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PVA holds summer graduation for Class of 2020

By Brittany Wilson
Bastrop Enterprise



Photo by Brittany Wilson

Valedictorian Abbigale Rose Spikes congratulates her class and gives her speech.

Prairie View Academy held a summer graduation ceremony for the Class of 2020 at Bonita Road Baptist Church on Saturday, July 11.



Photo by Brittany Wilson

Salutatorian Hannah Claire Billings shares her speech with the audience.

The ceremony started with a speech from Salutatorian Hannah Claire Billings. Billings spoke of the good times the graduates had at PVA and the opportunities awaiting them in their future. She noted that each person is writing their own story. Billings stated, "I am certain many of us are anxious about the next chapter that is about to begin. We have to adjust to the change coming. We have the opportunity to take our stories in any direction we choose."

She asserted to fellow students, "I know our senior year was cut short. We have to remember everything happens for a reason, and this graduation marks a new beginning for each of us. Never be afraid to go after your dreams no matter the

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Bussey's reopening - full of excitement exceeding its high expectations

Photos by Brittany Wilson

By Brittany Wilson
& D'Juan Thomas
Bastrop Enterprise



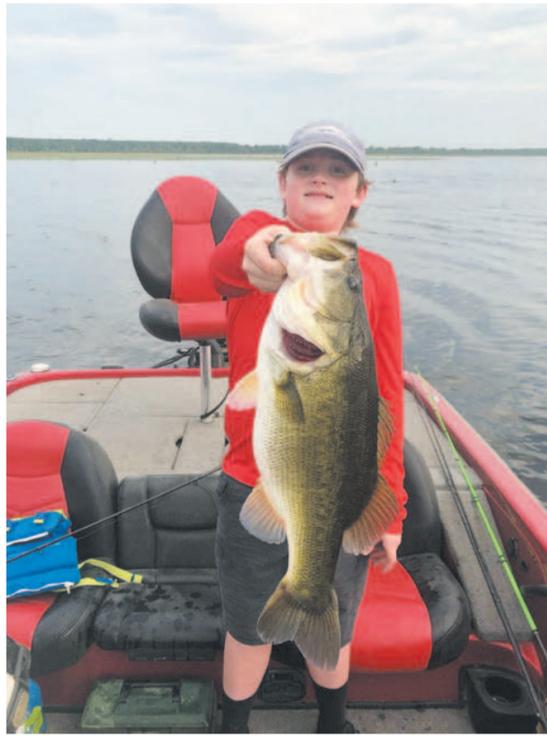
These fishermen get their gear ready for the opening day.



A fisherman shows off his catch.



Pier fishing was fruitful for many anglers



A young fisherman smiles as he shows off the fish he reeled in.

Residents have already begun to use and enjoy the summer activities available as Bussey Brake reopened for public use. The banks and boat launch has many citizens already casting their lines for catfish, bass, crappie and bream.

Bastrop veterinarian Dr. Glenn Melton was at Bussey on Wednesday, July 15th to enjoy the good weather and fishing. His initial feeling about Bussey's reopening was excitement. "This is such a huge asset - it has been in the past- for Bastrop and Morehouse Parish, and now we're looking at it to be that way again. This is an asset that's generational."

Though he is not a native of Bastrop, Melton added, "You don't have to talk to very many folks to know [that] their grandfathers and their fathers and their families before them fished here, and now it's a third and fourth generation thing."

In addition to the great fishing opportunities the area offers, Melton noted Bussey's "great natural beauty" and its part in the history of Bastrop/Morehouse Parish's economy. "It served an economic reason for IP to have it as a water supply for the mill as a back-up, but now it's something we can have even for generations to come."

Bussey Brake also welcomes back anglers and nature lovers who enjoyed what it had to offer in the past. Monroe resident Blair Sherman was a regular at Bussey in the 1980's as a teenager. "In the mid 80's, I used to come out here and catch a lot of bream and white perch."

Sherman recalls those high school days he spent at Bussey saying, "In high school I had a little 14 foot boat with a 15 horsepower Evinrude. We'd stick it in the back of the truck and come out here."

Describing his past fishing success at Bussey, Sherman went on to add, "This is one of the places we would come and do pretty well fairly consistently." He feels that with the work that the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries has done at Bussey Brake, the lake "has a helluva lot of potential."

Sherman, who works in agriculture, attributes a lot of that potential to the surrounding soil. "All the farms' surrounding dirt and underlying soil are so fertile. With the way they've reworked it and channeled and marked, it's going to be a lot easier to get around."

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School Board talks school reopening, new buses

By Brittany Wilson
Bastrop Enterprise

The Morehouse Parish School Board members discussed plans for reopening school, as well as purchasing new buses, at the Board meeting on Tuesday, July 14.

Superintendent David Gray spoke about reopening school this year noting, "The safety of our students and teachers is imperative." He stated, "We should start back on Thursday, August 12, because we are still under accountability. We will be testing in April, and they need to get as much instruction as they can." He noted that the School Board Office has sent out surveys to parents and will be looking at that information as well as scientific data to decide how many children will be in a classroom. They are looking at the possibility of up to 25 kids in a classroom in staggered groups or bringing in different students on alternating days.

Board Member Veronica Loche-Tappin suggested getting opinions from local child health experts, and Gray noted that he is talking to several. She also mentioned bringing the teachers in and making them aware of what they need to implement. Board Member Adrin Williams suggested putting the guidelines in the school handbooks so that parents can review them with children.

Mr. Gray and the Board agreed on a specially called board meeting to be held Tuesday, July 28 to finish creating the guidelines. "By then we should have gathered things we've heard from the surveys, in the community, and looking at best practices."

Child Welfare and Attendance Supervisor Ralph Davenport discussed the need for eight additional buses to be purchased. "We only have one spare bus. We are looking at 2015 model 75 passenger buses, and they have all of the latest conveniences."

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