

THE DAILY ADVERTISER

Monday, July 27, 2009

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INSIDESPORTRAGIN' CAJUNS

Trash debate continues

Lafayette to discuss Allied Waste

Amanda McElfresh
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Officials from Allied Waste and Lafayette Consolidated Government will give their take on whether garbage collection procedures should be changed during a discussion at Tuesday's City-Parish Council meeting.

Since late March, Lafayette customers have received once-a-week collection through an

automated system, complete with new, 96-gallon containers. Councilman Kenneth Boudreaux said he hopes to get answers on how feasible it would be to give at least some residents a second container, as well as if collection could revert to a twice-weekly system. In addition, Boudreaux said he's asked whether a program can be set up for the collection of construction debris.

"I don't know if costs

Want to go?

The council meets at 5:30 p.m. Tuesday at City Hall, 705 W. University Ave. Anyone wishing to address the council must fill out a blue speaker's card and submit it to the council clerk before the item is discussed.

would become a factor or not," Boudreaux said of any possible collection changes. "I realize it's an uphill battle, but I have a lot of optimism that we can come to some type of agreement."

In addition, the council will receive an update on contracts for animal control service. Earlier this year, the council agreed to split the costs of such services between Lafayette Consolidated Government and the five other municipalities in the parish. But so far, officials in Broussard and Scott have questioned the proposal and the amounts they are being asked to contribute. Both towns have said they don't have a problem with paying for such

See TRASH on Page 8A



Countdown to kickoff: Nebraska hosts UL on Sept. 26. Can the Cornhuskers return to past glory or do the Cajuns have what it takes to pull of the upset? Page 1B

INSIDEAGENT CHEER ABOUTIT



5-6-7-8 ...! Cheer camps sparkle with youthful enthusiasm. Page 9A

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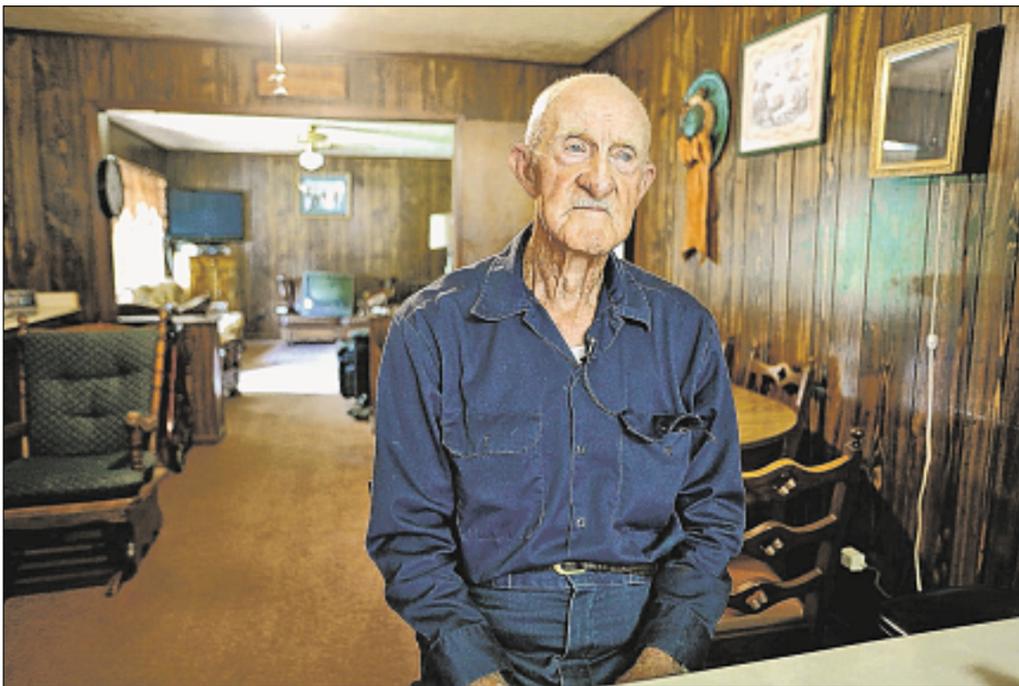
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OUR ATCHAEALAYA Saving the basin. A special series of The Daily Advertiser

Bred on the Basin



Until he retired four years ago, Kayser Dupuis, 92, says he was the only man who fished year-round in the Atchafalaya. In his heyday, Dupuis would put out 200 hoop nets in the river, sometimes catching two boatloads of fish a day.

Editor's Note: The Choctaw called it Long River. Basinkeeper Dean Wilson calls it River of Trees. But for the many who live along this 140-mile length of winding waterway and the nearly 1 million acres of swamps, forests and marshes surrounding it, it's our playground, our fishing hole, our source of income, our home.

