

# State of the Parish 2016



Building a stronger St. James Parish



Timothy P. Roussel  
St. James Parish President

On behalf of the Parish Council, administration, and employees of St. James Parish, it is my privilege and honor to present the State of the Parish 2016 report. This report is filled with highlights, accomplishments, and updates from the previous year, which enable us to celebrate our achievements together.

I'm pleased with the advancements made by my administration to make our parish stronger through infrastructure improvements and the streamlining of government services. My administration remains focused on implementing beneficial community projects and searching for new ways to better serve our residents.

Recently, a devastating tornado ripped through St. James Parish. I'm proud of the response delivered by the first responders, firefighters, law enforcement personnel, and employees. Thank you to everyone who stood united during this disaster and continue to be actively involved in our parish's recovery and relief efforts. Some of the work being done by the parish is included in this report. As our residents continue to recover, much work remains to be completed and my administration is committed to maintaining strong momentum toward a rapid recovery for all our residents.

Through it all, I believe St. James Parish continues to prosper as our community expands to welcome new residents, businesses, and industries. By working together, we can build a stronger St. James Parish for everyone. I remain optimistic and look forward to an exciting and productive year ahead.

**Highlights from 2015 include, but are not limited to:**

- Recertified through the National Flood Insurance Program with a class 7 rating, which resulted in a 15% reduction in flood insurance premiums for residents living in flood zones.
- Completion of a 24-inch waterline under the Mississippi River, which connects the two water systems owned and operated by the parish.
- Completed a survey of parish drainage systems to identify ways to improve drainage throughout the parish.
- Began construction on the District 4 Senior and Community Center, which is completely funded by federal disaster recovery grants.
- Consolidated the fire departments in Gramercy, Lutcher, Paulina, Grand Point, and Belmont to combine manpower and resources to better serve residents of the new fire district.
- Reduced worker's compensation insurance premiums by \$21,000 in 2015 with a total of \$191,000 in savings within the last three years.
- Construction started on the Yuhuang Chemical Inc. methanol-manufacturing facility, which is a \$1.85 billion project that will create 400 new direct jobs with an average annual salary of \$85,000 plus benefits.
- Established the Wall of Honor at the parish libraries to memorialize distinguished community leaders who have made substantial literary contributions to the parish.
- Added a splash park to District 6 for a total of 3 splash parks located throughout the parish.
- Construction of evacuation streets in districts 5 and 6 through a federal disaster recovery grant.

I am honored to serve all residents of St. James Parish and proud of our employees and their accomplishments. I will continue to work long hours with a spirit of enthusiasm for all our residents, because St. James Parish is a great place to grow, work, live, and prosper together.

Sincerely,

Timothy P. Roussel  
St. James Parish President



**Vision**

We envision a thriving St. James Parish community in which economic and social gains prevail and all people grow, prosper, and live productive, healthy lives while preserving our culture and heritage.

**Mission Statement**

St. James Parish Government works together with community, business, industry, and agriculture to provide resources and services to improve our quality of life.

## St. James Parish is vibrant and a wonderful place to:



### LIVE WORK PLAY GROW

**56** new residential construction permits (60% increase over 2016)

**20** new commercial construction project permits



**District 6** Park

New splash park is **3rd** splash park to open in St. James Parish

HOME TO **21,638** RESIDENTS

**449** BUSINESSES & INDUSTRIES IN SJP



**1,158** Youth recreation participants



**16** Adult softball teams



**Tourism**

In-State Visitors – **2,965**  
Out-of-State Visitors – **1,283**  
International Visitors – **333**  
Total Visitors – **4,581**

Serviced over **71,659** patrons at the libraries

**34,426** books checked out

**126,428** items available for public use



Maintained class **7** rating with **NFIP** which means reduced flood insurance premiums for residents



**Telephone Calls**

**44,392** Administrative  
**24,358** Emergency 9-1-1  
**19,566** Outgoing  
**88,316** Total Calls



**Future Projects:**

Bayou Chevreuil Bridge  
St. James Historical Society  
Wetlands Assimilation

**Recovering from the Tornado**

St. James Parish continues to recover from the tornado that ripped through Convent on February 23. Numerous travel-trailers were tossed and destroyed and trees were snapped or uprooted with damage spread across an area 350 yards wide. The National Weather Service assigned an EF-3 rating to the tornado with maximum winds of 140 mph.

