



# 2024 STATE OF THE PARISH

PARISH PRESIDENT PETER A. DUFRESNE



# LETTER FROM THE PARISH PRESIDENT

St. James Parish,

I am very humbled and honored to serve as your Parish President. As I think about the past year in St. James Parish, I think about the future as well. In 2024, and indeed, since 2020, we have worked tirelessly to improve our infrastructure and prepare our parish for growth, laying the foundation for St. James Parish to grow as quickly as it desires to – on both sides of the river.

Over the last year, we've seen major progress throughout the parish. A 3.5 million Hometown Revitalization grant was awarded for the 5th District Recreation Building, which will be completed in 2026. Major drainage projects were completed on Highway 20 at Apple St, Spruce St, David Plantation, Highway 643, Buddy Whitney, N and S Angelle St, Humble St, Industrial Park St, Baytree St, Kingview St, and Canatella St. We have made major improvements to the gas and water infrastructure, including a new natural gas purchase point on the West Bank, and significant upgrades on the East Bank as well. The Department of Human Resources building opened. The District 4 commercial kitchen was finished, and now provides quality meals cooked by local chefs to our seniors. Just in the last year, 20.4 miles of parish roads were paved or preserved.

The West Bank has seen major growth over the last few years and is set up to continue to grow and thrive. The new St. James High School is providing excellent education to our students. The St. James Parish Hospital expansion will make access to quality medical care easier than ever. The Vacherie Senior Center will open in 2026, providing much-needed services to our seniors who have paved the way for us. In the near future, the West Bank Recreation Center will be a community hub and provide exceptional recreation opportunities for youth and adults alike. The Highway 20 widening project is anticipated to be finished by the end of this year. A transportation project will begin in 2027 that will increase Highway 3127 to four lanes from Highway 3213 (Veterans Bridge) to one mile west of Highway 20 in Vacherie. Additionally, roundabouts will be constructed at each intersection.

It is my hope to continue to provide improved essential services to our residents, to streamline our government operations and continue to save taxpayer dollars through these initiatives. I look forward to continuing to serve this great parish as we build a better future for each of us and our children.

Sincerely,



Pete Dufresne, St. James Parish President

## ADMINISTRATION



**PETER A. DUFRESNE**  
Parish President



**INGRID BERGERON**  
Director of Human Resources



**FELIX BOUGHTON**  
Director of Finance



**RICK WEBRE**  
Director of Operations



**ERIC DEROCHE**  
Director of Emergency Operations



**JAJUAN HICKERSON**  
Personnel Manager



**COURTNEY TOMLINSON**  
Executive Assistant



**VICTORIA HENRY**  
Public Information Officer



**LAURI ROUSSEL**  
Community Relations Officer



### **2024 PARISH COUNCIL**

Todd A. Poche - District 1  
Courtney Long - District 2  
Ryan Louque - District 3, Council Chair  
Neal T. Poche II - District 4  
Anthony Jasmin, Sr. - District 5  
Vondra Etienne-Steib - District 6  
Donald Nash - District 7

# 48 million in Grants Awarded

St. James Parish has been awarded **48 million in Grant funding**, with an additional 7 million obligated, totaling 55 million dollars. By creating a grants management division

in 2020, our ability to apply for and receive critical funding to improve infrastructure has greatly increased. Funding has come from Capital Outlay allocations, the Office of Community Development, DOTD, FEMA, and federal funds.

This funding is used for projects such as the annual Road Rehab Program, the Humble Street/ Buddy Whitney and David Plantation Drainage Projects, and new clarifier being installed at the Convent Water Plant.



## St. James Parish Finance Information

### Budget Expenses & Data



### Top 10 Industrial Property Taxpayers

Industry	Assesed Value	Percent of total assessed value
Equilon Enterprises LLC (Shell)	\$109,799,307	15.11%
Mosaic Fertilizer LLC - Faustina	\$52,501,816	7.23%
Americas Styrenics LLC	\$50,264,511	6.92%
Nustar Logistics, L.P.	\$49,153,924	6.82%
Mosaic Fertilizer LLC - Uncle Sam	\$48,153,924	6.63%
Zen-Noh	\$47,306,991	6.51%
Louisiana Sugar Refining, LLC	\$31,294,884	4.31%
Atalco Gramercy, LLC	\$21,493,735	2.96%
Shell Trading US	\$19,735,937	2.72%
Exxon Mobile Oil Corporation	\$18,892,470	2.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$448,597,499</b>	<b>61.81%</b>

### Percentages of Actual Spending

\*Audited Figures

2023 Revenues  
- \$51,317,930

2023 Expenditures  
- \$45,008,248

2023 Revenue from taxes 57.69- 63%



St. James Parish

# Parish Wide Millage Renewals

**Millage renewal propositions on the May 3rd Ballot directly impact the quality of life for St. James Parish residents.**

These are NOT new millages –they are ALL RENEWALS.

