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**ST. JAMES PARISH  
GOVERNMENT**

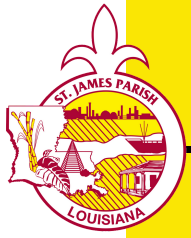
**STATE OF THE PARISH**

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2020

**PARISH PRESIDENT  
PETE DUFRESNE**

**[WWW.STJAMESLA.COM](http://WWW.STJAMESLA.COM)**



# OUR CURRENT STATE

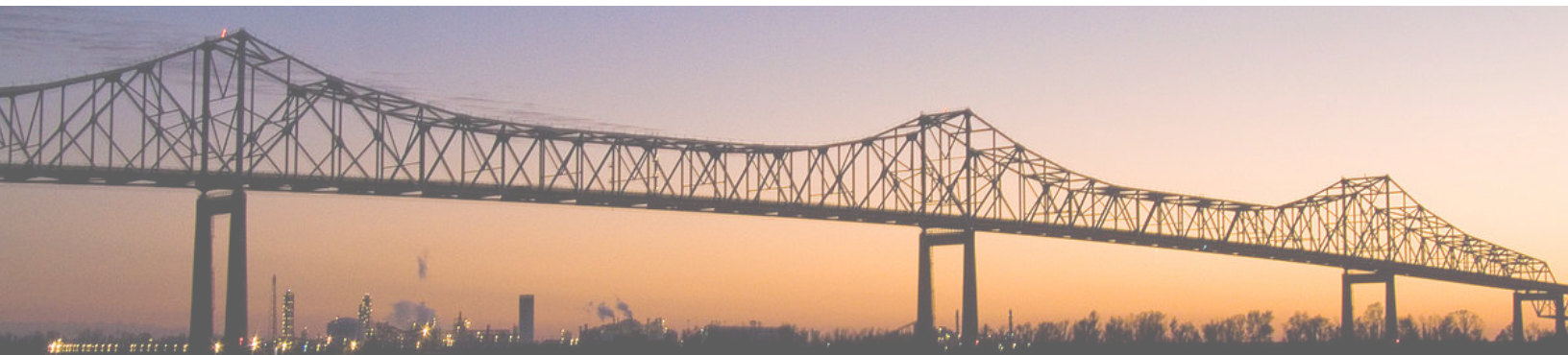
St. James Parish is home to over 21,000 residents made up of around 10,000 households, 312 businesses, over 50,000 acres of farmland with sugarcane serving as the most valuable row crop. Soybean production and perique tobacco, a unique crop to St. James are also largely produced. The parish is also home to 30 industrial facilities.

## 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.



# WHERE WE ARE NOW

## ST. JAMES PARISH

The year 2020 had proven to be one of the most difficult years many of us have faced in our lifetimes. Amidst a global pandemic requiring major shifts to regular operations, St. James Parish Government was able to adapt to the circumstances and continue to provide key essential services to its residents while creating a savings of nearly \$2.6 million dollars to taxpayers.

Parish President, Pete Dufresne, took office January 13th, 2020 with a promise to streamline government operations, see projects through to completion and create a long range infrastructure plan for St. James Parish.

This report will detail advancements within Parish Government Operations which have made services more efficient and provided new opportunities for residents to engage in local government.

In addition, this report will outline budget savings, new services offered to residents and data from each division within Parish Government.



# PRESIDENTS REPORT

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On behalf of Parish Council, my administration and the hardworking employees of St. James Parish, I am proud to present the 2021 State of the Parish report.

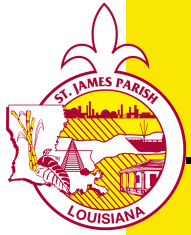
When I entered the race to be your next Parish President, I promised to bring a business mentality to government and take the politics out. I vowed to streamline government operations and to create a long-range infrastructure plan for the future of our Parish and to focus efforts on securing Federal and State grant funding for mitigation efforts and projects.

I set goals to put our drainage studies to work and to implement drainage projects parish-wide to address areas which had previously been ignored. The State of the Parish report detailed herein provides a comprehensive look at my first year in office and the success my administration and staff have had in accomplishing those goals while saving millions of dollars to taxpayers.

I look forward to continuing to serve this great Parish and pushing forward for more progress to build a better future for each of us and our future generations to come.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Peter A. Zappala". The signature is stylized with a large, flowing "P" and "Z".





## NOTABLE GOALS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Notable accomplishments and objectives reached are included below.

### **GOAL: CREATE A LONG-RANGE INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN**

Result: Developed a three-year Capital Improvement Plan incorporating short-term to long-range projects while remaining fiscally responsible and allowing for prioritization, budgeting and grant fund allocation.