During the first hour following the tornado touchdown, the parish's emergency dispatch center processed more than 100 phone calls. More than 100 firefighters from 12 different departments in the region assisted with search and rescue efforts. Utilities employees also reported to the affected area to check for gas and water leaks.

Two people died at the Sugar Hill RV Park and 31 individuals were transported to medical facilities with seven of those listed in critical condition upon arrival. Another 25 to 50 people were injured and treated at the scene or self-transported to medical care.

Approximately 50 residential homes were damaged and six homes were destroyed by the tornado. In addition, about 60 mobile homes were damaged and 120 were destroyed.

Parish employees have put in more than 1,200 hours of overtime responding to this disaster and continue to assist with recovery efforts.

The Operations Department has removed more than 5,600 cubic yards of debris and distributed more than 50 tarps to residents.

The Department of Human Resources has completed more than 60 pre-assessments on affected streets and has made more than 20 referrals to other assistance programs.

On February 26, parish employees observed a moment of silence for the victims of the tornado. A group of employees joined Parish President Timmy Roussel, Sheriff Willy Martin, Jr. and Assessor Glenn Waguespack in the council chambers for a prayer before the moment of silence.

St. James Parish Government has created a webpage to provide a centralized source for information concerning relief efforts. The webpage is [www.stjamesla.com/tornadorelief](http://www.stjamesla.com/tornadorelief).



**East Bank Flood & Drainage Task Force**

The East Bank Flood & Drainage Task Force was created to help prevent east bank residents from living in fear of flooding each time there is heavy rainfall or a major storm, to ensure that future developments don't negatively impact our drainage systems, and to keep flood insurance rates affordable.

**West Bank Drainage Survey**

A survey of west bank drainage systems identified steps parish government can take to improve drainage for west bank communities. The survey recommendations include placing more culverts under the railroad track and digging ditches from North Vacherie toward Bayou Lasseigne to Coteau Canal and Lac Des Allemands.

**Fire Department Consolidation**

The Lutcher Fire Department and the Paulina, Grand Point, and Belmont Fire Department merged in July 2015 to form the St. James Fire Department. These departments were combined in order to consolidate manpower and resources to better serve the community. The Gramercy Fire Department became part of the new department in December 2015.

**Lutcher Fire Station**

A new fire station is under construction in Lutcher and all fire hydrants in Lutcher were recently upgraded to National Standard Thread to match the thread type in use throughout the parish.

**The parish fire departments are accepting applications for volunteer firefighters. For more information or to sign up call (225) 562-2266.**



*The East Bank Flood & Drainage Task Force meets to discuss potential drainage projects.*



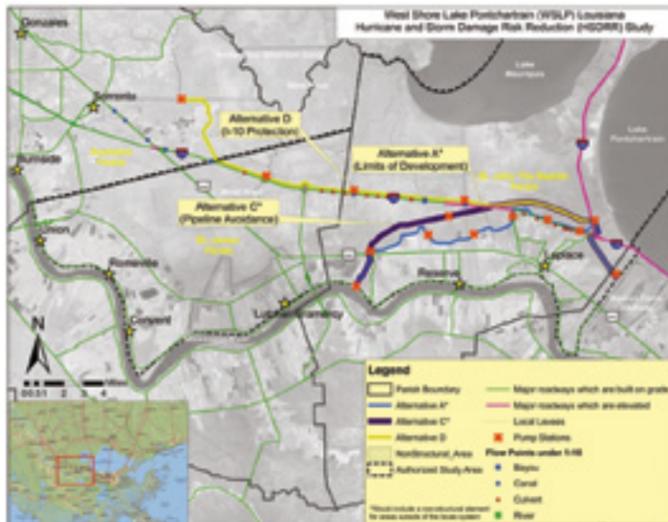
*A representative from T. Baker Smith answers questions from parish officials concerning west bank drainage.*



**West Shore Lake Pontchartrain Project**

In July 2015, the Army Corps of Engineers submitted a proposal to Congress for authorization and implementation funding of a plan to construct a hurricane storm damage risk reduction system along the West Shore of Lake Pontchartrain in the parishes of St. Charles, St. John the Baptist, and St. James.

In St. James Parish, the recommended plan includes a ring levee around the communities of Gramercy and Lutcher, a ring levee around the community of Grand Point, installation of one-way flap gates to existing culverts under Highway 3125, and nonstructural elevation of 14 homes.



**National Flood Insurance Program**

St. James Parish is a member of the Coalition for Sustainable Flood Insurance (CSFI). Elected and business leaders formed the national coalition in May 2013 to address drastic and unintended increases to flood insurance rates for home and business owners. CSFI supports a National Flood Insurance Program that balances premium affordability with financial solvency.

