

# THE REAL NEWS LOUISIANA

LOCAL NEWS • COMMUNITY • LOUISIANA

VOL. 02 • NO. 15 SEPTEMBER 13, 2026, PUBLISHER: LATORRIA FREEMAN

## HEALTH & WELLNESS

### AI AND MENTAL HEALTH IN THE BLACK COMMUNITY

*Can artificial intelligence help open new doors to mental-health support — without replacing human connection?*

By The Real News Louisiana Staff

Artificial intelligence is changing the way people work, communicate and find information. But one of its most personal uses may be happening quietly: people are turning to AI-powered tools when they feel stressed, overwhelmed, lonely or simply need somewhere to begin talking about what they are experiencing.

For the Black community, that development deserves attention. Stigma, cost, access to care and concerns about being judged can sometimes discourage people from seeking mental-health support.

AI could provide another doorway to information and conversation—but experts and advocates emphasize that technology should be viewed as a tool, not a replacement for trained mental-health professionals or human connection.



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# THE REAL NEWS LOUISIANA

LOCAL NEWS • COMMUNITY • LOUISIANA

A COMMUNITY WITH A VOICE SHALL BE HEARD®

September 13, 2026

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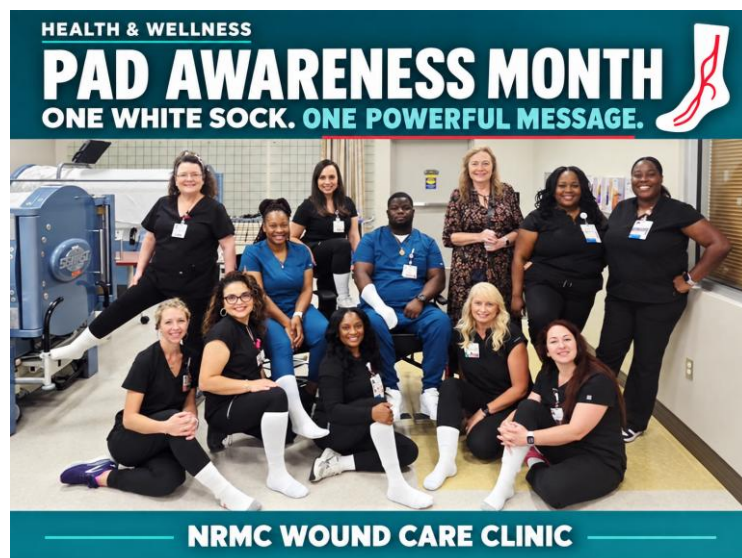
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More Local News • Community Stories • Education • Events



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HEALTH & WELLNESS

## Warning Signs of Suicide: Knowing When Someone May Need Help

By The Real News Louisiana Staff

Suicide can affect individuals and families across every community. Recognizing possible warning signs and knowing how to respond may help someone experiencing a crisis get the support they need.

A person experiencing suicidal thoughts may not always say directly that they are struggling. Changes in behavior, mood, relationships or daily routines can sometimes indicate that someone needs immediate attention and support.

### Warning Signs May Include:

- Talking about wanting to die or having no reason to live
- Expressing hopelessness or feeling trapped
- Saying they feel like a burden to others
- Withdrawing from family, friends or activities
- Giving away valued possessions or saying unusual goodbyes
- Extreme mood changes, anxiety, anger or agitation
- Significant changes in sleeping or eating habits
- Increased use of alcohol or drugs
- Engaging in unusually risky or reckless behavior
- Searching for or discussing ways to die

**988**

— YOU ARE NOT ALONE —  
**CALL OR TEXT 988**  
**Suicide & Crisis Lifeline**

Available 24/7 • Free • Confidential

If there is immediate danger, call 911.



If you notice these warning signs, reach out, listen without judgment and encourage the person to seek professional help. Starting a conversation could help save a life.

**HEALTH & WELLNESS**

**AI AND MENTAL HEALTH IN THE BLACK COMMUNITY — CONTINUED**

By The Real News Louisiana Staff

**A Tool — Not a Therapist**

Artificial intelligence can provide general mental-health information, help users organize their thoughts and suggest questions to ask a counselor or doctor. But AI should never replace a licensed mental-health professional, especially during a crisis.

**Why It Matters in the Black Community**

Stigma, cost, access to care and distrust of healthcare institutions can sometimes make seeking mental-health support difficult. AI may offer a private first step for someone who is uncomfortable beginning that conversation with another person.

Technology, however, should serve as a **bridge to human support—not a replacement for it**. Families, churches, schools and community organizations remain important sources of connection and encouragement.

**Using AI Responsibly**

- Use AI for general information, not diagnosis.
- Verify important medical or mental-health information.
- Be cautious about sharing personal information.
- Seek professional help when emotional distress becomes serious.
- Never depend on an AI chatbot during an emergency or crisis.

**Starting the Conversation**

AI may help someone find the words to begin, but mental health ultimately requires human connection. Sometimes a simple question—**“Are you okay?”**—can open the door to a conversation that matters.

*The Real News Louisiana encourages open conversations about mental health and greater awareness of the resources available in our communities.*



*You Are Not Alone* ♥

# NEED SOMEONE TO TALK TO?

Call or text **988** to reach the **Suicide & Crisis Lifeline** 24 hours a day.

If there is an immediate life-threatening emergency, call **911**.

