

# NATCHITOCHEES: WHAT'S HAPPENING IN THE CITY

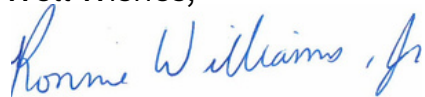
## FROM THE DESK OF MAYOR RONNIE WILLIAMS, JR.

It's hard to believe that we are near the end of the first quarter of this new year. Certainly, I've been working every day to help improve the quality of life for Natchitoches residents. In August 2022, we received the fantastic news that the city was a recipient of \$17.2 million to enhance our surface area transportation as in the rehabilitation and creation of sidewalks in certain areas of town.

Fortunately, good news keeps coming our way. In February of this year, we learned that our city is the recipient of \$5 million to improve our aging water infrastructure. These funds will enable us to produce more water to meet the growth trajectory the city is currently on. On a smaller note, but certainly not an insignificant one, the city was respectively awarded \$280,000 to develop a safe streets plan and \$100,000 to facilitate the promotion and awareness of and participation in the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) among eligible Natchitoches households. Things are looking up for our city.

More recently, I was overjoyed to attend a luncheon hosted by Big Brothers Big Sisters Natchitoches. You read that right! Big Brothers Big Sisters is now operational in the City of Lights. I found the luncheon to be both inspirational and informative. Here are some of the facts I learned about the impact of this great organization: 93% of Littles are saying no to drugs, violence, skipping school, or breaking the law, 86% of Littles are staying on track with or improving their grades, and 92% of Littles have plans to graduate high school and attend college. I know BBBS will have a positive impact on the youth of this great community. I encourage any adult reading this piece to strongly consider signing up to be a "Big". I'm looking forward to being a Big myself.

Well Wishes,



City of Natchitoches Mayor



# EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

**WHERE WERE YOU BORN?** Lafayette, Louisiana  
**WHAT WAS YOUR FIRST CAR?** 2003 Chevy Avalanche  
**HOW LONG HAVE YOU WORKED FOR THE CITY?** 4 Years,  
**WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE PART ABOUT WORKING FOR THE CITY?**  
the brotherhood with guys on shift.  
**NAME ONE THING YOU ARE PROUD OF IN YOUR LIFE.** Being in the  
fire service for the amount of time I have been in.  
**WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE MOVIE/TV SHOW?** Nightwatch  
**WHERE IS YOUR IDEAL VACATION SPOT?** A cabin in the mountains.  
**WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE FOOD?** Mexican  
**WHAT IS YOUR Hobby?** Fishing



Community Development assists with the Mayor's Anti-Litter Campaign



City of Natchitoches along with the Lt. Governor's Office hosted a Community Back-to-School Fair



2022 Summer Work Program



Renovation began on the Martin Luther King Recreation Center



2022 Juneteenth Basketball Classic





THE IMPACT OF SLEEP ON MENTAL HEALTH NOT ONLY IS YOUR PHYSICAL HEALTH AFFECTED WHEN YOU DON'T GET ENOUGH SLEEP, BUT IT ALSO TAKES A TOLL ON YOUR MENTAL HEALTH. IN FACT, MENTAL HEALTH AND SLEEP ARE SO CLOSELY RELATED THAT A LACK OF SLEEP CAN OFTEN LEAD TO ISSUES SUCH AS ANXIETY OR DEPRESSION.

UNFORTUNATELY, STUDIES CONSISTENTLY SHOW THAT AMERICANS STRUGGLE TO GET A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP. ACCORDING TO THE INSTITUTE OF MEDICINE, INSOMNIA—A COMMON SLEEP DISORDER THAT CAUSES ONE TO HAVE TROUBLE FALLING OR STAYING ASLEEP—OCCURS IN 30 MILLION AMERICANS. THIS ARTICLE EXPLORES THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SLEEP AND MENTAL HEALTH AND PROVIDES TIPS FOR GETTING A BETTER NIGHT'S SLEEP.

**SIDE EFFECTS OF LACK OF SLEEP**  
ACCORDING TO THE AMERICAN ACADEMY OF SLEEP MEDICINE, YOU SHOULD GET AT LEAST SEVEN TO EIGHT HOURS OF SLEEP PER NIGHT. LACK OF SLEEP OR POOR QUALITY SLEEP CAN INCREASE THE RISK OF MENTAL HEALTH DISORDERS.

