



NORCO

Newsline

Norco Manufacturing Complex



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ENTERPRISES LLC



When It Rains, It Drains ... Straight into the Mississippi River



Seven-year-old Josie Digirolamo waved her American flag proudly. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt was riding through the streets of Norco on his way to tour the Bonnet Carré Spillway. It was an exciting day for area children and an exciting time for the community. FDR's April 1937 visit came just weeks after the Spillway was opened for the first time since its official dedication two years earlier. **"I can remember seeing the President on Apple Street,"** said Josie Mire as she is known these days. **"We were all lined up with our flags."**



Mire shared her presidential memories during a Bonnet Carré Spillway presentation at a recent Norco Community Advisory Panel (CAP) meeting. Bonnet Carré Spillway Project Manager **Chris Brantley, Ph.D.** discussed the history, purpose, and recreational aspects of the floodway system.

"If it rains heavily for two or three days in Pennsylvania, chances are that the Mississippi River will rise and we will have to open the spillway to protect New Orleans and other downstream communities from flooding," said Brantley. A Corps of Engineers project developed in response to the great flood of 1927, which inundated 26,000 square miles as the powerful water flow broke through the levee system. To prevent a recurrence of the resulting loss of lives and damage from the 1927 flood, Congress authorized the Mississippi River and Tributaries Project (MR&T) in the Flood Control Act of 1927. The Corps of Engineers enlarged the existing levee system and constructed new floodways including the Bonnet Carré Spillway which diverts Mississippi River floodwaters to flow into Lake Pontchartrain and eventually the Gulf of Mexico.





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Since its first opening in 1937, the Bonnet Carré Spillway has been utilized 11 times, most recently from January 10 to February 1 of this year.

Brantley explained that the project consists of a control structure along the East Bank of the Mississippi River and a spillway to carry the diverted floodwaters to the lake. The mechanically controlled structure is a concrete weir extending for more than a mile and half parallel to the river. The spillway is confined by guide levees and stretches nearly six miles into Lake Pontchartrain.

“It takes three working days to fully open the spillway’s 350 bays although not all bays are always opened,” he said. “Opening the Bonnet Carré Spillway is made at the recommendation of the Corps of Engineers New Orleans District Commander who incorporates environmental factors as well as hydrological, structural, navigational and legal considerations. The decision to open the spillway is made when existing conditions, combined with predicted River stages and discharges, indicate the main

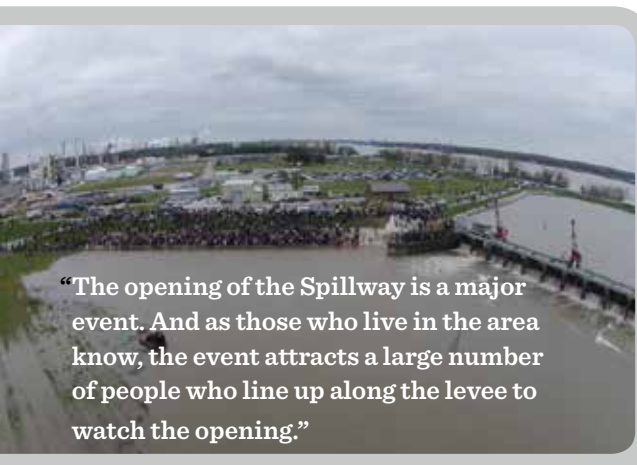
levees in New Orleans and other downstream communities would be at risk from high waters.

“The opening of the Spillway is a major event,” Brantley continued.

“And as those who live in the area know, the event attracts a large number of people who line up along the levee to watch the opening.”

Once the decision is made to open the spillway, two cranes are used to lift timber “needles,” one by one, from a selected number of bays. The needles are placed horizontally on top of the structure until they are replaced at closing time.

“Since its first



“The opening of the Spillway is a major event. And as those who live in the area know, the event attracts a large number of people who line up along the levee to watch the opening.”

CHRIS BRANTLEY, Ph.D.

Bonnet Carré Spillway Project Manager

opening to the most recent, the Spillway has always been opened in the same way,” Brantley noted. “Forty-two hundred of the system’s 7,000 needles are the original ones constructed in 1929.”

