

Voice of Vermilion Parish since 1856

# Police Jury approves raises

By Rachel Cherry  
Managing Editor

In an effort to keep up with the cost of living and to create a system that is competitive to other parishes, the Vermilion Parish Police Jury voted at a special meeting Monday night to raise all parish employees salaries.

Nearly a month ago it was decided that the salary compensation for CDL drivers was not competitive enough to entice local people to work for the parish government system instead of private enterprise. At that time a decision was made to research and adjust CDL salaries for employees of the solid waste facility and road crews with the expectation that higher wages

would mean more applicants for the positions.

A committee of jurors, some of the administrative staff and supervisors met on several occasions to iron out the details.

The result was not only a raise for CDL drivers, but for all parish employees.

The increase to the parish to pay out additional wages will total approximately \$329,000 which will be taken out of either the '76, '78 or '94 sales tax and will begin with the next pay period.

Juror Mark Poche and Jury President Gerald Butaud assured the rest of the jurors that there was ample funds to cover the increases.

Since it had been previously decided by the jury that day CDL drivers at sol-

id waste would make \$11 an hour, night CDL drivers, \$12 an hour and road crew CDL drivers \$10.25 an hour, the rest of the raises had to reflect an amount comparable to those positions. This posed a challenge as there exist at least ten different pay scale grades, depending upon the amount of time employed with the parish and what position is considered.

Using models and wage data from other parishes and organizations, the committee was able to come up with a plan that would guarantee all workers would receive a raise that was equal to what everyone else will get. It was also the first time in recent jury business that the corresponding supervisors were invited to have input about their workers' salaries.

"We went over every job description and every employee with the supervisors in order to make this fair," Poche stated.

While looking into each job, it was discovered that a few positions had been overlooked for step increases when the jury voted last year to get rid of the lowest pay step. With the new plan in place, each job has been detailed and will fall in line with the pay increases.

The jury voted unanimously to increase the wages and mentioned addressing another form of raise system in the future, citing the possibility of merit increases.

The Vermilion Parish Police Jury will meet this afternoon at 5:30 p.m. at the Vermilion Parish Courthouse for the regular committee meetings.

## Free cancer screenings today

Lafayette - A Free Breast Cancer screening opportunity will be held Wednesday, April 16, 2008 at the St. Bernadette Clinic located at 409 St. John St, Lafayette from 5pm-8pm (patients should arrive at 3pm).

This free session is available to women who meet the following guidelines:

Between the ages of 40-65 and have NO insurance or are under-insured

This event is sponsored by the LA. Breast & Cervical Health programs (LB-CHP), in partnership with Our Lady of Lourdes and St. Bernadette's Community Clinic. For more information call 337-235-7898 (extension 476) or email

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## National Healthcare Decisions Day today

Lafayette - Hospice of Acadiana, Inc., along with other national, state and community organizations, are leading a massive effort to highlight the importance of advance healthcare decision-making—an effort that has culminated in the formal designation of April 16, 2008 as National Healthcare Decisions Day (NHDD). As a participating organization, Hospice of Acadiana, Inc. is providing information and tools for the public to talk about their wishes with family, friends and healthcare providers, and execute written advance directives (healthcare power of attorney and living will) in accordance with Louisiana state laws. These resources are available at Hospice of Acadiana, Inc. at 337.237.1332, ext. 2236 or by contacting

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## Film shoots at historic house S. Main Street home used for interior scenes

By Rachel Cherry  
Managing Editor

Getting accustomed to the sight of cameras, booms and stage hands and actors working in and around Abbeville may be the future as Bullet Films utilizes the various unique scenery in Vermilion Parish for their latest film based upon an H.P. Lovecraft story.

Actors Dean Stockwell and Jeffrey Combs spent most of the afternoon Tuesday at the former Eli Wise house on S. Main Street filming interior scenes for the Sci-fi release.

Bullet Films plans to film at least eight productions in the Acadiana area within the next year, hoping to form a presence within the state and develop a facility that can help train the needed workforce for such endeavors in the future.

This is the second production company to feature Abbeville on film in the past month.

Louisiana is ranked third in the nation for the number of films produced, with Shreveport ranked as the third city in the



Photo by Chris Rosa

Bullet Films production team set the scene in a local Abbeville Historic home Tuesday. The sci-fi thriller is based on a short story by H.P. Lovecraft.

nation for productions.

Mayor Mark Piazza was on hand during the day to welcome the crew and actors to the city as well as members from the newly formed Abbeville Film and Visi-

tor commission.

Producers have visited Vermilion Parish on a number of locations looking for the perfect spots to film.