ACCORDING TO A STUDY PUBLISHED IN SLEEP MEDICINE, SLEEP DISTURBANCES WERE LINKED TO HIGHER LEVELS OF PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTRESS. FURTHER, SLEEP SHARPENS COGNITIVE SKILLS SUCH AS ATTENTION, LEARNING AND MEMORY. AS A RESULT, INADEQUATE SLEEP CAN IMPACT A PERSON'S ABILITY TO RESPOND TO MINOR STRESSORS AND EVENTS PROPERLY. NOTABLY, DEPRESSION AND ANXIETY ARE SOME OF THE MOST COMMON MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES LINKED TO LACK OF SLEEP. DEPRESSION IS A DEPRESSED MOOD OR LOSS OF INTEREST IN ACTIVITIES, CAUSING SIGNIFICANT IMPAIRMENT IN DAILY LIFE. ACCORDING TO THE ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA, NEARLY 50% OF PEOPLE WITH DEPRESSION ARE ALSO DIAGNOSED WITH AN ANXIETY DISORDER. ANXIETY REFERS TO FEELINGS OF TENSION, WORRIED THOUGHTS AND SOMETIMES EVEN PHYSICAL CHANGES SUCH AS INCREASED BLOOD PRESSURE OR HEART RATE. GENERALLY, THESE OR OTHER TYPES OF SYMPTOMS ARE RECURRING WITH ANXIETY.

**TIPS FOR A BETTER NIGHT'S SLEEP**  
SLEEP IS IMPORTANT TO YOUR MENTAL HEALTH AND OVERALL FUNCTIONING. CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING TIPS FOR BETTER SLEEP:

- KEEP A CONSISTENT SLEEP SCHEDULE.
  - SET A BEDTIME.
  - ONLY GO TO BED WHEN YOU'RE TIRED.
  - ESTABLISH A BEDTIME ROUTINE.
  - MAKE YOUR BEDROOM QUIET AND RELAXING.
  - LIMIT EXPOSURE TO BRIGHT LIGHT IN THE EVENINGS.
  - TURN OFF ELECTRONIC DEVICES AT LEAST 30 MINUTES BEFORE BEDTIME.
  - DON'T EAT A LARGE MEAL BEFORE BEDTIME.
  - EXERCISE REGULARLY.
  - MAINTAIN A HEALTHY DIET.
- HEALTH AND WELLNESS TIPS FOR YOUR WORK, HOME AND LIFE—BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE INSURANCE PROFESSIONALS AT 90 DEGREE BENEFITS

# RECREATION DEPARTMENT

AS WE TAKE A LOOK AT OUR YEAR IN REVIEW, WE WOULD LIKE TO TAKE A MOMENT TO REFLECT ON THE GROWTH AND SUCCESS OF THE RECREATION AND PARKS DEPARTMENT'S PROGRAMS AND INITIATIVES.

WE ARE PROUD TO REPORT THAT THERE HAS BEEN A SIGNIFICANT INCREASE IN PARTICIPATION ACROSS ALL SPORTS THIS YEAR. FROM FOOTBALL TO BASKETBALL, TRACK, AND FIELD, AND SOFTBALL/BASEBALL, WE HAVE SEEN A SURGE IN THE NUMBER OF CHILDREN AND ADULTS JOINING OUR PROGRAMS AND LEAGUES, WHICH IS A TESTAMENT TO THE HARD WORK OF OUR DEDICATED COACHES AND STAFF. WE BELIEVE THE UTILIZATION OF PARC NATCHITOCHEES FOR OUR OUTDOOR SPORTS HAS BEEN A HUGE FACTOR IN THE GROWTH OF OUR LEAGUES. WE ARE LOOKING FORWARD TO THE NEW AMENITIES THAT WILL BE COMING TO PARC NATCHITOCHEES IN 2023. ALSO, CHECK OUT OUR NEW PARC NATCHITOCHEES WEBSITE AT [WWW.PARCNATCHITOCHEES.COM](http://WWW.PARCNATCHITOCHEES.COM)

WE ARE ALSO THRILLED TO SHARE THAT SEVERAL OF OUR TRACK AND FIELD ATHLETES WON PRESTIGIOUS AWARDS AT THE AAU NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP IN FLORIDA. WE ARE SO PROUD OF THEIR HARD WORK AND DEDICATION TO THEIR SPORT AND LOOK FORWARD TO SUPPORTING THEM IN THEIR FUTURE ENDEAVORS.

IN ADDITION, WE ARE EXCITED TO ANNOUNCE THAT SEVERAL OF OUR SOFTBALL AND BASEBALL ALL-STAR TEAMS PLACED OR WON USSSA STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS. THESE ATHLETES HAVE WORKED TIRELESSLY TO HONE THEIR SKILLS, AND WE ARE SO PROUD OF THEIR ACCOMPLISHMENTS.

