

Poet, author, actress Maya Angelou dies at 86 **Page 7A**

WALT HANDELSMAN PAYS TRIBUTE **OPINION 8B**



10 hits, 87 runs, 8 games. Tigers on a roll.

**sports 1C**

# THE ADVOCATE

BATON ROUGE • LOUISIANA

**THURSDAY**  
MAY 29, 2014

**HIGH 80 LOW 69**  
FORECAST, MORE ON 10B

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**2014 Legislature**  
EDUCATION

## EBR school revamp fails in House

Bill aimed to give principals more power, responsibility

BY WILL SENTELL  
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A bid to overhaul the East Baton Rouge Parish school system was crushed Wednesday in the Louisiana House, setting off a gleeful celebration among opponents of one of the most divisive topics of the 2014 session.

The proposal, Senate Bill 636, failed 31-60.

The margin was so lopsided — 22 votes short of the minimum needed — that the legislation is considered dead for the session, which ends at 6 p.m. on Monday.

Parents and other opponents of the bill in the House gallery, many wearing red “Stop SB636” stickers, erupted in cheers when the tally was announced.

Bernard Taylor Jr., superintendent of the school district, who was among top officials on hand for the vote, was shaking hands and sharing hugs with allies moments later. “The legislators

► See **SCHOOLS**, page 4A

## EBR council members at odds

Some question moves to oust Roper

BY REBEKAH ALLEN  
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An attempt to oust East Baton Rouge Parish Attorney Mary Roper took a new twist Wednesday as some Metro Council members were angry to learn a private attorney had been retained without their knowledge to investigate her. The council had been expected to vote Wednesday on whether to remove Roper from office, but ended up deferring action until June 18 after objections were raised about Roper's rights to due process.

In the process, what started as a personnel hearing has transformed into a courtroom-type battle with lawyers on both sides,

► See **ROPER**, page 4A



Roper

## More rain to come after floods



Advocate staff photos by **RICHARD ALAN HANNON**

Miles Schexnayder, right, walks Cowboy, as Joel Louviere takes Buckshot out of their flooded barn at the Milestone Ranch on La. 3125 on Wednesday in Paulina.

## Storm causes death, road closures, floating caskets and tornado



Matherne's Supermarket produce manager Louise Bourgeois cleans muddy water from the store along La. 3125 Wednesday in Paulina. Bourgeois said the water started to rise at 6 a.m.

BY DAVID MITCHELL  
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The first wave of a weather system that hit south Louisiana on Wednesday morning brought widespread flooding from Lake Charles to southeast Louisiana and at least one death believed caused by the storm.

The River Parishes were particularly hard hit, with some areas receiving almost 10 inches of rain.

Roads were closed, homes flooded, sandbags were flying out of the Lamar-Dixon Expo Center in Gonzales to try to keep up with rising water, caskets in Assumption Parish floated out of the ground, a tornado touched down in Garyville and one man was killed when he apparently slipped in fast-moving water north of Gonzales.

► See **WEATHER**, page 5A

## Ordinance lowers neighborhood speed limits to 25 mph

BY REBEKAH ALLEN  
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Speed limits on about 1,500 miles of neighborhood streets in East Baton Rouge Parish are being lowered from 30 to 25 mph.

The Baton Rouge Metro Council passed an ordinance Wednesday reducing the speed limits on residen-

tial streets without center stripes.

The new speed limits will take effect road by road, as each one receives new speed-limit signs — a process expected to take two years to complete.

“It's significant,” said Bryan Harmon, interim Department of Public Works director. “You're talking about

12,000 signs that need to be changed out.”

The estimated cost is \$300,000, DPW Chief Traffic Engineer Ingolf Parteneheimer said.

But the blow of the change was softened, he said, because the state is already requiring the city-parish to upgrade signs with more reflective ones. So all of the signs

would have been swapped out eventually.

But Harmon said this changes the priority, because typically higher-volume roads would go first.

Traffic calming in residential neighborhoods is the No. 1 constituent complaint, said Matt Watson, a legislative aide for Councilman Ryan Heck, who sponsored the or-

dinance. Watson noted that Louisiana is fifth in the country for pedestrian fatalities.

Greg Ducote, a member of the Southdowns Civic Association and a planning commissioner, called the measure an important safety issue for pedestrians.

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