**988**  
SUICIDE & CRISIS  
LIFELINE

CALL • TEXT • CHAT

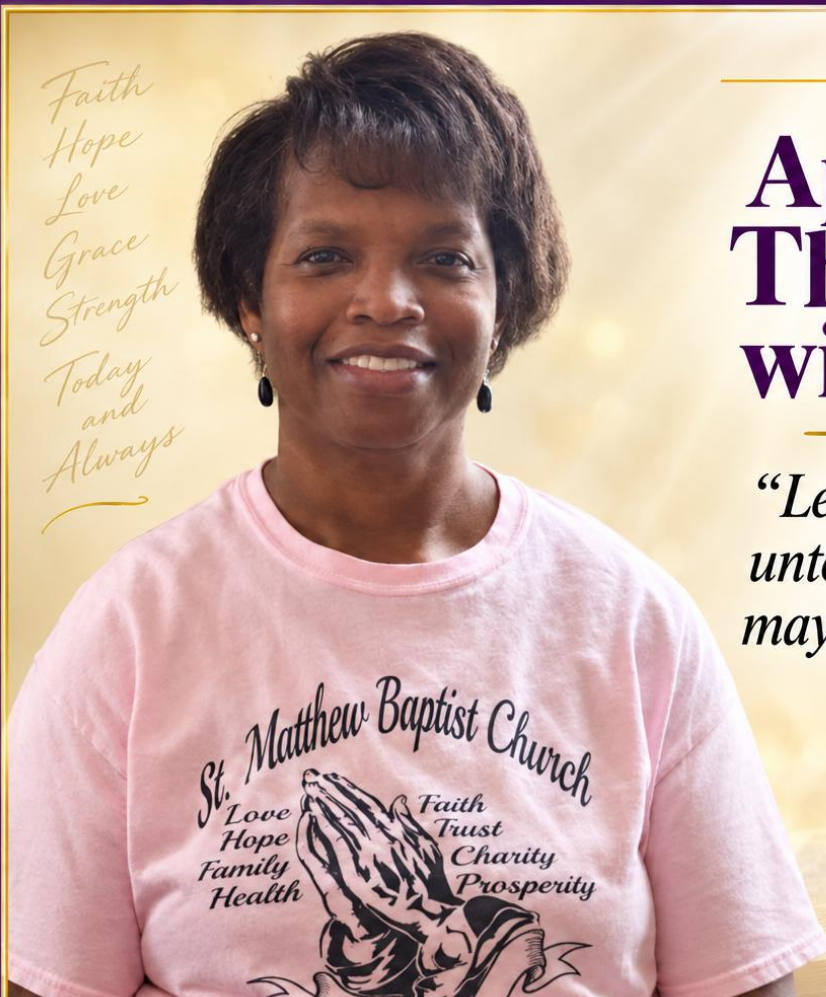
*Help is here.  
Hope is real.*

CALL 24/7 SUPPORT  
TEXT CONFIDENTIAL  
CHAT FREE  
REAL PEOPLE REAL HELP

*Stronger Together* ♥

**THE REAL NEWS**  
LOUISIANA  
LOCAL NEWS • COMMUNITY • LOUISIANA

FAITH & COMMENTARY



Faith  
Hope  
Love  
Grace  
Strength  
Today  
and  
Always

— FAITH & INSPIRATION —

## Approaching the Throne of Grace with Confidence

“Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.”

Hebrews 4:16 KJV

Evangelist and Author Bonita Moses Arnold

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OPINION & COMMENTARY



**“Trump’s an example of GREED on STEROIDS!”**

— Randy Stelly

The views expressed are those of the writer.

HEALTH & WELLNESS

**NRMC Wound Care Clinic Raises Awareness of Peripheral Artery Disease**



NATCHITOCHES, La. — September is Peripheral Artery Disease Awareness Month, and the NRMC Wound Care Clinic is helping bring attention to circulation problems and the importance of early treatment.

Peripheral artery disease, commonly called PAD, occurs when narrowed or blocked arteries reduce blood flow, most often to the legs and feet. Poor circulation may contribute to wounds that are slow to heal and, in serious cases, increase the risk of amputation.

During September, members of the NRMC Wound Care team wear one white sock as a visible symbol of PAD awareness and in honor of amputees. The campaign encourages people to learn more about circulation problems and seek medical care for concerning wounds.

The clinic's mission is simple: **Find. Treat. Heal.**

Anyone experiencing a non-healing wound can contact the NRMC Wound Care Clinic at **318-214-4822** to schedule an appointment. No referral or doctor's order is required.

## Meet Nattie

NRMC INFORMATION —RIGHT WHEN YOU NEED IT.

Have a question about our services, providers or clinics? Just ask Nattie. Available 24/7, Nattie provides quick, convenient answers to help you find the information you need - whenever you need it!

Simply text your question to Nattie at

**318.667.7973**

**No portals. No logins. No complicated systems.**

Just straightforward answers to help you make informed decisions about your health and your care.

**NRMC**

*Inspiring Excellence Everyday*

INSPIRATION & EVENTS



“Accepting someone else’s negative opinion as your truth is like *self-mutilation* to your own soul.

*Latorria Freeman*  
PUBLISHER  
THE REAL NEWS LOUISIANA

## JOIN US FOR

# PRIME TIME

### FAMILY READING

READ • LEARN • GROW • TOGETHER

- A FREE EVENING OF FUN ONE NIGHT A WEEK FOR SIX WEEKS
- YOUR CHILD KEEPS UP TO 10 AWARD-WINNING BOOKS
- DESIGNED FOR FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN 6-10 YEARS OLD, BUT SIBLINGS OF ANY AGE ARE WELCOME TO JOIN
- ENTER TO WIN DOOR PRIZES

*Build stronger families through the power of reading!*

**DATES & TIME:**

September 8, 15, 22, 29  
October 6 & 13, 2026  
5:30 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.

**LOCATION:**

Morning Star Baptist Church  
170 Main Street  
Natchitoches, LA

**CONTACT:**

Monique Sarpy 318-332-8264  
Cynthia Robinson 318-471-5782  
Transportation can be provided.

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**FINANCIAL SAFETY**

## BOM Bank Urges Customers to Pause Before Wiring Money

By The Real News Louisiana Staff

BOM Bank is reminding customers to slow down and verify every request before sending money by wire transfer.

Wire transfers can be difficult or impossible to recover after the money has been sent. Scammers often create a sense of urgency, hoping the sender will act before recognizing warning signs or confirming the request.

Before completing a wire transfer, customers should pause and carefully review the information. Verify the recipient's identity and confirm the bank routing and account numbers using a trusted phone number—not contact information supplied in an unexpected email, text message or telephone call.

Customers should also question whether the request, timing and payment method make sense. A demand for immediate payment or pressure to avoid speaking with others may signal attempted fraud.

If anything feels unusual or suspicious, stop the transaction and contact BOM Bank before sending the money.

Taking a few additional minutes to verify a request could prevent a costly and potentially irreversible loss.

### Stop Before You Wire Money

Protect yourself before completing a wire transfer. Follow these four steps:

**PAUSE**

Scammers create urgency. Take a moment before acting.

**VERIFY**

Don't just rely on an email—verify with the recipient the correct bank routing number and account number.

**QUESTION**

Ask whether the request, timing, and payment method make sense.

