

A plaque with the names of certificate recipients will be on display in the lobby at Patterson City Hall.



Increased Public Support and Corporate Sponsorship Helped to Make 2018 Cypress Sawmill Museum Festival a Big Success



NFL "Who Dat" Mascot delighting fans; Compliments of Ramsey, Skiles, Streva & Bourgeois Law

Cypress Sawmill Festival Makes Comeback

After taking a brief hiatus in the year of 2017; citing rainouts, declining revenues and lack luster public participation as reasons, the 25 year old Cypress Sawmill Museum Festival was back in full swing from April 6 to 8, 2018. Festival committee members determined that renewed community support and corporate sponsorship had rebounded sufficiently to bring the festival back

The three-day outdoor event delighted the young and the young at heart with exciting festival rides, delicious cultural food, live music and arts and crafts. It also offered the All American Lumberjack show and a car show as some of the featured events. Musical entertainers included Sadie McClendon, KQKI Country Showdown, Déjà Vu, Jus Cuz, Cliff Hillebran, Lowdown w/ Hal Bruni, Mudbone, Sean Gasaway, Gospel Jam, CJ Solar, Chubby Carrier and Jeff Bates as the headliner.

The festival is held at Kemper Williams Park. Proceeds from the festival support Louisiana State Museum in Patterson and Wedell-Williams Memorial Aviation exhibits.

Patterson Volunteer Fire Department Acquires New Truck



Contact Us

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Christmas came early this year for the Patterson Volunteer Fire Department when they acquired a shiny new fire truck. The new piece of equipment was purchased from E-1 at a cost of \$348,000 according to fire department president, Ryan Aucoin.

For the eight years of the current Mayor's administration, \$38,000 has been allotted to the fire department annually toward fire fighting equipment. The Patterson Volunteer Fire Department also receives a \$100,000 allotment every 11 years from the St. Mary Parish Government to help with fire truck needs. Those monies were used in the purchase of the new truck.

PVFD sold their old fire truck to Berwick fire department for a cost of \$130,000. It held six people, which didn't adequately serve Patterson's needs. Patterson Fire Department only needed a truck that holds two people, Aucoin said. However, they required more storage space than the old truck provided. The new fire truck has plenty of the needed storage space and holds two people.

PVFD received their new truck on Monday, April, 16, 2018.

GRADUATION DATES

PHS - Fri, May 11 @ 7:00 PM

**PJHS (8th grade) - Tue, May 22
@ 6:00 PM**

Schedule Changes Coming to St. Mary Schools

Because of deep budget cuts to the State's MFP fund, school districts in Louisiana are having to sink or swim as it relates to meeting educational needs with fewer per student dollars coming from the State. St. Mary Parish School District, who is traditionally prepared to handle State budget shortfalls, was unpleasantly surprised by this year's uncomfortably deep budget cuts that are resulting in a projected deficit amounting to approximately \$3,000,000 according to Chief Financial Officer, Alton Perry.

As a result, the St. Mary Parish School Board voted to change junior high and high school scheduling from block scheduling (which is a 4 period, 90 minutes per class day), back to a seven period schedule. The seven period day consists of seven approximately 52 minute class periods. The change in scheduling would result in a budget savings of approximately \$2,000,000. That still leaves a \$1,000,000 deficit to contend with by possibly eliminating less successful programs and other contingencies.

The money saved by the schedule change will help to keep employee salaries and step increases in tact.