




# Gazette

**Weather Outlook** 

**Sunday: Highs 60s, Lows 50s**  
**Conditions: Mostly cloudy, a lingering shower east.**  
**A great night for fireworks.**

**Monday: Highs 60s, Lows 50s**  
**Conditions: Mostly sunny.**  
**Happy New Year's.**

**Tuesday: Highs 60s, Lows 40s**  
**Conditions: Sunny.**

**Wednesday: Highs 60s, Lows 30s**  
**Conditions: Mostly sunny.**

92nd Year Number 104

VILLE PLATTE, LOUISIANA

\$1.00

Good Morning!

## SUNDAY

December 31, 2006

# Jeanmard ready to lead the City of Ville Platte

By: **CARISSA HEBERT**  
*Managing Editor*

Bill Jeanmard is excited about taking the reigns of leadership in Ville Platte and bringing his belief to life that government exists for the people and not the other way around.

"Government exists to serve the people," he said. "That's its purpose."

As Jeanmard prepares for the transition in government, he said he has several goals, and the first is he is committed to seeing a reduction in crime in Ville Platte. He plans to work closely with newly-elected Police Chief Neal Lartigue to lead the fight to make our neighborhoods safe. He plans on leading an administration that provides the tools necessary to get the job done. He said as time passes in this administration, he would like to see the policemen on the streets where they need to be. As a councilman, he believes he has worked well with the prior chief, and he has always been a strong supporter of police and fire. He is looking forward to working with Lartigue.

The key, according to Jeanmard, is unity and he wants citizens to become unified. He believes many share the same common goals and values and that is to clean up the neighborhoods to make them safe, address the juvenile issues, reduce crime and attract new jobs. "Basically its improving the overall quality of life in this community and making the city more effective."

The new mayor said we have a lot of issues and government can't address them all at the same time, but he has a plan. He wants to address leadership within the city, accountability, customer service and crime. He's addressing leadership within city government. He has already sketched a plan that will put key personnel, along with citizens interested in a better government, into committees to address every possible aspect of city government. A city worker

will be the chairperson, and the committee will include a member of the council and members of the community. When problems arise, he will be seeking ideas, solutions, etc. from these committees.

Over the past few weeks, as he meets with the public, Jeanmard said he has experienced a feeling of hope, renewed interest in city government and optimism. He has received an outpouring of ideas and he thinks this is a great way to start this new administration.

Other plans include reminding the council of the past election's results. He believes the people want its leaders to act boldly and get things done. "They're tired of seeing us talk about each other. I believe they want us to find common ground. I think they will find us to be an inclusive government. I want to assure the people of Ville Platte we're working harder than ever and are working for them."

In the area of accountability, Jeanmard said supervisors and managers will understand what he expects first-hand. "I want open communication with the staff," he said. "I will demand accountability from every level of city hall. I encourage the voters to demand more. Our goal is to restore the trust of the taxpayers. We will return to the basics, and I will lead this community with professionalism, courtesy and respect. I will demand the same of every employee of the city."

Customer service also is very important. He said he wants the staff to understand "we are here to serve the people."

Before assuming his role as mayor, Jeanmard has been meeting with some staff members and asking them to kick off some initiatives. He has instructed



**Jeanmard**

the city engineer to testify before DOTD about a four-lane highway between Opelousas and Ville Platte. "I believe its dependent on our livelihood if we're to succeed," he said. "I plan for us to meet with state and federal legislators throughout my administration until we see some advancement in this area."

Jeanmard also has instructed the city engineer, Ronnie Landreneau, to look at rebuilding the city's water system and possible funding opportunities. He also has asked Landreneau to begin moving toward constructing the pavilion at the Northside Park. "He and I have already started the preliminary drawings. These are things being done prior to taking office."

All of this work prior to taking office has been made possible by outgoing Mayor Phil Lemoine. Jeanmard said he thanks Lemoine for the smooth and professional transition Lemoine has offered and provided to him. He also extends gratitude to the outgoing and incoming council for their ideas and passion they have shown him in their "desire to shape the future of Ville Platte. I look forward to working with them."

"One area I think is important too is that we need to recognize the good work and dedication of our city employees," Jeanmard said. "They're the ones who show up to work. We can't forget police and fire either. They risk their lives on every call. I'd ask that the sacrifice of these employees set an example for all Ville Platte citizens."

Jeanmard doesn't have any plans to make severe changes to his personnel. He said there will be some changes, and

he does consider them minor. With the approval of the council, he plans to keep many managers and directors in place. He said they'll know his expectations and their job duties. It will be up to them to take the responsibility for keeping those jobs."

He also knows his administration is inheriting a difficult budget. He has been studying it, and he said there is not enough money to meet all of the improvement needs of this city. His goal is to make every dollar spent by city government to be productive, so he said government is going to have to work hard.

It's for that reason he believes it is important for government to being making the necessary investments it has to do to bring the people back to our neighborhoods and jobs back to the city.

I want "to make Ville Platte a city of opportunity and hope."

He supports housing projects, but he said its important those projects not just bring population. "That's not enough," he said. "We need people who will contribute."

And finally, Jeanmard has a few ideas about what type of mayor he hopes to be. "I will devote my time and energy to get the job done," he said. "People will see me here (at city hall), out there (in the community) and in their homes. I want to develop a line of communication beginning January 1, with myself and department managers. I've gotten a pager, so these particular managers can be in touch with me seven days a week for emergency purposes."

"In the beginning and throughout my term, we might make mistakes," Jeanmard said. "I know we might make mistakes, but without risk we won't have any rewards and successes. I will do my best to make those mistakes as few and as far in between as possible.

"I hope to be a mayor who shares in the rewards and accepts the blame when we fail."