

In and about Washington

February 2024
FREE—TAKE ONE

Arctic cold may be gone, but rain will remain

A frigid few days in the middle of January dropped temperatures into the teens, making this one of the chillier Januaries in recent years. Rainy fronts made it one of the wetter ones.

The low temperature here fell below freezing on January 14 and stayed there for a week, dipping to a pipe-freezing 15 degrees on January 17. Rainfall was already above average before January 24 when more than 4.5 inches fell in one day.

Forecasters expect more moderate temperatures this month, but above average rainfall.

Highs here in February average about 62 degrees, lows about 46. Average rainfall is about 4½ inches.

THE WEATHER

January 1-27

High: 72, Jan. 8, 11

Avg. High: 55.8

Low: 15, Jan. 17

Avg. Low: 34.6

Avg. Temp: 45.2

Jan. Rainfall: 10.28

Avg. for Jan.: 4.37

Rain for 2023: 43.32

20-year Avg.: 54.54



Pool anticipates warmer days

Workers who bundled against the January cold anticipated warmer times ahead as they installed a pool January 22 at the former Plantation Antiques building on Main Street that is being renovated to become the Klaus House Boutique Hotel. Barring complications, the renovations could be finished in late summer or early fall.

Community festival March 23

Plans are well under way for the Washington Community Festival set for March 23.

It is a revival of one that was replaced a dozen years ago by a short-lived Catfish Festival. It features food, music, a car show, and activities for kids.

It is administered through the nonprofit Steamboat City Association but is planned and staged by volunteers. Call Town Hall if you want to help.



2—In and about Washington, February 2024

Of Note

THE ST. LANDRY Community Action Agency offers public transportation services for qualified people Monday-Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. throughout St. Landry and Lafayette Parishes. Call (337) 948-3651 for details.

THE WASHINGTON Cemetery Foundation is accepting donations via the Venmo payment app. Donations may also be made by check to Washington Cemetery Foundation, P.O. Box 42, Washington 70589.

THE AMERICAN LEGION post here has set up a GoFundMe account to help repair the Legion Home. The link is <https://gofund.me/027782b8>. Send checks to American Legion Post 209, P.O. Box 45, Washington, LA 70589

THE HEALTH BUGGY offers free screening for blood pressure, blood sugar, and cholesterol from 8 to 11 a.m. each third Friday on the Immaculate Conception parking lot.

BINGO IS BACK, at 2 p.m. on each second and fourth Tuesday at the Recreational Center on Martin Luther King.

Send items for *In and About Washington* to jimbradshaw4321@gmail.com.



Trees for Joubert Park

Three live oak trees donated by the Washington Garden Club and two donated by the Steamboat City Association were planted at Joubert Park to celebrate Arbor Day on January 19.

Water association scholarships available

Graduating high school students and enrolled college students from Washington are eligible for a \$2,000 scholarship awarded by the Louisiana Rural Water Association. Applicants must live in a place that is a member of LRWA, which includes Washington. Five hundred dollars per semester will be paid to a student for two years for tuition, books, or room and board at an accredited institution of higher learning approved by the association. The student must maintain a C or higher-grade point average.

Applications are due by March 4. Get information at 1-800-256-2591 or lrwa.org.



Zydeco jam held monthly

Accordianist Gerard Delafosse hosted the monthly Zydeco Capital Jam January 13 at the St. Landry Parish Visitor Center on I-49 just south of Washington.

The jam is held from 1 to 3 p.m. on the second Saturday of each month. Admission is free.

It is open to musicians of all skill levels and fans of Louisiana music. For more information go to cajuntravel.com.

From Town Hall

THE JANUARY Town Council meeting scheduled for January 16 was cancelled because of frigid weather. Only routine items were on the announced agenda.

OCCUPATIONAL licenses must be renewed by the end of this month at Town Hall.

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



Grants at work
Grants and state appropriations have paid for refurbishing the Recreation Center doors and bathrooms and needed infrastructure work such as replacing old water lines and the Corso Street sewer list station



Town will be part of new congressional district

Washington will end up in a new, majority Black congressional district if a plan adopted by the legislature gets final court approval. The plan redraws the 6th Congressional District so that it stretches diagonally across central Louisiana from Caddo Parish to St. Landry. (Pink area on map)

Washington is currently at the tip of the 4th Congressional District, represented by Speaker of the House Mike Johnson, a Republican from Shreveport. The 6th District is currently represented by Baton Rouge Republican Garret Graves. The new 6th district that includes Washington will have a Black voting-age population of 53%.

The legislature was forced by the court to create two majority Black districts after census data showed that Black voters make up one-third of the state's electorate. The federal court that ordered the plan must give final approval. The other majority-Black district is in the New Orleans area. It has a Black voting-age population of 51%.



4-In and about Washington, February 2024

Town hall became World War II bandage factory

When young men from Washington marched off to World War II, their mothers, wives, and sisters marched to Town Hall, where they did impressive and essential work to support the fighting men. They organized a Red Cross surgical dressing unit and met daily to make bandages and other medical necessities for GIs wounded in the fighting.

The *Opelousas Clarion-News* identified the first volunteers as Mrs. Lode Thistlethwaite, Mrs. Z. McCaffery, Mrs. George Azar, Miss Hinda Klaus, Mrs. Paul Thistlethwaite, and Mrs. Gordon Oge. Mrs. Oge, the former Jennie Mae Brown, was an alderwoman and the first woman elected to public office in St. Landry Parish.

Within two months after they organized, the Washington ladies had made 1,400 surgical dressings and were complemented “very highly” by the Red Cross for “the quality and neatness of the dressings they made.” That was a good beginning, but American soldiers were just moving into harm’s way, and, sadly, many more bandages were needed.

At the end of June, 1942, 15,000 sets of bandages had been prepared in St. Landry Parish for shipment overseas, fully a third of them coming from Washington. Others were made in Opelousas and Melville. The work here impressed the War Department in Washington, DC enough to ask for many more.

“The surgeon general of the United States Army recently requested the American Red Cross to make a very large number of surgical dressings,” news services reported. That prompted local leaders to call for more volunteers and more work from those who had already been working. Washington women answered the call.

Mrs. S. B. Wolff, who was parish chairman for the bandage-making effort, said several weeks later that she was “delighted” with the response and that the ladies in Washington had finished “a large part” of their quota “and taken materials for more.”

Enough gauze to cut and roll into 18,000 bandages was sent to St. Landry at the beginning of September and by mid-November the volunteers in Washington had turned out 10,000 bandages.

The *Clarion-News* added to the list of Washington volunteers Mrs. Fred Bailey, Mrs. Gantt Nicholson, Miss Hattie Cook, Mrs. Louis Wartelle, Mrs. H. Boudreaux, Mrs. Quirk McCaffery, Mrs. E. Chiasson, Mrs. Will Nicholson, Mrs. Woodruff, Miss Elizabeth Stephenson, “and others.”

They may not have fully appreciated just how important their work was until a young airman from St. Landry Parish who was stationed in England sent a letter to his mother, which she shared with the newspaper.

“The fellows here really appreciate the work of the Red Cross,” Private James Adams wrote. “Little did I think when I saw you making bandages that I’d see them used. When you see them stained with red, then you thank God for the folks behind you back home.”



Looking Back

In and About
Washington

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