



November 1, 2024

Dearest Citizens within St. Mary Hospital Service District Two,

I am writing on behalf of the St. Mary Chamber of Commerce to express our strong support for the proposition to reinstate the nine mills that fund the maintenance and upkeep of Ochsner St. Mary. Our community's health and economic well-being are inextricably linked to the services provided by our hospital, and this funding is crucial to ensuring its continued success.

Ochsner St. Mary is not only a vital healthcare provider for the residents of HSD2 but also a significant economic driver in our region. The hospital currently employs two hundred and fifty individuals, providing them with a total of twenty-four million dollars in salary and benefits. This level of employment is essential, as it directly contributes to the local economy and helps to sustain families in our community.

Moreover, the regional economic impact of Ochsner St. Mary is impressive, totaling approximately ninety-seven million dollars. This figure illustrates how the hospital stimulates our local economy through job creation and the purchase of local goods and services. In fact, the hospital's commitment to supporting local vendors is evident in its annual local vendor purchases, which amount to over three million dollars.

Additionally, Ochsner St. Mary plays a crucial role in providing Medicaid and charity care, totaling ninety-five million dollars. This support is vital for our underserved populations, ensuring that all residents have access to necessary healthcare services regardless of their financial situation.

It's also important to highlight the substantial contributions Ochsner St. Mary makes to our community in terms of taxes, amounting to three hundred and eighty-five thousand dollars in Parish and State taxes. These funds help support local infrastructure and services that benefit everyone in St. Mary Parish, not just those within St. Mary Hospital Service District #2.

In summary, the reinstatement of the nine mills is not merely a financial decision; it is an investment in the health and economic stability of St. Mary Parish as a whole. We urge you to support this proposition, ensuring that Ochsner St. Mary can continue to thrive and serve the community for years to come.

This item will be on your December 7th Ballot.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Elisabeth P. Chiasson

President

St. Mary Chamber of Commerce