



# THE WEST SIDE Journal



THE OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF WEST BATON ROUGE PARISH  
www.thewestsidejournal.com

\$1.00

VOLUME 86 | NUMBER 33

THURSDAY, MARCH 16, 2023

PORT ALLEN, LOUISIANA

## DEQ investigating Port Allen cement plant after concerns raised by homeowners

JORDAN ARCENEUX  
sports@thewestsidejournal.com

A cement plant that was built less than a year ago is causing problems for residents in the subdivisions near the Port Allen plant.

One of the residents, Andrea Martin, said over the last several months, some of her belongings in the backyard, particularly her pool cover, have been coated with a white powder. Quality Concrete is located near Riverside Estates and Oak Alley subdivisions.

Over the last month, Martin said she has developed health issues, which she attributes to Quality Concrete's output.

"I've been dealing with sinus issues for over a month," she said. "My two kids have been dealing with headaches for over a month. The cement plant is less than 300 feet from my pool. We're supposed to sit in our backyards and breathe this stuff?"

According to the Centers for Disease Prevention and Control (CDC), Silicosis, which is permanent lung damage, is caused by breathing in fine particles containing crystalline silica. Crystalline silica

is found in materials such as concrete, masonry, and rock.

Martin said she believes the residents who are impacted did not have enough of a chance to fight against the cement plant before it was built.

"The parish permitting, or ordinance, they only notify adjoining landowners," she said. "And there's a person that owns like a 30-foot-wide strip of land that the parish uses as a servitude. She's the only one that was ever notified. None of us as residents were given an opportunity to fight this cement plant being put in."

Martin said she suspects the volume at the concrete plant has increased over the last few months because of the Intracoastal bridge being replaced.

"A couple of months ago, they started pouring all the concrete and supposedly that's why this concrete plant was put here for the close proximity to the Intracoastal bridge project," she said. "They're pouring concrete, so I think the volume of concrete increased in the last two months. The activity is much greater. The amount of trucks coming in and



out is greater. It's really severely impacting these houses that have been here since 1990."

"I'm the only one in my neighborhood that I'm aware of who has a pool cover," she added. "And so because my pool is covered, I can prove this white film is settling on everything. Everybody else is like 'Well, I've not noticed anything' but nobody has something black that's getting a white ring on it like a pool cover is."

Martin and other residents affected met with parish officials privately

on March 2 to voice their concerns.

According to Martin, as a result of the meeting between a few of the residents and West Baton Rouge Parish Public Works Director Kevin Durbin, an email was sent from Durbin to the residents stating: "Due to this subsequent discovery, I will no longer be able to communicate with your citizen group without going through parish legal counsel."

In the email, Durbin said he found out after the meeting that someone who

attended the meeting was not an immediate neighbor and was possibly an attorney.

Martin said the attorney, who was present at the meeting, identified himself by name and provided his residence as living in Baton Rouge.

"This position is now being taken by Mr. Durbin despite Mr. Durbin's repeated recommendation (on at least three occasions) that each of the residents seek legal counsel to address the civil liability of businesses causing damages to the

residents as well as the properties located nearby," she said.

The parish attorney is Lou Delahaye. Assistant District Attorney for the 18th JDC Kristen Canezaro is the parish council's special legal counsel.

The Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ) provided a brief update on the situation.

A spokesperson with LDEQ said someone from LDEQ visited the site and some issues were noted during the investigation. The Department is working with the facility to resolve those issues. If the facility fails to comply, the investigation will move into the enforcement phase.

One of the issues noted, according to the spokesperson, was dust was observed blowing off departing trucks. The spokesperson said the site operator is working with LDEQ to implement dust control measures and make sure the vacuum system used to reduce dust in loading/unloading operations is operational. LDEQ will conduct follow-up visits over the next month.

## Port Allen woman hit, killed while walking home

UNFILTERED WITH KIRAN  
unfilteredwithkiran.com

ERWINVILLE, La. — Early Saturday morning, Louisiana State Police Troopers responded to a single-vehicle crash where a Port Allen woman was hit & killed.