In addition to minimizing the risk of flood damage, the Bonnet Carré Spillway is a site for diverse recreational activities when it is not open for flood control. Fish and wildlife benefits also result from the spillway’s varied habitats and the introduction of fresh water and nutrients into the Lake Pontchartrain estuary.

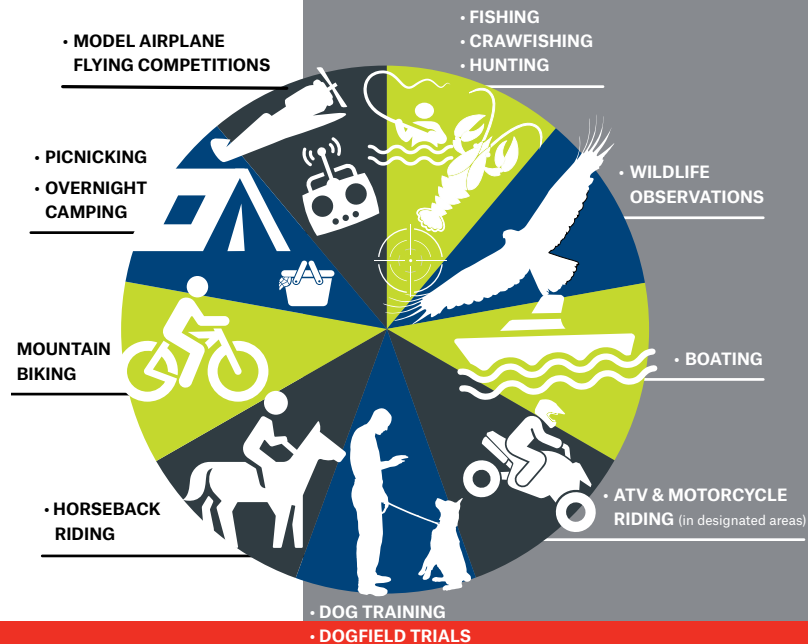
For additional information about the Bonnet Carré Spillway, contact the Project Office at 985-764-7484 or visit the recreational pages at www.mvn.usace.mil/Missions/Recreation/BonnetCarreSpillway.aspx

RECREATION AND THE SPILLWAY

More than 350,000 visitors enjoy the recreational benefits of the Spillway each year. Open to the public from 5 a.m. to 10 p.m., the spillway’s lands and waters offer opportunities for:

- fishing
- crawfishing
- hunting
- dog training
- wildlife observations
- boating
- picnicking
- ATV and motorcycle riding (in designated areas)
- mountain biking
- horseback riding
- dog field trials
- model airplane flying competitions
- overnight camping (with free permits from a Corps Park Ranger)

The spillway also contains five-boat launching sites including two provided by St. Charles Parish.



Date WITH Destiny



More than 100 women attended the Eighth Annual Date with Destiny, a day of workshops and presentations designed to encourage an interest in Process Technology or Maintenance Craft careers.

Years ago, a female refining operator was the exception. Not so much anymore. The once male-dominated field is gradually diversifying thanks to outreach programs like Date with Destiny, a career and educational forum which encourages women to consider more non-traditional roles in the workforce. Sponsored by Shell and Motiva Enterprises, LLC, the event provides information and assistance to inspire women to consider careers in the oil and gas industry as an operation technician or maintenance craft professional.

More than 100 women, of different backgrounds and ages, recently participated in the Eighth Annual Date with Destiny featuring career awareness sessions ranging from resume building and interviewing skills to hands-on equipment demonstrations and testimonies from women in the industry. Shell Human Resources Recruitment, Motiva Learning & Development, and the Shell Workforce Development Initiative Team hosted this year's event.



NMC employee Claudia Jenkins, left, discusses resumé preparation with a Date with Destiny participant.

"Date with Destiny introduces women to the responsibilities and educational requirements of work in the oil and gas industry as well as the job skills they need to secure a position," explained NMC Learning Manager **Theron Williams**, who initiated the event eight years ago.

"I really like the professional atmosphere," commented **Courtney Gant**, who attended the daylong event.

"Date with Destiny is very inviting to females because sometimes you can be intimidated in this industry."

