

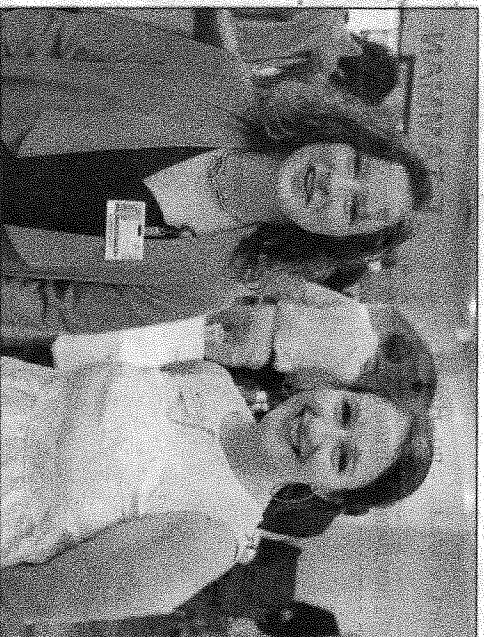
Nicky Bruno, Robby Marquet, Chad Duffaut and Chief Chris Kaufmann of St. Tammany Parish Fire Protection District 1



Don Shea and Bill Newton



Connie Ernst and Joel Treadwell



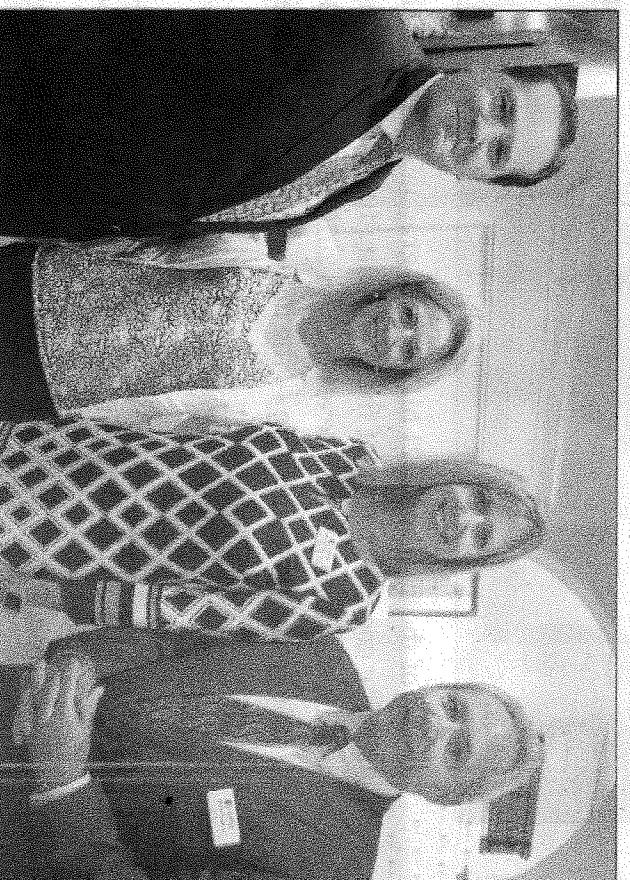
Melissa Hodgson and Noble-Bates Young



Claire Montgomery and her uncle, District Attorney Warren Montgomery



Gina Hayes, Parish President Mike Cooper, Michael Vinsanau and Rio Olend



Chris Masingilli, Beth Lemoine, Jennifer Messina and Mike Saucier

COOPER

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revenue for construction, as the original taxes did.

Mike Saucier, chairman of the Chamber's Public Policy Committee, said after the meeting that the group has not yet taken a position on the measure, but he anticipates

that it will support the tax. The Chamber was one of a number of business groups represented on the revenue review panel.

Cooper mentioned the tax issue toward the end of a speech that mostly focused on new initiatives and public works projects that have come during his nearly year and half in office. But he stressed several times that other anticipated revenue, including \$8 million in local tax income from the proposed Slidell-area casino and \$50.5 million

in federal money from the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, would not make up for the loss.

He called the federal money a large windfall but noted that it won't be recurring. The money is meant to help address economic fallout from the pandemic, he said, and St. Tammany Corp., the parish's economic development agency, has been tapped to come up with a framework for using the funds. Even though sales tax collections are up,

he said, the parish's current 2-cent sales tax is dedicated to roads, bridges and drainage. Cooper was also asked if the parish had done everything it could to ensure that it and the agencies receiving the funding were budgeting tightly and the expenses are necessary.

He said the committee pored over all the budgets and the actual cost is closer to \$30 million — more than the \$22.5 million annually generated by the proposed tax.