CSFI has successfully advocated for the passage of the Homeowner Flood Insurance Affordability Act, which delayed premium increases until an affordability study is completed and Congress considers the study's recommendations. In addition, CSFI is suggesting reforms to NFIP's management and working with FEMA to draw accurate maps that account for all flood mitigation features.



Parish President Timmy Roussel welcomes Sen. Bill Cassidy to St. James Parish for town hall meeting.

**NACo Board Appointment**

Parish President Timmy Roussel has been appointed to the board of directors for the National Association of Counties (NACo). He is one of only 10 appointments to the national board made by NACo President Sallie Clark.

As a member of the board of directors, Parish President Roussel will work on NACo President Clark's Safe and Secure Counties Initiative, which focuses on protecting public safety, preserving public health and well-being, and promoting local economies.

Through NACo, parish and county officials advocate with a collective voice on national policy, exchange ideas and build new skills, innovate transformational solutions, enhance the public's understanding of local government, and exercise exemplary leadership in public service.



Parish President Timmy Roussel and his wife Linda had the opportunity to meet with author and journalist Kathleen Koch and NACo President Sallie Clark during NACo's Safe and Secure Counties Symposium.

**Yuhuang Chemical Breaks Ground on New Facility**



Consul General of the People's Republic of China in Houston Li Qiangmin, Parish President Timmy Roussel, Yuhuang Chemical Chairman Jinshu Wang, and Yuhuang Chemical President and CEO Charlie Yao attend the Yuhuang Chemical groundbreaking ceremony.

Yuhuang Chemical Inc. formally broke ground last fall on the first of three phases of a \$1.85 billion, methanol-manufacturing complex in St. James Parish. The project represents the first major foreign direct investment in Louisiana by a company from China.

Yuhuang Chemical will create 400 new direct jobs with an average annual salary of \$85,000, plus benefits. In addition, Louisiana Economic Development estimates the project will result in 2,365 new indirect jobs, for a total of more than 2,700 new jobs in the Southeast Region of Louisiana and surrounding areas of the state.

**Formosa Petrochemical Project Named Top Business Deal**

The Formosa Petrochemical Corporation project in St. James Parish was named one of the nation's top three business deals in *Business Facilities* magazine's 2015 Economic Development Deal of the Year competition. Formosa, a Taiwan-based company, announced in September 2015 that it was assessing the feasibility of developing a \$9.4 billion industrial complex, which would include ethane crackers and downstream chemical manufacturing plants.

Louisiana Economic Development estimates the project would create 1,200 new direct jobs with an average annual salary of \$84,500, plus benefits, and result in an estimated 8,000 new indirect jobs, for a total of more than 9,200 new jobs.

**YouthBuild**

The YouthBuild program provides low-income young people with construction skills through building affordable housing for low-income people in their community. For unemployed young

people who left high school without a diploma, YouthBuild is an opportunity to reclaim their education by obtaining their GED or high school diploma, gain the skills they need for employment, and become leaders in their communities.

**Louisiana Super Region Rail Authority**

The Louisiana Super Region Rail Authority is a formal collaboration of local governments that empowers the region to pursue, finance and operate its rail and transportation priorities in coordination with state, regional and municipal entities.

The rail would connect an 80-mile corridor, representing more than 2.2 million people and nearly 1 million Louisiana jobs. The line is projected to serve 210,000 riders per year.

All seven parishes located along the rail corridor elected leadership to the Rail Authority and began meeting regularly in 2014. Progress to date has been steady due to strong support from local governments, planning organizations, business interests, foundations and transportation providers.

**Legacy Suites Grand Opening**



St. James Parish has a new option for travelers visiting the area with the opening of the Legacy Suites hotel.

Located at 10533 Hwy. 70 in St. James, La. at the base of the Sunshine Bridge, the 113 room Legacy Suites hotel is geared toward the extended stay traveler. The hotel provides all-suite, apartment style efficiencies and is located near several industrial facilities.

The suites provide a spacious and comfortable place to live, work, and relax while away from home. On-site amenities include the gathering room, convenience store, 24-hour fitness center, 24-hour laundry facilities, private lockers and mud room.

## Wall of Honor



St. James Parish Government established the Wall of Honor at the parish libraries to memorialize distinguished community leaders who have made substantial literary contributions to the parish. Individuals are considered upon submission of an application to a parish councilman.