For **Bryanne Mader**, the event was a day to learn outside the classroom. "I am looking for a new work experience," she said. "I am currently a middle school teacher, but interested in other options."

NMC Health, Safety, Security and Environmental Manager **Chrystal Landgraf**, who served as a featured speaker, shared her experiences in the industry including her first days as a process technician. "My stepdad, who worked at Norco, told me the site was hiring and that my husband should apply," she said. "When I found out how much money the job paid, I said 'my husband? What about me?' I had heard what a great company Shell was to work for." She applied and was hired.

"The first lesson I learned is to be flexible," Landgraf explained. "My degree

is in biology. I thought I was going to get a PhD and instead I ended up here."

Although she didn't get the positions she wanted right away, she always made herself available for opportunities that came her way. She had to prove herself and took that time to build friendships and relationships. "Learn to be excellent in what you're doing and always do your best," she advised.

"Women are still not common in this industry. I set out to prove I could do the job as well as a man could."

Landgraf noted the importance of believing in yourself. "Women are the worst at believing in and promoting themselves. Your drive and fulfilling your dreams is what is going to get you noticed," she said. "Overcome self-doubt and uncertainty. Don't let your fears get the better of you. You will miss opportunities if you do. Give it your all and don't give up! Take advantage of everything that comes your way and turn that voice of doubt off. You can do anything!"

Landgraf concluded her presentation on a positive note, emphasizing that, "Women in leadership are becoming more common. Shell works on that intensely and recognizes diversity in leadership."

NMC employees **Sandra Brooks, Regina Hollins, Quienna Jackson, Elke Mollere** and **Devin Rome** joined a panel featuring operators and former operators who had transitioned to supervisory and management positions. The women answered questions and presented highlights of their experiences in previous careers including criminal justice, hair styling, social work, daycare, retail and emergency response.

Operator **Elke Mollere**, a 9-year NMC employee, ran an in-home day care center before transitioning to the process technology field. "When I divorced, I had to start over and needed to provide for my family," said the mother of two teenage sons. "My brother worked in this field and introduced me to it. I am proud that I do this."

Motiva Convent HSSE Manager **Susan Kliebert** stressed the importance of safety rules in the workplace. "I would rather have people mad at me for pointing out a safety hazard than see them injure themselves," she said. "That often requires courage to speak out."

In a question and answer session, the panelists were asked how they addressed the fear of entering a new field and starting a new job. "Ask questions" was the unanimous response. They advised participants not to be afraid to admit that you don't know how to do something. You just need to ask. Then, learn how to do it and do it well.

"Date with Destiny introduces women to the responsibilities and educational requirements of work in the oil and gas industry as well as the job skills they need to secure a position"

THERON WILLIAMS | NMC Learning Manager

Women interested in the process technology or maintenance craft field are advised to contact area colleges about associate degree programs. Additional information is available at:

- www.shell.us/careers
- www.shell.us/jobs
- www.shell.us/energizyourfuture
- www.naptaonline.org
- www.shell.us/careers/students-and-graduates/scholarships/associates-degree-students.html

Preserving and Protecting the Wetlands: NMC PRESENTS DONATION TO WETLAND WATCHERS

General Manager Brett Woltjen learns about the animals living in the LaBranche wetlands as he tours the area with student volunteers.

Louisiana's coastline is in danger of disappearing. "Not on our watch," say Harry Hurst Middle School students. The St. Charles Parish Public Schools' Wetland Watchers program, under the direction of teacher Barry Guillot, is helping to preserve the LaBranche wetlands through service and education.

A long-time supporter of the national award-winning school-based program, Norco Manufacturing Complex recently presented a \$47,400 donation to the Wetland Watchers for assistance in expanding the program and enriching the group's park along the lakefront. General Manager **Brett Woltjen**, who presented the check, took a tour of the Wetland Watchers Park, learning about the park and the wetlands from student volunteers. Program founders **Barry Guillot** and environmentalist **Milton Cambre** also participated in the event along with Hurst Principal **Steven Gutierrez**, NMC HSSE Manager **Chrystal Landgraf**, Environmental Manager **Michael McNally**, and External Relations Manager **Rochelle Touchard**.

