

Early voting starts Tuesday

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Published: Oct 20, 2008 - Page: 1A

Residents who want to vote early — and avoid the potential of long lines at polling places Nov 4 — can begin Tuesday by making their choices on issues ranging from the next U.S. president and, in Louisiana, the U.S. senator and seven constitutional amendments to, in East Baton Rouge Parish, a \$989 million bond issue for East Baton Rouge Parish.

Early voting hours, held at parish registrar of voters offices and other designated locations, are from 8:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. beginning Tuesday and ending Oct. 28, excluding Sunday.

Voters can cast their ballots for either Democratic presidential candidate Barack Obama or Republican presidential candidate John McCain.

For people who are not fans of Obama or McCain, there are seven other choices for president on the ballot, including Independent Ralph Nader.

East Baton Rouge Parish Mayor-President Kip Holden, who was re-elected to a second term Oct 4, has a proposed \$989 million capital improvement proposal on the ballot that would create tax increases — a 9.9-mill property tax and a half cent sales tax.

Holden's proposal, if passed, would raise money to build two hotels as part of a proposed \$145 million expansion of the River Center; a downtown riverfront tourist attraction, Audubon ALIVE; a new \$135 million parish prison; a new \$87 million public safety complex to house Baton Rouge Police and the East Baton Rouge Parish Sheriff; \$208 million to overhaul major drainage channels and to replace 38

dangerous bridges, among other projects.

Also on the ballot for East Baton Rouge Parish voters are eight city-parish metro council runoffs — districts 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 10, 11 and 12.

Incumbents Ulysses “Bones” Addison of District 2, Martha Jane Tassin of District 6, and Byron Sharper of District 7 are battling political newcomers to keep their seats.

The contentious race between incumbent U.S. Sen. Mary Landrieu, a Democrat, and Republican challenger John Kennedy will be decided Nov 4. There are three other candidates in the senate race.

The 6th Congressional District runoff will also be decided Nov 4, with incumbent Don Cazayoux, a Democrat, taking on challengers Republican Bill Cassidy and Michael Jackson, no party.

In addition to other state and local runoffs and local propositions, Louisiana voters will vote on seven proposed Constitutional amendments.

According to the Public Affairs Research Council of Louisiana, if the amendments pass, they would:

- Establish term limits for members of state boards and commissions.
- Require two additional days of notice before calling a special legislative session.
- Allow a temporary successor to be appointed for legislators called to military duty.
- Redistribute state severance tax revenue.
- Allow the transfer of the special property tax assessment level for certain homeowners.
- Change the requirements for public bodies to re-sell expropriated property.
- Authorize certain post-retirement benefit funds to be invested in stocks.

Early voters should bring a Louisiana’s driver’s license, a Louisiana special identification card or some other recognized photo identification and their voter registration card.