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Publisher: Latorria Freeman

Cleo Fields' Congressional Seat Hangs in the Balance: What a Supreme Court Ruling Against Louisiana's Redistricting Could Mean

Washington, D.C. – September 26, 2025 – As the U.S. Supreme Court prepares for rearguments in the high-stakes redistricting case Louisiana v. Callais on October 15, the future of Rep. Cleo Fields' (D-La.) hard-won seat in Louisiana's 6th Congressional District remains uncertain. Fields, a veteran civil rights advocate and state senator who staged a remarkable political comeback in 2024, flipped the district from Republican to Democratic control for the first time in nearly 50 years. But a ruling against the state's congressional map could redraw the boundaries, potentially ousting him just as he settles into his third term in Washington. This case isn't just about one seat—it's a potential flashpoint for the Voting Rights Act (VRA), with implications for minority representation nationwide.



The Road to Redistricting: A Battle Over Black Voting Power

Louisiana's congressional map has been a legal battlefield since the 2020 Census revealed that Black residents comprise about 33% of the state's population—yet the initial 2022 map drawn by the Republican-controlled legislature included only one majority-Black district out of six. Civil rights groups, led by the NAACP Legal Defense Fund (LDF), sued under Section 2 of the VRA, arguing the map illegally diluted Black voting strength by "cracking" communities across districts, denying them a fair shot at electing representatives of their choice. A federal district court and the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals agreed, ordering a redraw to create a second majority-Black district. In early 2024, lawmakers complied under protest, crafting a new 6th District that snakes diagonally from Baton Rouge to Shreveport, boosting its Black voting-age population from 24% to 55%. The map passed with bipartisan support but sparked immediate backlash from non-Black voters, who filed Callais v. Landry, claiming it was an unconstitutional racial gerrymander where race "predominated" over traditional districting criteria like compactness and community interests.

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Cleo Fields' Congressional Seat Hangs in the Balance: What a Supreme Court Ruling Against Louisiana's Redistricting Could Mean

The U.S. Supreme Court intervened twice: first, staying a lower court's block on the new map in May 2024, allowing its use for the November election; then, in a rare move, postponing a final decision after March 2025 arguments to rehear the case in the 2025-26 term. In August, the justices escalated the stakes by ordering briefs on whether intentionally creating a majority-minority district to remedy a VRA violation itself breaches the 14th or 15th Amendments—a question that could gut Section 2's remedial power.



Cleo Fields: From Redistricted Out to Flipping the Script

Cleo Fields knows the sting of redistricting all too well. Elected to Congress in 1992 as a young firebrand representing the 4th District, his career was derailed in the mid-1990s when courts struck down his "zigzag" majority-Black district as an unconstitutional gerrymander. Fields, now 62, pivoted to the Louisiana Senate, where he built a reputation as a pragmatic power broker on issues like criminal justice reform and economic development. The 2024 map handed him a golden opportunity. In Louisiana's open primary system, Fields captured 51% of the vote outright against four challengers, including Republican Elbert Guillory and fellow Democrats, avoiding a runoff. His victory marked the first time in decades that Black Louisianans could elect two members to the state's congressional delegation—Fields joining Rep. Troy Carter (D-2nd District)—and flipped the 6th from GOP incumbent Garrett Graves, who opted not to run in the bluer district. For Fields, the win was personal. "I've been called a lot of things in this election, but tonight they can call me congressman," he quipped on election night in Baton Rouge. Now serving on the House Financial Services Committee, Fields has hit the ground running, co-chairing a new DEI Caucus and advocating for Medicaid protections and funding for the fentanyl crisis. However, his term, which began on January 3, 2025, is overshadowed by the litigation. A 2024 column in The Times-Picayune noted that while Fields is guaranteed a full two-year term under the current map, a post-2026 redraw could force him into a reconfigured district where his reelection odds plummet.

The Supreme Court Showdown: A Ruling Against Redistricting

The October 15 rearguments will revisit whether Louisiana's map passes strict scrutiny under the Equal Protection Clause. Challengers argue the 6th District's elongated shape—stretching over 200 miles and linking disparate urban and rural areas—was driven by a "racial quota," not neutral factors. Louisiana's Attorney General Liz Murrill, in a dramatic August 27 pivot, urged the court to uphold the lower court's strike-down, calling race-based redistricting "abhorrent" and unconstitutional—even when aimed at VRA compliance.

