SB approves beacons, speed limit for JES, HHS

School road safety project launched

By ERIN HARGRAVE
news2@jenningsdailynews.net

Jeff Davis Parish School Board (JESP) 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 $11,133.82 and three beacons at HHS for a total of $16,067.73 during the February meeting, according to JESP 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 stemmed 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 slaming on their brakes 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 brake screaming, 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 JES; 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 speaking out the signs that they needed to say 25 make an hour and asked if DOTD was going to take the 45 miles an hour. 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 whatever is necessary to make the roads safe for students and teachers.

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Parish water district audit released

By ERIN HARGRAVE
news2@jenningsdailynews.net

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 $2,14,159 in cash and cash equivalents, were listed at $2,233,560. Total current and non-current liabilities were listed at $1,944,356, resulting in a net position of $1,575,204.

Operating revenues came to $665,738, and expenses included $694,053, resulting in $18,315 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 is possible.

Also, there were two exceptions to the above as well due to the entity’s sexual harassment policy and compliance procedures. The auditor found a conspicuous location on the premises along with not preparing its annual sexual harassment report.

Management reported that it will add to its policies and procedures and pool on the premises.

Board Member Dr. Charles Dene 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 $56 for the first 2,000 gallons of water used and $4.50 for each additional 1,000 gallons used. Commercial accounts are charged $2 for the first 500 gallons and $4.50 for each additional 1,000 gallons used. To view the full report, visit La.la.gov.

United Way to host Super Tax Day events

Daily News Staff Report

In addition to its 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 1309 Ninth Street in Lake Charles and Mineral Civic Center at 235 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 Duril.

No appointments are necessary for a Super Tax Day unlike regular VITA sites, which require an appointment. Those with a household income of $60,000 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 alternative time or location by calling 211 or online at unswd.org/vita. Appointments are filled on a first-come, first-served basis.

Additionally, anyone who makes less than $73,000 can file for free by using the freeviewline link on the VITA page at unswd.org/vita. For a list of items to bring when having taxes prepared by VITA volunteers see unswd.org/vita.

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

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