Parish President Timmy Roussel and former Councilman James Brazan nominated Elton Oubre for placement on the Wall of Honor. Elton, a lifelong resident of Vacherie, is the first parish resident to receive the honor, after family members submitted an application and obtained Parish Council approval. The Parish Council passed a resolution approving the application in May.

Elton was a published author, genealogist and a dedicated supporter of the literary arts. He published two books on the history and genealogy of Vacherie after 30 years of extensive research. His literary publications and family histories are available at the St. James Parish libraries and through Nicholls State University in Thibodaux. Elton also translated historical records of the Catholic Church from French to English for the Diocese of Baton Rouge.

## Parish Receives Power of 9 Award

WAFB's Donna Britt featured the St. James Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) volunteers on the Channel 9 evening news as the recipient of the February 2015 Power of 9 award.

The VITA volunteers are parish workers who help guide people on how to file their taxes, where to seek help paying their bills and other financial mentoring.

In January, Capital Area United Way, in partnership with WAFB-TV Channel 9 and Capital One Bank, recognized the 2015 Power of 9 award recipients for their outstanding,

civic-minded service at the Power of 9 Honors Volunteer Recognition Luncheon.

## Youth Commission



The St. James Parish Council created the Youth Commission to provide opportunities for parish youth to participate in the decision-making process of parish government when parish youth are involved. Youth commissioners learn leadership and civic skills, attend Parish Council meetings, and provide input to the Parish Council on topics relevant to youth.

## District 4 Senior and Community Center



St. James Parish Government held a groundbreaking ceremony in August 2015 at the future site of the District 4 Senior and Community Center. Once completed, the 14,000 sq. ft. facility will be able to accommodate more than 400 people. The center is designed to house the area's senior citizen program and community events.

The new center is being constructed near the Parish Courthouse in Convent. Construction of the \$4 million facility is funded completely through grants from federal and state agencies. FEMA provided \$1.1 million through a Hazard Mitigation Grant and the parish received another \$2.9 million through a Community Development Block Grant for Disaster Recovery.



**Be Prepared.**  
Hurricane Season is  
June 1 – November 30.

Before this hurricane season, please take a moment to review the disaster supply kit check list. St. James Parish remains vulnerable to all levels of storm events. Be sure to get a game plan and be prepared. Visit [www.getagameplan.org](http://www.getagameplan.org) and download the free app – have the checklist readily available on your smartphone!



**Now GET A GAME PLAN app now available for iPhone and iPad in the Apple iTunes Store!**

## Hurricane Check List – Disaster Supply Kit

*Store all items in a waterproof container.*

### WATER:

One gallon per person per day for two weeks.

### NON-PERISHABLE FOOD:

2-week supply of ready-to-eat canned meats, fruits and vegetables, canned juices, energy bars, vitamins, peanut butter, nuts, crackers and canned soups.

### CLOTHING:

Include at least one complete change of clothing and footwear per person. Include rain gear and sturdy shoes or work boots, as well as sunglasses, hats and gloves.

### FIRST AID SUPPLIES:

Bandages, antiseptic, tape, compresses, non-aspirin pain relief, anti-diarrhea medication.

### TOOLS AND EMERGENCY SUPPLIES:

Emergency manual Flashlight/batteries  
Non-electric can opener  
Utility knife  
Duct tape  
Matches in waterproof box  
Plastic storage containers.  
Battery-operated radio  
Mosquito repellent/citronella  
Candles  
Camera  
Batteries  
Coolers for food and ice

Toilet paper, paper towels, towelettes  
Cash and/or traveler's checks  
Fire extinguisher – small canister ABC type  
Paper cups, plates and utensils  
DOTD Louisiana highway map  
Plastic sheeting  
Needles and thread  
Pliers  
Signal flare  
Paper and pencil  
Medicine dropper  
Water purification – chlorine tablets, iodine

### SPECIAL ITEMS:

Infant and medical supplies  
Supplies for elderly or disabled  
2-week supply of prescriptions

ENTERTAINMENT:  
Games and books

### IMPORTANT FAMILY DOCUMENTS:

Wills, insurance policies, contracts, deeds, stocks and bonds  
Passports, social security cards and immunization records  
Bank account numbers  
Credit card numbers and company addresses  
Inventory of valuable household goods and important phone numbers  
Birth, marriage and death certificates



In 2015, the St. James Parish Emergency Guide was mailed to every household in the parish. It is an all hazards guide with instructions, tips and useful information. Please keep this guide handy for easy consultation when preparing for or during an emergency.

