TO: Professors Andrea Armstrong and Samantha Pourciau
FROM: Skylar Barrett
RE: "Better Know a Jail" Memo
DATE: April 1, 2026
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Rayne City Jail

Introduction

Rayne is a unique, small town located in South Louisiana also known as "the Frog Capital of the World."[1] The City of Rayne was first established in the 1800s following the arrival of the coastal railroad.[2] Although Rayne lacks well-documented historical data regarding the formation of the Rayne City Jail, it likely developed alongside the law enforcement agency and municipal government. Rayne City Court was formally established in January of 1947.[3] With the emergence of a municipal court comes the need for a local jail able to detain individuals who offend the laws of the state. Rayne encompasses 3.792 square miles of Acadia Parish and has a population of six thousand eight hundred fifty-three (6,853) people.[4] As of 2026, an estimated 25.53% of the population live below the poverty line which is slightly higher than the national average.[5] In 2024, two-thousand seven hundred seventy nine (2,779) people were active in the workforce, despite the median age of citizens being thirty years old.[6] Further, the median household income is forty-two thousand dollars which is almost 50% lower than the national median household.[7]

The two largest ethnic groups in Rayne, Louisiana are White (Non-Hispanic) and Black or African-American (Non-Hispanic), with smaller percentages for other ethnic groups such as Native American, Asian, and Hispanic.[8] Over fifty percent (54.7%) of Rayne citizens are white, with 38.5% being Black or African American.[9] In 2024, there were 1.42 times more White residents than any other race.[10]

Jail Characteristics

[1] https://www.rayne.org/
[2] *Id.*
[3] https://www.raynecitycourt.org/visit-us?utm_source=chatgpt.com
[4] *Id.*
[5] *Id.*
[6] https://datausa.io/profile/geo/rayne-la
[7] https://worldpopulationreview.com/us-cities/louisiana/rayne
[8] *Id.*
[9] *Id.*
[10] https://datausa.io/profile/geo/rayne-la

The Rayne City Jail is a small detention facility located at 200 Oak Street in Acadia Parish, Louisiana. It operates under the authority of the Rayne Police Department ("Rayne PD") located next door, rather than a parish sheriff or the Louisiana Department of Corrections. Like most local jails in rural Louisiana, Rayne City Jail is primarily a short-term holding facility for pre-trial detainees arrested within the city or individuals transferred from nearby jurisdictions.[11] However, it may also serve as a post-conviction incarceration facility for people convicted of minor crimes, generally misdemeanors.[12] It generally serves as an initial custody point for detainees awaiting booking, bond determination, or transfer to a larger facility such as the Acadia Parish Jail.[13]

Although publicly available information regarding the Rayne City Jail is extremely limited, information regarding Rayne's Police Department can be accessed on the Parish's website at https://www.rayne.org/copy-of-fire-department. This site includes five tabs: Home, Rayne Historic Preservation Commission, Upcoming Events, the 2026 Rayne Frog Festival, and a "More" tab.[14] Hovering over the "More" tab results in a dropdown menu containing links to governmental resources such as policies and procedures, the Rayne Police Department, Public Meetings, Public Notices, and others.[15] Notably, the website does not include any information regarding the Rayne City Jail. The website's informational structure and lack of content gives insight into the city's priorities, focus and interests, and desired public image taking primacy over institutional transparency.

The Rayne Police Department webpage similarly reflects limited disclosure. The webpage includes a brief, single-page "overview" including a photograph of the police department, the names of the Chief of Police and one Captain, the physical location of the department, and, fortunately, an email to request public records.[16] It also includes a released statement regarding a deceased officer, and a brief acknowledgment of the Department of Corrections ("DOC") inmate labor program, in which Mayor Robichaux thanks the DOC crew and others for recent construction improvements and ongoing tasks to be completed.[17] Outside of the DOC Program, the website provides no meaningful information as to the Rayne City Jail, its operations, capacity, or policies.