These propositions WILL REDUCE millages by 0.62 mills, which SAVES taxpayers money.

These millages allow local government services to continue at a LOWER cost and also provide funding for major capital improvements to drainage and roads.

These Propositions include:

## Library



Our libraries are more than just buildings – they're community hubs for learning and growth.

**This reduced renewal of 2.48 mills (down from the current 3 mills) sustains library services while providing lower millage costs to taxpayers.** Bottom line: this saves YOU money.



The change maintains a wide variety of excellent library services, including the archive building set to open this summer. The millage renewal continues to allow open access to books, programs, and resources.

## Road Maintenance

Smooth, safe roads are essential for our daily lives. Over the last 4 years, 220 parish roads have been resurfaced, restored, or preserved.

**This 4.94 millage renewal ensures continued general maintenance and repair of Parish roads, including rehabilitation and preservation.** This is separate from the General Obligation (GO) Bond, which funds major road and drainage projects. Without this renewal, these critical maintenance programs would end, leading to deteriorating road conditions and growing safety concerns.



As of December 2024, 319,262 square yards of Mastic Seal, 80,046 square yards of BIORESTOR sealant, and 103,046 feet (19.5 miles) of crack sealant have been applied to St James Parish streets. The work isn't done – there are many more roads that need repair, and without the millage, this won't happen.

## GO Bonds (General Obligation)



The General Obligation Bonds ensures the parish can immediately make emergency repairs following a major natural disaster, which qualifies for FEMA reimbursements.

**These funds can only be used for major road or drainage improvements.** Without this bond, repairing infrastructure after storms would depend on federal aid, which can take years or may never happen, delaying recovery efforts. The parish surplus funds are dedicated by taxpayers for specific purposes, and must be used strictly where designated.

The GO Bond provides emergency funding on an as-needed basis. The library millage was reduced by 0.50, and replaced with this 0.50 mill GO Bond that will be used for major drainage and emergency situations, if needed. **There is no millage increase – just smarter business management.**

# VOTE!



**Early Voting: April 19-26, 2025  
Election Day: May 3rd**

For more information, visit [stjamesla.com](http://stjamesla.com)



St. James Parish

# Parish Wide Millage Renewals

## Public Buildings



Our public buildings, like courthouses, senior centers, and recreation facilities, are key to parish life. **This 4.93 millage renewal is critical for maintaining these buildings and continuing services for everyone.** Without this funding, some buildings would close, and services might be combined—like having just one senior center or administration building.

## Fire Department, Emergency, Medical Services



**This 3.91 renewal funds firefighting equipment, maintenance, insurance, and Acadian Ambulance services.** Without this funding, response times would increase, equipment could fail, and property insurance costs would rise. Ambulance coverage would also be reduced—from one unit on each side of the river to a single unit serving the entire parish. 25% of the millage goes toward the Acadian Ambulance Contract.

## Road Lighting



Streetlights provide safety and visibility in our unincorporated areas. **This 1.00 mill renewal funds electricity and maintenance for streetlights in unincorporated areas.** Without this funding, our streets would go dark, posing risks to drivers and pedestrians.

## E911 System



When emergencies happen, every second counts. **Without the E911 System millage renewal of 1.25 mills, the 911 system would be eliminated.** The millage keeps our emergency call system strong for the safety of everyone in our community. This millage also maintains the radio system law enforcement, firefighters, and Parish first responders use.

## Local Millages

### District 5 Recreation

#### 5<sup>th</sup> District Residents Only

**The Recreation District V (1.00 Mill) millage for 5<sup>th</sup> district residents funds the park maintenance and the 5th District Summer Camp, which could not exist without the millage.** Recreation for all other districts parish-wide is funded by quarter-cents sales tax, which has been on a steady decline for years, and is still impacted by the loss of Shell. Without the millage, the 5<sup>th</sup> District would be absorbed by the Parish Budget, further stretching resources to all parks.