THIS YEAR, WE ALSO LAUNCHED THE CHAMPIONS LEAGUE, AN INCLUSIVE SPORTS PROGRAM DESIGNED FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS. WE ARE THRILLED TO OFFER THIS INCLUSIVE OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL MEMBERS OF OUR COMMUNITY AND LOOK FORWARD TO OUR NEXT SESSION WITH OUR CHAMPIONS

WE ALSO HAD THE COMEBACK OF OUR ADULT CO-ED SOFTBALL LEAGUE. OUR FALL ADULT CO-ED LEAGUE HAD OVER 100 PARTICIPANTS AND CULMINATED WITH AN END-OF-THE-YEAR TOURNAMENT FOR THE 12 PARTICIPATING TEAMS.

FINALLY, WE ARE EXCITED TO SHARE THAT IN 2022 THE ANGEL FUND WAS CREATED, A PROGRAM THAT HELPS CHILDREN FROM LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS TO PARTICIPATE IN CITY-SPONSORED SPORTS AT NO COST. WE BELIEVE THAT EVERY CHILD SHOULD HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO PARTICIPATE IN SPORTS AND LEAD A HEALTHY, ACTIVE LIFESTYLE, REGARDLESS OF THEIR FINANCIAL CIRCUMSTANCES.

WE WOULD LIKE TO THANK ALL OF OUR PARTICIPANTS, COACHES, STAFF, SUPPORTERS, CITY COUNCIL, AND MAYOR'S OFFICE FOR THEIR DEDICATION AND HARD WORK THIS YEAR. WE ARE EXCITED TO CONTINUE GROWING AND EXPANDING OUR PROGRAMS IN THE COMING YEAR.



# COMMUNITY DEVELOPEMENT

DURING 2022 COMMUNITY DEVELOPEMENT KEPT BUSY WITH NUMEROUS PROJECTS THAT MAYOR RONNIE WILLIAMS JR., WANTED TO SEE IMPLEMENTED IN OUR CITY.

CAPITAL OUTLAY APPLICATION FOR THE 2023/2024 PERIOD AND ASSISTED WITH APPLYING FOR MANY GRANTS THROUGHOUT THE CITY WAS COMPLETED. COMMUNITY DEVELOPEMENT WAS AWARDED A GRANT FOR FIVE TRASH RECEPTACLES, ANOTHER FOR CLEANING SUPPLIES, AND ONE FOR BEAUTIFICATION BY KEEP LOUISIANA BEAUTIFUL.

## EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

A HUGE ACCOMPLISHMENT FOR ECE WAS INCREASING FREE CHILDCARE TUITION KIDS FROM 50 BIRTH TO 3 YEAR OLDS TO 85 FOR THE 2022/2023 ACADEMIC SCHOOL YEAR.

THIS YEAR ECE WOULD LIKE TO EXPAND ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE, HIGH-QUALITY CHILDCARE FOR PARENTS WHO ARE WORKING ATTENDING SCHOOL, OR WORK TRAINING. ALONG WITH INCREASING AGENCY AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT FOR EARLY EDUCATION SERVICES.



• NATCHITOCHEs •

# Farmers Market

FARMERS MARKET WOULD LIKE TO WELCOME OUTREACH RESOURCE MANAGER RUSTY O'BRYAN ABOARD. FARMERS MARKET HELD NINETEEN MARKETS DURING THE SUMMER AND FALL OF 2022. 489 KIDS CLUB PARTICIPANTS PURCHASED \$2445 WORTH OF FRESH FRUITS AND VEGETABLES. LAST YEAR FARMERS MARKET WAS AWARDED A TOTAL OF \$59,000 THROUGH GRANTS AND SCHOLARSHIPS. IN ADDITION TO MAKING SEVERAL NEW PARTNERSHIPS THROUGHOUT THE COMMUNITY. DURING THE 2022 SEASON, THE FM SAW AN INCREASE IN PRODUCE AND CRAFT VENDORS. WHAT A GREAT YEAR AND LOOKING FORWARD TO WHAT THE 2023 YEAR WILL BRING. 2022 WAS GREAT BUT WE ARE ALWAYS LOOKING TO IMPROVE THIS YEAR WE ARE STRIVING TO INCREASE KIDS CLUB PARTICIPATION BY 10%, AND INCREASE PRODUCE VENDORS BY 20%. WE ARE STRIVING TO OBTAIN MORE GRANTS AND CONTINUE BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS.

