



MICHAEL SIGUR
ACTING MAYOR

CITY OF KENNER

PRESS RELEASE

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ENHANCED SECURITY PROCEDURES IN PLACE AT CITY HALL BUILDING

Kenner, LA. – Visitors to Kenner’s City Hall will notice slightly different security measures in place at Building A, which houses the Clerk of Court, Mayor’s Court, City Council chambers, and Finance Department and faces Williams Boulevard.

The most obvious change includes full-time uniformed security guards and a screening station repositioned from the Council Chamber/Courtroom entrance to just inside the front entrance of the building.

Repositioning the metal detector ensures all visitors will be appropriately screened before entering the building. A seldom-used door at the rear of the facility has been converted to employee use only. Additional technical, procedural, physical, and personnel upgrades are possible after staff members have an opportunity to evaluate the new setup.

“I want to emphasize that these changes are not the result of any security issues that we’ve experienced,” Kenner Acting Mayor Michael Sigur said. “Instead, we had the opportunity to upgrade our security practices, which allows us to better serve both our employees and the public.”

Uniformed Kenner police officers are already highly visible at City Hall. In addition, trained, uniformed volunteers associated with the police department have for years worked metal detectors during Court and Council sessions.

Signage is in place to ensure visitors are aware of the various security restrictions for the building, particularly the courtroom. State law, local ordinances, court and council rules already prohibit guns, knives, mace and other items within the public building. Packages, briefcases and purses are subject to inspection.

Use of cell phones and prohibitions on video and audio recordings, as well as rules governing conduct and attire, are applicable during court and council sessions. The signs at the exterior of the building and immediately outside the courtroom clearly spell out those restrictions.

“The intent is to inform visitors well before they make entry to the building, allowing them the opportunity to dispose of prohibited items or to place the item in their vehicle before coming inside to conduct their business”, said Doug Dodt, Emergency Management Director.

In addition, all subpoenas, whether issued in person or mailed, contain information on the security restrictions in the complex.

Building A, located at 1801 Williams Boulevard, was the first of three buildings erected within the City Hall Complex. The single-story structure dates to the early 1970's. Kenner's Mayor's Court is recognized as one of the busiest court systems in the state, and on a daily basis, the facility accommodates large numbers of folks, sometimes hundreds, participating in trials, hearings, attorney meetings, and paying fines.

"Tight quarters and an extremely busy court makes it essential that our staff members are able to promptly screen and direct people in and out of narrow hallways, small offices and into and out of the courtroom," said Mary-Sharon Howland, director of the Clerk of Court's Office. "These improvements make sure we can continue to adequately address the needs of the many defendants, witnesses, attorneys, and court officers who access our facility daily. Most importantly, we want to meet our customers' needs quickly and efficiently while ensuring a safe and secure environment for all," said Howland.

The cost for the upgrades was made possible by passage of a bill introduced by the Louisiana Legislature in 2016 and which became effective this past August. A portion of fees derived from traffic and criminal fines are dedicated to security and technological improvements for the Mayor's Court. No tax dollars are used for these improvements.

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