

The Ouachita CITIZEN

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Coach who beat up student now at WMHS

BY ZACH PARKER
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The Louisiana State Police Commission plans to send a letter to the Ouachita Parish School Board, challenging the School Board's decision to employ Jack Goode as a teacher at West Monroe High School after he pleaded guilty to beating up a Sterlington High School student last year.

Goode, 39, was arrested

in April 2017 for beating up a 16-year-old Sterlington High School student and providing the student and other Sterlington youth with alcohol. The victim and other witnesses said Goode beat up the student and called him an expletive for not holding his liquor. Goode later pleaded guilty to simple battery of the student.

The incident involving Goode was the subject of a

hearing before the State Police Commission in Monroe last week. During the Aug. 9 hearing, the State Police Commission considered an appeal from State Police Trooper Joseph Michael Jones, in light of the trooper's actions in response to Goode's battery of his son, Chandler Jones.

Joseph Jones previously received 40 hours of suspension, because he violated State Police proce-

dures by interfering with the Ouachita Parish Sheriff's Office investigation of the battery incident and by demonstrating conduct unbecoming of an officer.

After hearing testimony from Joseph Jones, Chandler Jones, a sheriff's investigator and State Police Superintendent Kevin Reeves, the State Police Commission rescinded Joseph Jones' 40-hour suspension and imposed discipline of 12 hours

of suspension instead.

The State Police Commission also voted unanimously to issue a letter to the School Board.

"It's reprehensible to me, what has happened," said State Police Commission Chairman Eulis Simien Jr., of Goode's actions. "That he is still coaching. I would join, wholeheartedly, to write the School Board and question how that could be. I was shocked when that in-

formation came out."

School Board President Jerry Hicks, who represents the school district including West Monroe High School, referred the newspaper's question about Goode to the school system's personnel director.

"I'd rather not comment," Hicks said.

When informed of the

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COACH / 14A

West Monroe gets relief from FEMA

Board moves on developing former golf course property

BY SAM HANNA JR.
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The West Monroe Board of Aldermen got some good news Tuesday night at its regular meeting.

Aldermen learned the Federal Emergency Management Agency had reversed its decision to deny the city of West Monroe hundreds of thousands of dollars in federal funding to repair Black Bayou Canal, which was widely damaged in the March 2016 flood. The canal serves as a primary drainage artery for much of the city.

City engineer Robbie George informed the Board of Aldermen of FEMA's decision.

According to George, FEMA agreed last month to pay 75 percent of the \$368,756 that it will cost to repair Black Bayou Canal. George said the city would

tap Community Development Block Grant funding to cover the remaining 25 percent of the costs for the project.

George said the city had initially applied for some \$346,000 in funding from FEMA's Public Assistance Program. That application was denied in November 2016.

The city appealed FEMA's decision. Over the next two years, according to George, FEMA officials paid four site visits to West Monroe to inspect damage along Black Bayou Canal, determining along the way the damage that was caused during the flood in March of 2016 as well as damage to the canal that had occurred prior to March 2016.

"We walked the banks of the canal," George said. "They saw the damage firsthand."

"Obviously, it paid off for the city," he added.

On another front, the Board of Aldermen gave S.E. Huey Co. the green

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FEMA / 13A

INVESTITURE CEREMONY



Above: **DAVID DOUGHTY**, a Rayville attorney, congratulates his brother, Terry Doughty, who is now a judge at the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Louisiana, which includes more than 40 parishes from northern Louisiana all the way to Lake Charles. Terry Doughty, of Rayville, is stationed at the U.S. District Courthouse in downtown Monroe. He was nominated by President Trump and confirmed by the U.S. Senate earlier this year. Left: **SECOND CIRCUIT** Court of Appeal Judge James "Jimbo" Stephens, of Baskin, administers the oath of office to U.S. District Court Judge Terry Doughty. Stephens and Doughty previously served as judges in the Fifth Judicial District Court, as recent as last year. Though Stephens administered the oath of office to Doughty about five months ago, the oath was administered a second time as part of an investiture ceremony held in Monroe last week.

Vantage to sell 40% stake to investment group

BY JOHNNY GUNTER
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Vantage Healthcare chief executive officer Dr. Gary Jones says an investment group is planning to purchase some 40 percent of the company and also will provide additional capital for planned expansion.

Jones said he is not at liberty to identify the investment group at

this time. He said the deal should be completed by the end of the year.

"This is a good deal for the current stockholders and we'll grow as a result," Jones said. "We have plans to expand into surrounding states, Arkansas and Mississippi."

Vantage Healthcare, Affinity Health and Monroe Surgical Hospital are owned mostly by local physicians and other local stock-

holders.

The company has been in business for nearly 25 years. These entities, according to Jones, employ some 1,300 people.

The company, according to its website, provides health insurance to more than 50,000 members and contracts with more than 15,000 Louisiana healthcare providers.

Jones said that the company cur-

rently has some 300 stockholders "and after 25 years some of them are ready (to sell) to move on to other ventures."

He said the investment group will own a minority 40 percent of Vantage.

"We have been selling stock all along but his will be the largest one yet," Jones said. He said the investment group will purchase some of its 40 percent share from

current stockholders and additional new stock.

Jones said he does not see any significant changes in how Vantage currently operates or in its labor force.

"We have found through the years that the talent of our employees here is unique to this business," Jones said.

"We do have the talent pool here."



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