"Although I am new to the Louisiana area, I am aware of the need to protect the area's coastline and preserve the natural beauty and purpose of the wetlands," Woltjen said. "As an industry, NMC has pledged to protect the environment. That means more than just monitoring our operations and working reliably. It also means supporting programs such as Wetland Watchers which introduces the young generation to their roles in environmental protection and preservation."

Initiated 19 years ago in partnership with community environmental activist Milton Cambre, the University of New Orleans and the Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation, Hurst Middle School teacher Barry Guillot introduced the Wetland Watchers program to sixth grade science students. "I was looking for a way to utilize our beautiful Louisiana wetlands as an outdoor classroom where students could be fully immersed in science while learning about the many values of our wetlands and the many challenges that they face," Guillot explained.

Working on a small tract of land they adopted, 150 students focused on improving the area for better field studies while working to keep the land from washing away. "As word spread about our learnings and activities, many other teachers and

"As an industry, NMC has pledged to protect the environment. That means more than just monitoring our operations and working reliably. It also means supporting programs such as Wetland Watchers which introduces the young generation to their roles in environmental protection and preservation."

BRETT WOLTJEN | NMC General Manager



NMC recently presented Wetland Watchers with a donation to expand the award-winning environmental group's activities and educational programs.

parents wanted their students involved as well," he continued. "We became a whole school project and quickly started including other schools throughout our district. As we expanded, different agencies, organizations, businesses, and colleges enthusiastically offered their expertise, time, and resources. We currently have solid partnerships with over 35 different organizations. Student activities include planting trees, water quality testing, picking up trash, and working on what is the first public nature trail in our area."

Wetland Watchers students share their knowledge by leading wetland trips for younger students, facilitating field experiences, and presenting information at science night activities. Hurst students have led over 25,000 youngsters on wetland trips since the program started. Over the past four summers, the group has sponsored a regional Swamp School at Wetland Watchers Park teaching environmental outdoor skills to nearly 600 kids. The group has also welcomed the National Science Teachers Association, the National School Boards Association, international environmental groups from Canada, Europe, the middle east, South America, the Netherlands, and Nigeria, and school groups from as far away as New York and California.

The original tract of land adopted almost 20 years ago has expanded to 28 acres, with donations from the Pontchartrain Levee Board. Today, the Wetland Watchers Park

includes eight picnic pavilions, a grand pavilion, two outdoor classrooms, and an eight-foot marsh overlook, along with nearly 1,200 feet of boardwalk nature trails.



Wetland Watchers volunteers introduce NMC General Manager Brett Woltjen to the group's 28-acre park as they discuss the natural beauty of the wetlands.

MILTON CAMBRE:

Guardian of the Wetlands, Protector of St. Charles Parish

Most Louisiana citizens know the basics of protecting themselves and their property during hurricane season. Norco resident and environmentalist **MILTON CAMBRE** goes one step further. Known as the “Voice of the LaBranche Wetlands,” for more than 40 years, he has made it his life’s work to help protect St. Charles Parish from hurricane damage by advocating and working for the protection and restoration of the parish’s natural lines of defense.



Milton Cambre, center, discusses wetland protection during a recent tour of Wetland Watchers Park for members of the Norco Manufacturing Complex.

HIS ACTIVIST ROOTS GREW OUT OF A DESIRE TO PRESERVE THE LIFE HE KNEW. “I grew up on the Mississippi River in Paulina and I saw all the benefits of the river,” he reminisced. “I supported my family by trawling and fishing and hunted the batture, basically living off the land. Once I got out of the service in 1959, I saw it all being destroyed. We were bringing in all those (oil and petro-chemical) companies without controls, letting them do what they pleased. That wasn’t right. Even though I worked in the industry (Cambre is a DuPont retiree), I spoke out, but I was never penalized. After I retired in 1985, I got into it full time. I wanted to leave what I enjoyed for future generations.”

In addition to dedicating himself to protecting the river, he also works to restore and protect the multiple lines of defense that protect the parish from hurricane damage. **“THE FIRST THING WE NEED**

TO DO IS TO PROTECT OUR SHORELINE, keep the lake where it is,” he states. “I’ve been involved in getting the shoreline rocked which helps stop erosion. We had started doing it, but then the state decided they wanted to reclaim a little bit of it and put it out 30 feet into the lake which never made sense to me, but you’re dealing with a bureaucracy. We still have about 15 thousand feet to go and the costs are going up.”

