

The Richland Beacon-News

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Community Calendar

• **American Legion Post 122** will meet at 6 p.m. Jan. 20 at St. David's Episcopal Church, 834 Louisa St., across from the Rayville Civic Center. The meeting will be held in the Parish Hall.

• **The Richland Parish Sheriff's Office** will host a 10-hour classroom hunter education course from 6-9:30 p.m. Jan. 24-6 at the shooting range building across the highway from the Richland Parish Detention Center. Call or text Randy Ogles at 318-509-9582 for more information or register online at <https://louisianaoutdoors.com/events/191505>

• **Delhi Charter School** will host its winter PTO meeting at 6 p.m. Jan. 27 in Amber Hall. The meeting will include a silent auction, a talent show with cash prizes and a celebration of the DCS Young Authors Contest winners. Parents and spectators will be able to bid on the baskets throughout the PTO meeting with winners announced at the end.

• **The North Louisiana Quilters Guild** will host its annual quilt show Feb. 25-26 at the West Monroe Convention Center, 901 Ridge Ave., West Monroe. Admission is \$7 for ages 7-79 and free for all others. For more information, visit www.NLQG.us.

• **The Richland Parish Police Jury** meets at 6 p.m. the first Monday of each month at the Richland Police Jury Annex Building, 35 Lynn Gayle Robertson Road, Rayville.

• **The Delhi Town Council** meets at 5:30 p.m. the second Monday of each month at Delhi Town Hall.

• **The Rayville Town Council** meets at 6 p.m. on the second Monday of each month at the Rayville Civic Center.

• **The Mangham Town Council** meets at 6 p.m. on the second Monday of each month at Mangham Town Hall.

• **The Richland Parish School Board** meets at 6 p.m. on the second Tuesday of each month at the Richland Parish School Board office in Rayville.

• **Food for Families**, along with the Richland Parish Sheriff's Office, will deliver boxes of commodities from 8-10 a.m. the third Friday of every month at the Buckner substation. You must be 60 years or older. Please bring proof of income and ID to sign up. If you have any questions please call 728-2071.

Richland jobless rate falls slightly

Richland Parish's unemployment dropped slightly in November according to the latest figures released by the Louisiana Works Commission.

Richland Parish's jobless rate dropped from 4.1 percent in October to 3.8 percent in November. This is also down from 6.3 percent a year ago.

This means 308 people were seeking work in Richland Parish in November, down from 330 in October and 510 in November 2020.

A total of 7,735 people were employed in the parish in November, down from 7,818 in October but up from 7,619 a year ago.

LaSalle Parish had the state's lowest unemployment in November with 2.3 percent. East Carroll Parish had

the state's highest jobless rate at 7.5 percent.

On the statewide level, Louisiana's jobless rate fell from 5.4 in October to 5.1 in November, down from 7.9 a year ago. The national rate fell from 4.6 to 4.2 for the same period, down from 6.7 a year ago.

In Louisiana, total non-farm employment (1,865,300 jobs) added 8,500 jobs over the month and added 34,600 jobs over the year.

The series has seen eight consecutive over-the-year gains. This is the highest employment level since March 2020. Private sector employment (1,555,100 jobs) gained 8,000 jobs over the month and gained 36,100 jobs over the year. The series has seen eight consecutive over-the-year gains.

Volt discusses plans for Internet service

Volt Broadband, a wholly-owned subsidiary of the Winnsboro-based Northeast Louisiana Power Cooperative, plans to build out a fiber optic internet network for their customers residing and working in NELPCO's seven-parish territory footprint.

"We are pleased to be able to bring this to the customers we already serve through the power cooperative," said NELPCO and Volt Broadband General Manager Jeff Churchwell at a launch meeting held Jan. 11 at the company's office in Rayville. "Moving forward with this broadband initiative was approved by the cooperative board in June of last year, and we've been working toward this since that time."

"As you can imagine, this is certainly not a simple process and, as with any project of this type, there are many legal and political roads we must travel down before construction starts," he said. "This process is on-going and we are anxious to begin construction and launch this service for our membership."

A number of elected officials from throughout NELPCO's footprint were in attendance at the kickoff meeting, including numerous state senators and representatives, along with parish law enforcement and local government officials, cooperative board members, and interested citizens.