"We have been scouting

around the region for a month and a half," producer Nick Everhart said. "This house was perfect as far as Director Lee Scott was concerned for the scenes."

## New film visits the inevitability of coastal loss

By Rachel Cherry  
Managing Editor

For a young filmmaker who was drawn to tell the inevitable loss of his native Louisiana coast, the ultimate reward and his loftiest goal would be to see the U.S. Congress stand up, take notice and do something about the ever shrinking coastline and the preservation of its wetlands.

'Paradise Faded - The fight for Louisiana' a film by Lafayette native Jared Arsement is scheduled

for full release on April 22, but about 750 copies of the film have been distributed to the media and all of the state legislators in the hopes that the message contained therein will make a difference.

The film was inspired by a trip that Arsement took with some friends to the coast and then he was introduced to the book *Bayou Farewell - The Rich Life and Tragic Death of Louisiana's Cajun Coast* by Mike Tidwell.

"I always knew there was a problem with the wetlands, but

didn't really know the extent or how much Louisiana contributed to the nation for that matter," he said.

Fresh out of school at the University of New Orleans Film School, Arsement set out to find more information about coastal erosion, losing the wetlands and the value of the coast to the nation.

His research, which he started in 2004, took him to not only the wetlands of Louisiana, but also to the Netherlands where he filmed

the system of flood protection in place in that region.

He researched the available material from the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and the Save America's Wetlands organization among other materials and felt that he could tell the story in a better way, beyond all the technical reasons, yet including them.

"The more I worked on the project, the more people told me to

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# Coastal

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speak to so and so, or this person here, and this person there.”

Eventually he came across the name of John T. Landry who, according to Arsement, was his initial contact to the Vermilion Parish information.

In fact, Landry contributed to the film with some footage he took at Pecan Island shortly after Hurricane Rita ravaged the area.

In addition to the local images, the music featured in the film is only from Louisiana musicians.

Filming first began at the 2006 Mardi Gras celebration in New Orleans and continued for about six months as Arsement traveled along the Louisiana coast in search of more footage and information.

The opening frames of the film bring in Sterling Freiu, a retired commercial fisherman who still spends much of his time on the waterways and bayous around Morgan City. Although looking for information on the commercial industry over the years, Freiu proved to be a valuable asset and fount of information regarding the disappearing lands.

“He put a face of the people, the culture, to the film,” Arsement stated.

Some of the 67 minute film is based upon the format of a documentary, but the unique placement of music and information creates an hour of entertainment as well as information.

Arsement has another tie to Vermilion Parish; his wife, the former Camille Guidry from Abbeville.

In addition to distribution of the film, Arsement hopes to premiere it in several cities around the state and hopefully the nation. He will meet with the Abbeville Film and Visitor Commission on May 15 to discuss the possibility of a venue in the immediate area.

A trailer of the film, which includes Abbeville’s Judge Edwards, can be seen at his website [www.paradisefaded.com](http://www.paradisefaded.com)



s also tied to Louisiana’s wetlands that are



disappearing wetlands and coastal erosion is overways by the oil industry, which is also imtate.

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# Decisions

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toni@hospiceacadiana.com by email or logging on to [www.nationalhealthcaredecisionsday.org](http://www.nationalhealthcaredecisionsday.org).

“As a result of National Healthcare Decisions Day, many more people in our community can be expected to have thoughtful conversations about their healthcare decisions and complete reliable advance directives to make their wishes known,” said Toni Rios, Director of Community Relations of Hospice of Acadiana, Inc. “Fewer families and healthcare providers will have to struggle with making difficult healthcare decisions in the absence of guidance from the patient, and healthcare providers and facilities will be better equipped to address advance healthcare planning issues before a crisis and be better able to honor patient wishes when the time comes to do so.”

For more information about National Healthcare Decision Day, please visit [www.nationalhealthcaredecisionsday.org](http://www.nationalhealthcaredecisionsday.org).

# Cancer

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lbchp@laonc.com.

The goal of the LBCHP is to prevent unnecessary disease, disability or premature death due to cancer of the breast, cervix in women who live in Louisiana.

To accomplish this, LBCHP will provide quality no-cost breast exams, pap smears and mammograms to women who qualify. Exams will be performed by a physician, physician’s assistant or nurse practitioner. Mammograms will not be done the night of the screening but will be scheduled at another facility at a later date.

This is an important chance for many of our women to receive early breast and cervical cancer screenings.

Please pass this on to your mothers, sisters and just plain friends.....who may fit the criteria and benefit from this event.