**STOP**

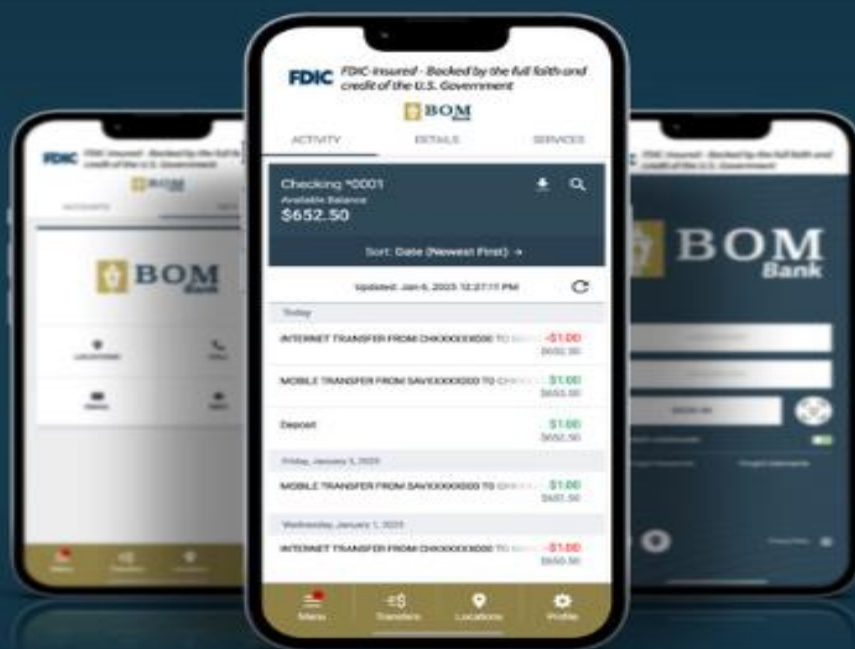
If anything feels wrong, **do not send the wire.**



**BOM**  
Bank

Member FDIC

## Fresh look. Powerful features.



**BOM**  
Bank

Member  
**FDIC**  
Equal Housing Lender

CAMPAIGN NEWS

**MEET THE CAMPTI MAYORAL CANDIDATES**  
Incumbent Katrina Evans and challenger Jasmine Lewis outline their records, priorities and visions for Campti.

KATRINA EVANS — INCUMBENT



Experience & Record

- Current Mayor
- Education
- Infrastructure work
- Grants & funding
- Community programs
- Financial management

JASMINE LEWIS — CHALLENGER



Experience & Background

- Criminal Justice degree
- Management/human services experience
- Community service
- Faith & values
- Economic development
- Youth & families

CAMPAIGN NEWS

## CAMPTI MAYORAL CANDIDATES — CONTINUED

### Priorities & Vision

#### KATRINA EVANS — INCUMBENT CAMPAIGN PRIORITIES

- Investing in the community
- Improving infrastructure
- Building financial stability
- Supporting families
- Expanding community programs
- Creating a stronger Campti

#### CAMPAIGN MESSAGE

*“The Foundation Is Laid; Let’s Keep Building.”*

#### JASMINE LEWIS — CHALLENGER CAMPAIGN PRIORITIES

- Stronger infrastructure
- Supporting local businesses
- Investing in youth
- Community revitalization
- Transparency & accountability
- Community engagement

#### CAMPAIGN MESSAGE

*“A Voice for the People, Fighting for a Cause.”*

### TWO VISIONS FOR CAMPTI

Both candidates identify infrastructure, community involvement and improving the quality of life in Campti among their priorities. Evans is asking voters to continue the work of her administration, emphasizing projects and programs completed or underway. Lewis is asking voters to support a change in leadership, emphasizing transparency, community engagement and new initiatives.

*Source: Campaign materials provided by the candidates.*



# 2026 FALL Election Calendar



## U.S. Senate General, Open U.S. Representative Primary, & Open Primary

**Early Voting**  
**October 20-27**  
(Except Sunday)

**Election Day**  
**NOVEMBER 3**

### Register to Vote

In Person/By Mail  
Registration Deadline  
**October 5, 2026**

Geaux Vote Online  
Registration Deadline  
**October 13, 2026**

### Vote by Mail

Request a Vote by Mail Ballot by  
**October 30, 2026**

Return a Vote by Mail Ballot by  
**November 2, 2026**

## Open U.S. Representative General & Open General

**Early Voting**  
**Nov. 28-Dec. 5**  
(Except Sunday)

**Election Day**  
**DECEMBER 12**

### Register to Vote

In Person/By Mail  
Registration Deadline  
**November 12, 2026**

Geaux Vote Online  
Registration Deadline  
**November 21, 2026**

### Vote by Mail

Request a Vote by Mail Ballot by  
**December 8, 2026**

Return a Vote by Mail Ballot by  
**December 11, 2026**

Learn more about elections in Louisiana,  
download sample ballots, and more.



**PowerCoalition.org/Vote**  
PCEJ.org/Vote

## WHAT TO BRING TO VOTE



- Louisiana driver's license
- Louisiana Special ID
- LA Wallet digital driver's license
- A recognized picture ID that contains your name and signature

You must bring **ONE** of the above to vote.

## IMPORTANT VOTER DATES

**Early Voting:** Oct. 20-27 • 8:30 a.m.-6 p.m. (except Sunday)

**Election Day:** Nov. 3 • Polls open 7 a.m.-8 p.m.

**Online Registration Deadline:** Oct. 13 by 4:30 p.m.

**Absentee Ballot Request Deadline:** Oct. 30

**Absentee Ballot Return Deadline:** Nov. 2 by 4:30 p.m.

PUBLIC SAFETY



By The Real News Louisiana Staff

Public safety is strongest when law enforcement agencies communicate, coordinate and support one another. In Natchitoches, the City Marshal's Office, Natchitoches Police Department and Natchitoches Parish Sheriff's Office have different responsibilities, but they share one goal—protecting the community.

The Natchitoches Police Department responds to calls and enforces laws within the city limits. Its officers patrol neighborhoods, investigate crimes, direct traffic and assist residents during emergencies.

The Natchitoches Parish Sheriff's Office serves residents throughout the parish. Its duties include patrol, criminal investigations, emergency response and providing additional personnel or resources when assistance is needed.

The City Marshal's Office carries out orders of the court, serves legal documents, executes warrants and helps maintain safety within the City Court system.

Although each agency has its own jurisdiction and responsibilities, situations do not always remain within those boundaries.

A suspect may travel from the city into another area of the parish, or an emergency may require more personnel and resources than one department can provide alone.

By sharing information and assisting one another, the three agencies can respond more effectively, locate suspects, execute warrants, manage major events and protect residents.

