

In and About

January 2026

Washington

FREE – TAKE ONE

Report identifies redevelopment opportunities

The North Main Street area reaching from Bayou Courtaleau to just past the Highway 103 traffic light has been identified as a priority area in a draft report on sites eligible for redevelopment under a federal Brownfield Technical Assistance program.

The study by the Acadiana Planning Commission is meant to identify “underutilized or potentially contaminated properties that could be repositioned for redevelopment.” A site must have environmental concerns to qualify for grants or low-interest loans under the program, but the report also outlines broader opportunities.

North Main Street “serves as the historic and commercial spine of the community,” according to the report. It also identified sites on a stretch of Bayou Courtaleau that was once lined with light industries.

“As one of Louisiana’s oldest towns, Washington faces the dual challenge of preserving its historic character while confronting long-term issues such as ... aging infrastructure, and disinvestment along portions of its Main Street,” according to the draft report. At the same time, the town’s location along I-49 and its proximity to Bayou Courtaleau present new opportunities to strengthen tourism, recreation, and small-business activity. ... [It] also possesses unique geographic and cultural assets.”



School, Southland Coating pair for training

The St. Landry Parish School Board has announced a partnership with Southland Industrial Coatings to offer classroom education and hands-on training for high school students that will lead to full-time jobs.

Beginning in February, classroom instruction will be through the Washington Career and Technical Center. The practical training will be at Southland’s new plant in Washington.

Southland is expected to complete work on its plant this month to provide galvanizing, sand blasting, and fireproofing for steel poles.

“It is our intent that not only will students pick up the skill set, but we’re hoping that some of them will eventually have the opportunity turn to a full-fledged career with Southland,” school superintendent Milton Batiste III said. “This is a prime example of students being able to matriculate from their high school setting right into a career.”

A student must have completed a workplace safety course and be at least in the 11th grade to participate in the training, according to Therese Ellender, St. Landry director of career and technical education.

Those who are already enrolled at the Washington career center can ask to be placed in the course in January. Students who are not currently enrolled at the Washington center should ask their counselor to see if their schedule can be changed to enroll in the course. For next school year, they should simply ask to be placed in the course when making out their schedule.



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Of Note

VOLUNTEERS helping to maintain Ethel Park meet at 8:30 a.m. each first and third Saturday at the park across from Town Hall.

THE FAMILY Healthcare clinic in the Community Center on Veterans Memorial provides wellness visits, school physicals, cholesterol care, diabetes and asthma care, immunizations, DOT physicals, and other services. The telephone number is (337) 826-7702.

YOU CAN DONATE to the Washington Cemetery Foundation via the Venmo payment app or by check to P.O. Box 42, Washington LA 70589.



Now open

The Portrait Lounge at Hotel Klaus now opens at 5 p.m. Thursday through Saturday and from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Sunday.



Christmas in Washington

Threatening weather thinned the crowd for the town's annual Christmas event on December 6, but Santa and Mrs. Claus were as jolly as ever.

Decorating contest winners

Winners of the residential Christmas decorating contest were Angela Doomes, Main Street, first place; Steven and Cheryl Bordelon, John Mark Street, second; Beth James, Carriere Street, third; and Evelyn and David Hanna, Mayer Street, honorable mention.

Business winners were Dorian Law, Veterans Memorial, first place; Southern Strands, Moundville Street, second; Hotel Klaus, Main Street, third; and Thrif-T-Way Pharmacy, Main Street, honorable mention.

'Giving Fridge' available 24/7

A "Giving Fridge," has been established outside the St. Landry Parish Community Action food distribution center, 1065 La. Hwy.749, to provide St. Landry residents the opportunity to share food, reduce waste, and provide fresh meals for anyone facing food insecurity. St. Landry residents Itzell Camacho and Juan Carlos Cruz created the project with the simple concept: "Take what you need, give what you can." The fridge is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Donors can drop off groceries, produce, and food in safe, sealed containers at any time.

For anyone interested in donating, it is suggested that prepared meals or individually packaged foods should be labeled and dated.

WASHINGTON

WEATHER

Forecast:

Warm, wet month

December 1-27

High: 78, Dec. 13

Avg. High: 62.4

Low: 24, Dec. 15

Avg. Low: 42.4

Avg. Temp: 52.46

5-Year Avg: 55.6

Dec. Rainfall: 4.49

20-year Avg.: 4.38

Rain for 2025: 46.90

20-Year Avg: 52.79



Remembered

Donations in memory of Pamela Ortego Landreneau may be made to the Washington Cemetery Foundation, Washington Garden Club, St. Mary Altar Society at Immaculate Conception Church or Ethel Park. The wife of Mayor Dwight Landreneau for more than 50 years died on November 28 after a long struggle with Bulbar amyotrophic lateral sclerosis.