Our Atchafalaya. This is the latest installment in an occasional series of stories, photographs and online videos exploring the expansive, rich basin created by the Atchafalaya River and the people who live and work here.

HENDERSON — A lifetime of commercial fishing in the Atchafalaya River and Basin left Kaiser Dupuis with a strong handshake that belies his 92 years on this Earth.

Until he retired four years ago, Dupuis says he was the only man who fished year-round in the Atchafalaya. He sold some of his catch to people who met him at the river. The rest he sold to J.B. Talley fishery, which is no longer in business.

In his heyday, Dupuis would lay out 200 hoop nets in the river, sometimes catching two

boatloads of fish a day. That's somewhere between 4,000 and 5,000 pounds of fish a day and, even when he got just four cents a pound, he managed to make a decent living.

"I was one of the biggest fishermen on the river," he said.

Dupuis' father, who lived to be 93 years old, also was a fisherman and owned a store. Today, Dupuis' sister, Beulah Dupuis Doucet, owns and operates the family store at Butte LaRose on the spot where the old school once stood.

See BASIN on Page 8A

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U.S. pins hopes on China talks

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — With the global economy mired in recession, the United States and China begin talks today to seek a solution together despite tensions over currencies, the U.S. budget deficit and the huge U.S. trade gap with China.

Ultimately, how well the U.S. efforts succeed could help determine how fast the economy recovers and how many U.S. jobs might be created once it does.

Other issues, such as climate control and North Korean nuclear ambitions, also will command attention. Few expect the talks to bridge the sharp differences between Beijing and Washington. But both governments want to use the occasion to help build a less confrontational relationship.

See TALKS on Page 8A



The Associated Press Treasury Secretary Tim Geithner, left, meets with China's Vice Premier Wang Qishan in this April photo. With the global economy mired in recession, the United States and China begin talks today.

United Way begins annual fund drive

Agency hoping to raise \$3.5M during event

Bruce Brown
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Every day, headlines tell the tale of a struggling domestic economy, a struggle not likely to be solved anytime soon. Yet United Way of Acadiana once again is aiming high with its annual fund drive.

"This year will be a challenge," said Pete Yuan, president of the Lafayette market and CEO of IberiaBank, who chairs this year's drive. "But, we're optimistic. Our goal is to raise \$3.5 million, which is higher than last year and the year before."

"I think it's a goal we can realistically reach."

Sarah Berthelot, United Way chief of philanthropy, said the goal represents "a two-percent

increase over last year's final numbers. It's a fairly conservative goal. We would often pursue a goal of 10 percent."

The fund drive involves more than 50,000 people in all sectors. "The key," Yuan said, "will be communicating with the community the direction of PACT United. If they understand it, they will see that it is so powerful, and they'll find a way to fit (giving) into their budget."

The Three E's — Essentials, Education and Earnings — are the cornerstones of the PACT United program. The PACT, or Plan of Action for Community Transformation, calls on citizens to Live United and to find innovative ways to solve immediate and long-range needs in a four-parish area.

Extensive study went into the program, most of that provided by input from community lead-

Want to go?

To give to the United Way of Acadiana, call Sarah Berthelot at 337-706-1221.

"The key will be communicating with the community the direction of PACT United."

— Robert Yuan, chairman of this year's United Way fund drive

ers. It represents a re-focusing of efforts by the United Way, an effort to improve long-range conditions that lead to problems in the community.

Agencies were asked to submit proposals, detailing ways in which they fit the Essentials, Education and Earnings goals of the PACT United, in order to receive fund-

ing. About 88 proposals were received, with 53 approved. Of those, 35 percent are from new agencies with innovative plans. The new focus was not without its rough spots, as supporters of longtime United Way agencies voiced objections.

"There has been a lot of noise out there," Yuan said, "particularly with certain agencies."

But PACT United supporters see it as the way to bring greater benefits to the area. The campaign will remind businesses and individuals of the impact of the PACT, as well as the fact that 97 cents of every dollar given stays in the four-parish area. "We have a campaign cabinet of 40 leaders," Berthelot said. "They will visit with 95 CEOs. They've been very supportive. We get good feedback on PACT." About 40 to 50 Pacesetter Companies have been contacted about taking the lead as usual in the fund-raising campaign, which is under way and will

See UNITED on Page 8A

Continued from Page 1A

Basin

The family moved their house from the Atchafalaya Basin, south of where Interstate 10 passes, to Butte LaRose when Dupuis was a boy. "Every year, we'd flood. Sometimes, it would take the house floor," he said. "But we fought it." They also fought sedimentation carried by floodwaters and deposited on the bank. Every couple of years, he recalled, they

had to lift the house a few feet because of the sand, not the water. One of two boys and five girls, Dupuis attended school at an Atchafalaya Basin settlement called des Glaises. "They was trying to make a lawyer out of me, I guess," he said. During the massive 1927 flood, which inundated the Atchafalaya Basin and much of the lower Mississippi River valley, Dupuis was going to school in Henderson, staying with his grandmother. He remembers evacuating, landing on high ground in Breaux Bridge, then ending

up in Lafayette where his grandmother bought a house. One of his fondest memories of that time was that he tasted the soft drink Nehi for the first time. Despite the education, Dupuis would not become a lawyer. By 1945, America was at war, Dupuis was married and a father, and he was heading into military service. That's when he moved his own family to Henderson, "to dry land," where he raised his children, buried two wives — the last within the past year — and where he still lives today.