# PUBLIC WORKS

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT IS COMMITTED TO PROVIDING THE CITIZENS OF NATCHITOCHEs WITH A ONE CUSTOMER SERVICE. WITH THE EQUIPMENT THAT WAS PURCHASED ON LAST YEAR WE PLANNED TO FOCUS ON: STREETS & DRAINAGE •BY UNCLOGGING EXISTING DRIVEWAY PIPES, RE-ESTABLISHING DITCH GRADES, EROSION CONTROL ON THE DRAINAGE DITCHES, AND REPAIRING POTHOLES

RIGHT-OF-WAYS BY LITTER PICK UP OF RIGHT-OF-WAYS AND OTHER SPECIAL LITTER PICK UP. IN ADDITION TO CUTTING AND CLEANING OF RIGHT-OF-WAYS OTHER. IN ADDITION TO PUBLIC WORKS RESPONSIBILITIES WITH THE UPKEEP OF OUR WONDERFUL CITY THEY ARE FOCUSING ON IN-HOUSE AS WELL. MORE EMPLOYEE TRAINING, OBTAINING EQUIPMENT NEEDED TO KEEP THE CITY IN TIPTOP SHAPE, ALL WHILE BUILDING STRONG EMPLOYEE RELATIONS.

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## NATCHITOCHEs

Regroup

Simple, Effective Mass Communication

- 1 DOWNLOAD THE "ALERT ME" APP TO YOUR DEVICE 
- 2 CREATE AN ACCOUNT  
REGISTRATION CODE: CONALERTS
- 3 STAY UPDATED ON THE LATEST INFORMATION

.....

DOWNLOAD TODAY!

#GO  NATCHITOCHEs

 Download on the App Store  GET IT ON Google play

## City of Natchitoches Summer Youth Employment Opportunity



WORK. LEARN. CONNECT!

Apply today to join our team!

### Application dates:

March 27th - April 21st

Applications can be picked up at City Hall -  
700 Second St. or

APPLY ONLINE AT:

<https://www.natchitochesla.gov/content/youth-summer-employment-natchitoches>



### Managing Seasonal Allergies

According to the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America (AAFA), allergies are the nation's sixth-leading cause of chronic illness. Seasonal allergies are an annual nuisance for many people and typically ramp up this time of year. It's no surprise that as plants bloom and neighbors cut their grass more frequently, people living with allergies across the nation start sniffing and sneezing. Further, as mold growth occurs both indoors and outdoors, it's almost impossible to escape these seasonal allergy triggers.

Some allergy symptoms may consist of sneezing a couple of times a year. Alternatively, seasonal allergies can cause congestion, a runny or itchy nose, watery eyes and headaches—among other symptoms—for weeks or months.

#### Nip Your Allergies in the Bud

Similar to other types of allergies, seasonal allergies develop when your body's immune system detects and then overreacts to a foreign substance it deems harmful. Spring, summer and fall are the most common times for seasonal allergy symptoms to arise. What may trigger your seasonal allergies depends on what you're allergic to and where you live.

To reduce your seasonal allergy symptoms, consider the following tips:

- Keep track of local allergen (e.g., pollen and mold) counts to help you know when to avoid spending excessive time outside.
- Wash your bedding in hot water to help keep the spread of pollen under control in your home.
- Utilize washable indoor rugs to easily remove allergens.
- Take a shower after spending time outdoors, as pollen can stick to your hair, skin and clothing.
- Clean your floors often with a vacuum that has a high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filter.
- Change your air conditioning and heating HEPA filters often.

Treatment for most seasonal allergies is available both over the counter and by prescription. You may need a series of allergy shots if your symptoms are severe or chronic. Contact your doctor or allergist to determine which seasonal allergy treatment option is best for you

## JUNETEENTH FREEDOM FESTIVAL Historic Downtown Riverfront June 17th, 2023

# VENDORS WANTED

Do you have a pop-up shop? Come out and show off your business during the City's 2nd Annual Juneteenth Freedom Festival. Set-up as early as 12 noon.