## Shelter-In-Place

See pages 3 – 4 of your Emergency Preparedness Guide for additional details.

In the event of a weather or chemical incident, you may be instructed to Shelter-In-Place. Immediately seek shelter in a building, house or vehicle.

If you are told to Shelter-In-Place and you are at home:

1. Get indoors immediately.
2. Close all windows and doors.
3. Turn off heaters and air conditioners. (Other precautions to consider: cover nose and mouth with wet cloth and seal windows.)
4. Turn on your radio or cable television to emergency channels and listen for instructions.
5. Wait for additional instructions. Following an "all clear" message, air out your home.

**Helpful Hint: Cut out and post on your refrigerator!**

- Assessor's Office ..... (225) 562-2252
- Clerk of Court's Office ..... (225) 562-2270
- Emergency Preparedness ..... (225) 562-2265
- Finance ..... (225) 562-2293
- Human Resources ..... (225) 562-2305
- Libraries:
  - Lutcher ..... (225) 869-3618
  - Vacherie ..... (225) 265-9066
- Operations (Public Works) ..... (225) 562-2262
- Parish Council ..... (225) 562-2400
- Planning & Permitting Office ..... (225) 562-2264
- President's Office ..... (225) 562-2260
- Recreation..... (225) 562-2337
- Registrar of Voters ..... (225) 562-2330
- St. James Parish Hospital ..... (225) 869-5512
- St. James Parish Health Unit ..... (225) 265-2181
- School Board ..... (225) 258-4500

- Senior Centers:
- Lutcher ..... (225) 562-2878
  - Romeville ..... (225) 562-2299
  - Vacherie ..... (225) 562-2568
  - Welcome ..... (225) 265-3030
- Sheriff's Office ..... (225) 562-2200
- Tourist Information Welcome Center .... (225) 562-2525  
Toll-free (800) 367-7852
- Transportation ..... (225) 562-2352
- Utilities ..... (225) 562-2412

### Stay Connected!

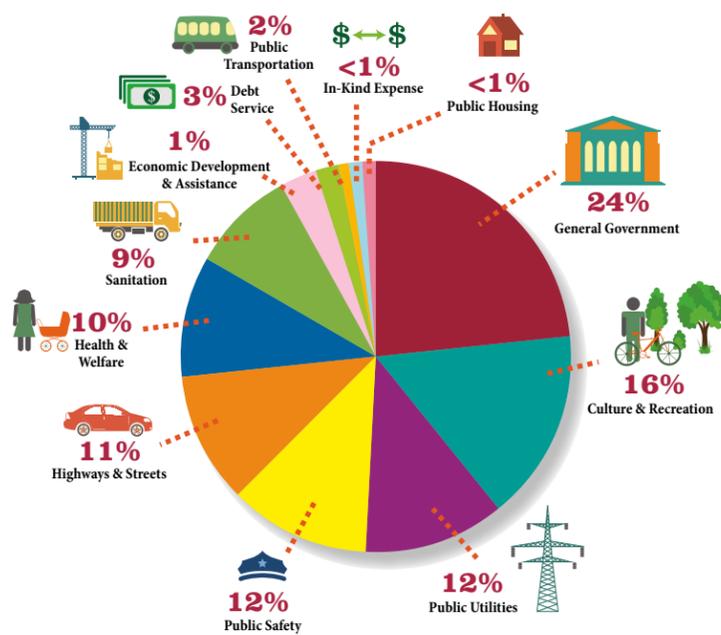
MAIL: P.O. Box 106, Convent, LA 70723  
WEB: [www.stjamesla.com](http://www.stjamesla.com)

 Tweet to @stjamesparishla

 [www.facebook.com/pages/St-James-Parish/](http://www.facebook.com/pages/St-James-Parish/)

 [www.youtube.com/user/StJamesParishGov](http://www.youtube.com/user/StJamesParishGov)

## Managing Resources Wisely



### Parish Budget Synopsis

- 2016 Expenditures = **\$47.9 million**
- 2016 Revenues = **\$48 million**, an increase of **\$2.6 million** over 2015 revenues.
- Taxes are St. James Parish's largest revenue source, with property taxes comprising **72.8%**.
- 2016 budgeted sales tax revenues = **\$6.5 million**.
- Sales and use tax collections finance the Elderly and Emergency Medical Services, Solid Waste Disposal and the Parks & Recreation funds.