### **GOAL: DEVELOP DRAINAGE PROJECTS FOR NEGLECTED AREAS**

Result: Established a drainage division, equipped with the manpower and tools necessary for adequate drainage maintenance. We successfully cleared over 250 linear miles of drainage in 2020.

### **GOAL: CREATE TRANSPARENCY IN GOVERNMENT TO RESIDENTS**

Result: Created a Citizen Service Center to provide direct customer service to residents.

Conducted regular Facebook Live addresses to alert residents to the latest Covid-19 information, storm related procedures, and more.

Created a social media campaign, "How Your Government Works for You" to share updates of major capital projects through videos, as well as services offered by Parish Government.

### **GOAL: STREAMLINE OPERATIONS AND CREATE EFFICIENCY**

Result: Implemented a Work Order Management System in which residents can place and track a work order through its life cycle.

Result: Established a Citizen Service Center to manage the work order system and serve as a call center for resident questions, and assistance with work orders.



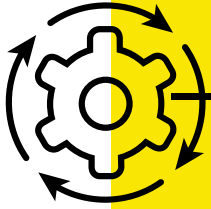
## SAVINGS RESULTING FROM INEFFICIENCIES

The following section details the financial savings to taxpayers in 2020.

<b>INSURANCE - PROPERTY &amp; LIABILITY</b>	<b>\$700,000</b>
<b>INVESTMENTS</b> Evaluated proposals and received same services for lower management and bank custodial fees	<b>\$17,500</b>
<b>CANCELED OR REDUCED EXISTING CONTRACTS</b>	<b>\$121,000</b>
<b>WORKERS COMPENSATION &amp; INSURANCE</b>	<b>\$56,660</b>
<b>AWARDED DISCHARGE PERMIT FOR MOLAISON SEWER</b> By completing a years-old project, the Parish was able to refrain from repaying grant funds and lift sanctions against the parish from the previous administration.	<b>\$800,000</b>
<b>MILLAGES NOT ROLLED FORWARD</b>	<b>\$331,500</b>
<b>PREVENTED CALLING A SPECIAL ELECTION FOR TAXES EXPIRING IN 2024</b>	<b>\$45,000</b>
<b>SECURED CARES ACT FUNDING</b>	<b>\$930,816</b>



**\$2,573,976 MILLION  
SAVED TO TAXPAYERS**



# OPERATIONS DIVISION

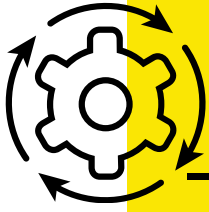
Operations Director, Rick Webre, made significant changes to Parish-wide operations in 2020. Some notable additions include a Citizen Service Center, Vegetation Management Division, Drainage Division, Fleet Maintenance Division and prioritization and closeout of projects.

## HIGHLIGHTS

- Cleared over 250 linear drainage channels cleared parish-wide.
- Implemented a new work order management system and closed over 2200 work orders in 2020.
- Established a Citizen Service Center to manage the work order system and provide customer service to residents.
- Developed a three-year Capital Improvement Plan to program over thirty-six months of major capital projects including drainage, transportation, utilities and recreation infrastructure improvements.
- Established a Drainage & Herbicide Division equipped to maintain all parish waterways and major drainage channels.
- Established a fleet Management Division to provide routine preventative maintenance to millions of dollars worth of parish owned equipment
- Conducted a parish-wide roadway assessment to provide priority rank and document roads in need of preservation and complete repair.



Operations Director, Rick Webre

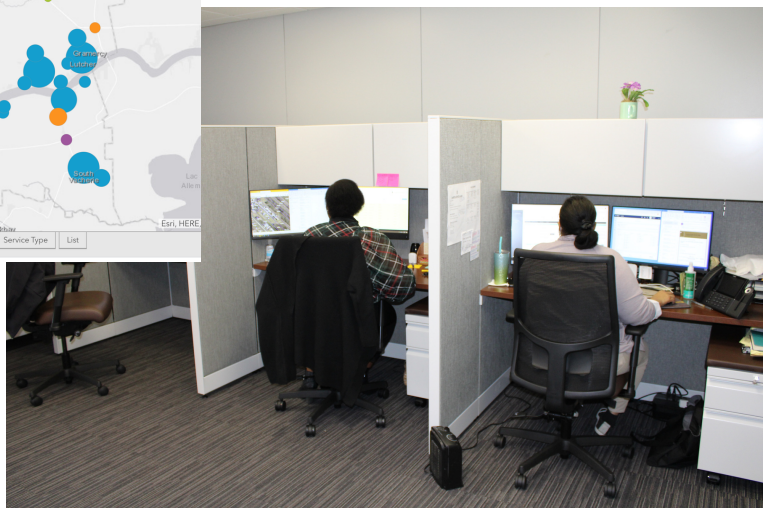
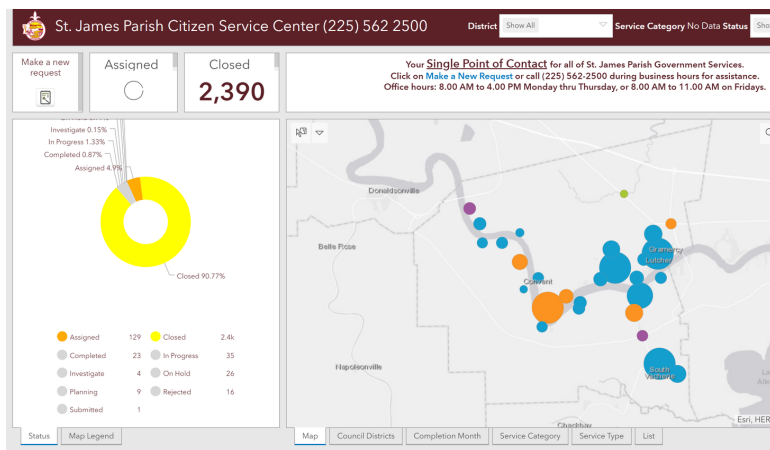


