By CHRIS HAND
Advertiser Area Writer

ABBEVILLE — The Vermilion Parish Police Jury voted to go on record as opposing shell dredging in Louisiana last night. And, the Seventh Ward Fire station, closed since a walk out by volunteer firemen there over a month ago, may soon be back in operation, Secretary-treasurer Jewit Hulin announced at the meeting.

The jury passed a motion requested by Richard Hayes, the president of Save Our Coast Inc, to oppose shell dredging.

Hayes and other environmentalists argue that shell dredging is destroying the barrier reefs along the coast of Louisiana causing an increase in erosion.

In his request, Hayes told the jury that much of the shell dredging which goes on in Louisiana is sponsored by the La. Department of Highways which uses the shells for road beds even though other, more practical materials, such as lime, are now used.

“It’s ironic,” Hayes said, “that the state is paying to pull shells out of the Gulf to build roads and then paying again to have artificial reefs put in.”

Hayes said the state stands to lose millions of dollars in oil tax revenues as erosion moves the coastline back, putting oil rigs which are now under state regulation, beyond the 3-mile limit.

Resolutions to ban shell dredging in Louisiana have already been passed in the neighboring coastal parishes of Iberia and Jefferson Davis.

The Seventh Ward Fire station, shut down last month after a walk-out by its volunteer fire fighters, will be re-organized, it was also announced at last night’s meeting.

Secretary-treasurer Jewit Hulin told the Jury two residents of the Seventh District, Odilion Marceaux Jr. and Mike Detraz, are currently taking on new volunteer fire fighters to replace the 19 firemen who resigned more than a month ago.

Members of the fire station had walked out in protest of juror Leon “Shorty” Detraz’s appointment of Kenneth Stelly to an $800-a-month position at the fire station.

The fire fighters claimed Stelly was not qualified for the position of station manager because he was not from the area and had no previous fire-fighting experience, and that his appointment by Detraz was merely “political.” Detraz was absent from last night’s meeting.

Hulin said he didn’t know whether Stelly would serve with the new fire department or how many volunteers have signed up so far and that until re-organization of the station is complete emergency calls will continue to be taken by the Abbeville Fire Department located 18 miles from the Seventh Ward.
IN VERMILION PARISH

Jury Votes Against Dredging

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