### Savings

St. James Parish reduced worker's compensation insurance premiums by **\$21,000** in 2015 with total savings of **\$191,000** in the last three years.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Mobile Phone \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

What did you enjoy most about this report? \_\_\_\_\_

Complete the registration form and mail it to P.O. Box 106, Convent, LA 70723-0106.

All winners give St. James Parish permission to print their name in a list of winners in the next report and/or online at [www.stjamesla.com](http://www.stjamesla.com).

All forms received by May 31, 2016 will be entered into a drawing and several winners will be selected at random.

Entrants must be 18 years or older to win. St. James Parish Office of the President, employees, Parish Councilmen and their immediate families are not eligible to win.

To encourage everyone to read the report, we have joined with area businesses to provide these fun prizes!

## 12 LUCKY WINNERS! REGISTER TO WIN THESE PRIZES!

**ROSE'S CATERING SERVICES**  
10141 Frontage Street, St. James, LA 70086  
225-474-0071

*Dinner for four Monday - Friday*

**SPUDDY'S CAJUN FOODS**  
2644 Hwy 20; Vacherie, LA 70090  
225-265-4013

*Gift card \$15.00*

**ST. JAMES NURSERY**  
1501 N. Airline; Gramercy, LA 70052  
225-869-5254

*Plant*

**SOUTHERN CREOLE SPICES CATERING**  
19999 Highway 644; Vacherie, LA 70090  
225-265-2841

*Gift card \$25.00*

**CAD PRINTING UNLIMITED**  
2681 Highway 20; Vacherie, LA 70090  
225-265-3535

*Designed Saints shirt*

**"A CLASS ACT" PHOTOGRAPHY BY NADINE**  
8316 Kingview Street; St. James, LA 70086  
225-717-1207

*3 nights and 2 day trip*

**BLUE'S SON GROCERY**  
6335 Highway 18; St. James, LA 70086  
225-265-3550

*\$25.00 gift card*

**VACHERIE AUTO & HOME CENTER**  
22044 LA 20; Vacherie, LA 70090  
225-265-4801

*Socket set and cap*

**DÉCOR SHOPPE INTERIORS**  
915 LA 3125; Lutcher, LA 70071  
225-869-86323

*Gift Certificate \$50.00 - Pittsburg Paint*

**HIGHSTEPPER'S BOUTIQUE**  
22140 Highway 20; Vacherie, LA 70090  
225-265-2993

*Gift card \$25.00*

**ADVERLASTING PROMOTIONS**  
19678 Albert St.; Vacherie, LA 70090  
225-265-3333

*Gift card \$20.00*

**GUZMAN'S MACHINE WORKS**  
3720 Nicole Street; Paulina, LA 70763  
225-869-3542

*Gift card \$25.00*



The St. James Parish Government Administration is represented from front to back, left to right by Chief Administrative Officer Michelle Nailor-Octave, Parish President Timmy Roussel, Director of Operations Blaise Gravois, Director of Finance Chantal Waguespack, Director of Human Resources Bedar Warren and Director of Emergency Preparedness Eric Deroche.

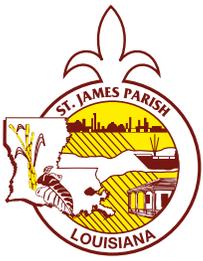
### St. James Parish Government Administration

- Timothy P. Roussel  
*Parish President*
- Michelle N. Octave  
*Chief Administrative Officer*
- Blaise J. Gravois  
*Director of Operations*
- Chantal T. Waguespack  
*Director of Finance*
- Bedar W. Warren  
*Director of Human Resources*
- Eric S. Deroche  
*Director of Emergency Preparedness*

### Parish Council

- Alvin St. Pierre, Jr.  
*District 1*
- Jason Amato  
*District 2*
- Ryan Louque  
*District 3*
- Ralph Patin, Jr.  
*District 4*
- Clyde Cooper  
*District 5*
- Kendricks Brass  
*District 6*
- Eddie Kraemer  
*District 7*

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P.O. Box 106  
Convent, LA 70723



*The elected officials representing St. James Parish Government include from front to back, left to right District 1 Councilman Alvin "Shark" St. Pierre, Jr., Parish President Timmy Roussel, District 2 Councilman Jason Amato, District 3 Councilman Ryan Louque, District 4 Councilman Ralph Patin, Jr., District 5 Councilman Clyde Cooper, District 6 Councilman Ken Brass, and District 7 Councilman Eddie Kraemer.*