

THE ACADIANA ADVOCATE



THEADVOCATE.COM | MONDAY, MARCH 27, 2023 \$2.00

ST. MARTINVILLE

Tuneup

New owners restoring Duchamp Opera House to serve as event space

BY ADAM DAIGLE
Acadiana business editor

It's a pretty routine thing for a group of visitors to empty out of a large tour bus in downtown St. Martinville. Sometimes they are French, and they may even peek into the Duchamp Opera House, across the street from the city's biggest attraction, the St. Martin de Tours Catholic Church.

But if they ask about what's going on at the opera house, its new owner, St. Martinville native Mike LeBlanc, will engage. His grandmother spoke textbook French — as well as Cajun French — and often conversed with French tourists years ago, but nowadays, he will try his best to converse via translator on his smartphone.

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ABOVE: The staircase and first floor inside the Duchamp Opera House in St. Martinville

LEFT: Actors' and other theater participants' names, phrases and drawings are seen on the dressing room wall.

BELOW: The Duchamp Opera House, first built in 1830, is believed to be the oldest in Acadiana and the oldest surviving opera house building in the country.

STAFF PHOTOS BY LESLIE WESTBROOK

6 options eyed for renaming La. Guard facility

Official follows Army's lead in removing Confederate links

BY FAIMON A. ROBERTS III
Staff writer

Camp Beauregard, the sprawling Louisiana installation in Pineville that functions as one of two main sites for the Louisiana National Guard, will get a new name later this year as it follows the Army's lead in moving away from bases named for Confederate officers.

Louisiana Adjutant Gen. D. Keith Waddell, a gubernatorial appointee, will choose from six names presented to him by a committee made up of National Guard and civilian leaders, he said Tuesday. Waddell hopes to have made his decision within the next month with a rededication ceremony to come later this year.

"I understand that the Louisiana National Guard is a very diverse and inclusive organization," Waddell said Tuesday. "I wanted to do what's best for our organization, and this is part of that."

The names under consideration include: Louisiana National Guard Training Center Pineville, Central Louisiana Training Center Pineville, Camp Stroud, Louisiana Maneuvers Training Center, Camp Pineville and Post de Rapides.

An online survey conducted by the Guard showed 71% of respondents in favor of the name change, according to Lt. Col. Noel Collins, a Louisiana National Guard spokesperson. At a town hall in September, the feedback was more mixed, according to a report in The Alexandria Town Talk.

Alexandria resident Carol Ann Thompson said she favored keeping it as it is.

"I don't know why they want to change it to start off with," Thompson, 76, said. "He is the one it was named after to begin with."

Thompson brushed off worries that naming things after Confederates was problematic. "We are all Americans now," she said.

Camp Beauregard is named for P.G.T. Beauregard, who served as a general in the Confederate Army. Beauregard Parish, in southwestern Louisiana is also named for him. In 2017, New Orleans officials removed a statue of Beauregard that stood at the entrance to City Park.

The name change comes at a

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New transportation leader described as experienced, no frills

Kalivoda's tenure to be short-lived

BY WILL SENTELL
Staff writer

Louisiana's new transportation chief has already learned that the demand for roads and bridges in this state never ends.

"When you are secretary, that is when everybody wants five min-

utes of your time, but it is never five minutes," said Eric Kalivoda, who began the job as secretary for the state Department of Transportation and Development on March 5.

Kalivoda, 65, was named to the \$202,000-per-year post by Gov. John Bel Edwards to succeed former Secretary Shawn Wilson, who is running for governor.

Kalivoda has spent most of his career at DOTD, starting there as

an intern in 1980 fresh out of LSU. He has served in the No. 2 spot at the 4,200-person agency since 2010.

Edwards leaves office in January, which means Kalivoda's time as secretary will be short, and likely not much different from Wilson's seven-year run. Kalivoda has said for the past year that he plans to retire in early 2024.

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Eric Kalivoda was named secretary of the state Department of Transportation and Development by Gov. John Bel Edwards to succeed former chief Shawn Wilson, who is running for governor.

STAFF PHOTO BY TRAVIS SPRADLING

WEATHER

HIGH 82
LOW 65

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