# OPERATIONS DIVISION

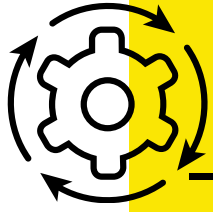
## CITIZEN SERVICE CENTER

Established to maintain, manage and administer the work order management system. Residents can input a work order online or by calling the CSC, and track the work order throughout its life cycle. The combination of the CSC and Work Order System provide transparency, and a streamline process for requests, ensuring no requests are lost as was prevalent with the previous, manual system.

## 2200+ WORK ORDERS CLOSED IN 2020



## CITIZEN SERVICE CENTER: 225-562-2500



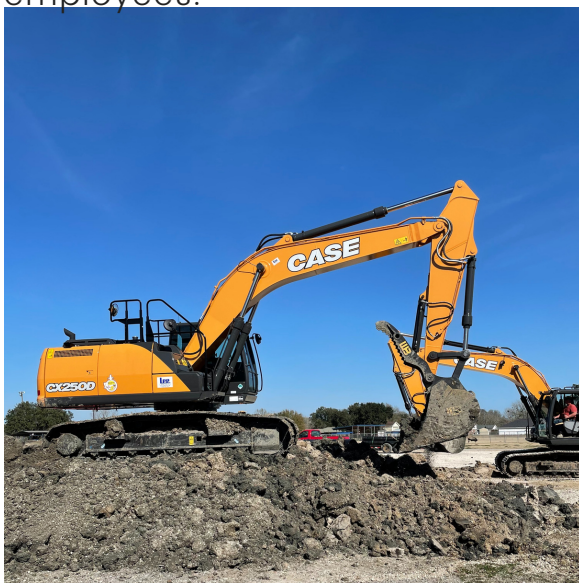
# OPERATIONS DIVISION

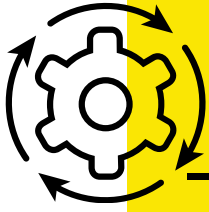
## DRAINAGE & HERBICIDE

Established to address years of neglect in Parish-wide drainage. With the purchase of new and proper equipment, ten dedicated employees, over 250 linear miles of drainage channels were cleared by year's end. The herbicide application team was formed to reduce the workload of mechanically removing vegetation by providing routine spraying of all major drainage channels to control vegetation growth.



These divisions include eight pieces of specialized equipment and ten dedicated employees.





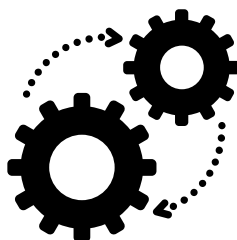
# OPERATIONS DIVISION

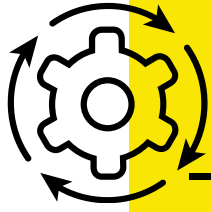
## FLEET MANAGEMENT

Established to routinely provide preventative maintenance on the millions of dollars of parish-owned equipment including cars, trucks, and heavy operating equipment.

A software system, "Fleet Management Pro", was implemented to track all services and keep detailed records of maintenance on each piece of equipment.

By providing in-house maintenance on the St. James Parish Fleet, equipment will last longer, maintain safety standards and save taxpayer dollars from previously outsourcing repairs and maintenance.





