



## **KUDOS TO THE COUNCIL**

What a difference one week can make. In a letter sent to the editor last week by the Plaquemines Association of Business and Industry, PABI expressed our opinion that now is not the right time to adopt new taxes. Then, at the Council Meeting on November 12, the Council showed the courage and foresight to adopt and implement a USER FEE. This monthly fee will be included on the water bill and will eliminate most of the annual deficit of the Mosquito Control Department.

PABI understands that Plaquemines Parish no longer generates adequate revenues from oil and gas to fund the public services demanded by our residents. Long ago, PABI acknowledged that we must be part of the solution, which is USER FEES, not new taxes.

The big advantage that user fees have over millages is it provides immediate funding. Plaquemines Parish Government will not receive the first penny of a new 10-year property tax millage before 2023! What do we do in the meantime? One of the main reasons the current Parish Budget is balanced, and additional jobs and services were not cut, is because one-time funding from expiring BP fines was used to pay for recurring expenditures. This funding will not be available a year from now to continue paying for these services. Unfortunately, revenues from a millage tax will not be available for at least two years. However, USER FEES to provide Parish services will be available right-away.

We must all realize that times in Plaquemines Parish have changed. We can no longer pay for Parish services with abundant oil and gas revenues. However, we must find a fair and equitable way where no one pays more than their fair share. Not everyone will be subject to paying millage taxes. How would you like to pay higher taxes and have your neighbor pay none at all? A USER FEE could be a smaller amount paid by all. Everyone will pay a little bit thus spreading the burden out among all. We should all pay less.

In summary, now is the time for our elected leaders to question the cost of operating subsidized departments and the cost of services provided. PABI appreciates our elected officials considering USER FEES and coming to an agreeable approach and PABI asks that these discussions continue in all department areas.

We encourage all residents to educate themselves on the issues and to exercise their right to vote on Saturday, December 5, 2020.

Timothy J. Schotsch,

2020 Chairman

Plaquemines Association of Business & Industry (PABI)