

The Plaquemines GAZETTE

89 YEARS, NO. 10 MAY 9, 2017 BELLE CHASSE, LA 50 CENTS

Riley and fam experience joy, pain of being a Falcon

By Jason Browne
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It's all good now, but things got tense there for a few minutes for Duke Riley.

Riley, of Buras, was projected to be taken in the second or third round of the 2017 NFL Draft out of LSU. When the second round passed without a phone call from an NFL team, the linebacker, who was watching Day 2 of the draft with select friends and family at his aunt's house, needed a moment to himself.

"After the second round went by, he got nervous. His friend Kwon Alexander was there, and the same thing happened to him. He was supposed to go in the second," said Riley's father, Duke Berghman. "He went off to a room with just himself and Kwon. After about six or seven picks, he decided to come out."

"Then his phone rang and everyone got quiet. When he took the call he was real quiet. He was all cuddled up. Then he erupted after he got off the phone and everyone went crazy," said Berghman.

The call had come from Thomas Dimitroff, general manager of the Atlanta Falcons. Riley had been selected with the 75th overall pick. Things worked out for Kwon, too. The former LSU outside linebacker was picked up by the Tampa



Duke Riley just moments after he got "the call" that he was being drafted by the Atlanta Falcons.

RILEY— SEE PAGE 2

New Port deputy director ready to lose sleep for Plaquemines



Paul Matthews signs his contract to become deputy director of the Plaquemines Port Harbor & Terminal District alongside Port executive director Sandy Sanders at the April 27 Port meeting in Davant.

By Jason Browne
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A long time ago, Paul Matthews accepted the consequences of wanting to do it all: "Either get up earlier or stay up later."

So the new Plaquemines Parish Port Harbor & Terminal District deputy director doesn't get much sleep. That's how the 33-year-old spends time with his wife and their two toddler sons while, until recently, working full-time in external affairs at the Port of New Orleans. All while pursuing a master's in transportation—he also holds a master's in business administration—at UNO and chairing a non-profit for his church that aids in-

MATTHEWS— SEE PAGE 5

Port cuts consulting budget in half

By Jason Browne
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The Plaquemines Port Harbor & Terminal District is trimming its list of consultants and the corresponding budget.

Executive director Sandy Sanders told the Port Committee at its May 2 meeting at the Belle Chasse Library that he has followed the parish council's directions to part with two of three consulting firms that have provided research and negotiating assistance over the past two years as the Port pursues its strategic master plan. The Port will retain Bob Stevens of Trident Holdings Inc., in that capacity via a two-year contract valued at \$150,000 per year. The Port was previously budgeted \$300,000 annually to retain Stevens along with Vickerman and Associates LLC and Burk-Kleinpeter Inc.

The parish council will vote on the new contract at its May

PORT— SEE PAGE 2

Summer Hoops keeps kids on the court, out of court



Participants in the 2016 Summer Hoops Basketball League at South Plaquemines High School. Registration is ongoing now through May 19 for Summer Hoops 2017. Participation is free and camps will be held weekly at South Plaquemines High School, Phoenix High School, Belle Chasse Middle School and Belle Chasse High School.

By Jason Browne
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On its face, the Summer Hoops Basketball League is a chance for young men to get out of the house one evening each week, get some run, work up a sweat and maybe make a few friends in the process. And it definitely checks all those boxes. But it's bigger

than just basketball.

Entering its fifth year, the program begun by 25th Judicial District Court Judge Michael Clement and the Department of Youth & Family Services, through a partnership with the Plaquemines Department of Recreation and the Plaquemines Parish School Board, is registering boys aged 11-17 now. The

deadline for registration is next Friday, May 19 (contact info to register is at the bottom of this story).

