Crawfish Not Only Key To Breaux Bridge Growth

BREAUX BRIDGE - The residents of Breaux Bridge are proud — and justly so — of the reputation their biennial Crawfish Festival has attained. On the other hand, they'd like to inform area residents that there's much more to the growing town than the Crawfish Festival and any drainage problems that may have been created due to it.

However, this is the year for the Crawfish Festival and town officials are quick to assure that it will be nothing short of previous celebrations. This year's event is scheduled for April 15, 16 and 17.

In 1960, the town had a population of nearly 3,500 but this year, Mayor Louis M. Kern estimates that the figure has now grown to over 4,000. "We're a growing town," he said. "Part of the increase comes from the normal birth rate but the coming of a petroleum company just outside of town brought in several families."

New families moving into the town are assured they'll have ample police and fire protection. The town has four regular police officers under a full-time chief plus two men who are employed part-time. The fire department consists of volunteers who man the two fire trucks and, for rural fires, the department has a tank truck which carries enough water to efficiently battle small blazes.

"The town faces little problem in the matter of sewerage unless it annexes additional area. All of the residences and business establishments are already connected to the sewerage system," the mayor said.

PROGRESSIVE MAYOR - Louis M. Kern, mayor of Breaux Bridge, appears happy over the fact that his town is growing. He said there will soon have all streets paved and every house in the corporate limits has sewer connections. The town has also undertaken recent major improvements in its water system. (Advertiser Staff Photo)

WATER SUPPLY

A water supply is vitally important to a town and Breaux Bridge ranks among the top in area towns. During the past year, many improvements have been made in the municipal water plant and a new well has just been put into production.

"We also have installed a new reservoir tower of 500,000 gallon capacity and constructed a new tank, also of 300,000 gallons," Kern said. "Formerly, we had a tank of only 100,000 gallon capacity."

"We've also built a new filtration system for the town," he said.

Breaux Bridge's business establishments are already connected to the sewage system, the mayor said.

WATER SYSTEM

The town also has its own gas system, but buys its light supplies from a utilities supplier. In the way of schools, Breaux Bridge can boast of three high schools — a public unit for white students, a parochial school and Carver High for Negro students. Each of the three schools has its own elementary department.

Recently, six classrooms were added to Breaux Bridge Elementary School, and five classrooms plus a new industrial arts and agricultural building were built at high school.

"Our City Hall was once a school building," Kern said. "But five years ago we bought it from the school board and remodeled it and now we have a nice, modern building which is well equipped. In addition to city offices, it also houses the drivers license examiner's office as well as other official offices."

A $12 million expansion of the Wanda Petroleum Company in Breaux Bridge is expected to benefit the community greatly. Work on the expansion is underway.

Another big project for the crawfish town is the town's new rental housing facilities for the elderly. Plans are now being worked up. In the future, the town hopes to see a four-lane highway to Lafayette residents who commute daily to their jobs.

To cope with the expansion and growth of Breaux Bridge, the city recently acquired land for a new subdivision, "Tech Eights, which will soon open up across the bayou. Already, streets have been dedicated in this subdivision and some lots have been sold."

The city is ready to install water, gas and sewerage facilities in the area.

From a recreational standpoint, the town has installed a lighted half mile field for the youth recreation department, and has two swimming pools.

Most of the income of the town is derived from sugar cane, the principal crop of the parish, and Breaux Bridge has a large cane processing plant which has spent nearly a half million dollars recently in returning its crops. Income from oil adds to the bank accounts of local residents.