# OPERATIONS DIVISION

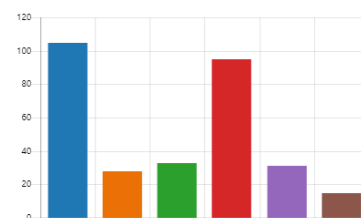
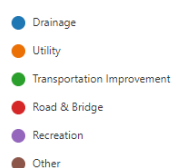
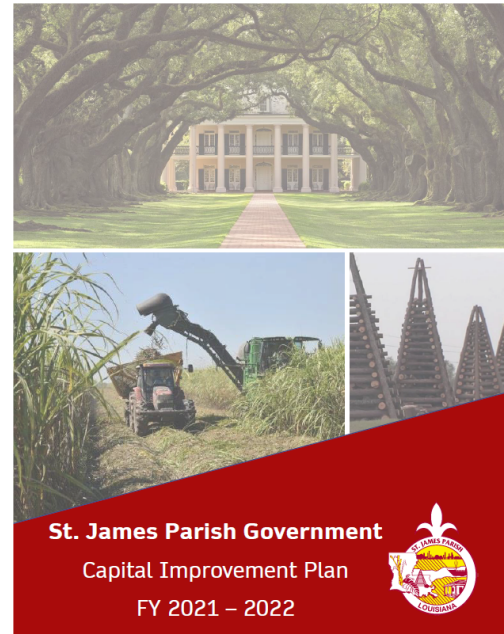
## CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

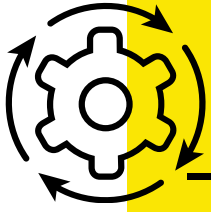
The first-ever CIP for St. James Parish was developed to plan and program over thirty-six months of all major capital projects. This includes all improvements in areas of drainage, utilities, transportation, road and bridge and recreation.

Notable projects part of this plan and completed in 2020 include the Road Rehabilitation Program, Molaison Sewer system, Humble Street Drainage Mitigation and Bourbon Country Subdivision gas line replacements.

Plan development incorporated resident feedback by collecting data from residents through a public survey, as well as incorporating feedback from each council member.

The plan is available at [www.stjamesla.com](http://www.stjamesla.com).





# OPERATIONS DIVISION

## MAJOR PROJECTS | MOLAISON SEWER PROJECT

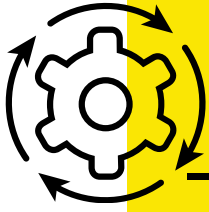
In February of 2020, St. James Parish received a sanction for two cycles of the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), equating to 6 years of inability to receive funds which provide housing and a suitable living environment as well as expanded economic opportunities for low and moderate income persons or families.

The cause for this sanction was the result of the Molaison Sewer Project located in South Vacherie having lingered on the books for nearly 6 years after receiving CDBG funding.

Due to the lack of movement in the project, the parish would be obligated to repay \$800,000 of grant funds to the Office of Community Development.

Parish President, Pete Dufresne and Operations Director, Rick Webre made a request in February 2020 to the Office of Community Development asking for the opportunity for the new St. James Parish Government administration to complete the project within one year and eliminate the obligatory repayment of funds.

St. James Parish operations division has since then worked diligently to competitively engineer and bid the project. The project is now nearing completion and expected to be functional by the end of February 2021. With the completion of this project, over thirty homes in the Molasion community of South Vacherie will have improved sewerage discharge.



## OPERATIONS DIVISION

### **MAJOR PROJECTS | MAGNOLIA DRAINAGE MITIGATION**

The Magnolia Heights drainage project is a multi-year project to improve the major drainage functions of the Magnolia Heights area on the West Bank of St. James Parish. After St. James Parish crews began work, it was determined only 1 of six culverts were functioning in this area. Once complete, this project will significantly improve the drainage and waterflow through this area.

### **MAJOR PROJECTS | CANATELLA STREET DRAINAGE MITIGATION**

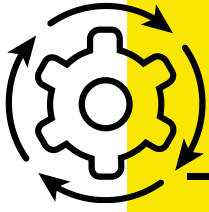
The Canatella Street drainage project replaced the existing trunk line with improved and additional culverts to divert water to the East. This project improves drainage conditions from the levee at Trudeau Street, past the Judicial Building and Courthouse and continues through Canatella Street.

### **MAJOR PROJECTS | HUMBLE STREET DRAINAGE MITIGATION**

The Humble Street drainage project will adequately drain water from Hwy 3125 through Longview Park and ultimately help drain areas east of Hwy 642 North of the Canadian National Railway.

### **MAJOR PROJECTS | BOURBON SUBDIVISION GAS LINES**

The Bourbon Gas line project replaced the PVC pipes with upgraded Polyethylene lines to increase gas pressure and bring lines up to industry standards in the Paulina area.



## OPERATIONS DIVISION

### PLANNING & PERMITTING

COMMERCIAL PERMITS ISSUED 12

RESIDENTIAL PERMITS ISSUED 42

MOBILE HOME PERMITS ISSUED 31



### UTILITIES

NEW GAS SERVICES 55

NEW WATER SERVICES 60

CUBIC FEET OF GAS SOLD 194,714,300

MILLIONS OF GALLONS OF WATER SOLD 726,441,100

### LOGISTICS

St. James Parish in-house maintenance and logistics crews took over all grounds maintenance operations in 2020 resulting in a savings to taxpayers with the cancellation of outsourcing the same work.



