Abbeville man ploy his trade shoeing horses

By PAT WATTERS
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PERRY — Bryan Boudreaux, slinging a halter against his leg, strode across the pen toward the big gelding who eyed him warily.

"One thing I hate is chasing horses," Boudreaux explained. That's plainly the only thing he doesn't love about his work as a farrier.

He was on one of the farms he regularly services. He caught the sorrel gelding, led him to a fence near his camper pickup truck and tied him.

The back of the truck was open with the tools of his trade sitting ready, his portable forge, anvil, hoof stand and rack of horseshoes.

Boudreaux, 21, who lives near Perry on his parents' farm overlooking the Vermilion River, started out as a horseshoe last year.

His trade is perhaps little known to city dwellers but is crucial to farmers and other horse owners. It's the modern version of the old village smithy. But he goes to the horses rather than the horses being brought to him.

Boudreaux went to work quickly, taking his tool rack out of the truck. He put on a pair of red leather McIlhene State University, he dropped out to go learn about the horseshoe business.

"I just always wanted to try this," Boudreaux said. He learned how to make a horseshoe at the school by doing it. But he doesn't expect to make one for a customer. He charges $150 for a toffy shoe.

They come in a variety of sizes. Boudreaux keeps a wheel with all the sizes he needs to make it in the horse's hoof. The shoe has different-sized grooves and a hole for shaping the shoe. Sometimes he has to use his forge in the process.

Boudreaux has received on-the-job training from Lindsay Perez of New Iberia, a dedicated horseshoer in the area. Most days he travels with Perez, the two of them shoeing the horses. They shoe and trim horses in six periods.

"I learned a lot in school, but Lindsay has taught me how to really do things, like how to make a shoe that has rounded toe. I learned that something in school, but Lindsay really taught me about it."