

THE REGION

Livingston to refile delinquency lawsuits

LIVINGSTON — With the dismissal of a court fight, Livingston Parish officials plan to refile lawsuits on delinquent trash bills.

Assistant District Attorney Jimmy Kuhn told the Livingston Parish Police Jury Tuesday night that an appeal by Clerk of Court Lucius Patterson opposing similar lawsuits filed earlier this year was dismissed last week by the 1st Circuit Court of Appeal.

"As soon as we verify the names, we will refile the suits," Kuhn said. Some of the people on the earlier list have paid their back bills, he said.

If the jury wins the lawsuits, residents who refuse to pay, can have their incomes garnished, Kuhn said.

Patterson had objected to the suits and declined to file them without the jury paying filing fees. The appellate court verified that a police jury can file suits without paying advanced fees.

The parish is billing 15,769 households for the service, but a new court Tuesday shows Waste Management Inc. pickups at 18,799 dwellings.

The jurors and Waste Management officials agreed the parish will pay for 18,000 households, an increase of 1,000, at the contracted rate of \$4.34 each a month.

"It'd be worth our expense to survey the parish and get correct addresses on all 18,000," Juror Pat Scivique said.

"We've got almost 3,000 we're missing. It's costing us \$180,000 a year," said Juror Dewey Ratcliff.

The jury took no action on a suggestion from Juror J. L. Shilling to hire someone to get addresses and/or work on collecting from people who aren't paying.

In other action, jurors:

- Agreed to change wording on a federal grant application to lease-purchase an old plywood plant near Holden for use by Del Boeno Foods Inc. that the land would be leased, not sold to the company.
- Agreed to pay \$8,951 to the city of Denham Springs to write a hazardous material emergency preparedness plan for the parish.
- Waived collection of \$3,500 in taxes on the public housing facilities in Denham Springs.
- Laid off four road workers for the winter.
- Agreed to direct permits officer Delmos Taylor to check houses in the federal flood zone to see if sewerage facilities are adequate when additions are made to the homes.
- Approved bingo licenses for the Young At Heart Club and the American Legion in Springfield.
- Designated the first week of January as Jackson Baptist Church Centennial Week.

Different times



Associated Press photo

Deckhand Robert Sweet performs a little preventive maintenance Tuesday aboard the Pride of Baltimore II as a working tug slides by, heading up the Mississippi River. The replica of a topsail schooner, which is ending a five-day stay in New Orleans, is a symbol of Maryland's maritime heritage and an ambassador for business and tourism.

EPA considering new Dutchtown cleanup proposal

By Vicki Ferstel, River Parishes Bureau

GONZALES — Officials with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency say a proposal to change the way they clean up the Dutchtown Oil Reclamation site should not delay the project.

EPA spokesman Garret Bondy confirmed it is considering the new plan when he spoke Tuesday at a status meeting on the three Superfund abandoned hazardous waste sites in Ascension Parish.

Bondy said attorneys representing firms identified as potentially responsible parties for the 21.5-acre site near Interstate 10 and La. 74 in Dutchtown approached EPA a few weeks ago.

Those firms may be forced to pay for the cleanup of the Dutchtown site, which contains several waste pits and 11 above-ground storage tanks near a residential subdivision and Dutchtown Elementary School.

In May, EPA approved funding to remove the sludges and oils in the storage tanks to an off-site facility, treat the remaining water in the waste pits on-site, remove the empty storage tanks and then backfill the excavated pits.

Bondy said the companies now propose to clean the site through "bioremediation," or a bug pond that eats the sludges.

"We're just entering negotiations right now with what we'll allow them to do," Bondy said. He said the industry proposal would cost about \$2 million instead of the \$5 million estimated for the EPA plan.

The change did not please Ascension Parish Police Jury member Shafter Kling, who lives near the site. He said EPA originally told the community the site would be cleaned up last spring.

"I just lost my credibility with a lot of people," Kling said. "That (the new proposal) is just ridiculous. . . . We keep playing games."