Clement, who oversees the 25th JDC's juvenile division and coached his daughter's Recreation Department teams when she was younger, conceived the Summer Hoops program as an opportunity to give young men

a productive, healthy activity to focus on through the summer. It began on the Eastbank and below Myrtle Grove on the Westbank and eventually grew to encompass the entire parish, engaging more than 150 kids per summer. This year, the program will

HOOPS— SEE PAGE 2

Plaquemines Parish Students Work to Restore the Forest at Woodlands Trail

This spring Plaquemines Parish Fourth and Fifth graders concluded their final lesson in Woodlands Conservancy's eight month Seeds to Sapling service learning program. Thanks to the generosity of the Brown Foundation's Service Learning Program and Chevron Oronite, six classrooms at Belle Chasse Primary and Phoenix Elementary were able to participate in the program during the 2016-2017 school year. Students learned about the environmental issues facing our area in a series of lessons tailored to meet fourth grade benchmarks in Science, English, Language Arts and Social Studies, then put their knowledge into practice by

helping to restore forested wetland habitat at Woodlands Trail in Belle Chasse.

Participating students included the fourth grade classes of Erin Cossé, Lisa Rodriguez, Mary Beth Newchurch, and Anna DeBelle at Belle Chasse Primary as well as Trieva Carey's fifth grade and Wendy Sisung's fourth grade students at Phoenix Elementary. This year's classes planted over 465 trees at Woodlands trail during two days this March. Students planted native hardwood trees including cypress and oak to help replace invasive species removed as part of an earlier restoration effort. Students learned how native trees can help provide ecosys-

tem services for the community such as filtering pollution and serving as a storm buffer as well as how the species they planted can provide important food and habitat for wildlife. Belle Chasse Primary teacher Erin Cossé said "This program has such an impact on my students' learning and they are able to make connections throughout the science content. The best part of the program is that students really experience their role as active citizens by going into the Woodland Trails and planting native trees to help restore the area."



Students from Ms. Carey and Ms. Sisung's classes at Phoenix Elementary, parish officials Amos Cormier and Irvin Juneau, and local volunteer Janell Simpson learn how to plant seedlings.

TRAILS— SEE PAGE 20

MAILING INFO HERE

BC Rotary raises funds for mission efforts at orphanage in Mexico



Belle Chasse Rotary raised \$1,000 in funds and presented a check to support mission efforts at an orphanage in Mexico. Pictured are Club President, Anthony Sciacca, Treasurer of the Belle Chasse Rotary Foundation Board, Kim Turlich-Vaughan, Club Secretary, Denise Buford and T. Dale Smith of the Louisiana Volunteers in Mission! The mission of the Belle Chasse Rotary is to make our community a better place through service by balancing needs and acting to satisfy those needs! All are welcome to contact any member for additional information.



Students from Ms. Cosse and Ms. DeBelle’s classes at Belle Chasse Primary pose with Greg Abdelnoor of Chevron Oronite and Plaquemines Parish Councilmembers Benny Rousselle and Irvin Juneau before heading into the forest to plant trees.



Plaquemines Parish President Amos Cormier helps students from Belle Chase Primary Plant trees at Woodlands Trail.



Students from Phoenix Elementary were excited to plant trees to help restore the forest.

TRAILS

CONTINUED FROM THE FRONT PAGE

Students were encouraged in their efforts by the attendance at their planting events by several local officials and representatives from Chevron and the Brown Foundation. Greg Abdelnoor, Finance Officer at Chevron Oronite in Belle Chasse, said “We see our partnership with Woodlands Conservancy as a collaborative effort to preserve forested wetlands and to educate the next generation on how to protect them in the future.” Parish President Amos Cormier, Councilman Irvin Juneau, and Councilman Benny Rousselle answered student invitations and attended the planting event making a special effort to speak with students about science, the environment and community involvement as well as helping to plant trees.

Over the four-year history of the program, Plaquemines Parish students have now planted over 1,000 trees at Woodlands Trail and have directly helped to improve the habitat quality, beauty and function of the forest. Come visit the trail to see this year’s student planting areas!



Student’s in Ms. Rodriguez’s Science class plant seeds at the school greenhouse and learn about the life cycle of a tree. Next year’s Seeds to Saplings Students will plant these seedlings at Woodlands Trail.

Mike Dickinson
General Manager

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