### Gramercy Recreation District

#### Gramercy Residents Only

**The Gramercy Recreation District millage funded a new concession and restroom building, pavilion, pickleball court, spray park, swing set, and ADA playground. The millage funds maintaining these facilities.** Recreation for all other districts parish-wide is funded by quarter-cents sales tax, which has been on a steady decline for years, and is still impacted by the loss of Shell. Without the millage, the 5<sup>th</sup> District would be absorbed by the Parish Budget, further stretching resources to all parks.

**VOTE!**

Election Day: May 3rd  
Early Voting: April 19-26, 2025

These millage renewal propositions on the May 3rd Ballot directly impact the quality of life for St. James Parish residents.

These are NOT new taxes—they are ALL RENEWALS.  
These propositions WILL REDUCE millages by 0.62 mills.

# 2024 Highlights



## Department of Human Resources Building

The Department of Human Resources Building has improved access to much-needed services for St. James Parish citizens, especially seniors.

## American Cruise Lines

American Cruise Lines launched in March of 2024, bringing tourists from all over the world to St. James Parish.



## Veterans Memorial at the Welcome Center

The new Veterans Memorial at the St. James Parish Welcome Center, sponsored by Nucor, honors the service, dedication, and sacrifice of our local veterans.

## Government's Finance Officer Association Certificate for Excellence

For the third consecutive year, St. James Parish has received the Government Finance Officers Association Certificate of Excellence, an achievement earned by fewer than 5% of government organizations nationwide.



# 2024 Highlights



## Blind River Boat Launch

The Blind River Boat Launch, fully funded through Capital Outlay funds, is set for completion by summer 2025. The project includes two new concrete docks and 300 feet of bulkheads.

## Vacherie Senior Center

The Vacherie Senior Center is underway and set to open by 2026. The facility will feature a state-of-the-art kitchen for meal preparation, a crafts room, a fitness room, and a community meeting space.



## 3127 Widening Project

Funded entirely through Capital Outlay, the Highway 3127 Widening Project is set to begin construction in 2026. The project will expand the roadway to four lanes from Highway 3213 to the Sheriff's Fleet Building and include a roundabout at Highway 20 and Bridge Road.

## West Shore Connector Levee

The West Shore Interconnect Levee project, located on the East Bank, has reached a point of irreversible momentum. St. James Parish has secured approximately \$40 million in funding from state and local agencies, not from our local budget.



# Department of Human Resources

One Department, Many Services



## BY THE NUMBERS

### **458 individuals**

Assisted by Quarterly Commodity Distribution

### **58 Individuals**

Served by Community Service Block Grant

### **176 individuals**

Volunteer Income Tax Assistance

### **18,739 Meals**

Congregate meals served

### **207 Individuals**

Assisted May 2024 Tornado victims with food vouchers

### **55,855 Meals**

Homebound meals served

### **37,125 Trips**

taken through Transit Services

### **369 Individuals**

Assisted by Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program

### **2,423 Individuals**

Transit Services

### **21 Clients**

Homemakers' clients

### **81 Clients**

Emergency food and Shelter

### **10 Individuals**

Power to care

## ELDERLY SERVICES

- 107 seniors attended 1st annual Valentine Social.
- St. James Seniors attended Jazz Fest for the first time.
- Weekly Alzheimer's Support class with St. James Hospital.
- Expanded the senior exercise class to the east bank for 60+.
- Received \$1000.00 Entergy "Beat the Heat" grant to provide education on hurricane readiness for seniors.
- Welcomed back the Bayou River Region, Senior Games for the first time since COVID for a month of events.





## HOME AND COMMUNITY BASED PROGRAMS

In 2024, our Home and Community Based Programs serves 21 Clients through the Homemakers' Program and 17 Clients though the Caregiver's Program. We served 55, 855 Homebound Meals and 18,739 Congregate Meals.



## ST. JAMES PARISH HOSPITAL PARTNERSHIPS

Alzheimer's Support Group  
Annual Health Fair  
Breast Cancer Awareness  
Healthcare Presentations.