Public Service Commissioner Foster Campbell and Veneeth Iyengar with the governor's office were also in attendance.

"You all know I'm a lifelong Democrat," said Commissioner Campbell to the many elected officials in attendance at the meeting. "But, this is not a Democrat or Republican project, this is a people deal. This is far bigger than our politics because it's about helping people get educated and businesses get connected."

"There's no wrong way to do the right thing, and this is the right thing for the people

of northeast Louisiana," he added.

In addition, Jonathan Chambers of Conexon was on hand to discuss his company's involvement in the upcoming project. The company will be working with Volt Broadband to construct the network which will utilize the NELPCO power grid infrastructure. Chambers, a partner at Conexon based in Kansas City, MO, has worked for over thirty years at start-up telecommunications companies, as well as in government with the FCC. For the majority of his career, Chambers has worked with scores of electric cooperatives building broadband networks to bring fiber-to-the-home broadband to the customers they serve. "We're very pleased to be a part of this project," he told those in attendance. "The Volt Broadband initiative is different from any other broadband project in the state of Louisiana. Volt is wholly owned by the Northeast Louisiana Power Cooperative and, because of that, they will follow the long-established cooperative principles that have been successfully followed since they first brought electricity to the rural areas many years ago."

"At Conexon, we'll follow those same principles as we move forward in this project, meaning we will build the same high quality network to every single cooperative member, and we will do so quickly."

Chambers said once actual construction work begins, it will move at a fast pace.

"We plan to build this network over the course of the next two years," Chambers told those assembled at the meeting. "In just two years, one hundred percent of the members of Northeast Louisiana Power Cooperative will have access to the best levels of internet service available anywhere in the country, right here in rural northeast Louisiana, and the services will be very affordable."



Stockshow pageant winners announced

Madi Masters was named Queen of the Miss Northeast Louisiana Livestock Show Pageant Jan. 18 in Rayville. Above Masters is joined by fellow winners Miss Dixie Stockshow McKenzie Connelly, Miss Heart of Dixie Stockshow Sarah Broadway, Outstanding Teen Stockshow Sage Bell, Outstanding Teen Dixie Stockshow Julia Cox and Outstanding Teen Heart of Dixie Stockshow Hannah Reeder. Winners in other divisions, below, include 0-11 months Tiegan Carwell, 12-23 months Evan Williams, 2-3 years Lylah Kate Wiggins, 4-5 years Seigan-Kait Cobb, 6-7 years Mabry Ross, 8-9 years Keely Chevallier, 10-12 years Rayleigh Raney, 13-15 year Isabella Jones and 16-17 years Kierstyn Kitchens and 0-5 Supreme Queen Anna McGuffee, 6 and up Supreme Queen Emma Tatum and Ultimate Queen Leilani Washington.



NELPCO hosts annual meeting for members

Northeast Louisiana Power Cooperative is celebrating its 84th anniversary this year.

The member-owners of Northeast Louisiana Power Cooperative will meet at 9 a.m. Feb. 15 at the Jack Hammon's Community Center on Adams Street in Winnsboro. Registration begins at 8 a.m. and the meeting will begin at 9 a.m.

Business for the morning will include the election of seven directors to the cooperative's board of directors. Nominated for re-election for a three-year term are Charles B. Hixon, Rayville, and Richard Strong, Oak Grove. Nominated for re-election for a two-year term are Alton Welch, Pioneer, Thad Waters, St. Joseph, and Steve Pylant, Delhi. Nominated

for re-election for a one-year term are Ronald Pippin, Lake Providence, and Weldon Fitch, Bastrop.

All members registered and in attendance will receive a credit towards their next month's electric bill (one credit per member). To save time, members are urged to clip and bring the mailing label from their February issue of PowerLines.



Ray Cumpton

2021 Aycock Award winners

The Rayville Kiwanis Club has named Henry Cumpton and Dr. Georgia Ineichen as the winners of the 2021 Sellers Aycock Jr. Service Award on Jan. 11. Presenting the award are, from left, Kiwanis Club president Adam Townsend, Aycock family representative Sarah Aycock, Ineichen and Cumpton. The award is given each year in recognition of service to the community.

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