For more information, contact the City of Natchitoches Finance Director  
Clarissa Brown-Smith: (318) 357-3825 or (318) 663-0939



# CELEBRATING YEARS OF SERVICE

## JANUARY

LOUIS WILLIAMS - 35  
DARRON CLARK - 25  
ERIC RACHAL - 25  
KENNETH PENROD - 25  
BRIAN JOHNSON - 21  
WILLIAM CONNELL - 18  
DOUGLAS DOWNS - 16

BOBBY BEARD - 16  
ROBERT LILES - 1  
ALFRED WILLIAMS - 8  
VANESSA MONROE - 8  
JONATHAN MEZIERE - 7  
SHELIA BURTON - 6  
ALLEN HOLMES - 4

SHERMARIA LEWIS - 3  
MATTHEW DODSON - 3  
SARAH PRUDHOMME OUBRE - 2  
KELLY KOWALSKY - 2  
MEGAN LACEY - 2  
ROBERT OWSLEY - 2  
IVAN MCDANIEL - 1  
DEVONTE ROBINSON - 1

## FEBRUARY

HARMON WINTERS - 33  
ALBERT LAW - 27  
EDD LEE - 24  
DONALD WAFER - 42  
CARY HARGROVE 3  
SHERRY EDWARDS - 22

CHESTER HURLEY - 15  
MARK SCOTT - 15  
BUKAR MOHAMMED - 14  
CHANCE EVANS - 10  
VALERIE BALTHAZAR - 6  
KEIFFER SEBASTIAN - 4

REECE WARREN - 2  
DAIGAN SCARBROUGH - 2  
WESTON NOE - 2  
DONNA WILLIAMS - 1  
NICHOLAS EGANS - 1  
MARTHA RAYNES - 1

## MARCH

BILLY MEZIERE - 27  
REGINA WALKER - 30  
BRENDA HENDERSON - 43  
PAUL ALBRECHT - 20  
NIKEO COLLINS - 27  
IRVING BARFIELD - 17  
CARISA BLADE - 16  
SHONEEKUA CARPENTER - 15

ERICA DUPREE - 14  
CARUST SCOTT - 14  
PAULA GOODEN - 9  
MICHAEL LACAZE - 8  
AUSTIN PORCHE - 6  
KRYSTYN TOUSEK - 4  
ALEXANDER BRANNING - 3  
JOSHUA HICKMAN - 3

PRESTON FERGUSON - 2  
STACEY LAWRENCE - 2  
ROBERT NICHOLS - 2  
BRIAN JONES - 2  
HANNAH WENNINGER - 2  
NATHAN HOLMES - 1  
SHERMAN DUKE - 1  
CLARISSA SMITH - 1

**MANY THANKS TO OUR EMPLOYEES FOR THE YEARS OF  
DEDICATED SERVICE TO THE CITIZENS OF THE  
CITY OF NATCHITOCHEs**

# UPCOMING EVENTS

**APRIL 16TH**

Bike Sunday

**APRIL 21ST**

Farmers Market

Community Cleanup Day  
King Kat Fishing Tournament

**MAY 3RD**

Best of Natchitoches

**MAY 6th**

Crawfish Cookoff

**May 21st**

Bike Sunday

**MAY 26th**

26th Annual Jazz/R&B  
Festival

**JUNE 17th**

Annual Juneteenth Festival

**JUNE 18TH**

Bike Sunday

CELEBRATE JUNETEENTH!

**Basketball Tournament**

**Starting at 9 AM**

**Pop-Up Shops**

**Starting at 2 PM**

**Freedom Festival**

**Starting at 7 PM**

JUNE 17TH, 2023

**Bike Sunday**

Join the Mayor's Health and Fitness Council for a 3-mile bike ride. This event is completely free!

**APRIL 16TH @ 2:30 PM**

Ride will begin and end at the Eugene P. Watson Memorial Library Parking Lot  
911 University Pkwy,  
Natchitoches, LA 71497

Scan the QR Code to register:



Join us every 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday for healthy recreation for the whole family!

**SAFETY FIRST! WEAR YOUR HELMET!**

Funded in part by  
**THE RAPIDES FOUNDATION**



**CUPID** **MARK CHESTNUTT** **TRACY BYRD**

**2023 HEADLINER ANNOUNCEMENT**

**EARLY-BIRD TIX ON SALE NOW!**  
**MORE ARTISTS TO BE ANNOUNCED!**



**Bike Sunday**

Join the Mayor's Health and Fitness Council for a 3-mile bike ride. This event is completely free!

**MAY 21ST @ 2:30 PM**

Ride will begin and end at the Eugene P. Watson Memorial Library Parking Lot  
911 University Pkwy,  
Natchitoches, LA 71497

Scan the QR Code to register:



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**Bike Sunday**

Join the Mayor's Health and Fitness Council for a 3-mile bike ride. This event is completely free!

**JUNE 18TH @ 2:30 PM**

Ride will begin and end at the Eugene P. Watson Memorial Library Parking Lot  
911 University Pkwy,  
Natchitoches, LA 71497

Scan the QR Code to register:



Join us every 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday for healthy recreation for the whole family!

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