## SPECIAL THANKS

The Department of Human Resources would like to thank our Parish President, Advisory Boards, Parish Council, Staff, Donors, and Volunteers.

# TOY AND COAT DRIVE

DHR has helped make Christmas magical for families in our community for 30 years. **This year, 35 families and 86 children were served.** Thanks to our volunteers, Mr. and Mrs. Jefferey Reulet for serving as Mr. and Mrs. Claus, and Jonrell Jones with Rell's Photos.

### *Business and Civic Sponsorship/Donations*

Guzman Machine Works, Inc.

Veron's Supermarket, LLC

Laura Plantation Co., LLC

Oak Alley Foundation

Roussel's Antiques Gifts and Jewelry

Michael T. Favalora DDS, LLC

Catholic Daughters of America

Laura Plantation

Vacherie Fuel

Schexnayder Supermarket

Councilwoman Vondra Etienne Steib

Parish President Pete Dufresne Office

### *Industry Partners of Toy Drive*

America Styrenics

Koch Methanol

Mosaic

Shell and Shell Oil Hero

### *Employee Sponsors/Adopted families*

Ceta-Jagers Reine

Dakota Harness

### *Faith Based & Church Sponsorships*

Hwy Baptist Church

Jeremiah Baptist Church



# Department of Human Resources

One Department, Many Services



## TRANSIT

### WE KEEP THE PARISH ROLLING

- Ridership increased by 8%.
- Completed DHR fleet parking lot located near Lutcher Senior Center.
- 4 New Partnership Opportunities to shuttle passengers for special events.
- Transported 25 residents weekly for physical rehabilitation within the parish.
- Hired monitors to assist disabled and elderly clients.

## ST. JAMES ARC

- Represented St. James Arc at the 2024 Arc Day at the Capitol alongside approximately 125 attendees; met with state representatives to advocate for individuals with disabilities.
- Strengthened partnerships with the St. James Parish School System Special Education Department by participating in transition workshops for high school students.
- Fostered relationships with neighboring Arcs, including the Arc of St. Charles, the Arc of East Ascension, and the Arc of Baton Rouge.
- Increased community life engagement activities for Arc participants.
- Prioritized staff development through the implementation of monthly training days.
- Successfully completed health inspections with no major findings.
- Expanded collaboration with senior centers by hosting mental health awareness activities and organizing a spring celebration in the park.
- Increased volunteerism, including new support efforts like assisting the St. James Library with recycling initiatives.
- Established a new partnership with Vacherie Elementary (Trunk or Treat) and continued collaboration with St. James and Lutcher High Schools (Special Olympics support).
- Launched sign language training for Arc individuals through video instruction.
- Honored parents who were Breast Cancer Survivors.
- Staff successfully completed Medication Administration training.



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# ST. JAMES PROUD SUMMER CAMPS

In keeping in the mission of the CAA network and DHR, the purpose of St. James Proud Youth Summer Camp is to provide low – income and disadvantaged youths, ages 5 to 12, throughout the St. James Parish community a safe environment to foster their social emotional skills, character building, and personal growth while creating a lifetime of memories.

This year's St. James Proud Youth Summer Camp theme was "Unity". The goal is to inspire unity within the St. James Parish communities through our next generation. It is the mission of St. James Proud to teach the youths of St. James Parish about community engagement and advocacy in fun and creative ways.

St. James Proud Youth Summer Camps hosted 171 campers at New Zion Christian Center, King Solomon Baptist Church, Highway Baptist Church, First Baptist Church of Vacherie, and New Horizon Missionary Baptist Church.



## YOUTH COMMISSION

The Youth Advisory Commission serves as a platform for youth to actively engage in decision-making processes, contribute to community service projects, and make recommendations on how promote the well-being of their peers.

*"By reinstating the Youth Advisory Commission, we are giving young people a voice in decisions that directly impact their lives, and further developing them as leaders." - Ingrid Bergeron, Director of the St. James Parish Department of Human Resources.*

Through leadership training, community engagement, and advocacy, the Youth Advisory Commission will work to promote youth development in St. James Parish. The purpose of the commission is also to conduct research and studies on the factors affecting youth welfare in the parish, such as employment opportunities, financial literacy, mental and physical health, social adjustment, and recreational needs. The commission is tasked with gathering data and sharing findings with the public, while also making recommendations for necessary improvements in youth services and resources.