Saving the shoreline is key in restoring and preserving the LaBranche wetlands, a 20,000 acre cypress swamp. Working with local industry and the government, he has also been instrumental as chairman of the Coastal Zone Advisory Board in speaking out against the Mississippi River Gulf Outlet, which brought saltwater to the marsh and has since been closed. Cambre also consults with the highway department to ensure the responsible construction of interstate 310. “The saltwater from the lake is killing the cypress and vegetation and the marsh is dying off,” he explains. “The wetlands protect against hurricane tidal surges and it will all be open water, making us vulnerable to storms, if we don’t save it.”

THE SECOND LINE OF DEFENSE IS THE RAILROAD TRACKS. “If you get a tidal surge, the shoreline is about five feet so that would cut a bit,” he explains. “Then a half mile later that water would spread out to hit the railroad embankment which is about eight feet so it would chop off another bunch of feet. You have about a half a mile between the lakeshore and the railroad and more than a mile where the water would spread out so it would impede the progress of the tidal surge. That’s why you want to keep the swamp.”

THE LEVEE IS THE THIRD LINE OF DEFENSE. Cambre has been trying to get the levee built past the Blind River, but at over 30 million dollars a mile, it is a hard sell in a state that has precious few dollars to spare.

Over the years, Cambre has dedicated himself to solving the problems that affect what he still considers a sportsman’s paradise. As both a private citizen and as a constable for 26 years, he has served St. Charles Parish in various capacities,

championing wetland projects to industry, governmental agencies and environmental groups. He has been interviewed in numerous environmental documentaries and has won numerous awards and honors. He also works with the Wetland Watchers, a school-based service-learning project that furthers the cause of wetlands preservation.

“The public is better educated today about the importance of the wetlands,” Cambre states, “but unless you’re involved in fishing or hunting, you don’t see how important the wetlands are. We take so much for granted, such as our seafood and our habitat. But everyone should be aware of their purpose. What’s happening now is going to affect all of us, even if it is just in rising flood insurance.”

NEW HIRES



Congratulations to Machinists **Brian Magee, Luke Naquin and Ross Becnel**, who recently completed Norco Manufacturing Complex New Hire training. They are pictured with Instructor **Larry Russell**, far right.



Norco Manufacturing Complex Honored for Refinery and Chemical Safety

Members of the Norco Manufacturing Complex's Joint Health and Safety Committee gather in front of the NMC memorial flag pole recognizing employees who lost their lives in the May 5, 1988 incident.

The American Fuel and Petrochemical Manufacturers (AFPM) honored the Norco Manufacturing Complex for its outstanding Refinery and Chemical Safety performance in 2015. The site received two awards at the 24th Annual AFPM Safety Awards program in San Antonio, Texas, this May.

"The recognition speaks to the performance we've had year after year," said NMC HSSE Manager **Chrystal Landgraf**.

The Motiva Norco Refinery received a Merit Award for its total employee recordable incident rate. The rate is calculated by the number of injuries and illnesses for every 200-thousand man hours. In order to receive the award, the rate has to be lower than 0.6. Motiva Norco achieved 0.2.

Shell Norco Chemical was honored with a Safety Achievement Award for operating a minimum of 365 consecutive days without an employee injury resulting in days away from work, restrictions, transfers or fatality.

"Last year was actually the best performance for safety that we've had at the site, so it's really nice for us to be recognized externally for our performance," Landgraf noted.

Sixty-one refineries and 80 petrochemical plants were represented at the AFPM awards presentation.