Cooperation also helps prevent gaps in service. Residents should not have to understand every jurisdictional boundary before receiving assistance. Strong professional relationships allow calls and information to be directed to the appropriate agency more efficiently. The three agencies may wear different uniforms and perform different duties, but public safety is a shared responsibility. When they work together with professionalism, communication and mutual respect, the entire Natchitoches community benefits.

A safer community is not built by one office alone. It is built through cooperation, public trust and a common commitment to serve and protect.

COMMUNITY

Celebrating the 100th Heavenly Birthday of Mrs. Emma Robinson Williams

# Natchitoches Parish School Board Tribute

PEOPLE  
SCHOOLS  
COMMUNITY  
BRIGHTER  
TOMORROWS

Celebrating the **100th** Heavenly Birthday of  
**Mrs. Emma Robinson Williams**

September 15, 1926 – September 15, 2026

A Centennial Tribute from NPSB

**September 15, 2026**

as  
**'Mrs. Emma Robinson Williams  
Legacy Day'**

*A Legacy  
of Love,  
Learning  
and Opportunity.*



*Her legacy continues to inspire excellence in education.*



**Emma Robinson**  
— WILLIAMS EDUCATION FOUNDATION INC. —

**GAME ON!**

**CHECK.  
DETECT.  
PROTECT.**

**NRMC**  
Urology  
Associates

**Prostate Cancer AWARENESS MONTH**

Men, don't play around when it comes to your health. Prostate cancer is one of the most common cancers affecting men and often causes no symptoms in its early stages. If you have a family history of cancer, you may carry a hereditary gene that increases your risk.

**NRMC Urology Associates** encourages men age 45 and older to schedule an annual prostate screening.

**Take your health seriously, call 318.214.5810 today!**

**Check in. Detect early.  
Protect your future.**



Question about  
our urology  
services?

TEXT NATTIE

**318.667.7973**

EDUCATION

## NSU Welcomes Largest Freshman Class in Three Years By The Real News Louisiana Staff

NATCHITOCHES, La. — Northwestern State University welcomed **1,120 first-time freshmen** for Fall 2026, its largest entering class in three years and a 6 percent increase over last year.

The freshman class arrived with an average ACT score of **21.7** and an average high school GPA of **3.4**. It includes 114 high school valedictorians and 22 salutatorians.

NSU also recorded its largest number of entering freshmen from Natchitoches Parish in the last decade. A record 112 local students selected the university. Members of the entering class represent 10 states, 25 countries and six continents.

Demand for the traditional campus experience remains strong. University Place I and II, University Columns and Varnado Hall are at 100 percent occupancy for the second consecutive year.

Student retention also improved. Northwestern's first-to-third-semester retention rate reached **70 percent**, exceeding Louisiana's average of 64 percent.

"This is the type of growth we want to see at Northwestern," said NSU President James T. Genovese. "We are attracting talented students who want the complete college experience."

Overall Fall 2026 enrollment totaled **8,245 students**, compared with 8,402 in Fall 2025. University officials attributed much of the decline to increased degree completion, including students finishing accelerated programs more quickly. Graduate enrollment increased to 904 students, while dual enrollment also grew.

Northwestern continues investing in academics, facilities and the student experience. Those investments include the \$45 million Robert Alost Hall, which opened in Fall 2025 as a new academic hub on the Natchitoches campus.

With a larger freshman class, full residence halls and retention above the state average, university officials say Northwestern's focus on recruitment and student success is producing encouraging results.

 NORTHWESTERN STATE

**100+ AREAS OF STUDY**

**WWW.NSU.LA/EXPLORE**

**SHAPE YOUR TOMORROW  
AT NORTHWESTERN**



**RE-ELECT  
RANDY  
WILLIAMS**

**CITY MARSHAL  
WARD 1**

*Leadership ★ Service ★ A Safer Natchitoches*



**PRESTON DURR**



## **TWO HAVE ANNOUNCED. WHO ELSE WILL ENTER?**



**STEVE PEZANT**

### **2027 IS ALREADY TALKING**

*Why Is the Natchitoches Parish Sheriff's Race Generating Attention More Than a Year Before Election Day?*

By The Real News Louisiana Staff

**NATCHITOCHES, La.** — The election for Natchitoches Parish Sheriff is still more than a year away, but judging by conversations around the parish, social media discussions and candidates already hitting the campaign trail, the 2027 sheriff's race has begun in everything but the voting booth.

And there is a reason.

The sheriff's office is one of the most visible and influential positions in parish government. The office touches nearly every community in Natchitoches Parish through law enforcement, criminal investigations, patrol, corrections and tax collection. Stuart Wright has held the office of sheriff since 2020.

#### **The Campaign Started Early**

At least two candidates have already publicly entered the race.

Preston Durr announced his candidacy in July, emphasizing his 26 years in law enforcement and proposing changes that include expanded rural patrol, reopening substations, a violent-crimes and homicide unit, additional juvenile services and greater community involvement.

Steve Pezant followed with an announcement in August. Pezant, who says he has 36 years of continuous law-enforcement experience, currently serves as chief deputy of the Natchitoches Ward One Marshal's Office after a career that included service with the Louisiana State Police.

His campaign has announced plans for parish wide outreach, meet-and-greet events and other campaign activities.

With candidates announcing this far ahead of Election Day, voters are being given considerably more time to examine their backgrounds, records, priorities and personalities.

#### **Interest Actually Began Even Earlier**

Perhaps the strongest indication that this race was going to attract attention came before the first major 2026 announcements.

An informal Natchitoches Parish Journal reader survey conducted in August 2025 asked readers whom they would support for sheriff. The publication reported 9,665 views and more than 3,000 submitted entries, although 648 entries were excluded for irregularities. The publication specifically cautioned that the survey was not scientific, but the sheer level of participation demonstrated substantial early interest in the office.

In other words, people were talking about 2027 before 2027 candidates were officially campaigning.

***Continued next page***

## 2027 IS ALREADY TALKING — Continued

By The Real News Louisiana Staff



### The Sheriff's Office Is a Major Operation

This is also about more than personalities.

The sheriff oversees a substantial public operation. According to the Louisiana Legislative Auditor's financial report, the Natchitoches Parish Sheriff's Office reported approximately **\$18.7 million in revenue for fiscal year 2025**, with more than \$17.2 million in public-safety expenses.

The Louisiana Sheriffs' Association currently lists 99 regular deputies, 13 reserve deputies and 13 corrections officers for the department.