The 2024-2025 Youth Advisory Commission members include:

- Rylie Roussel, Member-At-Large
- Erron Hickerson, Member-At-Large
- Neeka Al-Amin, District 1
- Kent Boe, District 2
- Harper Coppone, District 3
- Paisly Joseph, District 4
- Aaron Guy, District 5
- Paige Williams, District 6
- TyReanna Broden, District 7

# Operations Department



The 5th District Recreation Building is being redesigned and is set for completion in 2026. The project was awarded a \$3.5 million Hometown Revitalization grant.

The 2025 Road Rehab Program is fully funded and will include repairs to 26 streets.

20.43 miles of roadway was preserved in 2024, extending their lifespan.



Undersized culverts at Apple Street and Highway 20 have been upgraded.

The Library Archive Building is set to open in the summer of 2025, offering access to historical documents and genealogy records.

The Gramercy Park restroom, concession stand, and pickleball courts are complete, and the ADA-compliant playground is set for completion in spring 2025.

# ...a year of progress



The District 4 commercial kitchen is now complete. Local chefs with DHR are able to prepare meals for homebound residents and senior center participants.



Staff members preparing to deploy following Hurricane Francine.



The Convent Clarifier will have the capacity to clarify an additional 2 million gallons of water daily, significantly enhancing our system's ability to respond during natural disasters.



The Advanced Metering Infrastructure Water and Gas Meters will improve accuracy and streamline the utility metering and billing process.



FEMA funding has been secured to update the fleet with the acquisition of 22 new vehicles.



Crews are clearing the (Brazen) Coteau Canal.



## DRAINAGE

2.98 Road Maintenance Millage

Parish crews manage over 200 miles of previously neglected drainage channels. Our herbicide crews play a vital role in reducing flood risks by controlling weeds and aquatic vegetation.



## ROAD AND BRIDGE

4.94 Road Maintenance Millage

St. James Parish has received over \$3.2 million in state capital outlay funding for road rehabilitation since 2020, in addition to local funding dedicated to road repair.

As of December 2024, the following treatments have been applied to parish streets:

- 319,262 square yards of Mastic Seal
- 103,046 feet of crack sealant
- 80,046 square yards of BIORESTOR sealant



## SOLID WASTE

Funded by a Quarter-Cent Sales Tax

Solid Waste operates two landfills, open seven days a week, and contracts with Waste Management for twice-weekly garbage collection. The department also manages litter abatement and provides tree limb pickup services.





## **CODE ENFORCEMENT**

The Code Enforcement Division works to uphold community standards, improve public health and safety, and maintains property values by enforcing regulations through inspections, warnings, and penalties when necessary.



## **PERMITTING**

Our Permitting Division works with citizens to ensure new projects are permitted and comply with safety standards.

### **2024 PERMIT NUMBERS:**

- Residential Permits: 387
- New Residential Permits: 70
- Commercial Permits: 20
- Mobile Home Permits: 78
- Code Enforcement Properties: 315



## **UTILITIES**

The Utilities Division has the responsibility of maintaining all drinking water and natural gas infrastructure in accordance with strict state and federal standards and regulations. A critical component of this infrastructure is water tank and tower maintenance.



# St. James Parish Library Highlights



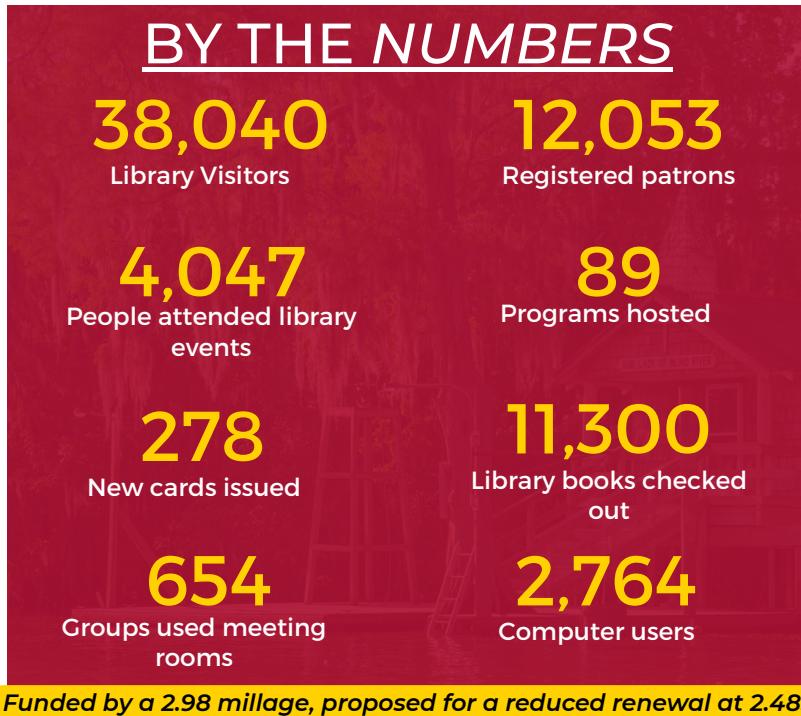
Children enjoy a Christmas program.



