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JENNINGS DAILY NEWS

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2023

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SB approves beacons, speed limit for JES, HHS

School road safety project launched

By ERIN HARGRAVE
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Jeff Davis Parish School Board (JDSB) recently announced its plans to add LED school zone flashing beacons at Jennings Elementary School (JES) and Hathaway High School (HHS), as well as lowering the speed limit during pick up and drop off in Hathaway.

The board approved the purchase of two beacons at JES for

a total of \$11,131.82 and three beacons at HHS for a total of \$16,697.73 during the February meeting, according to JDSB Superintendent John Hall.

"We started an interesting process at JES and HHS," he said. "They are on two state highways so we started this discussion a long time ago and have been working with the Department of Transportation and Development (DOTD)."

Hall said the changes stem

from a need to focus on safety at the schools due to both campuses sitting on state highways.

"We started getting calls, then we found out that Jeff Davis Parish Sheriff's Office was also getting calls about people slamming on their breaks in front of the schools," he said. "When teachers are out on duty, that is one of the scariest things. When you are at a school and you hear breaks screeching, you look up and hope that it is not a student

trying to cross the road."

Earlier this year, DOTD approved the signs and the speed reduction for HHS, however, there is a need for more research before the speed limit can be reduced, Hall said.

"When we started working with Hathaway, we were approved for a 35-mile-an-hour speed limit," he said. "We found out that when we were specking out the sign that they needed to say 35 miles an hour and asked if DOTD was

going to take the 45 miles an hour sign down. That's when we discovered that they inadvertently approved it without doing a traffic study."

Despite the setback, Hall said he is willing to do what is necessary to make the roads as safe as possible for teachers and students.

"The signs at JES will go up pretty quick because the speed

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Daily News photos by Erin Hargrave



Parish water district audit released

By ERIN HARGRAVE
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The state recently released an audit report for the financial health of a parish water district.

Auditors from the Louisiana Legislative Auditor's office (LLA) released the results this week of routine audits performed for Jeff Davis Parish Water District No. 4.

The 26-page report for the entity was completed by certified public accountant J. Aaron Cooper, CPA, LLC for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2022.

According to the statement of net position, total assets, which include \$214,199 in cash and cash equivalents, were listed as \$2.2 million. Total current and non-current liabilities were \$676,546, resulting in a net position of \$1.57 million.

Operating revenues came to \$683,738 and expenses totaled \$564,035, resulting in \$119,703 in operating income.

There was a finding for the lack of segregation of duties due to the entity's small size. The district determined that it is not cost-effective to achieve complete segregation of duties in the accounting department. They have however segregated as many duties as possible.

Also, there were two exceptions listed for the entity not displaying its sexual harassment policy and complaint procedure in a conspicuous location on the premises, along with not preparing its annual sexual harassment report. Management responded that it will add to its policies and procedures and post it on the premises.

Board Member Dr. Charles Deese was contacted for a statement but could not be reached before press time.

The Jeff Davis Water District No. 4 was created to establish, acquire, construct, improve, extend and maintain a water system within its political subdivision. At present, the district charges residential customers \$16 for the first 2,500 gallons of water used and \$4.50 for each additional 1,000 gallons used. Commercial accounts are charged \$32 for the first 5,000 gallons of water used and \$4.50 for each additional 1,000 gallons used.

To view the full report, visit lla.la.gov.

Ash Wednesday

Our Lady Help of Christians Catholic Church priest Fr. Keith Pellerin places ashes on the foreheads of parishioners Jillian Lantz (above), 17, and Ben Oustalet (left) during Ash Wednesday mass. The day marks the beginning of Lent, a season of penance, fasting and reflection to prepare for Jesus's resurrection on Easter Sunday.

United Way to host Super Tax Day events

Daily News Staff Report

In addition to regular Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) sites, United Way of Southwest Louisiana has planned two events on Super Tax Day.

The Super Tax Day events will be held from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday, March 4. The events are planned at American Legion Post 1 at 1530 Ninth Street in Lake Charles and Mowad Civic Center at 213 South 10th in Oakdale.

"Super Tax Day is a FREE tax preparation and financial resource fair for individuals

featuring IRS-certified tax volunteers and United Way of Southwest Louisiana partners with financial resources all under one roof," said President and CEO Denise Durel.

No appointments are necessary for a Super Tax Day unlike regular VITA sites, which require an appointment.

Those with a household income of \$67,000 or less in 2022, persons with disabilities, senior citizens, veterans and limited English speaking taxpayers are eligible for VITA.

Those unable to attend the Super Tax Day can make an appointment at a VITA

site for an alternate time or location by calling 211 or online at unitedwayswla.org/vita. An up-to-date list is maintained of locations and open appointments.

Additionally, anyone who makes less than \$73,000, can file for free by using the myfreetaxes link on the VITA page at unitedwayswla.org/vita.

For a list of items to bring when having taxes prepared by VITA volunteers see unitedwayswla.org/vita.

United Way of Southwest Louisiana partners with Entergy Louisiana and the IRS for VITA.



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