

Ducote will represent District 1

Ricky Ducote has been selected as interim member to fill the District 1 Town Council seat vacated by Beau Wilson’s resignation.



Ducote has been active in community affairs for many years, most prominently recently as an organizer of the popular car show that is part of the Washington Community Festival.

Wilson was elected in 2014 to replace his father, Gary Wilson, who had served on the Council for 20 years. He moved to a new home just outside the town limits. Council members must live in town.

District 3 member Tanya Doucet will replace Wilson as mayor pro tempore and preside over council meetings and act as mayor when the mayor is absent.



Big cleanup day

A score of volunteers turned out April 25 for the Love the Boot cleanup in Washington, part of Louisiana’s largest litter removal effort. The local cleanup was sponsored by the Washington Garden Club, Steamboat City Association, and Town of Washington. The crew filled about 25 large garbage bags with litter.

School tax on May 16 ballot

A 9.9-mill property tax increase proposed by the parish school board and a handful of state constitutional amendments are on the May 16 ballot here. The school tax proposition is divided into two parts, both of which must pass for either tax to go into effect.

Democrats and Republicans will select congressional candidates.

The first school proposal authorizes a 7.7-mill, 10-year property tax to fund “salaries for school safety and security personnel” including school resource officers, counselors, and nurses, and for “salary increases of not less than \$2,500 for all employees of the St. Landry Parish School System.”

The second school proposition authorizes a 2.2-mill, 20-year property tax to fund “acquisition, construction, maintenance, equipping and furnishing school safety facilities and turf football and soccer fields, tracks, and other performing arts facilities.”

Constitutional amendments deal with staffing unclassified civil service positions, the school system in East Baton Rouge Parish, providing a state-funded teacher pay raise, taxes on business inventories, and changing the mandatory retirement age for judges from 70 to 75.

Related election story, Page 3

2-In and about Washington, May 2026

Of Note.

AMERICAN LEGION Post 209 is again offering \$12 barbecue chicken and pork dinners on the first Saturday of each month beginning May 2. Proceeds fund maintenance and repairs of the home on Hwy. 182.

A FREE LUNCH is planned for Washington's mothers on May 9, the Saturday before Mother's Day, at the Town Pavilion.

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

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



Family day

Barbecue dinners, games, and a yard sale were among the features at the Spring Family and Friends Fun Day April 18 at the Town Pavilion.



Antique fair brings many visitors

Hundreds of happy bargain hunters and one or two old goats crowded into Washington for the Old High School Antique Fair on the gorgeous weekend of April 10-12. Nearly every parking space close to the old Washington High School was filled by 10 a.m. on the first two days.

Construction projects require certificate

The Historic District Commission has issued a reminder that anyone planning new construction, a demolition, addition, alteration, or other exterior project, including fencing, signs, and lighting within the Washington Historic District must get a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) from the commission in addition to a building permit. Applications are available at Town Hall. The district was created in 2007 to preserve

the historic character of the town. Current commissioners are Stephanie Thompkins, chair; Skip Holloway, vice chair; Erin Edmonson, secretary; and members Karen McKinney and Marilyn Smith.

Ministry plans summer camp here

Registration is now open for a 5-day summer camp at the Washington Community Center from 8 a.m. to noon June 8 through 12. The camp will be limited to 30 first through sixth graders. The fee is \$150. Families registering more than one child may get a discount.

"Children learn how to grow into strong, wise, and kind people," according to a posting by the Journey and the Well ministry, sponsors of the camp. Contact thejourneyandthewell.corsizio.com

2026 will be busy election year

The May 16 election begins a busy political year for Washington voters. At the end of June we will decide on changes to the town charter, most significantly on whether the police chief should be elected or appointed. The mayor, town council, and school board member will be selected November 3, along with members of Congress.

Here is who and what are on the upcoming ballots:

May 16: School tax proposals, constitutional amendments, Democrat and Republican Senate primaries, Republican congressional primary.

June 27: Town charter changes, congressional runoffs if needed.

November 3: Mayor and town council, school board member, U.S. senator and congressman.

December 12: Runoffs from November 3 if needed.

Races for parish offices will be in 2028.



Volunteers

Derek Benoit, Rene Daigle and Johnnie Fontenot were among volunteers who spruced up the Town Pavilion with a new paint job.