Lutcher High School students perform.



Patrons compete in a bake-off.



Funded by a 2.98 millage, proposed for a reduced renewal at 2.48.



Children and parents wowed by a magic show.



Students pet snakes at a library event.



The ARC supports our recycling program.



Bridge to Bridge Animal Rescue event.



Summer Campers visit the library.

## St. James Parish Recreation

Funded by a Quarter-Cent Sales Tax

St. James Parish Recreation provides a wide variety of services, sports, and classes, including: Youth Baseball and Softball, Youth Soccer, Flag Football, Biddy Basketball, Youth and Adult Open-Play Pickleball, Men's Softball, Co-Ed Cabbage Ball, Line Dancing with Susie Q, Aerobics and Yoga/Pilates Classes, and a Fitness Center.

The St. James Parish Recreation NFL Flag Football league had 150 local youth, ages 6-12 participate. Championship winning teams include the 8-U Dolphins, the 10-U Dolphins, and the 12-U Saints. The 12-U Saints, led by Coach Reggie Joseph, were invited to showcase their skills at the Superdome during the Saints' halftime show. Our team competed against top regional flag football teams and secured a victory in the iconic venue.



# Community Rating System & Flood Plain Management

The Coastal Zone and Planning department's mascot Floody visits local schools and events to share about disaster preparedness, making a family emergency plan, how to stay safe in various situations, staying prepared for emergencies, and how departments within St. James Parish assist with both preparation and recovery. Floody is helping families—and our entire community—better understand their role in flood preparedness.

The National Flood Insurance Program's (NFIP) Community Rating System (CRS), launched in 1990, rewards communities like St. James Parish for exceeding minimum floodplain management standards with discounts on flood insurance premiums. Communities earn points by creditable activities across four categories. Benefits of participation include reduced flood damage, improved public safety, opportunities for citizens to better understand flood risks, and technical assistance for community officials.



## Fleet Management

The Parish Fleet Department manages and maintains the government-owned vehicles and equipment used for public services. It oversees vehicle procurement, repairs, maintenance, and fuel management to ensure safe, reliable, and efficient operations.

The department supports various parish agencies, including public works and emergency services, by keeping their fleets in optimal condition.



## Citizen Service Center

**225-562-2500**

In 2021, the St. James Parish Call Center was opened, providing residents with a streamlined process for contacting St. James Parish Government. Our Work Order System was launched simultaneously, allowing anyone to call or go online to open a work order, track its process, and be notified when it is completed.



# Emergency Operations Center

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Our new mobile command center enhances emergency response with advanced communication technology, enabling real-time coordination and decision-making on-site. This investment strengthens our ability to protect St. James Parish residents during long term power and communication outages.

Scan the QR Code or go to [stjamesla.com](http://stjamesla.com)  
to sign up for community alerts.





St. James Parish sustained minimal damage during Hurricane Francine. Our three pumps operated around the clock throughout the storm, helping to minimize water damage.



The St. James Parish Community Awareness and Emergency Response (CAER) Group funded 72% of the first-floor renovation of the Emergency Operations Center.



The St. James Volunteer Fire Department is actively recruiting new members, register on [stjamesla.com](http://stjamesla.com).

Firefighting equipment, maintenance, and insurance are funded by a 3.91 millage.

St. James Parish  
5800 LA-44  
Convent, LA 70723

# 2024

## STATE OF THE PARISH



PARISH PRESIDENT PETER A. DUFRESNE

### *Mission*

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.

### *Vision*

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