As a result, the most detailed publicly accessible information regarding detention in Acadia Parish is provided not by the city of Rayne, but by the Acadia Parish Sheriff's Office ("APSO"). The APSO offers the only available insight into the life of incarcerated persons in Acadia Parish. Their website hosts significantly more information regarding incarcerated

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[11] https://www.jaildata.com/prison/rayne-police-jail?utm_source=chatgpt.com
[12] *Id.*
[13] *Id.*
[14] *Id.*
[15] *Id.*
[16] *Id.*
[17] https://www.rayne.org/copy-of-fire-department

individuals, detention processes, and inmate procedures and can be accessed at https://www.apso.org/inmate-visitation.html. This website includes the APSO directory, as well as guidance on inmate banking and inmate visitation. Pursuant to the APSO website, inmates are allowed commissary and there are outlined procedures for depositing funds into inmate accounts through the Acadia Parish Sheriff's Office.[18] Additionally, it presents information regarding inmate visitation and communication in which options include inmate phone calls, inmate messaging, remote visitation, and on-site visitation.[19]

Jail Leadership

The Acadia Parish Sheriff K.P. Gibson serves a number of incorporated communities including Rayne, Crowley, Church Point, Eunice, Iota, Morse, and Estherwood. In 2024, Gibson was sworn in for his third term and also as the President of the Louisiana Sheriffs' Association.[20] The Rayne City Jail, however, is operated directly by the Rayne Police Department which is directly responsible for both the policing of the city and jail administration and management. Thus, the jail is supervised by police chief Carroll Stelly, with the assistance of Captain Tony Olinger. Chief Stelly has been in law enforcement for over thirty years, and public records show that he has worked for the City of Rayne since 2017.[21] Records also show that Chief Stelly's salary is 149 percent higher than the average police chief, and 156 higher than the median salary for Rayne citizens.[22] Chief Stelly also serves on the D.A.R.E. Advisory Board under the Louisiana Commission on Law Enforcement ("LCLE").[23]

Public Records Request and Inmate Mortality

The Rayne Police Department website contains an email with the words "Public Record Requests" placed above it.[24] Using this email (raynepd.org), I was able to directly contact Captain Olinger and request any and all records concerning deaths in custody at the Rayne City Jail from January 1, 2015 through present. Captain Olinger gave a prompt response the following day that there had been no deaths. He further stated that he was "not aware of anyone ever dying in custody in [his] 34 year career" which he verified with Chief Stelly who "has been there longer than [he] has."

Jail News Coverage and Transparency

The Rayne City Jail is notably under-documented with little access to formal public records. Thus, it lacks transparency regarding its functions, procedures, and funding. The City of

[18] https://www.apso.org/inmate-banking.html
[19] https://www.apso.org/inmate-visitation.html
[20] https://www.katc.com/acadia-parish/gibson-sworn-in-for-third-term
[21] https://govsalaries.com/stelly-carroll-j-191329523
[22] *Id.*
[23] https://lcle.la.gov/programs/dare/d-a-r-e-advisory-board/
[24] https://www.rayne.org/copy-of-fire-department

Rayne's Code of Ordinances, Policies and Procedures, Civil Service Handbook, and Municipal Police Civil Service and Local Rules can be found under the "Policies and Procedures" tab of the Parish website.[25] This includes an accessible PDF regarding the city's grants and funding resources.[26]

Online searches of the Rayne City Jail reveal usual news coverage in relation to criminal activities within the city. However, I was able to locate news articles in relation to Rayne's Chief of Police, Carroll Stelly. In June of 2014, Chief Stelly publicly criticized parents of Rayne for failing to raise their children "in a responsible and respectful manner" as stated in a press release.[27] According to Stelly, Rayne faced a "criminal justice crisis with violent juvenile criminal activity."[28] This statement came after a police response to three minors who had threatened to shoot another individual.[29] The minors were charged with aggravated assault and illegal possession of a handgun by a juvenile, with one minor in particular, aged seventeen, receiving additional charges of possession of marijuana, illegally carrying a weapon, resisting an officer and obstruction of justice.[30] The minors were released to a "concerned adult," which Chief Stelly took issue with. He stated that the "crisis" was beyond the control of the Rayne Police Department, and that he hoped to "expedite these juveniles' incarceration for these violent crimes."[31]

In August of 2019, a local news station, KLFY, reported that Chief Carroll Stelly was asking the city council for a salary raise of sixty-five thousand per year because "good work deserves good play."[32] The council ultimately voted to raise his salary but decreased the requested amount by four thousand dollars.[33]

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[25] https://www.rayne.org/coronavirus
[26] https://lla.la.gov/resources/local-government-reporting/best-practices
[27] https://kpel965.com/rayne-police-chief-we-are-facing-a-criminal-justice-crisis/
[28] *Id.*
[29] *Id.*
[30] *Id.*
[31] *Id.*
[32] https://www.klfy.com/news/rayne-police-chief-carroll-stelly-getting-a-pay-raise/
[33] *Id.*