Continued from Page 1A

United

run through the end of the year. Expected revenues should be identified in August. The annual fund drive coincides with the height of the hurricane season in South Louisiana, and in recent years, that has been a factor. Hurricanes Katrina and Rita struck the state in 2005, while Gustav hit Louisiana and Ike came ashore in Galveston, Texas, last year. When those storms strike, the United Way switches gears to provide relief to those in need. "The fundraising campaign becomes secondary at that point," marketing and communications director Stephanie Mire said. "When that happens, sometimes the campaign can be prolonged past the first of the year."

"We have a disaster plan, and we act very deliberately. Last year, we ceased the United Way campaign for two weeks. With Katrina and Rita, it was 30 days. The community needs to take care of themselves, and often companies have to set new priorities."

— Sarah Berthelot, United Way chief of philanthropy

"We have a disaster plan, and we act very deliberately," Berthelot said. "Last year, we ceased the United Way campaign for two weeks. With Katrina and Rita, it was 30 days. The community needs to take care of themselves, and often companies have to set new priorities. Also,

our staff needs to work on disaster relief. We have to solve the community's problems. "The last hurricane did not affect our final numbers. It's important that the community sees the United Way acting in a highly responsive manner." Berthelot added that storms prompt the United Way to activate its Disaster Fund, and that people go "over and above" to help with that fund. "They're motivated to give," she said. "With the Disaster Fund, we may see more individual donors than

during the annual campaign," Mire added. Yuan noted that 98 percent of IberiaBank employees gave to that disaster fund, realizing that storms could strike any one of them. Barring hurricanes, the United Way will keep its focus on its annual drive, and on solving problems through PACT United. "PACT United helps with everyday catastrophes," Berthelot said, "and we also address the root causes of those problems." "It takes a little bit of time to tell the story of PACT United," Yuan said. "We haven't changed the core of what United Way has always been about. The essentials, the safety net, is something we'll never walk away from. We just direct funds toward making a lasting change." It is a concept that may thrive with time. "We had 88 proposals last year," Mire said. "I think the agencies understand it better now. We could have more." Nonprofit agencies have until 4 p.m. Sept. 30 to submit those proposals for 2010 PACT United funding. "We want agencies who share our strategic vision," Yuan said. "That's why the campaign is so important."

School budgets dip, class sizes grow

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Like a seesaw on the school playground, falling state budgets are pushing class sizes higher. The recession is forcing districts to lay off teachers even as the economic stimulus pumps billions of dollars into schools. As a result, classrooms across the country will be more crowded when school starts in the fall. Patti Hathorn, a fifth-grade teacher in rural Pinson, Ala., is expecting 29 or 30 students, making it the biggest class she's taught. Many of her students at Kermit Johnson Elementary are learning English or are in special education. "You may have a child that needs you, that needs that adult figure, to spend the extra five minutes with them. If you have five or six extra kids, that five minutes is gone," Hathorn said. It's the same story in small communities such as Pinson and Wapakoneta, Ohio, and urban areas including Los Angeles and Broward County, Fla. In many places, classes will have well over 30 kids. There is no official data on class sizes for the upcoming year; many states and districts have not finalized their budgets. A survey this year by the American Association of School Administrators found that 44 percent of school districts expected to increase class size. Educators and parents worry the larger classes will keep kids from learning. "The issue is how this affects kids and what price this generation is going to have to pay," said John White, principal of Mulholland Middle School in Los Angeles, where the

district has laid off more than 2,000 teachers. Classes in Los Angeles are expected to grow by two kids in fourth through 12th grades. Middle school classes will have 35 kids on average; juniors and seniors will have about 43 kids in each class. Kindergarten through third-grade classes will rise by four kids to 24. Very large classes can keep teachers from teaching because their time is spent keeping order. Crowded classrooms also increase the chance that struggling students may fall through the cracks. "I certainly won't say there's a magic number because it depends on the nature of the student group," said Jeremy Finn, education professor at University at Buffalo-SUNY. "But in the elementary grades especially, there's a certain point at which teachers can't do what they were trained to do." Just as there's a downside to bigger classes, there's an upside to smaller ones, he said. Research has shown that younger children, those in kindergarten through third grade, perform and behave better in smaller classes. Benefits are strongest for minority and poor children, Finn said. There is evidence that being in small classes early on improves a student's chance of graduating from high school or taking the SAT or ACT college entrance exams. Most often cited is a large-scale, four-year study of smaller class sizes in Tennessee in the 1980s. The study found that by eighth grade, children who had smaller classes in kindergarten through third grade had substantial advantages

