BVD gets new headquarters by river

Carpenters finish work on the new Bayou Vermilion District offices located at 350 Fisher Road near Vermilionville. The cluster of offices, which consists of an old caretaker's cabin as well as newly constructed buildings, is slated to open in March. Bayou Vermilion District officials are happy to be locating next to the river in order to establish a greater identification with the body of water they manage.

The Bayou Vermilion District is now next to river it manages

John St. Ores
Staff Writer

LAFAYETTE — It was once the caretaker's quarters on the Jean Mouton plantation, but within the next couple of weeks, it will be the new home of the people who take care of the Vermilion River.

The effort to locate the Bayou Vermilion District's administrative offices to a permanent home on the river, across from Vermilionville, has been under way for almost two years, according to BVD spokeswoman Jo Dunham.

"We were not quite sure how we were going to do it or when," Dunham said.

The answer came when the Mouton estate donated the bousillage two-room cottage to BVD. "Bousillage" is the term used to describe the dried-mud-and-moss-style of construction common to many vintage Acadian dwellings. The dried mud and moss is used as in-filling between wooden timbers.

"The house probably dates to the early 19th century," Dunham said. "We got advice from Ed Cazayous, who is the head of the Architecture Department at USL, and who has just finished building a new house using the bousillage process. He came over and showed us how to do it and we've just been doing it ourselves in-house."

The building was moved to a site across the pond from Vermilionville at 350 Fisher Road. Electric, plumbing and air conditioning/heating were added, as were an additional conference room, a half-bath and a kitchen area.

The Bayou Vermilion District was first located at Vermilionville. When it outgrew that space, it relocated to offices in Broussard and then on Pinhook Road. Dunham said the new permanent address on the river was needed for a number of reasons.

"We feel like we should have been on the river a long time ago," she said. "The setting back there is wonderful. It's at the end of the airport lease (land) that was never developed. Being able to have projects there that identify us with the river (like Trash Bash) will be really important."

One such upcoming project is a two-year endeavor, funded by the Department of Environmental Quality, to monitor "macro-vetbrates" in the Vermilion water.

"That sounds really complicated, but it really only means going in and taking monthly water samples in different areas of the river," Dunham said. "You find little bugs that live in the water and you determine if they are good bugs or bad bugs, depending on the water quality. That will involve a lot of citizens from the community, we hope."

A ribbon-cutting and open house are tentatively slated for Saturday, April 4 to formally dedicate the new BVD office.

"A lot of people still don't know who BVD is," Dunham said. "Starting in March, people are welcome to come on over and check out our new digs."

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