

Litter catcher installed

In its continuing effort to prevent litter from going into Bayou Plaquemine, the City of Plaquemine has installed eight devices to stop litter from going into the city's storm water drainage system.



The devices were screwed into the inside of catch basins to stop litter before they enter the city's drainage system and are flushed into the bayou. The devices have trap doors that can be opened to clean out debris and/or litter that get caught. The city has installed the devices in areas that have higher litter volume to test them. The devices open during heavy downpours to prevent flooding of the drains.

"The long term solution is for people to stop littering," said Mayor Mark "Tony" Gulotta. The city is continuing its efforts to educate residents about

littering, is continuing to pick up some 100 bags of litter weekly, and a two-man team is collecting trash from the bayou weekly by boat.

LITTER COMMERCIAL CHALLENGE: The city also sponsored a litter commercial challenge among high school students to produce a litter commercial, which the city will air on local cable in 2015. A total of 12 litter commercials were submitted by students at the three local high schools, and the winner will be announced in February. The goal of the contest is to make the students aware of the littering problem by having them research and create commercials to deter littering among teens and young adults. Visit the City of Plaquemine YouTube site for video entries: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC1SL-d4pKU1ooF_-v8CSYIQ/videos



DIGITAL SIGN INSTALLED...

A digital sign to keep Plaquemine residents updated on events, programs and activities in the city is now operational. The sign was built into the iron frame the city has used to hang banners at the entrance of the city on La. Hwy. 1. The technology to fully program the sign from a remote location was being installed in the last week in January, and the city is expecting to start showing messages on the sign in February. At the time of this newsletter printing, only the time was running on the sign, as shown at left.



City of Plaquemine
23640 Railroad Ave.
Plaquemine, LA 70764

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City of Plaquemine

Plaquemine City Hall • 23640 Railroad Ave.

Plaquemine, Louisiana • 225-687-3116

HOURS: 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. Monday - Friday

Emergency After-Hours Phone 225-687-4796

www.plaquemine.org

Mark A. "Tony" Gulotta, Mayor

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NEW WASTEWATER PLANT 60% COMPLETE...

The city's \$16 million wastewater improvement project, including the construction of a new \$12 million wastewater treatment facility in a south Plaquemine cane field, is expected to be completed this summer. The new facility will replace the city's antiquated plant off W.W. Harleaux Street, and provide the city with more efficient wastewater treatment. The city had already re-routed wastewater discharge from Bayou Plaquemine to the Mississippi River in 2013, providing environmental benefits to Bayou Plaquemine and meeting La. Department of Environmental Quality regulations. In addition, the new plant will provide plenty of capacity for future expansion of the wastewater system.

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CITY NEWS

JANUARY 2015

City of
Plaquemine
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Changes in electrical system to keep prices stable

The City of Plaquemine embarked on an aggressive improvement program for the city's electrical system in 2013, and much of that work was completed by the end of 2014.

Changes are also on tap for this system in 2015 that will keep the city's already competitive electrical rates stable for local residents for years to come. Here is a breakdown of what has been done and what is in store for the system.

What's been done:

- Installation of a new \$4 million transformer to replace the 1960s transformer – completed in 2014. The old transformer now serves as a back-up transformer.
- A \$1.6 million power line upgrade in various areas of the city – the stronger and more powerful lines will maintain power better in severe weather conditions - to be completed by March.
- Replacing 60-year-old circuit breakers connected to the power plant with new circuit breakers - estimated cost \$1 million with completion by this fall.
- Adding the on-line bill pay option for customers. This new feature went live in December, and more than 450 customers signed up for the on-line capabilities in less than two months.

Total Improvement Cost: \$6.6 Million - \$5 million was borrowed to be repaid by electrical system revenues, and the city funded the additional costs.



What's coming in 2015? Look inside!

What is coming in 2015?

Another big change for the electrical system is the closure, in June, of the city power plant operated by the Louisiana Energy & Power Authority (LEPA). This old steam plant was built in the 1960s, and has been leased to LEPA for many years. LEPA has maintained the plant and operated it when needed to meet its

required electrical load capacity.

LEPA notified the City in late 2014 that it would no longer lease the plant after June of 2015 because it could purchase the load capacity from more modern plants for about \$300,000, while maintaining the old steam plant costs \$1.2 to \$1.3 million annually.

Benefits of the closure: Stable, low rates for years

The closure has both benefits for the Plaquemine electrical system and you, the customers. The biggest benefit is that electrical customers will see stable rates.

"LEPA will no longer operate old power plants in four cities – Plaquemine, Morgan City, Rayne, and New Roads," explained Mayor Mark "Tony" Gulotta. "It will save a lot of money by ending those leases, and those savings will be passed on to LEPA member cities.

In addition, the City of Plaquemine has contracted to purchase 20 percent of its electrical power from a new energy efficient power plant that LEPA is constructing in Morgan City. That plant will be completed in September of 2015, and because it will provide power so efficiently, it will also help keep electrical rates down in Plaquemine for years to come.



The steam plant has served as a back-up when the city lost electrical power through the grid, which is operated by MISO. "In the last 20 years, we have needed to use the steam plant as a back-up only twice – and those times were during Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Gustav. In both cases, we were able to switch over to the steam plant and were able to have power restored more quickly to our customers," explained Mayor Gulotta.

"When this plant closes, we will no longer have that back-up, so if we lose power through the grid in a storm, we will have to wait for the grid to be restored to regain power," he said. "What that means is Plaquemine customers may be without power longer than in the past if a major storm damages the power grid."

City officials considered keeping the plant operational as a back-up, but they decided that

the \$1.2 million to \$1.3 million annual cost was too high to keep the 1960s plant as a backup. In addition to this cost, getting parts is harder and harder. "Any major breakdown could add significantly to that \$1.3 million overhead," the mayor explained.

Because of closure of the steam plant, the city has to purchase new circuit breakers to link the new transformer to the grid. The city was already planning on replacing two circuit breakers annually, but the closure will require that all of the breakers be replaced now.

The new circuit breakers will provide updated equipment with additional advantages, including: immediate remote notification of outages to dispatcher, more detailed information on the source of an outage, and better controls of sub-stations so that outages can be confined to smaller areas.

"With this reliability and stable rates that are very competitive with other electrical companies in this region, including Entergy, the City has an electrical system that is a real asset to our residents, something that many people thought was impossible even a few years ago."

Mayor Mark "Tony" Gulotta

Once all of these changes are in place, the city electrical system infrastructure will be in very good shape. The improvements have helped us cut outage times significantly, and the additional improvements will make it more reliable.