in all subjects over their peers who had been in larger classes. Others dispute the importance of smaller classes; the debate is far from settled. Researcher Eric Hanushek called it "kind of silly" that advocates still rely on 20-year-old data from Tennessee. He pointed to other studies that showed small to negligible benefits for kids in small classes. "All the research suggests the number of kids is much less important than who is teaching the class," said Hanushek, a senior fellow at Stanford University's Hoover Institution. "In the face of budget problems, allowing class size to move a little bit makes all the sense in the world." "In fact, to the extent you put ineffective teachers into classrooms, you're much better off by keeping larger classes with effective teachers," he said. The trouble with this recession is that kids may wind up with larger classes and ineffective teachers. Mass layoffs are reshuffling teachers into grades or subjects they may never have taught, or taught long ago. Administrators are being pushed back into the classroom after years away from teaching. At Coweeman Middle School in rural Kelso, Wash., one teacher who has taught math for 30 years has been reassigned to special education, principal Randy Heath said. In fact, every teacher who is endorsed to teach special education is being switched to those classes, regardless of whether he or she actually has taught it, he said. "We're being forced to make decisions that we know are not good for kids," Heath said.

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packing up
and
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Continued from Page 1A

Trash

services, but believe a fairer agreement could be reached. Both of those issues are up for discussion purposes only. One matter that was set to be voted on will likely be deferred until Aug. 25 at

the request of Councilman Don Bertrand. That issue is an appeal from St. Thomas More Catholic School, which is seeking to expand its campus. To do so, LCG officials have said the school must pay for a road to be extended to accommodate an expected increase in traffic. In a letter to other council members, Bertrand said he met with STM officials last week and

agreed that more discussion with the Traffic and Transportation and Planning, Zoning and Codes Department are necessary before the council takes a final vote. "It is my sincere wish to amicably reach an agreement between Lafayette Consolidated Government and the appellant prior to the Aug. 25, 2009 zoning meeting," Bertrand wrote.

Continued from Page 1A

Talks

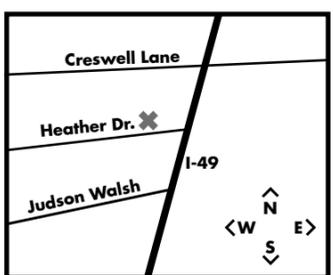
Three years ago, Henry Paulson, then Treasury secretary, used the talks to press Beijing to let its currency, the yuan, rise in value against the dollar, to make it cheaper for Chinese to buy U.S. goods. U.S. manufacturers blame an undervalued yuan for record U.S. trade deficits with China — and, in part, for a decline in U.S. jobs.

The U.S. efforts have yielded only mixed results. The yuan, after rising in value about 22 percent since 2005, has scarcely budged in the past year. Beijing had begun to fear that a stronger yuan could threaten its exports. Chinese exports already were under pressure from the global recession. But the Obama administration intends to remain focused on the trade gap. It plans to stress at the talks Monday and Tuesday that China can't rely on U.S. consumers to pull the global economy

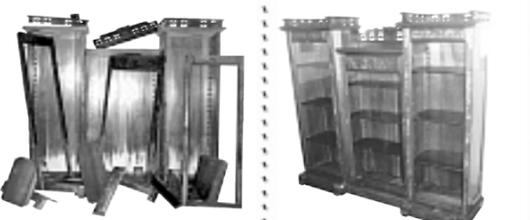
out of recession this time. In part, that's because U.S. household savings rates are rising, shrinking consumer spending in this country. "Perhaps the most important message we are going to have for the Chinese is that there has been a fundamental change in the U.S. economy," said a senior administration official, who briefed reporters on the meetings under rules that did not permit use of his name. "The U.S. economy is going to recover, but it is going to be a different type of recovery than what the Chinese have seen in the past."

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That change will mean that the Chinese won't be able to rely on booming U.S. demand for Chinese goods to lift their economy. Instead, they will have to shift from an export-led economy to growth that's fueled in large part by rising Chinese spending. For the United States, suffering from a 9.5 percent unemployment rate, the ultimate goal is to help put more Americans to work. "All of this ultimately gets back to jobs in the United States," the U.S. official said. "If the Chinese can increase their domestic consumption and reduce their trade surplus, that will mean more U.S. jobs."