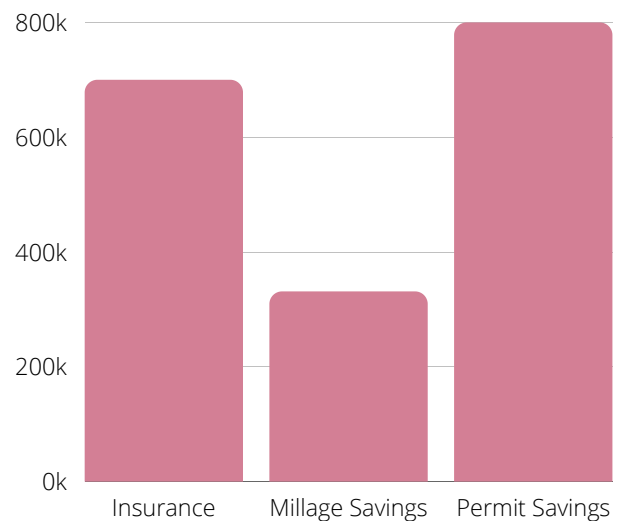
# FINANCE DEPARTMENT

Finance Director, Felix Boughton, created a tracking source for all Parish savings in early 2020. Those savings and department updates are outlined below.

## CARES ACT FUNDING RECEIVED

**\$930,816**

## NOTABLE SAVINGS



**TOTAL SAVINGS TO  
TAXPAYERS IN 2020**

**\$2.6 MILLION**

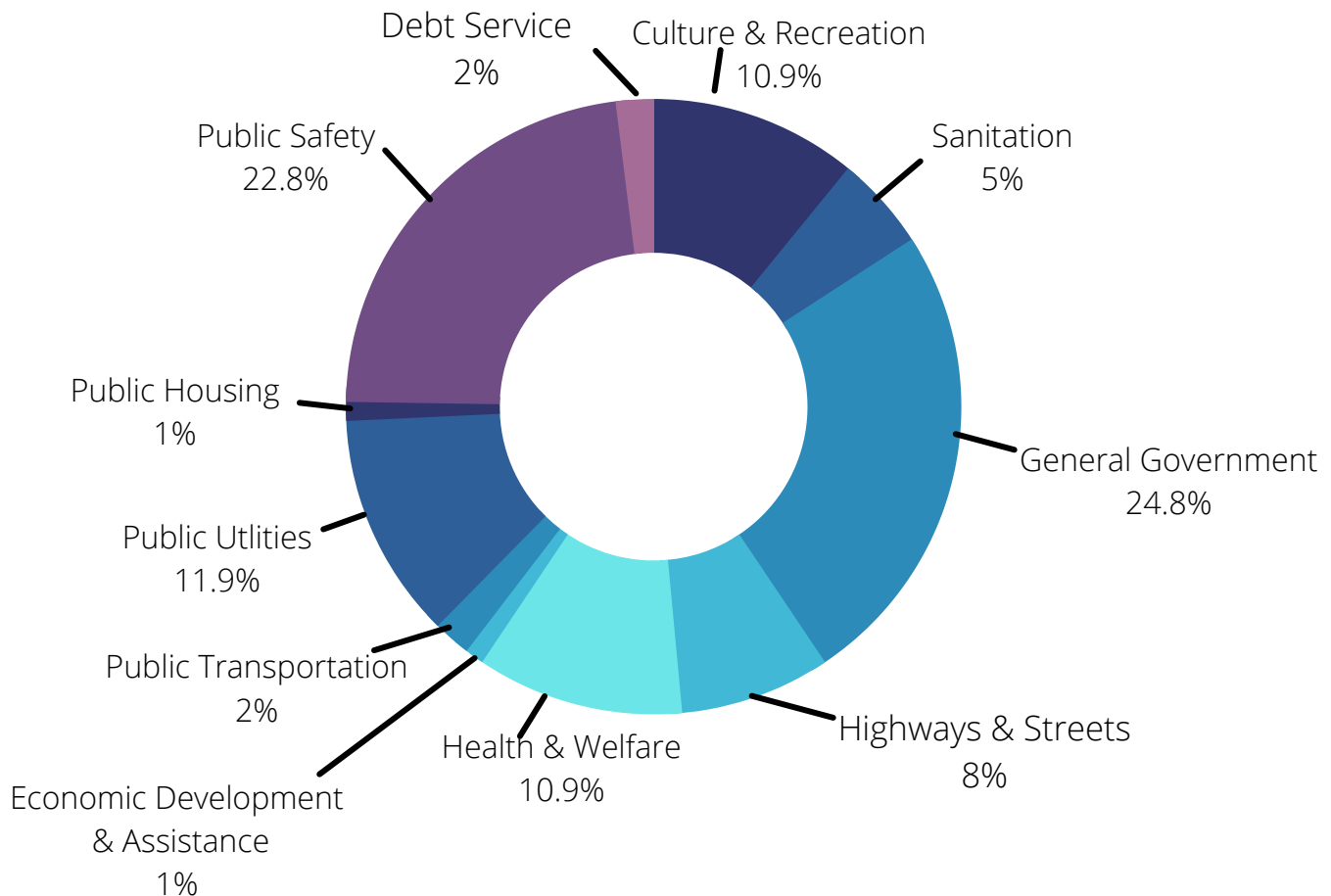


Finance Director, Felix Boughton



# FINANCE DEPARTMENT

## BUDGET EXPENDITURES BY FUNCTION



**2020 EXPENDITURES \$46.9 MILLION\***

**2020 REVENUE FROM TAXES 62%**

**2020 REVENUES \$51.4 MILLION\***

\*Denotes Preliminary Actual Figures - Unaudited



# FINANCE DEPARTMENT

## BUDGET EXPENDITURES EXPLANATION BY FUNCTION

**Public Safety:** Parish wide Drainage, Fire Departments, Enhanced 911 System Maintenance, Emergency Communication (911 Dispatchers), Emergency Preparedness Department, Juvenile Care, Adult Prisoner Care, Jail Maintenance and Operations, Mosquito Control

**Culture & Recreation:** Parks & Recreation Department, District 5 Recreation, Gramercy Recreation District, Parish Library System

**Sanitation:** Solid Waste Disposal, Molaison Sewer Project

**General Government:** Financial Administration, Information Technology, Parish Council, Justices of the Peace and Constables, Parish President, Personnel Office, Public Information Office, Executive Administration, Permitting and Planning Office, Call Center, GIS Office, County Agent support, Courthouse and Public Buildings Maintenance, Criminal Court System support

**Highways & Streets:** Road & Bridge Maintenance, Road Lighting District #3, Parishwide Road Improvement

**Health & Welfare:** Department of Human Resources (Social Services), Elderly and Emergency Medical Services, St. James ARC, Governor's Office of Elderly Affairs Programs, LiHeap Energy Assistance Program, Community Services Block Grant Program, Emergency Food and Shelter Program, Housing Preservation Program, Health Unit support, St. James Parish Coroner

**Economic Development & Assistance:** Economic Development Office, Economic Development Board

**Public Transportation:** St. James Parish Transit System Operations

**Public Utilities** St. James Parish Gas & Water Distribution System



# DHR & SOCIAL SERVICES

"Our dedicated staff have done an incredible job in expanding our advocacy outreach while strengthening the service delivery model. Our mission remains the same—to empower individuals and families to move toward self-sufficiency.