Service ANNIVERSARIES

Someone You Know Works for Norco

35 Years

Lori Blessing
Kenneth Breaux
Stephen Hernandez
Raymond Jackson
Timothy McMurray

Michael Stillinger
Steven Young

20 Years

David Duke
Michael Kornick
Lionel LeBouef

Richard White
Michael Williams

10 Years

Ricky Allen
Michael Arcement
Jemal Baptiste
Bruyan Blanda
Kyle Bourdreaux
Anastasia Boudreaux
Jeffrey Brignac
Kevin Brown
Ron Cambre
Lee Clement
Scott Thompson
Franciso Varona
Kenneth Delatte
Taft Donaldson

Nicholas Ducote
Craig Jacomine
Norward Johnson
Ivan Lewis
Gary Matherne
David Pfeifer
Aaron Roberson
Todd Roussel
Eric Wagoner
Brandon Weber
Joshua Williams

Ryan Dolive
Clint Gagliano
Claudell Harris
Chad Hebert
Sidney Keppard
Philip Meche
Kerwin Mitchell
Timothy Olsen
Eric Oubre
Peter Pelitre
Larry Torres
Joshua Tullier

30 Years

Vincent Bruno
Vance Grieshop
David Hutton

15 Years

Arturo Armenta
Darren Brack
Rupert Dinvaot
Darryl Lagrande
Barry McGregory
Alan McKnight
Blaine Michel
Bonnie O'Shaugnessy
Christopher Riecke
Camille White

25 Years

Gregory Breaux
Ellis Cathalougne
Mark Guarino
Lyonald Kirk
John Langley
Kent Raiford
Scott Schexnaydre

5 Years

Bradley Bankston
Julious Broussard
Ryan Cannon
Peter Chan
Jason Cutrer

TROOPS ★ SALUTE

A regular Newsline feature spotlighting NMC employees who have served or are currently serving the United States as a member of the military.

NMC Technical Safety Specialist

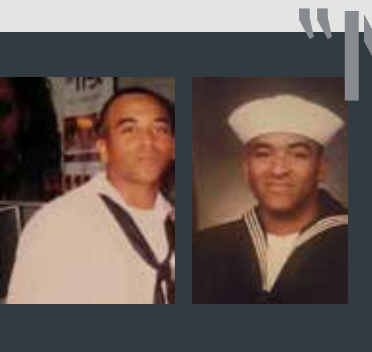
LeVar Lewis laughs when he talks about his love of life in Louisiana.

You might not expect such strong roots from the former Navy Hospital Corpsman. He has definite intentions to keep on circling the globe. **“I lived in 23 countries during my military years and saw half the world,”** he explained. But, although he left right after his Hahnville High School

Graduation, the St. Charles Parish native certainly knows where home is.



**“BURY ME IN LOUISIANA.
NO, MAKE THAT SOUTHEAST LOUISIANA.”**



“My dad worked for Northrup Grumman for 45 years, earning a Master Shipbuilder title,”

Lewis said,

explaining his interest in the naval branch of the military. “I always looked up to my dad, watching him build ships when I was a kid. I did want to do something a little different though, so I decided to join the Navy, serve my country, and have a way to pay for my college education. I left the little town of Killona, received two degrees, and continue to benefit from eight years of military life.

“I saw a lot of trauma over the years, including two tours of duty in Iraq,” he continued. “Our group was also assigned to represent the United States by bringing healthcare to areas of need all over the world from the Philippines to Thailand.”

Although Lewis had the opportunity to become an officer – he became a non-commissioned officer within his first two years in the Navy – he turned down the officer role, deciding that he did not want to make the military a lifelong career.

“I had a dream of doing something in the medical field like dentistry or physical therapy but did take a little shift in careers when I came home,” he said. “I recognized that I enjoyed the education and the teaching aspects of helping others.”

Armed with degrees in Healthcare Administration and Occupational Safety and Health, Lewis’s family encouraged him to explore the petrochemical industry when he left the military 11 years ago. “I never thought of working in this field even though much of my family did,” he said. “I finally got my feet wet and I really enjoy this industry. I like the challenge, and I especially like helping people learn more about safety and taking care of themselves. I have worn ten different hats in my lifetime of experiences, but I definitely love my safety hat.”

Lewis’s Navy hat covered experiences that stay with him today. “I have learned that no matter where you come from, a small town or large town, the world is so much bigger than what you think,” he explained. “If you take the time to get to understand others and their cultures, you find that people are so much alike in their many different ways. It is amazing how much I have learned from the friends I have all over the world. Carrying that type of learning and understanding into the diverse workplace and community will make you a better person. I know that it helped me to grow personally as well as to appreciate my heritage.”

