

# Press Release



## Library Needs More Room

For Immediate Release – October 7, 2009

When Plaquemines Parish residents gather on October 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>, they will provide input on projects for the Plaquemines Long Term Community Recovery Plan, which has \$44 million available for the program. The meetings will be held at Boothville-Venice Elementary and the Belle Chasse Auditorium, which neighbors the site of one potential project: the Belle Chasse Library.

A national consulting firm specializing in libraries recently evaluated the parish's library system. After talking with residents, school board members, council members, the parish president, and library staff, it found the Belle Chasse building outdated and undersized.

"The bottom line is, it's an old facility that needs to be expanded and updated with today's technology," said Parish President Billy Nungesser.

The Belle Chasse Library first opened in 1965 as a branch of the parish's library system; the main branch was in Buras. In 1977 the library underwent an addition, but the building has not been renovated in the past three decades. It's currently 7,600 square feet and the firm suggests expanding to no less than 20,000 square feet.

The library offers programs, but right now it's making due with what's available. For instance, it has a story time program called Lap Sit, but due to a lack of useable space it's held in a hallway. Overcrowding limits computer literacy programs and other educational opportunities that libraries offer to the public. Creating additional space would allow more unique options such as computer labs, study rooms, and an entertainment area.

"The whole layout needs a make over," said Todd Schouest, Library Director. "Without an obvious main entrance, people are confused when they visit the library. They don't know where to go and end up coming in the different doors."

The study also recommends adding parking spaces. Right now, the administrative offices are set up in trailers in the back of the parking lot. With an expansion, those offices would be incorporated into the library building, but there would still be a need for more parking.

The public meetings to discuss the library and other projects are scheduled for Tuesday, October 13, 2009, at 6:00 p.m. at the Boothville-Venice Elementary School Gym, #1 Oiler Dr., Boothville, and Wednesday October 14, 2009 at 6:00 p.m. at the Belle Chasse Auditorium.