However, we recognize that the needs of the residents and the community are steadily changing, as the COVID-19 pandemic has proven. We focused on restructuring of the department, addressing safety concerns, and improving the overall quality of service delivery. Growing the department to ensure that we are addressing the changing needs of our community while increasing our impact and awareness within the community remains the primary focus."

## COVID-19 RESPONSE

- Implemented a series of financial literacy and homeowner Podcast.
- Safe and protective office space created at Satellite Office to continue serve clients during the pandemic.
- Telephone interviews were setup to assist clients while ensuring social distancing.
- Drop boxes were installed at four different locations in the parish to obtain and secure client's document requesting assistance.
- CARES Act, GOEA and 1st Families Act funding allowed the agency to serve an additional 1,000 meals to registered clients.
- Conducted activities to assist with "feelings of isolation" among seniors including additional telephoning.



DHR Director, Ingrid LeBlanc

\*Some photos contained in this report were taken pre-covid19



# SOCIAL SERVICES

## ELDERLY SERVICES

CONGREGATE MEALS PROVIDED: **5,505**  
HOMEBOUND MEALS PROVIDED: **64,613**

## TRANSIT SERVICES

**51,253** PASSENGERS SERVICED  
PURCHASED **4** NEW BUSES

## SPECIAL PROGRAMS (EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE)

- 292 Children & 119 families served through the annual toy & coat drive.
- 160 households and 304 individuals assisted with LIHEAP
- 113 households and 299 individuals assisted with utilities, rent, mortgage and tuition assistance.
- Implemented a new client tracking system (CTS) to monitor and track client services
- Assisted 65 households with commodity distribution throughout 2020.