That means voters are selecting someone responsible not simply for wearing the sheriff's badge, but for managing personnel, public money, law-enforcement priorities and an agency serving communities across the parish.

***Continued next page***

By The Real News Louisiana Staff

### Voters Are Already Asking Questions

The early chatter may also reflect something larger happening among voters.

People want to know how candidates would address violent crime, drugs, unsolved cases, rural response times, deputy recruitment and retention, community policing, transparency and relationships between the Sheriff's Office and other law-enforcement agencies.

Those questions aren't necessarily criticism of the current administration. They are legitimate questions for anyone seeking one of the parish's most consequential elected positions.

An early campaign gives voters something they do not always receive: time.

Time to listen.

Time to compare.

Time to separate campaign promises from actual plans.

Time to examine experience and leadership.

And, perhaps most importantly, time to decide what they believe the Natchitoches Parish Sheriff's Office should look like for the next four years.

### This Race May Be Different

The 2027 primary is scheduled for **October 9, 2027**, meaning the campaign still has a long way to go.

Additional candidates could emerge. Campaign issues could change. Alliances could shift. And conversations taking place today may look very different a year from now.

But one thing already appears clear: Natchitoches Parish is paying attention. The amount of conversation surrounding the sheriff's race this early suggests voters aren't waiting until campaign signs cover the highways to start thinking about their choice.

The Real News Louisiana will continue covering the 2027 sheriff's race as it develops, providing candidates an opportunity to discuss their qualifications, priorities and vision while giving voters information they can use to make their own decision.

NATCHITOCHES PARISH

# 2027 IS ALREADY TALKING

Why Is the Natchitoches Parish Sheriff's Race Generating Attention More Than a Year Before Election Day?

**PRESTON DURR**  
CANDIDATE  
NATCHITOCHES PARISH SHERIFF

**STEVE PEZANT**  
CANDIDATE  
NATCHITOCHES PARISH SHERIFF

**ANOTHER CANDIDATE?**  
WHO WILL JOIN THE RACE?

**THE REAL NEWS LOUISIANA**  
COVERAGE • CONTEXT • COMMUNITY

**PUBLIC SAFETY**

## NPSO NOW HIRING: OPPORTUNITIES TO SERVE

The Natchitoches Parish Sheriff's Office is seeking applicants interested in serving the community through a career in law enforcement and public safety.

Current opportunities include **911 Dispatcher/Communications Deputy, Civil Deputy and Patrol Deputy (Trainee)**. These positions provide individuals an opportunity to become part of an agency serving residents throughout Natchitoches Parish.

Those interested in learning more or applying can visit **NPSHERIFF.ORG**.



**NOW HIRING**

- 911 DISPATCHER / COMMUNICATIONS DEPUTY
- CIVIL DEPUTY
- PATROL DEPUTY (TRAINEE)

★ **APPLY TODAY!** ★  
NPSHERIFF.ORG

# The NPSO is here to safeguard the lives and property of the people we serve...



Should you have an Emergency, dial **911**

For Non-Emergency assistance, dial 352-6432

For Administration, dial 357-7800

For Investigations, dial 357-7830

For Civil Process and Property Tax Collection, dial 352-4104

For the Natchitoches Parish Detention Center, dial 357-9300

## We are ALWAYS here for you.



**BOM**  
Bank

BANKING ON A STRONGER  
TOMORROW TOGETHER

*Gives Back*   
PEOPLE • COMMUNITIES • A STRONGER LOUISIANA

*Investing  
in Our  
Communities*

 **NATCHITOCHES** *Supporting Conservation*



BOM Bank was proud to support the Cane River Chapter of Delta Waterfowl with a donation! Delta Waterfowl is dedicated to producing ducks, conserving prairie wetlands, and securing the future of waterfowl hunting through science-based conservation efforts. Our donation will help support the chapter's annual banquet, which raises funds to advance these important initiatives. We're honored to invest in organizations that help preserve our natural resources and outdoor heritage.

*Pictured: Ricky McConnell with the Cane River Chapter of Delta Waterfowl, and BOM's Brooklyn Broussard, Colleen Benefield, and Keith Miller.*

 **RAPIDES** *Connecting with Our Community*



BOM Bank was proud to host a booth at Unitech Training Academy's Alexandria Campus! BOM's Anna Lee and Holly Cloessner had an amazing time visiting with students, staff, and members of the community.

We love opportunities like these to connect, build relationships, and show our support for the communities we're proud to serve. Thank you, Unitech, for having us!

 **SABINE** *Celebrating Local Business*



BOM Bank was proud to attend the Grand Opening of Fish and Fuel Gas Station on Toledo Bend! We love celebrating new businesses and the entrepreneurs who invest in our communities. Congratulations to the Fish and Fuel team! We're excited to see all the ways this new business will serve the Toledo Bend area. Here's to many miles, full tanks, and plenty of success ahead!

*Pictured: BOM's Linda Guay, Tiffany Miller, and Genevieve Loe.*

 **CADDO/BOSSIER** *10 Years of Excellence*



Please help us celebrate Fran Myles on 10 amazing years with BOM Bank! As a Customer Service Representative at our Houghton location, Fran has spent the last decade welcoming customers with a smile and providing the friendly, hometown service that makes BOM Bank special. Fran, thank you for your dedication, hard work, and commitment to our customers and community. We are so grateful to have you as part of the BOM family and can't wait to see what the years ahead bring!

***Join us in congratulating Fran on this incredible milestone!***

# 100 YEARS

## OF LIGHTS, LAUGHTER & LEGACY

SAVE THE DATES FOR THE  
100TH NATCHITOCHE  
CHRISTMAS FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS

NOVEMBER 21, 2026–JANUARY 6, 2027

TICKETS  
ON SALE  
NOW



GET  
YOURS  
TODAY!

[NATCHITOCHECHRISTMAS.COM](http://NATCHITOCHECHRISTMAS.COM)

CHAMBER  
NEWS



## FULL FIGURE LLC WELCOMED TO DOWNTOWN NATCHITOCHES



Full Figure LLC owner Tara Sapp is welcomed to the Natchitoches business community as she opens the company's new storefront in Historic Downtown Natchitoches.