Council OKs two ordinances

The Town Council approved a new ordinance regulating alcohol sales and another to annex a vacant 12.4-acre plot on Highway 103 across from Southland Industrial Coatings.

The alcohol ordinance restricts sales to two zones and allows sale only from 6 a.m. to midnight Sunday through Thursday and from 6 a.m. to 2 a.m. Friday and Saturday.

Zone One includes the east side of Main Street from East Garrigue to Bayou Carron; both sides of Main Street from Hill Street to Bayou Courtableau, and a stretch of Highway 103 and Dupre Steet that includes Ardoin's, and Country Market (both closed) and Washington Fast Foods (Phillips 66).

Zone Two runs on both sides of Veterans Memorial from Main Street to the town limits near I-49.

The annexed property is owned by ALCYE, LLC, of Lafayette.

Grant donation

Kip Bertrand, CEO of Washington State Bank, presented a \$3,000 check to Mayor Dwight Landreneau for the Washington Grant



From Town Hall

BUSINESS AND property owners are being asked to complete a brief survey as part of the town's effort to join the Main Street program. Anyone owning property in town should go to info@steamboatcity.org to complete the survey.

UTILITY CUSTOMERS are reminded that bill payments are due on the 17th of each month and that payments received 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.

THE TOWN'S FACEBOOK page can be accessed at townofwashingtonla.com.

WASHINGTON WEATHER

Forecast: Hot and dry

April 1-27

High: 88, April 4

Avg. High: 81.3

Low: 43, April 7

Avg. Low: 60.6

Avg. Temp: 71.0

5-Year Avg.: 67.1

April Rainfall: 4.23

20-year Avg.: 4.67

Rain for 2026: 17.06

20-Year Avg.: 18.31

4 – In and About Washington, May 2026

Pope Leo's family tree branches directly to Washington

The genealogy of Pope Leo XIV leads directly to Washington and shows not only his own complex ancestry but that of many families of mixed ancestry. The pope was born Robert Francis Prevost in Chicago in 1955. His father was Louis Marius Prevost. His mother was Mildred Agnes Martinez, daughter of Joseph Norval Martinez and Louise Bacque, who married in 1887 in New Orleans. They moved to Chicago about 1911. Louisiana documents list Joseph and Louise as of mixed race; Chicago records list them as white.



Louise was the daughter of Ferdinand David Bacque and Eugenie Grambois, both born in New Orleans. Ferdinand's parents were Joseph Aristide Bacque, who was born in Guadeloupe, and Celeste Lemelle, who was born in St. Landry Parish. Celeste was the daughter of Louis Lemelle and Celeste Olimpie Grandpre, who were listed as having one-fourth African ancestry when they married in Opelousas on October 17, 1798.

Louis was the son of Francois Donato Lemelle, who married Charlotte Labbe in New Orleans about 1760. They moved to St. Landry Parish before 1777, when they are listed in a census here that shows them to be a prosperous family. Francois and his siblings owned Lemelle's Landing on Bayou Courtableau, and he is buried in the old Church Landing (Yellow Fever) Cemetery in Washington.

After his wife's death Francois lived with a former slave, Marie Jeanne Davion, with whom he'd had a long relationship. Louis, who was born about 1775, was one of their several children. One of Louis Lemelle and Celeste Labbe's eight children, Etienne, may have had something to do with the Courtableau steamboat trade other than through Lemelle's Landing. One genealogy lists his occupation as "riverboat pilot."

Mark these dates for events in St. Landry

- Sunset Herb and Garden Fest, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., May 2, Festival Grounds, Sunset
- Cook'n for Kiwanis, 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. May 2, South Park, Opelousas
- Le Grande Boucherie de Mallet, 11 a.m. May 2, St. Ann Church
- Louisiana and the Revolution Fête, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. May 8, Historic Prudhomme Home, Opelousas
- Cankton Accordion Festival, 9 a.m. to 11 p.m. May 23, Pitre Memorial Park
- Rendezvous in the Prairie, 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. each Thursday, Prairie Acadian Cultural Center, Eunice
- 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. each third Saturday, St. Landry Visitor Center, I-49 exit 23



Come see us today!

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

337.948.8004

cajuntravel.com

