

## Barn

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halted, and the historic property might someday be restored and reused.

"Surprised would be an understatement," said Kendra Van Cleef, who has seen the "Save the Dairy Barn at Buhlow Lake" page draw more than 7,200 "likes" since she started it on Nov. 11.



Kendra Van Cleef

"I was shocked. I knew people cared about it, but I didn't know it was going to have the support it's had."

The barn — with its white exterior, red gambrel roof and double wings jutting off from the main loft — is one of the more recognizable historic structures still standing in the area. It's historic quality and majestic setting have inspired plenty of conversation of what it could be, if redeveloped in the right hands.

Unfortunately, the talk has been only that. And every year that passes without major renovations is a year closer to potentially

losing the landmark.

In the 1990s, several of the beams supporting the roof were replaced and steel tension rods were installed horizontally throughout the main loft to stabilize the barn. In 2009, it was named by the Louisiana Trust for Historic Preservation as one of the 10 most endangered historic sites in the state.

While the barn is not in immediate danger of collapsing or being demolished, the elements continue to take a toll and the lack of a plan for its restoration and use has long been a source of concern for local preservationists. Van Cleef, a Dry Prong resident who has taken photos of the barn every year for several years, started the Facebook page after noticing the changes in her most recent photo from earlier ones.

That quickly turned into a seven-member committee. It's one and only mission — to protect the barn from further deterioration.

"We don't have an endgame as to what it should be," said committee member Nathan Martin, also a Pineville city councilman. "None of us have a personal agenda other than it being saved."

For now, committee

members are trying to generate as much buzz as possible. They're asking anyone with an interest in the barn to visit the Facebook page, add to the likes total and share their own thoughts, memories, photos, etc.

Moving forward, they're hoping the momentum translates into a plan of action.

Tom David with Pan-American Engineers in Alexandria has offered his services to assess the structural condition of the barn and provide the group a better idea of the costs of protecting and restoring the property.

Committee members are exploring forming a nonprofit that would be able to receive donations dedicated to protecting and restoring the barn.

"We know it's going to be a \$1 million project," Van Cleef said. "I'm not scared by that."

Committee members have had ongoing dialogue with public stakeholders, including Central officials and the city of Pineville, and found them receptive. Funding has been approved for Central to move to a new facility adjacent to Pinecrest Supports and Services Center, which could open up hundreds of acres to

private sector development.

"That will become some prime real estate for the most part, if handled correctly," Pineville Mayor Clarence Fields said.

Fields said "it's been a long time coming" for a private sector group to step up and make a push to save the barn. The Historical Association of Central Louisiana previously had discussions with the state about taking the property over, but had to pass since it lacked the resources to restore it.

Historical Association President Charles Charrier said the barn "probably has a greater number of people interested in it than the Hotel Bentley. As Alexandrians, of course, we love to see the Bentley being restored. But I think the Dairy Barn has an even broader appeal among the general populace of Rapides Parish for its restoration and preservation."

"The offers we've had of people willing to donate their professional expertise demonstrates how much this means to people," Martin said. "I think the passion is unanimous throughout the community. It's just the perfect time. The momentum is there."

## Mayo

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2015.

He said the city as a whole is improving, and he's working to expand that growth into southern Monroe, an area of the city where residents feel overlooked and under-served.

"The city is stronger now than what it was when I started," he said. "We feel like the city downtown is growing, so the things that we've done, along with our private partners, are working."

"The north side is healthy and growing. One of the biggest challenges right now is in south Monroe. We've done some things like the Public Safety Center and the City Hall Annex. There's been some developments in south Monroe, but it's incumbent upon us to be more aggressive."

There's no denying that his sometimes-tumultuous relationship with the City Council will cause problems, but Mayo said he hopes to improve it and sees a clear way of doing so.

"The biggest prob-

lems I have with some members of the council is they have tried to do administrative roles and duties," he said. "What the administration needs to do is communicate more what those duties and responsibilities are. The public has hired me to do a job just like they've hired (council members) to do a job."

Mayo said he hopes the two bodies can show some leadership, put their differences aside and work to move the city forward.

"I have no problems with putting things aside and trying to do what's in the best interest for the city," he said. "I think that the council and administration relationship could be much, much better, but there has to be leadership. The biggest thing is understanding the roles and responsibility."

Mayo said the future will bring forth positive change for the city.

"I'm optimistic," he said. "Even all the positive things you've seen so far, you've seen nothing yet. The start of 2015 is going to be something major."

Follow Kaleb Causey on Twitter @Kaleb\_Causey.

## Math

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ered proficient in math based on standardized tests. In Louisiana, the figures are even lower — 27 percent of fourth-graders, and 21 percent of eighth-graders — were categorized as proficient.

In addition, only about half of high school students in Louisiana have mastered all of the skill areas in algebra and geometry, according to end-of-course data in the report.

"I think one of the problems that I saw was having a coherent progression of the mathematics," said

Nell McAnelly, co-director of the Cain Center. "There were too many times where there were gaps in student education, where they didn't master something before moving on ... I think there have been cases of re-teaching things, or having big gaps, and we weren't teaching in a developmental fashion so that students were able to progress and master the material and understand it as they move forward."

Penny Gennuso, president of the Louisiana Council of Supervisors of Mathematics, said the research has shown the importance of establishing a strong foundation in basic math skills before teachers and

students move on to more advanced concepts.

"There's a strong correlation between being successful and understanding number sense and fractions, especially as it correlates to the success the student will have in algebra," said Gennuso, who is also the Lafayette Parish School System's math and science specialist. "Once you move into algebra, you have to find unknowns and think critically. Having a strong foundation in those early grades definitely relates to success in algebra."

To help Louisiana students perform better in math, some educators said they think the Common Core State Standards can

be used in an increased way. Rapides Parish public schools are using Eureka Math, a curriculum that uses the Common Core standards, and has been implemented in about 70 percent of Louisiana school districts this year, up from 40 percent last year, said Kim Bennett, Rapides schools deputy assistant superintendent of curriculum and instruction.

Proponents argue that the curriculum teaches concepts to a greater depth and develops critical thinking skills. Rapides schools Superintendent Nason "Tony" Authement has said it moves beyond memorization and "drill and prac-

tice" math and into conceptual thinking.

Not all schools in the district have gone that route, though. Two private elementary schools — St. Frances Cabrini School and Our Lady of Prompt Succor School — are using alternative curricula that are aligned to the new standards.

Gennuso said Lafayette Parish schools are seeing positive results with Eureka Math.

"We've seen some data on schools that implemented it well last year, and they have increased scores in several grade levels," Gennuso said. "It seems like Common Core is heard as a bad word, but when you

read the standards, they are really good. Is anything perfect? No, but it brings us to another level and I know if we really embrace it in Louisiana, we will see some good results."

McAnelly said she also thinks there needs to be more rigor in math instruction, which is called for in the standards.

"Rigor doesn't just mean harder," she said. "Rigor involves the conceptual understanding with the procedural skill and ability to apply it. We need to take the politics out of it and we've got to help our students. I hope this report focuses on that in such a way that it's a call to action."



# CELEBRATING CHRISTMAS

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\$15.00 Adults	Red River Chorale Members
\$5.00 Students	Red River Chorale Website: <a href="http://redriverchorale.com">redriverchorale.com</a>
Available from:	TicketCentral: <a href="http://ticket-central.org">ticket-central.org</a> 
Red River Music, 5731 Jackson Street	To reserve by phone, call: 484-4463

Tickets will be available at the door on a space-available basis.

# RED RIVER CHORALE

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