EPA spokeswoman Betty Williamson said 30 companies were notified of potential responsibility for Dutchtown cleanup costs. According to the Dec. 5 list, EPA has not yet identified all the responsible parties nor does inclusion on the list indicate the company will be held responsible.

Bondy said some of the 23 companies mentioned as potentially responsible parties for the 25-acre Cleve Reber site

on La. 70 in Sorrento also have approached EPA about changing cleanup plans.

Between 1976 and 1974, the site was used for municipal and industrial wastes, including pollutants such as aluminum, cadmium and nickel. EPA removed 1,100 drums from the site in 1983 and placed a temporary clay cap over a large portion of the site. However, 6,400 drums remain buried at the site along with other wastes and sludges.

According to Bondy, the companies proposed capping the area and using a French drain to collect leachate to contain the contamination. However, Garret said EPA is "continuing with our design because at this point we consider our remedy appropriate."

Bill Marsh of Vulcan Chemicals, one of the 23 companies on the list, said they're concerned about possible air pollution from excavation of the drums. He noted the cleanup at Petro Processors in Scotlandville was shut down in 1987 because of air pollution from excavating the waste.

At the Cleve Reber site, EPA plans to excavate the drums, incinerate the waste on-site, treat the water from four ponds, solidify and bury wastes that cannot be incinerated, and construct a multilayered cap to contain residual contamination. They will monitor the groundwater for 30 years.

Engineers still are working on the design phase, which EPA predicts should be completed by next spring.

At the one-acre Old Inger site, between La. 75 and the Mississippi River in Darrow, EPA proposes using a biodegradation system to eat up the 51,500 cubic yards of waste oil, sludges and contaminated soils along with the 1.9 million gallons of contaminated fluids.

Old Inger Refinery leased the site in 1976 for reclamation of refinery wastes. According to EPA, the site contained nine storage tanks, which overflowed into nearby surface waters. In March 1978 a large spill contaminated the surrounding area.

State and federal officials are reviewing the Old Inger cleanup engineering design and should release the plan for bids in January. Construction of the on-site biological treatment unit could start by next spring.

Services set for former mayor

Baker-Zachary Bureau

ST. FRANCISVILLE — Services were to be held today for former St. Francisville Mayor Marie H. Wenger.

Wenger, who was mayor from 1972 until 1984, died Tuesday at West Feliciana Parish Hospital. She was 72. She was a member of Mount Carmel Catholic Church in St. Francisville and

memorial donations may be made to Our Lady of Mount Carmel Memorial Fund or St. Jude's Children's Hospital. Services were to be held at 2:30 p.m. today at Mount Carmel Catholic Church, with entombment in the Mount Carmel Mausoleum.

Wenger is survived by her husband, James W. Wenger of St. Francisville; her mother, two daughters, two sons, a brother and six grandchildren.

Baker police chief wants to form traffic division

Baker-Zachary Bureau

BAKER — Police Chief Sid Gautreaux asked the Baker City Council Tuesday to consider changes in his department's capital budget to form a traffic division.

In addition, a committee of seven was appointed to study a possible pay plan for city employees. They are John Walden, Billie Ard, Mary Bell, Joe

Watson, Huey Cash, Charline Templeton and Charles Booker.

Gautreaux said the city needs for a traffic division because of traffic problems on at least 18 streets, including La. 19, he said.

The council previously approved a capital budget allowing the purchase of 16 new police cars, trading in 16 currently in use. Gautreaux asked the council Tuesday to consider purchasing

14 new cars and two motorcycles. The city already has three officers on part-time traffic patrol duty and all have been certified, he said. The traffic division could be justified through the number of citations issued to traffic violators, Gautreaux said.

Councilman Jim Hill said Baker has the reputation of a friendly community, and using traffic citations as a source of revenue can be bad publicity.

Gautreaux said the citations are the department's way of justifying the need for the division and the issuing of tickets would decrease once drivers are aware of regular traffic patrols.

The chief estimated the cost of the new police cars at between \$11,000 and \$12,000 each, with a \$2,500 trade-in allowance for each old police car, and a \$6,500 price for a fully equipped police motorcycle.

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