### ABOUT FULL FIGURE LLC

**Owner:** Tara Sapp

**Location:** 105 Church Street, Suite B  
Historic Downtown  
Natchitoches

**Phone:** 318-238-3380

**Website:** FullFigure.co

**Specializing in:**

Size-inclusive bras •  
Shapewear • Sleepwear

Complimentary professional  
sizing available

**JOIN TODAY**  
**FOR AS LITTLE AS**  
**\$25**  
**A MONTH**

Contact Morgan Green  
morgan@gonatchitoches.com

# TICKETS NOW AVAILABLE



**SAT. SEPTEMBER 26TH**  
**NATCHITOCHES RIVERBANK**

## Tickets Now Available for Upcoming Natchitoches Riverbank Event

By The Real News Louisiana Staff

NATCHITOCHES, La. — Tickets are now available for an upcoming event scheduled for **Saturday, September 26, 2026**, at the **Natchitoches Riverbank**.

Organizers have not yet released the complete event schedule, entertainment lineup or ticket-purchasing information. Additional details will be shared as they become available.

Community members are encouraged to save the date and watch for future announcements.

## MCKINNEY-VENTO HOMELESSNESS PROGRAM

ENSURING EDUCATIONAL STABILITY FOR STUDENTS NAVIGATING HOUSING TRANSITIONS



### Stay In School

- Immediate enrollment with or without paperwork

### Student Support

- Academic services and after-school programs
- School uniforms for qualifying applicants

### Transportation

- Transportation provided to the student's school of origin

### Family Support

- Referrals to local community services



To complete the **Louisiana Student Residency Questionnaire Form**, Scan the QR code OR contact

**Alexa Bernard-Conday, Ed.S.**  
Coordinator of Homeless Services and Federal Programs at

**Alexa.Bernard@npsb.la** or  
(318) 238-0702

**NSU**  
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LAB SCHOOL

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MAKE AN IMPACT

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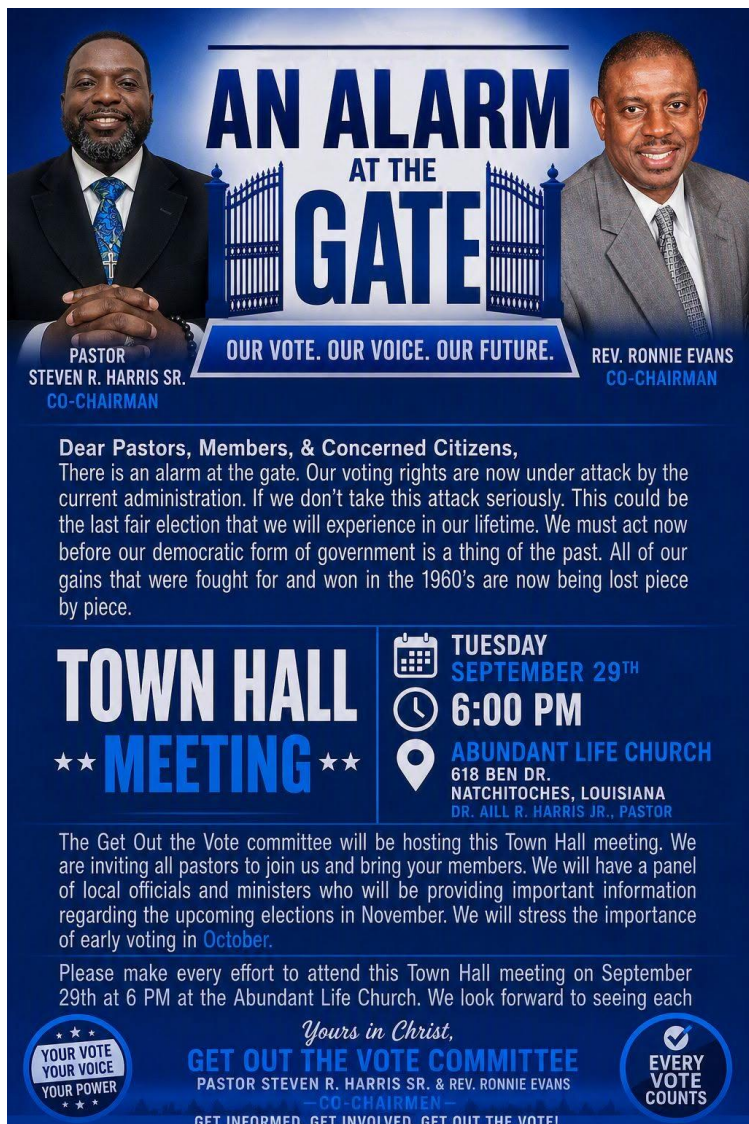
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**support@therealnewslouisiana.com**

COMMUNITY

## Get Out the Vote Committee to Host Town Hall Meeting Sept. 29



**AN ALARM AT THE GATE**

OUR VOTE. OUR VOICE. OUR FUTURE.

PASTOR STEVEN R. HARRIS SR. CO-CHAIRMAN

REV. RONNIE EVANS CO-CHAIRMAN

Dear Pastors, Members, & Concerned Citizens,  
There is an alarm at the gate. Our voting rights are now under attack by the current administration. If we don't take this attack seriously. This could be the last fair election that we will experience in our lifetime. We must act now before our democratic form of government is a thing of the past. All of our gains that were fought for and won in the 1960's are now being lost piece by piece.

**TOWN HALL MEETING**

TUESDAY  
SEPTEMBER 29<sup>TH</sup>  
6:00 PM

ABUNDANT LIFE CHURCH  
618 BEN DR.  
NATCHITOCHES, LOUISIANA  
DR. AILL R. HARRIS JR., PASTOR

The Get Out the Vote committee will be hosting this Town Hall meeting. We are inviting all pastors to join us and bring your members. We will have a panel of local officials and ministers who will be providing important information regarding the upcoming elections in November. We will stress the importance of early voting in October.

Please make every effort to attend this Town Hall meeting on September 29th at 6 PM at the Abundant Life Church. We look forward to seeing each

Yours in Christ,  
**GET OUT THE VOTE COMMITTEE**  
PASTOR STEVEN R. HARRIS SR. & REV. RONNIE EVANS  
— CO-CHAIRMEN —  
GET INFORMED. GET INVOLVED. GET OUT THE VOTE!

YOUR VOTE  
YOUR VOICE  
YOUR POWER

EVERY  
VOTE  
COUNTS

The Get Out the Vote Committee will host an “Alarm at the Gate” Town Hall Meeting at 6 p.m. Tuesday, Sept. 29, at Abundant Life Church, 618 Ben Drive in Natchitoches.