## YOUTH AND CAREER SERVICES

- The Youth Services Division launched its first apprenticeship program enabling participants stackable credentials during their six to eight week training.
- Launched its first pilot program for transitioning citizens back into their respective communities after incarceration.
- Served 38 participants through the youth and career services programs.
- Three participants received HSET diplomas
- Five participants received TWIC/OSHA cards.





# SOCIAL SERVICES

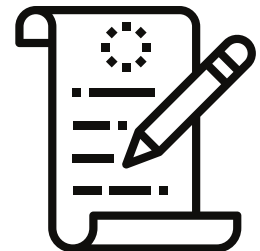
## HOUSING

- Became a certified housing counseling agency.
- Created the agency's first ever podcast during Covid-19.



## ADMINISTRATION AND PLANNING

- St. James Parish Government received 100% Compliance for meeting all fifty of the Louisiana Workforce Commission's Community Services Block Grant Organizational Standards. The standards reflect many of the requirements of the CSBG Act, applicable Federal laws and regulations, good management practices, and values of Community Action.
- 2020-2023 Community Needs Assessment completed to identify services areas and strategic planning for the next five years.





# RECREATION & LIBRARIES

## RECREATION IMPROVEMENTS

In keeping with the Parish Administration's goals and objectives for 2020, several recreation improvements and additions were made to St. James Parish district parks and facilities. Some of those major improvements include:

- District 4 Splashpark
- District 5 Splashpark and Concession
- Lutchter Baseball Fields
- Lutchter Covered Basketball Courts
- Magnolia Covered Basketball Courts

## RECREATION PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS

Numbers reflected below are impacted by COVID-19 regulations.

- West Bank Biddy Basketball Registrants - 99
- East Bank Biddy Basketball Registrants - 86
- Youth Soccer - 304
- Adult Cornhole - 20 teams
- Adult Cabbage Ball - 14 teams

## LIBRARY PROGRAMMING

- Created 20 virtual programs during Covid-19 serving over 2,000 people.
- 14,830 library visitors in 2020.
- 80 book mobile stops
- 11,331 checkouts
- 2,216 computer users





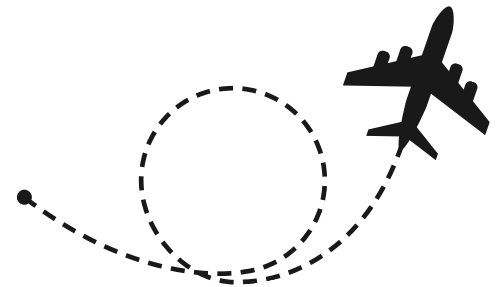
## TOURISM & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Welcome center updates, visitor information & continued business development

- Continued collaboration with the River Region Economic Development Initiative and hosted the Washington Economic Development Breakfast.
- Conducted monthly Economic Development board meetings to discuss economic and community development initiatives as well as to promote local businesses through the "Small Business of the Month" awareness program.
- Continued collaboration with River Region Chamber of Commerce, River Parishes Tourist Commission and GNO, Inc.
- Continued collaboration with the Next25 Group and St. James Parish School "Jump Start Program" to prepare students for technical jobs and training for employment with local industries.
- Direct support to the State's Workforce Investment Career Solutions Center for job placement, training and business opportunities.
- Supported site selection and development due diligence efforts of multiple industrial and commercial prospects, including several foreign investors.
- Ongoing initiatives of a "Work Ready Community" to provide basic skill training and certification to enhance the employability of Parish residents.

## VISITORS

IN STATE	580
OUT OF STATE	851
FOREIGN	38
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,469</b>

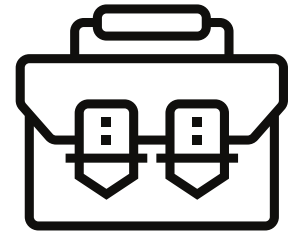




## TOURISM & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

### BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

- 527 Local Businesses Supported
- Continued Marketing of SCPDC revolving loan fund for start-ups and expansions.
- Retail business promotion through parish-wide "Shop Local" initiative in collaboration with the River Region Chamber of Commerce.



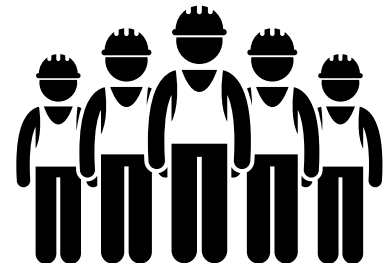
### COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

- 5th District alternate access project
- Brownsfields pilot program
- Opportunity zones
- Community housing options
- Census 2020 #MakeltCountStJames



### WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

- Continued support of a "work ready community" thru implementation of act workkeys training and certification
- Active role in technical & career education thru support for St. James School Board's Jump Start Program & Accelerated Traiing
- Support for development of the FG Academy



