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BASILE

Led By a Lady Mayor, Basile Produces Leaders
Who Refuse To Take No For An Answer. The Results: Community Growth and Civic Pride.

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WHAT MAKES Basile run is a question many Louisiana officials would like answered. Year in, year out, the strategically located town of 2,000 has captured the imagination of many with its innovations and progress.

An inkling of the answer is manifest in the dedication of the new Basile State Bank building recently.

Fortunately, Basile has produced a crop of businessmen and civic leaders who do not take no for an answer and who are uncowed by difficult goals. Their influence has forced the town to move forward.

In the first place, the officials governing a town with such a reserve of ability must necessarily be capable. They must somehow manage to keep a step ahead of their constituents.

Basile has found a durable group to do the leading.

Mrs. Rose L. Doga, the mayor, accepted the burden at the untimely death of her husband, Walter Doga, to make sure his program was carried out. He had just been elected to his second term as mayor.

Mrs. Doga has been fortunate in getting the caliber of men now serving on the council. Adam Brunet, for instance, is serving his second term. C. (Chunkie) Hester, Jr., is serving his third term, in addition to one term as mayor. John P. Langley is in his second term. Howard Chaumont and Abney Fontenot are proving that newcomers, both in their first term, to the council can make singular contributions.

For years the underlying feeling has been one of cooperation. Dedication of the new bank building proved this.

Since the new building marks a milestone in what is turning out to be an extremely successful venture, President Fulton J. Bacon and the board planned an open house. Well, the merchants, businessmen and civic clubs provided door prizes and four hours of uninterrupted, non-commercial radio time over KEUN, Eunice, to mark the occasion.

Opened on July 2, 1956, the Basile State Bank reached the $1 million deposit mark in three months. After six years of operation, it had reached the $2 million mark during its peak season.

President Bacon points out that the bank has 1,700 accounts, a high figure for a town this size. The stockholders are mainly from the trade area, a fact which explains the fast growth.

Total deposits were $6 million at mid-year.

The president is active in civic, business and political affairs, being vice president of the Evangeline School Board, vice president of the State School Board, and manager of a lumber company.

Other officers are P. J. Baker, Jr., executive vice president and cashier; Harry Aymard, vice president; and Brunet, House M. Deshotel, Deo Guidry, C. L. Hester, Jr., Wesley Hebert, Raymond Koudal, M. M. Mertens, Sidney M. Pelloquin and S. J. Stagg, directors. J. Rayford Aucott is assistant cashier. Other employees are Leonard M. Daigle, Irene Sonnier, Linda C. Laflargue and Besse Ledoux.

Another important factor in Basile’s success story is its organizations. Take the Freeman Memorial Hospital, Inc. This is a group headed by P. J. Baker attempting to get a clinic or hospital to locate in Basile.

The Basile Civic Club is a merchant organization which functions as a Chamber of Commerce.

Then there is the Basile Athletic Assn., a model group devoted to the development of Basile High School and its athletic program. P. J. Baker is also head of this group. Maurice Andrepont is vice president and Russell Stockwell is secretary-treasurer. The association does everything from selling tickets to providing transportation for the team, everything but the coaching.

Basile has long had excellent streets. Street Commissioner Dewey Bellon can point to seven years of progress in which close to 100 per cent of the streets were blacktopped at $1.50 a foot. State aid was used and property owners only paid for the materials.

A recently constructed bridge has opened a new route through the town.

Police Chief Cleve Schambres a long time ago organized a 24-hour protection patrol for the town.

Fire Chief Deo Guidry is in charge of a 36-volunteer department with two trucks. A phone system, with 20 phones tied in, is used to alert the firemen. An alarm system is also used.

The department is operated by a board made up of Guidry, P. J. Baker, Jean Fontenot, Maurice Andrepont, Charles Bollick, Joe Elbert and Burke Brunet.

Basile owns its own water system. The wells have just been repaired and worked. Residents pay $2 monthly while business places are metered. The town also handles natural gas distribution.

Ferdie Andrus is in charge of the playground and recreation program. The town sponsors a summer program including Little League, volleyball, softball, horses, bowling, ping-pong and swimming. The Knights of Columbus, Baptist church and the sheriff’s department cooperated with the town in sponsoring the program.

Youth is served through the Boy Scouts. For the first time in 26 years, a troop was formed in 1958. P. J. Baker and Maurice Andrepont organized it with 52 scouts. Russell Stockwell, Baker’s successor as scoutmaster, has just brought the troop back from a 1,200-mile trip through the Ozarks.

Basile High School, grades 1 through 12, has just received half a million dollars worth of new facilities, including classrooms, athletic field and a lighting system. Cepured students attend W. W. Stewart High.

Basile, located on Louisiana Highway 371, and U. S. Highway 190, also has freight and passenger service from the east-west route of Missouri Pacific railroad.

Rice, cotton, cattle and oil are the main economic standbys, while fishing and hunting are dependable for outside money. The main fishing spots are Bayou des Canes and Bayou Nezique.

Geographically Basile is linked with the Deep South and the Acadian culture. It is 15 miles east of Kinder, 11 miles west of Eunice and 26 miles southwest of the parish seat, Ville Platte.