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New Iberia CREOLE MARKET to Celebrate Official Grand Opening and Hydroponic Gardens to Premier

Celebs and VIPS to ring opening bell, cut the ribbon in this Market's dual celebration

NEW IBERIA, LA - At 8am on Saturday, March 22, under the oaks of the West End Park, the Creole Market opening bell will be rung by *New York Times* Best-Selling Author, sustainability advocate/entrepreneur and former host of MSNBC's highest-rated, non-prime time show, Dylan Ratigan. This ceremonial bell-ringing will also mark the Iberia Community Garden Co-op, Heirloom Produce Cooperative and Sugar City Growers Co-op's premier presence as a group, in an Iberia Parish farmers market.

Harvests from the three BestLife Iberia Certified hydroponic garden projects will join nearly 30 other vendors in the Creole Market that will feature fresh, locally grown seasonal vegetables and Louisiana seafood (including Vermilion Bay Sweet® brand shrimp and black drum) along with a host of home made preserves, jams, jellies, sauces and marinades; local honey; home-made baked treats and goodies, as well as arts and handmade crafts. If you're looking to jump-start your spring garden, several vendors will have starter veggie plants on sale and members of the Acadiana Permaculture Guild will be in hand to answer your questions. If you're interested in catching your own fish, a local bait shop will be set-up with basic fishing gear, live baits and lures and "fish stories."

The Acadiana Food Circle will be offering information on healthy, local food choices helping connect consumers to local producers across our area. BestLife Iberia Executive Chef Patrick Mould will be cooking up several products offered at the Market in a healthy and flavorful way for tastings and recipes will be provided. Iberia Medical Center will be on hand with free blood pressure and body mass index readings and other helpful information.

At 10am, Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry Commissioner Mike Strain, DVM will be at the ribbon, big scissors in hand, for the Greater Iberia Chamber of Commerce OFFICIAL RIBBON CUTTING CEREMONY. Scheduled to join the Commissioner and other partners and supporters of the Creole Market on the red ribbon will be New Orleans Saints Defensive End (#75), New Iberia's own, Tyrunn Walker along with Mr. Ratigan and other visiting dignitaries from the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of LA Foundation and Community Foundation of Acadiana.

Along with all of the tasty, ready-to-eat offerings sold by vendors at the Market, a fresh-off-the-boat, boiled Gulf shrimp lunch will be sold by volunteers from New Iberia's Shepherd's Food Pantry to raise money for their local food access mission. "Kullen's Buds for a Cause" will handle sales of water and soft drinks with a goal to raise enough money to sponsor farm animals for impoverished families, globally. (Kullen and his "buds" are students at Sugarland Elementary.)

The Creole Market, with extended sales hours this month will be open from "bell ring" at 8am till 1pm. Music and lots of other fun, family activities will also be going on in the West End Park during the day. For a complete list of activities and further announcements, check out the Creole Market's Facebook page at: facebook.com/CreoleMarket.

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Here's a bit of
Background...



ABOUT CREOLE MARKET: Held on the fourth Saturday, monthly, the Creole Market soft-opened in August, 2013 and is a project of the Hopkins Street Revitalization Association, Inc. and its health & wellness initiative, AYTOI (Activating Your Time Outdoors and In.) It is made possible by a *Challenge for a Healthier Louisiana* grant from the Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Louisiana Foundation. Additional support is provided by Iberia Medical Center, CLECO Power, Iberia Industrial Development Foundation (IDF), BestLife Iberia, Women's Advantage and the Twin Parish Port Commission/Port of Delcambre.

Follow the Creole Market on Facebook /CreoleMarket and on Twitter @CreoleMarket

ABOUT DYLAN RATIGAN: Dylan Ratigan is a New York Times Best-Selling author, sustainability entrepreneur/advocate and the former host of MSNBC's highest-rated, non-prime time show.

He resigned at MSNBC in 2012, on the eve of the Presidential Election in order to partner with returning veterans who went to war for global security and realized the path forward for global security is a revolution in global resource systems. Climate change and global conflict are the existential threat of our era. Ratigan left a comfortable life as a broadcaster to establish a construction and engineering firm to address this threat.