Pastors, church members and concerned citizens are invited to attend and participate in a community discussion about voting rights and the importance of taking part in the upcoming November elections. A panel of local officials and ministers will provide important election information and encourage residents to become informed, involved and prepared to vote. Organizers will also emphasize the importance of early voting in October.

The town hall is chaired by Pastor Steven R. Harris Sr. and the Rev. Ronnie Evans. Attendees are encouraged to bring others from their churches, families and communities.

For the Get Out the Vote Committee, the message is clear: “Our vote. Our voice. Our future.”



### Mama Shug would always say...

*If the iceberg doesn't get you,  
the submarine will.*

# Help, Healing and Hope for Crime Victims

*You are not alone. Resources are available in Natchitoches and beyond.*

By The Real News Louisiana Staff

**NATCHITOCHES, La.** — Being a victim of a crime can be a traumatic and overwhelming experience. Whether it involves a violent crime, property crime or another criminal act, victims often face emotional, physical and financial challenges. Help is available.

Local and state organizations provide services to support crime victims and their families. Assistance may include crisis intervention, counseling, safety planning, legal guidance and help navigating the criminal justice system.

## Report the Crime

If you are in immediate danger, call **911**.

To provide information about a crime anonymously, contact Natchitoches Crime Stoppers at **318-238-2388** or visit **P3Tips.com**.

## Support Services

Eligible crime victims may receive assistance through the Louisiana Crime Victims' Compensation Program. Depending on eligibility, available assistance may include medical and prescription expenses, mental-health counseling, funeral expenses, loss of earnings or support, childcare and crime-scene cleanup.

Visit **LCLE.LA.GOV** for program information, eligibility requirements and applications.

## You Have Rights

Louisiana law provides important rights and protections for crime victims. These may include the right to receive information about available services, to be treated with fairness and respect, to receive notice of certain court proceedings, to be present and heard at critical stages of a case, and to seek restitution. Victims should complete and submit the appropriate victim notice and registration forms to receive applicable notifications.

If you or someone you know has been affected by crime, reach out for help. Support, resources and hope are available in our community.



# YOU ARE NOT ALONE

**Support Today.  
A Safer Tomorrow.**

-  **COUNSELING & SUPPORT**
-  **SAFETY PLANNING**
-  **LEGAL ASSISTANCE**
-  **HELP WITH EXPENSES**
-  **RESOURCES FOR FAMILIES**

*Stronger Together*  
Awareness • Support • Healing • Hope

 **EMERGENCY  
CALL 911**

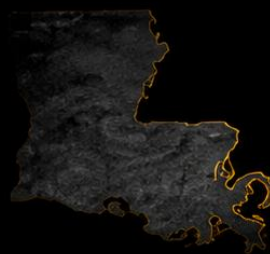
**NATCHITOCHES CRIME STOPPERS**  
**318-238-2388**  
**P3TIPS.COM**

**LOUISIANA CRIME VICTIM SERVICES**  
For state resources visit:  
**www.lcle.la.gov**





**THE**  
**REAL NEWS**  
**LOUISIANA**  
LOCAL NEWS • COMMUNITY • LOUISIANA



# COMMUNITY EVENTS



*Upcoming Events • Meetings • Community Announcements*

**BEGINNERS  
LINE DANCE  
AT NSU**

**Starting September 15**

**Tuesdays for 6 Weeks**  
**5:30 PM-7:00 PM**

**Would you like to learn to line dance?**

## BEGINNER LINE DANCE AT NSU

Northwestern State University is offering a Beginner Line Dance course for anyone looking for a fun way to exercise, socialize and build confidence.

**DATES:** Sept. 15 – Oct. 20, 2026

**DAY:** Tuesdays

**TIME:** 5:30–7:00 PM

**CLASSES:** 6

**FEE:** \$65

**LOCATION:** Room 127 of NSU's Health and Human Performance building

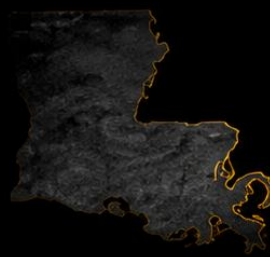
**INSTRUCTORS:** Avila Kahey & Wanda Kahey

**NO DANCE EXPERIENCE REQUIRED**



# THE REAL NEWS LOUISIANA

LOCAL NEWS • COMMUNITY • LOUISIANA



## COMMUNITY EVENTS



Upcoming Events • Meetings • Community Announcements

### Family Story Time

Tuesday's  
10:30 AM

With Ms. Dianna



Main Branch – Children's Department

No sign up needed!

Themes vary each week for stories and crafts.

Stories and crafts are geared for children up to age 5.





**Group One: Ages 6-8**

A D&D inspired game geared to children

**Monday, September 14**  
6-8 pm  
Main Branch-Children's Dept.

**Sign Up Only!**  
Parents may sign up in person or by calling 318-238-9222.



Children must be accompanied by an adult in order to stay for the program.

### NATCHITOCHES PARISH LIBRARY

★  
**READ**  
★  
**LEARN**  
★  
**CREATE**  
★  
**CONNECT**



★  
**PROGRAMS FOR  
EVERY AGE**  
★

**YOUR LIBRARY.  
YOUR COMMUNITY.**

### Kid Gamers Club

Ages 6-12

Saturday, September 12  
2-3:30 pm

Main Branch-Children's Dept.

Club Activities:

- Bring your own devices to play with new friends!
- Wii and board games available for play!
- Snacks provided!



**Sign Up Required!!**  
Parents may sign up in person or by calling 238-9222.

Children must be accompanied by an adult in order to stay for the program.





**TEEN PROGRAM**  
AGES 12-17

**ART CLUB**  
CLAY FAIRY FROGS

Create your own cute little magical frog figure!

**SEPTEMBER 15**  
6PM - 8:00PM  
3RD FLOOR MEETING ROOM  
REGISTRATION REQUIRED  
REGISTER IN PERSON OR  
CALL (318)238-9224

### Finger Painting Fun

Ages 1-4

Tuesday, September 15  
6-7PM

Main Branch – Children's Floor  
**SIGN UP ONLY!!**

Parents may sign up in person or by calling 238-9222.

Children must be accompanied by an adult in order to stay for the program.