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This unusual alignment pits GOP officials against their own map, potentially to reclaim a Republican seat in a narrowly divided House. Conservative justices, including Clarence Thomas and Brett Kavanaugh, have signaled skepticism. During the March arguments, Thomas dissented from delaying the case, calling for an end to "race-based redistricting." Kavanaugh echoed concerns from the 2023 *Allen v. Milligan* ruling (which upheld Alabama's second Black-opportunity district) about an "endpoint" for race in map-drawing. A decision expected by summer 2026 could:

- **Invalidate the Map:** If the court finds race predominated, Louisiana's legislature would redraw districts for the 2026 midterms—likely reverting to one majority-Black seat, merging the 6th's territory into Republican strongholds. Fields could run in a new district but face steep odds as a Democrat in a GOP-favored configuration.
- **Uphold with Limits:** A narrower ruling might affirm the map but impose stricter "breathing room" for states, complicating future VRA claims and eroding minority protections.
- **Broader Assault on the VRA:** Worst-case, the court could declare Section 2's use in remedial redistricting unconstitutional, as urged by challengers and now Louisiana. Experts like Michael Li of the Brennan Center warn this would invite "endless collateral attacks" on maps, reversing gains from *Milligan* and enabling vote dilution nationwide.

Voting rights advocates, including LDF attorney Victoria Naifeh, counter that Section 2 demands flexibility: "The distinction is important to preserving states' flexibility to account for... complying with the law." The Biden administration's brief in March supported neither side but urged reversal of the map's invalidation, emphasizing states' leeway.

Stakes for Fields, Louisiana, and Beyond

For Fields, the personal impact is apparent. At a recent press conference, he asked Murrill to "represent the state's interest" in defending the map and described the AG's change in position as politicized. Losing the seat would end his federal campaign and reduce Black representation in a delegation currently at 4-2 Republican after Fields' win. Nationally, the case addresses the VRA's status on its 60th anniversary. John Bisognano of the National Redistricting Foundation stated, "Courts have never ruled there is a conflict between the Constitution and Section 2." With the current court majority, an unfavorable ruling could encourage similar cases in states such as North Carolina and Georgia. As rearguments approach, Fields reiterated his perspective: "There is nothing new about running for Congress for me," he said before the election. If the Supreme Court rules against redistricting, the outcome for Fields and Louisiana may be similar to his 1990s removal from office, illustrating that changes in representation are not assured. For updates, consult SCOTUSblog or the Brennan Center. Oral arguments will be live-streamed on the Supreme Court's website.

ALERT

Louisiana Redistricting Lawsuit Pursuing Fair Maps Will Move Forward

LA Lightning Hosts Demon Diamond & Devotion Breakfast Benefiting NSU Baseball

Photos by: Zoe Johnson

NATCHITOCHES, La. — September 20, 2025 — The LA Lightning 12U team hosted the Demon Diamond and Devotion Breakfast on Saturday at Northwestern State University's Prather Coliseum to benefit the NSU Demon Baseball Team. The event, held from 9–11 a.m., brought together families, players, and community members for a morning of faith, fellowship, and support.

The program began with Cole Gentry, LA Lightning parent, leading the team and families in prayer before the event kicked off. Then the attendees enjoyed an autograph session with the 2025–2026 Demon Baseball Team. Guests received branded autograph cards and had the opportunity to meet each player in a lineup of introductions. Thanks to donations from several local businesses, the Natchitoches Boys and Girls Club also attended the event, giving local youth a chance to experience the special morning.

Dr. Matt Endris, Pastor of Fairview Baptist Church, shared background on NSU and the baseball program before leading the Pledge of Allegiance and a prayer over the gathering. Guests then enjoyed a breakfast of pancakes, sausage, fruit, juice, water, and coffee before the formal program began.

Chris Bertrand highlighted the upcoming baseball season, the coaching staff, and the players. In recognition of her leadership and dedication, Bertrand presented a signed, custom-designed glove from the 25–26 team to Carrie Hough, honoring her vision in bringing the event to life.

The program continued with Kevin Robinson, #13 pitcher for the Demons, who shared his powerful testimony. Robinson spoke about his childhood growing up in the church, his high school baseball career, family hardships—including his mother's victorious battle with breast cancer—and his college decision, ultimately choosing NSU over East Texas Baptist University as a calling from the Lord. He is now an active member of FCA, BCM, and the NSU Baseball Team.

To conclude the event, Steven Solomon, Associate Pastor of Freedom Life Church, encouraged attendees to get involved in their communities, inspire local youth, and help reignite programs such as FCA and Activate in area schools. He closed the breakfast with a heartfelt prayer. The Demon Diamond and Devotion Breakfast showcased the strong bond between LA Lightning families, the NSU Baseball program, and the community, setting the stage for an exciting 2025–2026 season. To support the NSU Demon Baseball Team you can make a donation online at donation at: [NSU Athletics](https://www.nsu.edu/sports/donations).



LA Lightning 12 U Team (Hosts) - Back row (L-R): Gavin Key, Murphy Linebaugh, Liam Mahloch, Cohen Gandy, Adam Todtenbier. Front Row (L-R): Carter Hough, Jax Errington, Carson Gentry, Callen Bertrand, Luke Fair, and Archer Johnson.