The victim has been identified as Kendra Richard, 32, of Port Allen. It happened on Hwy. 190 near Rougon Road in West Baton Rouge Parish.

State Police says as of now, their investigation reveals a 2021 Toyota Camry was headed east in the left lane on Hwy. 190. For reasons still under investigation, Richard was in the left lane of 190 and was hit by the Camry. State Troopers added Richard was wearing dark-colored clothing at the time of crash.

Richard's family reached out to Unfiltered with Kiran and explained that a Livonia Police Officer assisted in getting her from



Kendra Richard, 32, of Port Allen (Source: Family)

Pointe Coupee Parish into West Baton Rouge Parish, but dropped her off at a gas station.

Livonia Police Chief Landon Landry told UWK that Richard works at a hotel in Livonia and called dispatch asking if someone could give her a ride to West Baton Rouge Parish. "That's not unusual for us at all to help people and

give them a ride if need be," said Chief Landry. "By the time our officer made it out to her, she was already walking on Hwy. 190. That's where our officer saw her and offered to drop her as far as he could but explained he would be outside of his jurisdiction."

Chief Landry said the officer dropped off the Port Allen woman to the Exxon or Tiger Tracks in Erwinville, where a

West Baton Rouge Sheriff's deputy was working extra duty. Richard is said to have told the Livonia officer she could be dropped off to the Exxon.

"We wanted to make sure she was at a safe location so that's why the officer dropped her at the gas station and even told the deputy that he was outside

his jurisdiction and this was the furthest he could go," said Chief Landry.

After that, West Baton Rouge Sheriff's Office tells UWK "Richard advised that she had a ride coming to pick her up. Mrs. Richard was seen walking the parking-lot by the deputy and later lost sight of her, suspecting her ride had picked her up."

Richard started walking the rest of the way home on Hwy. 190 when she was hit by the driver of the Camry. Chief Landry added his officer had no reason to suspect any impairment on Richard.

Richard died on the scene. State Troopers said the driver of the Camry was properly restrained and uninjured. As part of the ongoing investigation, a toxicology sample was obtained from the pedestrian and driver and will be submitted for analysis. This crash remains under investigation.

## Drugs seized before entering parish jail

KRISTIE HENDRICKS  
westsidejournalnews@gmail.com

The West Baton Rouge Sheriff's Department stopped illegal import of multiple schedule two narcotic substances: methamphetamine and buprenorphine. According to a press release from the WBR Sheriff's Department, parish inmate Dervell Barnes, age 36 planned to receive contraband from James Gianelloni, age 45 and Kardell Samuel, age 20. All accused persons are now in custody.

West Baton Rouge Parish Jail gave the department information leading to the investigation and arrest on March 7, 2023. Arrests were made the following day on March 8, 2023.

Deputies seized 108 grams of methamphetamine and 46 buprenorphine (Suboxone) sublingual strips. Gianelloni and Samuel received charges

for possession with intent to distribute the schedule two narcotics as well as conspiracy to introduce contraband into a penal facility. Barnes was charged with conspiracy to introduce contraband into a penal facility.

Methamphetamine is manufactured from household products and Suboxone is a legal medication that can be used to treat narcotic dependence when prescribed and taken under the care of a physician.

The WBR Sheriff's department also linked these suspects to Baton Rouge location; narcotics detectives informed Baton Rouge Police Department. Thereafter, BRPD conducted a search warrant and seized four and a half pounds of marijuana and four firearms from the property. Two of the firearms were stolen. Another arrest was made at that property.

### Local

Port City opens bakery

Page 2

### Lifestyles

City of PA celebrates International Women's Day

Page 5

### Sports

Four in a row

Page 14

## INSIDE

News.....1 - 3  
Obituaries.....8

Bids & Notices.....9 - 10  
Opinion.....7

Events .....4  
Lifestyles.....5

Church.....6  
Sports.....13 & 14

Classifieds.....12  
Legals.....11