By JAY WORKMAN

DENHAM SPRINGS — Suburban commuters and small-town natives make up much of the population of Denham Springs, which is Baton Rouge's neighbor to the east.

Across the Amite River in Livingston Parish, Denham is reached by Florida Boulevard (U.S.190) or the first Interstate 12 exit east of O'Neal Lane. The population is about 8,000, with nearly 4,600 registered voters.

The Chamber of Commerce has information on businesses, demographics and services in the area. It has an office near City Hall and its telephone number is 665-8155.

Municipal water, natural gas, sewer and trash services are available by telephoning 667-8330. The trash collection service is contracted to Browning-Ferris Industries Inc.

Automobile registration can be done in Hammond or Baton Rouge. Drivers' licenses may be applied for at the municipal annex across Government Street from City Hall.

Four public elementary schools, two junior highs and a 1,600-student high school draw pupils from within the city. Other public services include the Council on Aging, the Youth Services Bureau and a small library.

Two large parks offer athletic and picnicking facilities. Wine and liquor are not sold in stores or most restaurants, although liquor by the drink can be obtained at the local private country club and some establishments in predominately black neighborhoods.

The telephone number of the Police Department, where Scott Jones is chief, is 665-5196.

The Fire Department number is 665-8276. C.H. 'Connie' Kennedy is chief.

The Livingston Parish Sheriff's Office number is 665-2241. Residential telephone service may be obtained by calling 1-557-6506.

Two electricity companies serve the city. Dixie Electric Membership Corp. is at 665-9522 and Gulf State Utilities is at 665-6111.

Three banks and two savings and loan associations are headquartered here.

There are 37 Protestant churches and one Roman Catholic church.

The city is incorporated under the Louisiana Act and operates with an elected mayor and a five-member Board of Aldermen.

Land in the area was first granted to a European in 1804. In 1827 William Denham settled on property near the Amite River that had several springs on it.

When yellow fever was causing deaths in nearby communities before the Civil War, many persons moved here and some believed the springs contained minerals that prevented the disease.

Several hotels were built and federal troops were quartered in them during the Civil War. When the Yankees abandoned the area in 1863 the hotels were burned.

Following the war the community, then called Hill Springs, was dormant, partly because of the weak economy of the post-war South.

In 1888 the post office was renamed Denham Springs and in 1903 the community of 125 persons was incorporated as a village.

The construction of a railroad between Hammond and Baton Rouge in 1908 brought new life to the village, which became a town in 1929 and a city in 1957. Railroad trains no longer stop here.