

# METRO • STATE

IN CAMERON PARISH

## Rita rebound

Wildlife refuge center back in business



### Visitor friendly center

The Cameron Prairie National Wildlife Refuge officially reopened its doors Thursday. Visitors can learn the history of the area and see wildlife in its natural environment. The new center features several displays and interactive computers. About 200 people attended the opening ceremony, which was also held to honor those involved in the center's rebuilding effort.

BRAD PUCKETT / AMERICAN PRESS



## Center gives Cameron reason to celebrate

BY CLAUDETTE OLIVIER  
AMERICAN PRESS

The Cameron Prairie National Wildlife Refuge's visitor center, heavily damaged during Hurricane Rita in 2005, has reopened, marking another step in bringing ecotourists and others back to the area, said one refuge official.

"Rebuilding the center will be good for Cameron Parish," said Don Voros, Southwest Louisiana National Wildlife Refuge Complex project leader.

The new center — whose repair and refurbishment cost about \$2 million — includes two animatronic characters in a diorama; a scale-model water control structure; alligator displays; computers; and a fiber-optic migration exhibit.

"Our new elevated building is hurricane prepared,

**'Our new elevated building is hurricane prepared, with a metal roof and concrete siding, and will better withstand future storms.'**

**Don Voros**  
SW La. National Wildlife Refuge Complex project leader

with a metal roof and concrete siding, and will better withstand future storms," Voros said. "The building also won a Refuge Directors Award for being a green building. It's built from recy-

#### ■ MORE ONLINE

For more scenes of the refuge center opening visit our Web site: [www.americanpress.com](http://www.americanpress.com)

clod materials, and as little wood as possible was used.

"The new building is a feather in our cap," he said.

About 200 people attended the center's opening ceremony, including Shelley Johnson, executive director of the Southwest Louisiana Convention & Visitors Bureau.

"Since 2005, outdoors and recreation are a large part of what we promote to draw people to Southwest Louisiana," she said. "We have resilient people and resilient wildlife, and without the people, opening this center would not be possible."

Monte Hurley, Creole Nature Trail All-American Road District chairman, spoke of the importance of

local refuges.

"These refuges are something that some people have never experienced before," Hurley said. "We've got the greatest little piece of earth here, a little piece of heaven at home. We have to retain the wildlife we have. We're doing this for future generations to enjoy what we did."

Also on hand were 22 students from Ascension Episcopal School in Lafayette Parish.

"The center is great, a wonderful time," said teacher Chad Chase. "A biologist talked to the students, and they invited us to opening ceremony since we were here. The kids loved it, by accident, and we will continue to bring students yearly."

The students, along with another teacher, Danielle Ware, visited the center as part of their biology, chemistry and forensics classes.

### Drug fight

Substance abuse takes toll on youth. Drug court program proves effective tool in battling problem.

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## Six men indicted for alleged ambush of LC police officer

BY VINCENT LUPO  
AMERICAN PRESS

Calcasieu Parish grand jurors indicted six men Thursday who allegedly ambushed a police lieutenant as he left a substation Sept. 2. Jurors also cleared a motorist who struck and killed a cyclist Aug. 1.

Indicted on charges of attempted first-degree murder were Brandon Andra Trahan, 33, of 17618 Lasting Rose Drive in Houston; Edmond Lawrence Jr., 23, of 1617 12th St.; David Wayne Royster, 22, and Joshua Wayne Royster, 23, both of 1712 Eighth Ave.; Anthony James Aaron, 23, of 1505 Hunter Drive; and Eddie Joseph Banks, 23, of 1725 13th St.

Judge David Ritchie previously set bond at \$2 million each.

At 12:30 a.m. Sept. 2, Lt. Arnold Bellow was leaving his office in the 2400 block of Anita Drive when he was fired on by up to six men, Police Chief Don Dixon said when the men were arrested last month.

"Lt. Bellow returned fire, took cover and was not injured," he said. "These cowards clearly had no regard for human life whatsoever."

He said residences surrounding the scene were hit by bullets during the shootout.

Dixon said the attack was the result of recent investigations by Bellow that "severely disrupted narcotics trafficking" in the Carshop area of Lake Charles — mainly Progressive and Tulip streets and Ninth and 10th avenues.

"Search warrants in the past few weeks led to arrests

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**Don Dixon**  
Police chief

and seizures of narcotics, drying up the drug trafficking in the area," Dixon said.

He said the people arrested were major suppliers of drugs in that area.

Bellow has been with the department for 22 years and most recently worked in the community policing division, which works with Neighborhood Watch groups. He previously worked as a patrol officer and with the drug task force.

Dixon did not say how many of the attackers were armed or how many guns have been recovered or the types used.

Also Thursday, grand jurors declined to indict Orville E. Kuiken, 85, on a charge of vehicular homicide in connection with the death of Martin Dale Nicholson, 56, of Sulphur.

A truck driven by Kuiken struck Nicholson from behind as he rode his bicycle on Houston River Road at 7:30 a.m. Aug. 1.

Nicholson was taken to a local hospital, where he died from his injuries at about noon, authorities said.

Staff Writer **Vanessa C. Deggins** contributed to this story.

## CNN Web post draws tips in investigation into unsolved deaths

BY DORIS MARICLE  
AMERICAN PRESS

IN JEFF DAVIS

JENNINGS — Investigators are checking out leads that resulted from a CNN Web post about the unsolved slayings of eight women whose bodies have been found dumped in Jeff Davis Parish over the last four years.

The post, about a Web site recently established by a task force assigned to investigate the deaths, appeared Wednesday on CNN.com.

"On Tuesday the Web site had over 600 hits, but by 3 p.m. Wednesday — after CNN had put the story on their Web site — we had had 2,700 hits," Sheriff Ricky Edwards said Thursday.

He said many of those going to the site are posting tips and information for authorities to follow up on.

"We have a lot of people who are comparing different similar circumstances in other parts of the country and making us aware of them," he said. "Most we already had

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**Ricky Edwards**  
Jeff Davis Parish sheriff

because of the FBI, but we are keeping a close eye on all of those."

Several e-mails have also been generated from the site — many of them offering help, support and prayers, Edwards said.

He said the task force takes every bit of information seriously and follows up on every lead, even if it is something officials have received before.

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