

Guest Column to The Monroe Dispatch  
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From: Mayor James E. “Jamie” Mayo  
City of Monroe, LA

## **Monroe Wins Cleanest City Contest: But, we still have work to do**

On April 29, Louisiana Garden Club Federation officials informed me that the City of Monroe won their 2019 Cleanest City Contest for Category I. After advancing from the District competition this past March, Monroe advanced to the state level judging in April and competed against Alexandria and Lake Charles in the Population Category I.

We are Monroe Proud to receive this award. Our city is cleaner and moving in the right direction. It is a testament to the hard work of our Keep Monroe Beautiful Director Greg Smith, Public Works and Code Enforcement personnel. But, most importantly, it shows that the residents of Monroe take pride in the place we all call home. We appreciate the LGCF for the work they do to encourage our communities to look their best.

Jean Gilstrap, Louisiana Garden Club Federation Cleanest City Chairman, says “Every city has a planned route for judges to view. However, this is not a cleanest route contest – it’s a cleanest city contest. So, this year, we went off route during our judging. And, we plan to alter routes in the future. The competition was close, but I am very proud of Monroe for having placed first in the LGCF Cleanest City Contest for 2019.”

The primary goal of the LGCF Cleanest City Contest is to become a litter free Louisiana. The contest is over 60 years old. Volunteer judges visit participating cities and rate them on cleanliness. Cities are categorized by population (Groups A-J).

Keep Monroe Beautiful Executive Director Greg Smith adds, “This was a team effort. I want to thank Public Works Director Tom Janway, Superintendent Roshonda Gospel, Solid Waste Supervisor James DeTiege, Beautification Supervisor Kevin Turner, Administrative Assistant Mary Williams, and their personnel. I also want to thank Planning & Urban Development Director Ellen Hill, Code Enforcement Director Kathryn Robinson and all of their personnel for what they do every day to help keep Monroe beautiful!”

Mr. Smith is right. This is a team effort. I thank the Monroe City Council for their passing our Fight the Blight laws – which hare working. Our personnel are also using social media, water bill inserts, flyers and door hangers to help spread word about the trash and garbage rules in our city. I salute you because most of the public is complying with the rules. However, we still

have work to do. Our neighborhoods are cleaner, but you can still spot places where there is illegal dumping, overgrown lots and abandoned houses. We will continue to step up the enforcement of laws that are on the book. We will also continue searching for new ideas and best practices to implement. By working together, we are making a difference. Monroe is one city, with one future!