Incoming freshman John Frelot, with the help of his mom, Jeannet Frelot, and sister Auden, 4, moves into the dorms at Rose Garmany Halls on Wednesday at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette.

‘A long week but a fun week’
UL-Lafayette rolling out welcome mat

BY SETH DICKERSON
Special to The Advocate

LAFAYETTE — University of Louisiana at Lafayette plans to kick off the fall semester in style with a week full of events as students breathe life back into the campus.

“It’s a long week, but a fun week,” said Ruby Henderson, assistant director for marketing and leadership at UL-Lafayette. “It’s also an important week, especially for those returning students because it’s something that they expect and something they look forward to.”

The annual weeklong fall semester celebration begins Monday, the first day of classes.

University officials and student leaders will be handing out doughnuts, juice, water and fruit for students walking through the bustling intersection of St. Mary Boulevard and Rex Street from 7:30 a.m. to 9 a.m.

“It’s something really simple, but students really appreciate it,” Henderson said. “It really gives off the welcome-back-type atmosphere.”

After a short break on Tuesday, the festivities continue Wednesday with “Get on Board Day,” a two-hour showcase of the university’s clubs and organizations on the grassy corner of Hebrard and St. Mary.

“It helps to add people who may not have seen us for orientation or have even considered UL-Lafayette, even given it the time up until now,” UL-Lafayette Anime Club President Sladen Mire said. “So, in the spirit of ‘no nerd left behind,’ it’s very important.”

Later on that night, Bourgeois Hall will host “Rec Fest,” a presentation from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. show-
casing all the services the recreational hall offers students.

There will be a color run, as well as free drinks and shirts. Only the first 300 students who apply may participate in the paint race.

Looking to get students pumped up for the upcoming football season as well, the university will put on its annual Ragin' Roar from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. Thursday at the Blackham Coliseum.

After a 20-minute pep rally featuring cheerleaders and the Pride of Acadiana, singer-songwriter and Carencro native Marc Broussard will perform.

This will be the first time a musician has performed during the event.

“It’s going to be really cool,” Henderson said. “We’re trying to expand a tradition that we’ve had forever and make it better.

As times change, students change, so it’s important that we understand that and try to accommodate them by putting on programs that are of interest to them.”

And finally, on Friday, there will be a free breakfast for students near Broussard and Lee halls, as well as a Block Party featuring music from local radio stations and appearances by local businesses. The breakfast will be from 7:30 to about 9 a.m., and the Block Party will run from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

“Ever since I came to UL-

Incoming freshman Sarah Young moves her belongings into the dorms at Rose Garden Halis on Wednesday afternoon at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette. More than 2,000 students moved into university housing Wednesday and Thursday.

Lafayette, the Block Party at the end of the week has always been my favorite,” Student Government Association President Dane Adams said. “It promotes local businesses and has been a way for students to get hyped and excited for the upcoming year.”

The week of events is designed to get students excited about the college experience, Henderson said.

“It’s a proven statistic that if you can get college students involved in their university as freshmen, they’re more prone to continue on and be more successful as students,” he said. “They can feel the connection. It’s very important that we get them connected to something. If they can find something they’re interested in and connect to, it’ll increase their chances of being successful and continuing on through graduation.”

Adams agreed.

“When you get involved, you become invested in the here and now as well as the future,” Adams said. “You create your own home and experience by getting involved… and all these ‘homes’ come together to create UL-Lafayette.”