**TOURISM & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT****Top 10 Industrial Property Taxpayers**

<b>SHELL CONVENT REFINERY</b>	<b>\$19,394,955</b>
<b>AMERICAS STYRENICS</b>	<b>\$4,277,928</b>
<b>ZEN-NOH GRAIN</b>	<b>\$3,740,641</b>
<b>MOSAIC FERTILIZER (UNCLE SAM)</b>	<b>\$3,598,564</b>
<b>MOSAIC FERTILIZER (FAUSTINA)</b>	<b>\$3,291,579</b>
<b>LOCAP</b>	<b>\$2,076,002</b>
<b>LOUISIANA SUGAR REFINING</b>	<b>\$1,612,800</b>
<b>OXY CHEM</b>	<b>\$1,546,172</b>
<b>PLAINS MARKETING</b>	<b>\$1,390,138</b>
<b>NORANDA ALUMINA</b>	<b>\$1,275,991</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$42,204,769</b>





# EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Emergency Preparedness Director, Eric Deroche

## ACTIVATIONS & COVID-19 RESPONSE

- Activated the Emergency Operations Center for seven hurricanes and Covid-19
- Coordinated the establishment of Covid-19 testing sites within the Parish, testing 1745 people.
- 286 calls for service were received by the four parish fire departments.
- Following the devastation from Hurricane Laura, St. James Parish Emergency Operations Center staff members traveled to Beauregard Parish to assist with recovery efforts and provide equipment necessary.
- Assisted with local vaccination efforts.



Director, Eric Deroche





# COMMUNICATIONS

Communicating with residents and providing transparency in government has remained a key objective of this administration. Parish wide communications have been enhanced to ensure residents are kept up to date on projects, emergencies and resources offered.

In order to maintain transparency with residents, Parish President Pete Dufresne began hosting weekly Facebook Live videos to update residents of current initiatives within the Parish and status updates for major projects. These Facebook videos were a key strategy during the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic to inform residents of the latest information and restrictions set forth by the State of Louisiana.

An effort has been made to provide routine videos and photographs of ongoing projects on social media in an effort to keep residents informed of project progress. President Dufresne and the Communications team launched the "How Your Government Works for You" campaign in the fall of 2020 in an effort to bring the everyday operations of St. James Parish Government directly to its residents. This initiative will continue through 2021 and beyond to share updates of ongoing projects, new services available to residents and more.

The St. James Parish Government website will be redesigned in 2021 to allow for more ease of use and access to residents.

## COMMUNICATIONS TEAM



Meredith Conger



Amber Shepard

# SOCIAL MEDIA REPORT

St. James Parish Facebook page has provided real-time updates to residents and served as a source of information for news media and surrounding parishes. The followership of St. James Parish's Facebook page has grown to over 10k regular followers. At its height in 2020, the page reached over 135,000 people.



Social media has become an instrumental tool in communicating with our residents. By providing real-time updates and alerts, residents are able to use the St. James Parish Facebook Page as a valuable resource for announcements, accurate information and updates to Parish-wide projects.

**St. James Parish**  
January 17 · 🌐

St. James Parish President Pete Dufresne wasted no time getting to work. He, along with the parish's Legal Advisor Cody Martin, Councilman Alvin St. Pierre, Director of Finance Felix Boughton, Mayor Steve Nosacka, Assessor Glenn Waguespack, Sheriff Willy Martin, Superintendent Dr. Ed Cancienne, and School Board President George Nassar met to discuss the current Industrial Tax Exemption Program (ITEP) application process. ITEP offers attractive tax incentives for manufacturers to build or expand in the state of Louisiana. With St. James Parish's three taxing authorities present at the meeting, collectively, they were able to streamline the process and be sure each of their voices were heard and needs were met.



**St. James Parish**  
September 8 · 🌐

Parish President Dufresne held a public meeting with representatives from Entergy to address resident concerns about frequent power outages in District 3 and District 4.

Entergy assured residents that they have identified the problem and are committed to resolving matters as soon as possible.

**St. James Parish**  
November 4 · 🌐

St. James Parish President, Pete Dufresne, announces the launch of a new social media campaign titled, "How your Government works for YOU", to bring the everyday operations of St. James Parish Government directly to its residents.

As part of this initiative, each week, we will share updates of ongoing projects within Parish Government, the new services available to you and more!



**St. James Parish**  
March 12 · 🌐

Parish President Dufresne visits a work site to check progress being made on the parish's major drainage project. Contracted workers have been working diligently to complete the portion of drainage clearing and culvert replacement along Highway 3125 in Gramercy/Lutcher. These tremendous efforts will improve drainage for many residents in the surrounding areas.

Crews will continue servicing major channels for the next 3-5 weeks and then begin work on drainage infrastructure in residential areas. Thank you for your patience during this declared State of Emergency.