Lewis’s return to Louisiana after his years of service came just two weeks before Hurricane Katrina in 2005. He didn’t realize it then, but weather would become an important part of his life. He is married to WVUE television meteorologist Nicondra Norwood. The couple, who met while they were both out Salsa dancing, are the parents of eight-month-old Gage.

Travel buffs and admitted foodies, the Lewis family enjoys exploring both new and favorite places and restaurants. By the way, Lewis says the key to world peace is food. Based on his military experiences and his keen interest in other cultures, he says the solution is to invite the world leaders to a dinner. “Cook each one his or her favorite meal,” he suggested. “Everybody loves to eat and everybody loves to talk about food. The table conversation would be positive, full of energy and soon everyone would be extra agreeable.”

Lewis’s love of learning continues. He is currently working on a master’s degree in Occupational Safety and Health and is considering enrolling in a culinary degree program in the future.



Norco Newsline is published regularly to inform the community about activities at the Norco Manufacturing Complex. Please address inquiries to:

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504-465-6667

Numbers and Addresses to Know:

St. Charles Emergency Operations Center:
985-783-5050

Norco Site Supervisor:
504-465-7342

NMC Community Information Line
504-465-7483

www.shell.us/norco
www.motivaenterprises.com
www.norco-air.info

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POSTAL PATRON

River Parishes Students Awarded River Parishes Education Foundation Scholarships



Lutcher High School Administrator **Andy Hopkins** congratulates RPEF scholarship recipient **Gustavo Franco**.



St. John Parish students **Crystal Dabney** and **Carlshane Williams Jr.**, center, are pictured with counselor **Demecca Jones**, counselor **Tai Cambre** and District Assistant Superintendent **Quentina Timoli** at the RPEF awards dinner.



St. Charles Parish RPEF scholarship recipients are **Bryson Marretta** and **Tristen Bedi**.

ST. CHARLES PARISH RPEF SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

were **Bryson Marretta** of Destrehan High School and **Tristen Bedi** of Hahnville High School/St. Charles Parish Public Schools Satellite Center. Bryson will attend Mississippi State University and Tristen will attend South Central Louisiana Technical College in Reserve.

ST. JOHN PARISH STUDENTS

HONORED were **Crystal Dabney** of East St. John High School, who will attend Nicholls State University, and **Carlshane Williams Jr.** of East St. John High School who will attend Southeast Louisiana Technical College.

ST. JAMES PARISH STUDENTS

RECOGNIZED were **Jordan Warren** of St. James High School and **Gustavo Franco** of Lutcher High School. Jordan will continue his education at McNeese State University and Gustavo will attend South Central Louisiana Technical College.

Six River Parishes high school seniors were recognized with academic scholarships at the recent Annual River Parishes Education Foundation (RPEF) Scholarship Dinner in LaPlace.

According to Norco Manufacturing Complex External Relations Manager and RPEF President ROCHELLE TOUCHARD, the foundation presented \$18,000 in scholarships to St. Charles, St. James and St. John Parishes students pursuing a college degree or associate degree in process technology (PTEC). RPEF Scholarship Chair MARY LOU SUMRALL presented the awards, acknowledging individual academic, extra-curricular accomplishments and community service.

“The River Parishes Education Foundation is pleased to award scholarships to outstanding students who will soon be part of the workforce and leaders in the community,” Sumrall said. “Congratulations go out to the families who raised such good children. Parental involvement in the schools is one of the founding principles of RPEF and your dedication to your children is obvious. We also want to say a special ‘thank you’ to the teachers these young adults have encountered throughout their education.”

Established in 1993 as collaboration among River Parishes educators, government, business/industry and other interested partners representing St. Charles, St. James and St. John parishes, the River Parishes Education Initiative focused on parental involvement, career choices, and the funding of teacher grants for enhanced classroom learning. Since its inception, the group has worked to define/address specific problems facing the school systems, educate business/industry about the school system; provide successful learning tips/suggestions for parent-teacher communication, produce materials to promote parent/community involvement, host school-to-career conferences and workshops, and provide annual teacher grants. In 2010, the organization was re-structured as a foundation, awarding scholarships for the first time in the 2011-2012 academic year.