

Guest Column to The News-Star  
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From  
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## **We Have So Much to Be Thankful For**

I pray that everyone has enjoyed a fun, safe, and peaceful Thanksgiving holiday. There is absolutely nothing like spending quality time with family, friends and loved ones. I want to personally commend all who are taking time out of their busy schedules to give back during this holiday season. May God bless each of you.

As we enjoy the comfort of our homes, let us not forget all of those who were displaced by the devastation of the historic flood of March 2016. We are thankful for the assistance we had and continue to receive from local, state, and federal officials/agencies, non-profit and faith-based organizations. Even with such a tremendous outpouring of support, many people in our city, parish and region are still not back in their homes. In addition to prayer, I encourage you to do what you can to help our neighbors return home as quickly as possible. I want you to know that you city, parish, state and federal leaders are working together as we transition from relief, to repair and rebuild in our flood recovery effort.

In spite of the harsh challenges of this year, we have so much to be thankful for in the City of Monroe. In addition to many ongoing flood recovery and prevention projects, there is quite a bit of citywide development taking place. In south Monroe, utilities are being put in place for the U.S. 165 South Business (Zoo) Connector on Ticheli Road. A lot of underground infrastructure work has been done on the Abdul Khaliq project on U.S. 165 South. The Jackson Street overlay project has been completed. Residents and workers in that area can now enjoy a much smoother daily commute. In north Monroe, the Century Village project is well underway and road, water/sewer and building projects are in various phases of

development. The Egrets landing subdivision is expanding; and, the Hogg Bayou Bridge (Deborah Drive area) should be reopened by the end of the year.

In mid-town Monroe, business expansion continues on near Tower Drive. Local developers purchased the former Chase/Wingspan building on N. 19<sup>th</sup>. Now known as Tower Place, it is an ideal location for both large-scale employers and small businesses looking for a collaborative workspace. Downtown Monroe continues to be a hot-bed for development and fun activities. The success of our Downtown RiverMarket, Art Crawls, River Jams and multiple holiday events continue to show investors that downtown is the place to be.

A few days ago, we celebrated our annual Christmas tree lighting ceremony. Lights are on at City Hall, the civic center, city hall annex south, and throughout downtown Monroe. Saturday, December 3<sup>rd</sup> will be a day filled with activity as we enjoy the RiverMarket, Christmas Parade, and a host of events that kickoff the Christmas holiday season. We are truly blessed! By working together, we are making a difference. Monroe is one city, with one future!