Prior to his three years at MSNBC, Dylan spent six years at CNBC, where he created "Fast Money," co-hosted "The Closing Bell," and was outspoken about the financial crisis leading up to his resignation in 2009, in the process becoming one of the most trusted names in broadcast journalism.

Before joining NBC in 2003, Dylan spent nine years at Bloomberg LP, serving as Global Managing Editor of Corporate Finance. Ratigan established the global group for the first time in Bloomberg's history, in the process consolidating and supervising more than 120 reporters in more than 30 countries over 10 time zones.

His book, "Greedy Bastards" was released in January 2012, spending five consecutive weeks on the New York Times Best Seller List. The book connects misaligned personal interests with misaligned systems, arguing that a critique of broken systems must also deliver a healing of our own relationships to create a foundation for natural, sustainable reforms.

Dylan can be found on the web at www.DylanRatigan.com and on twitter @dylanratigan.

ABOUT THE BESTLIFE IBERIA CERTIFIED GARDENS: With ground breaking ceremonies held as recent as December, 2013, this hydroponic gardening project, spear-headed by the Iberia Industrial Development Foundation's (IDF) BestLife Iberia initiative has, quite literally grown faster than anyone could imagine. It is funded by a grant from Iberia Parish Foundation, an affiliate of Community Foundation of Acadiana through the *Fund for Gulf Communities* which provides programs and services to assist those adversely impacted by the Deepwater Horizon oil spill, and is administered by the Iberia Development Foundation with employment training provided by Acadiana Works, Inc.

The three garden cooperatives use some of the latest in hydroponic farming techniques, featuring high-density, vertical growing systems from Verti-Gro. These systems are designed for high quality and productivity in the least amount of space while using less water and energy than many other hydroponic systems.

Follow the progress of these and other projects of the IDF's BestLife Iberia initiative on Facebook at: www.facebook.com/IberiaGardenCoop, www.facebook.com/HeirloomProduce and www.facebook.com/BestLifeIberia

ABOUT TYRUNN WALKER: Tyrunn Walker, a native of New Iberia and graduate of Westgate High, is currently playing defensive end for the NFL New Orleans Saints. He signed with the Saints as an undrafted free agent in 2012 and debuted with the team in the 2013 season.



OUTLINE OF ACTIVITIES - March 22, 2013 - West End Park, New Iberia

8am --extended hours for market, close at 1pm	CREOLE MARKET OPENING BELL - Dylan Ratigan - premier of Iberia Community Garden Co-Op; Heirloom Produce Cooperative & Sugar City Growers Co-Op
8am - 10am	Meet the EASTER BUNNY - Free Pictures, sponsored by AYTOI - West End Park - Field St., southeast picnic pavilion
8:30am - Registration 9AM - AYTOI Easter Egg Hunt	AYTOI Children's Easter Activities, West End Park, southeast park lawn. Egg hunt prizes are Easter baskets filled with active toys and sports goodies.
9a - 11a	AYTOI Free Pony Rides , West End Park, near outdoor basketball pavilion.
10am	Greater Iberia Chamber of Commerce Grand Opening Ribbon Cutting with special guest, Commissioner Mike Strain, DVD, Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry. Blessing by Pastor Zachary P. Mitchell Sr. , Word of Hope Church
10:15am -- Registration First Heat - 10:30am Second Heat - 11:15am	AYTOI Mommy/Daddy Surprise Run - West End Park walking track - held in two heats winners of each heat win the choice of a bike or scooter for their child.
10:15am - 12:10pm	Mini Football Camp with New Orleans Saint Tyrunn Walker, autographs and camp with the Tryunn and the New Iberia Bronco Youth Football traveling team, starts immediately following the Ribbon Cutting Ceremony. Location: West End Park baseball field.
1pm	Creole Market Closes

WEST END STRONG: Additional activities in the West End Park:

- **United Blood Services Blood Drive** sponsored by the New Iberia NAACP
- 8:45a - 11:30a, look for the blood mobile in the West End Park on Field St.
- **Voter Registration Drive** sponsored by Delta Sigma Theta Sorority - MLK Rec Center
- **Information on Affordable Health Care Act**, sponsored by Iberia Community Health Care Clinic
- 8am-10am MLK Rec Center
- **Community Benefit BBQ Dinner** fundraiser for West End Council of Neighborhood Associations
- 10a - 2p - MLK Rec Center

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