Explore, taste, and learn about the importance of eating fresh, local food

**Thursday, September 17**  
6pm  
Main Branch – Children's Floor

**Sign Up Required!!**  
Parents may sign up in person or by calling 238-9222.



Children must be accompanied by an adult in order to stay for the program.  
**Snacks Provided!!**

# COMMUNITY EVENTS



Upcoming Events • Meetings • Community Announcements

## Celebrating Culture, Cuisine, Faith, Family & Friends



## Creole AND Family FESTIVAL

**OCTOBER  
9th - 11th**

2262 HIGHWAY 484  
ISLE BREVELLE, LA 71456

PLEASE NO PARKING ON  
THE RIVERBANK

\*ST. AUGUSTINE CATHOLIC CHURCH  
IS ON THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF  
HISTORIC PLACES.

FREE ENTRY &  
FAMILY FRIENDLY

LIMITED VENDOR  
SPACE AVAILABLE!!

**FRIDAY**

**6PM — 10PM**

- FRIED FISH & TRIMMINGS
- FESTIVAL T-SHIRTS
- MUSIC BY DJ JOEY



**SATURDAY**

**8AM — Until**

- 3RD ANNUAL "RUN FOR ROD" Run/Walk in Loving Memory of Chadwick "Rod" Nelson

**10AM — 5PM**

- FUN & GAMES
- BINGO & RAFFLES
- GUMBO, MEAT PIES, TA-MALES & DINNER PLATES

**5PM — 6PM**

- MASS
- 6PM — 11PM**
- FESTIVAL ACTIVITIES

**9PM**

- FIREWORKS SHOW!

**6:30PM — 10:30PM**



**GERARD  
DELAFOSE  
& THE  
ZYDECO  
GATORS!**

**ZYDECO CONCERT!!**

**SUNDAY**

**10:30AM**

- MASS

**11:30AM - 3PM**

- FESTIVAL ACTIVITIES RESUME

3RD ANNUAL

# RUN FOR ROD

"Let all that you do be done in love"

**5K RUN/WALK**

IN LOVING MEMORY OF CHAD "ROD" NELSON, II

TO KICK OFF THE 2026 ST. AUGUSTINE CREOLE & FAMILY FESTIVAL!

STARTS AND ENDS NEAR ST. AUGUSTINE CHURCH HALL

REGISTRATION: OCTOBER 10TH @ 7:00AM

FEE: \$35(YS - ADULT XL) - \$40(XXL - XXXL) PER PERSON (INCLUDES OFFICIAL RUN T-SHIRT)

REGISTRATION  
**\$35**

**SATURDAY  
OCT. 10, 2026**  
START: 8:00 AM



TO REGISTER FOR  
RUN/WALK

<https://square.link/u/E4Q2azt5>



TO PURCHASE T-SHIRT  
ONLY

<https://square.link/u/iImPumt3>

2250 HIGHWAY 484, NATCHEZ, LA 71456 ST. AUGUSTINE CATHOLIC CHURCH

\*\*\* TO GUARANTEE T-SHIRT FOR THE RUN, PLEASE COMPLETE  
PRE-REGISTRATION AND PAYMENT BY SEPTEMBER 18, 2026 \*\*\*

FOR INFORMATION CALL (318) 663-2506 OR (318) 332-6586 OR EMAIL RUN4ROD@GMAIL.COM

Natchitoches Alumnae Chapter of  
Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated



## Presents the 3rd ANNUAL SICKLE CELL AWARENESS EVENT



IN COLLABORATION WITH



OUTPATIENT MEDICAL CENTER



SCARF  
Sickle Cell Anemia  
Resource Foundation



ZETA PHI BETA SORORITY, INC.  
MU OMEGA ZETA CHAPTER



THE KREWE OF EXCELLENCE



**SATURDAY  
SEPTEMBER 19,  
2026**



**10:00 AM -  
12:00 PM**



**660  
MARTIN LUTHER  
KING JR. DRIVE**

SAVE A LIFE-  
*Donate Blood!*



LifeShare Blood Center-Alexandria's  
Mobile Blood Unit will be on site  
accepting blood donations.



Your donation can help  
patients living with sickle  
cell disease and others in  
need of lifesaving transfusions.



TOGETHER, WE CAN RAISE AWARENESS,  
SUPPORT FAMILIES, AND HELP SAVE LIVES.

*Every Drop Counts.  
Every Life Matters.*

For more information, email [natchitocheschapter@yahoo.com](mailto:natchitocheschapter@yahoo.com)

# COMMUNITY EVENTS



Upcoming Events • Meetings • Community Announcements

**HAVE AN UPCOMING EVENT?**  
**LET THE COMMUNITY KNOW!**

Send us your flyer and event details.

Church Programs • Festivals • Meetings • Celebrations

THE REAL NEWS LOUISIANA

# ZWOLLE TAMALE FIESTA

## 50<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY

### DANCE CONTEST

*Music Heals the Soul*

1<sup>ST</sup> PLACE  
★ \$500.00 ★

2<sup>ND</sup> PLACE  
★ \$300.00 ★

3<sup>RD</sup> PLACE  
★ \$150.00 ★

★ NO SIGN UP FEE ★

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 9, 2026  
★ 6:45 P.M. – 8:00 P.M. ★

A FAITHFUL PASTOR  
A STRONG COVERING  
A LASTING Legacy

# 27<sup>TH</sup> Year

## PASTORAL ANNIVERSARY

HONORING  
**PASTOR CAREY SMITH  
& FIRST LADY REGINA SMITH**

THEME:  
*"A Charge to Keep"*  
JEREMIAH 3:15

SUNDAY  
**OCTOBER 11, 2026**  
2:00 PM

GUEST PREACHER  
**REV. BYRON KING**  
AND THE MT. PILGRIM  
BAPTIST CHURCH

HOLY BIBLE

Join us as we celebrate a man of God,  
his vision, his service, and 27 years of faithful leadership.  
ALL ARE WELCOME

# PASTOR APPRECIATION BANQUET

*Honoring a Faithful Servant*

**DR. APOSTLE LINDA KING**  
SECOND STREET EVENT  
SEPTEMBER 26, 2026  
EVENT CENTER

"And I will give you  
pastors according  
to mine heart,  
which shall feed you  
with knowledge  
and understanding."  
JEREMIAH 3:15



# THE **REAL NEWS** LOUISIANA

LOCAL NEWS • COMMUNITY • LOUISIANA



## A COMMUNITY WITH A VOICE SHALL BE HEARD.



The Real News Louisiana is committed to bringing you local news that matters, inspiring stories, community events, and information that empowers our communities.



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### COMMUNITY FOCUSED

Highlighting the people, places, and events that make Louisiana strong.



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Stay informed with the latest news as it happens.



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