Bridge, highway work set

Contractors have moved in heavy equipment as work begins to replace the Bayou Carron bridge at the entrance to town. Work to dismantle the old bridge and rebuild the approaches to it is expected to begin early this month and last at least until April.

Gilchrist Construction Company of Alexandria was low bidder for the work at \$4,597,086.

The highway department has also announced a \$1.6 million project to replace pavement markings on I-49 from the U.S. 190 interchange north to the Avoyelles Parish line.

The work is expected to begin early this month and continue through March.

Commission offers recycling tips

The St. Landry Solid Waste Commission offers easy ways to recycle household goods, saving landfill space and turning materials that would otherwise be thrown away into new products.

The commission operates two recycling centers. One is at 2717 West Landry Street in Opelousas and the other is at 450 North CC Duson in Eunice. Both are open Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

The centers accept cardboard, newspaper, magazines, and other paper products, aluminum and metal cans, and most plastic products.

Both locations operate a buy-back center where you can be paid for items you deliver. If you choose not to get paid for recycling items, you can donate the money to any school in St. Landry Parish.

From Town Hall

THE JANUARY meeting of the Town Council will be moved to Tuesday, January 20, because of the Martin Luther King holiday. Regular meetings are at 6 p.m. on each third Monday at Town Hall.

UTILITY bill payments are due on the 17th of each month. Payments after 3 p.m. are posted on the next business day. A \$10 late fee is charged if the bill is not paid on time.

BAYOU STATE WASTE reminds residents that it does not handle anything too big to fit into a garbage cart. Call Morgan & Morgan Land Prep, (337) 331-5375, for pickup of those items.



Check presented

Mayor Dwight Landreneau accepted a \$5,000 grant from the St. Landry Parish Civic Leadership Fund, an affiliate of the Community Foundation of Acadiana, "to rehabilitate recreational resources to provide safe play and a stronger community."

Festivities made for a ‘delightful’ steamboat trip

Fine Mississippi River steamboats were often praised for their luxuries, but a letter writer to the *Opelousas Courier* in 1868 said several Bayou Courtaleau boats also deserved such compliments. The correspondent, who signed his letter only with an X, had just enjoyed a “succession of festivities” as the *Annie Wagley* steamed from New Orleans to Washington.



Looking Back

When he went into the cabin after watching New Orleans fade from view, he “was not long in finding out ... that something unusual was to make this trip a marked one, for every face, from the ... jovial one of the popular and portly clerk down to the smallest cabin boy, was wreathed in smiles.

“The table, too, presented ... a more inviting and tasty appearance than usual, and ... John, the unequaled caterer of the *Wagley*, seemed to be ... more than usually exacting ... in his requirements from his subordinates.”

X’s curiosity was satisfied when “to the head of the table advanced our young friend Phillips, the popular ... merchant, his countenance radiant with happiness, and supporting on his arm a charming young lady whose dress and deportment ... denoted a [new] bride. ... Everything was explained, this was a wedding trip and before me was the wedding supper.”

Oramel Hinckley, “the gallant old Captain of the *Wagley*,” took the head of the table ... making certain that pleasantries “flowed with the champagne,” X wrote. “If the bride had been Capt. Hinckley’s own daughter ... no more delicate and feeling attention could have been paid.”

Mark these dates for events in St. Landry

- Opelousas Imperial Mardi Gras Ball, 6 p.m. January 24, Yambilee Building
- Lebeau Mardi Gras Ball 6 p.m.. January 24, Immaculate Conception Church
- Annual Gumbo Cookoff, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. January 31, Yambilee Building, Opelousas
- Zydeco Capital Jam, 1 to 3 p.m., second Saturday, St. Landry Visitor Center, I-49 exit 23
- Zydeco Dance Lessons, 6 p.m. each Wednesday, Holy Ghost Church cafeteria, Opelousas
- Dulcimer Jam, 10 a.m. each Wednesday, St. Landry Visitor Center, I-49 exit 23
- Jammin’ on the Bayou, 1 p.m. third Saturday, St. Landry Visitor Center, I-49 exit 23
- La Table Française, 9:30 a.m. each Wednesday, Eunice Depot Museum, C.C. Duson Street
- La Table Française, 8:30 a.m. last Wednesday, Orphans Museum, Vieux Village, Opelousas
- La Table Française, 9:30 a.m. last Saturday, NUNU Art & Culture Collective, Arnaudville
- La Table Kreyol, 2 p.m. second Saturday, NUNU Art & Culture Collective, Arnaudville
- French Table, 2 p.m. third Sunday, St. Ann Church, Mallet



Come see us today!

St. Landry Visitor Center
978 Kennerson Road
(I-49 exit 23)

337.948.8004
cajuntravel.com