Autograph Session



LA Lightning Parents (Hosts) – (L-R): Cole Gentry, Luke & Anne Mahloch, Paul Errington, Barney & Tracie Key, Dana Johnson, Erika Todtenbier, Carrie Hough, Lori Bertrand, Brittani Linebaugh, Charlie Gandy, Mary Beth & Jack Fair, and Cody Hough



Natchitoches Boys and Girls Club



NSU Baseball Team

A fresh look, easy to use, NSU's redesigned website improves the experience for users

NATCHITOCHES – Northwestern State University rolled out a refresh of its website last week. The redesigned site is updated, interactive and easy to navigate with a focus on admissions, academic programs, campus life and the long-term value of earning a degree at NSU.

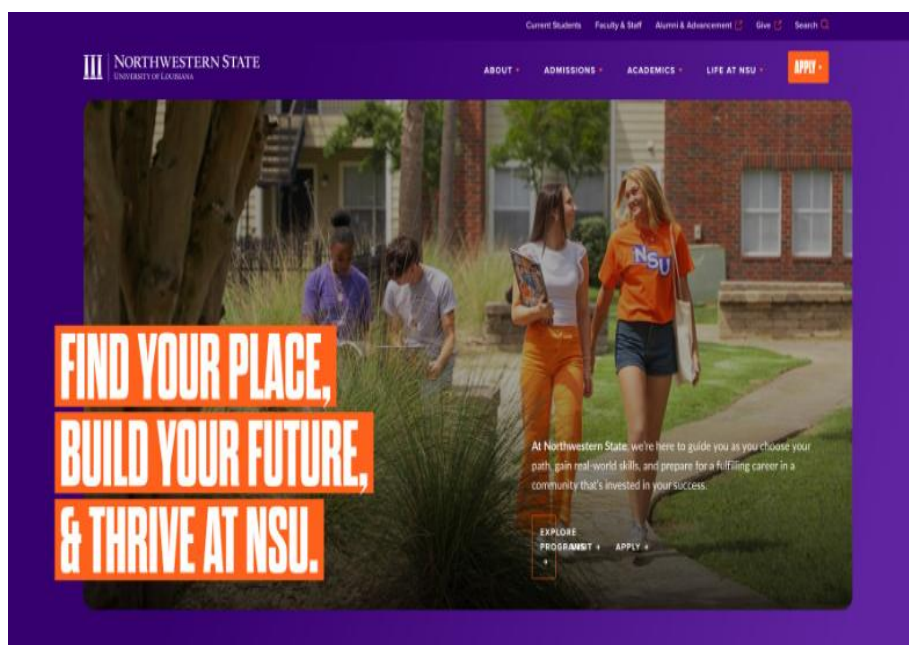
“The enhanced site will serve as a dynamic, mobile friendly and marketing-focused digital front door for our university. It is designed to meet the needs of current faculty and staff, current students and prospective students and families,” said Chief Marketing Officer Cole Gentry, who spearheaded the redesign. He worked with Push10, a branding and website design agency for non-profits whose list of clients includes Candler School of Theology, Princeton University Office of Advancement, University of Pennsylvania Law Center, Alpha Chi Delta Sorority, The Sontag Foundation and many other mission-driven organizations in academia, philanthropy, healthcare and the arts.

Gentry credited several NSU personnel as key team members contributing to the redesign, Director of Marketing Amy Lee, Associate Director for Web Services Joe Parrie, Academic Technology Support Specialist Melinda Parrie, Web Developer Dan Hypes, Senior Enterprise Applications Programmer Jorge Rodriguez, Deputy Chief Information Officer Rocky Peritt and Chief Information Officer Ron Williams.

The new website is more visually appealing and will continue to expand and adapt to the needs of NSU students, faculty, staff, alumni, and the broader community, Gentry said.

“Our team has completed quality assurance testing, and accessibility checks are ongoing to ensure the best possible experience for all visitors,” he added.

NSU's homepage can be accessed at <https://www.nsula.edu>.



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Key Qualities to Seek When Electing a Judge

Judges have a profound impact on justice and the communities they serve. When voting, look for candidates with integrity, impartiality, and competence. Here are the most important characteristics:

1. Impartiality and Fairness: Judges should decide cases based on law and facts, not personal bias.

Judges must make decisions based on law and facts, not personal biases. Look for candidates who are fair and neutral, treating everyone equally regardless of background.

A judge must be impartial, making decisions based on the law and the facts, rather than personal biases or external pressures. Look for candidates who demonstrate a commitment to fairness and neutrality. Their past rulings, public statements, or endorsements may offer insight into whether they favor specific groups or ideologies. A good judge leaves personal beliefs at the door and ensures every party in a case is treated equitably, regardless of background, status, or influence.

2. Judicial Temperament: Judges need patience, professionalism, and respect for all parties.

A good judge is patient, respectful, and professional. They stay calm under pressure and maintain courtroom decorum.

Judicial temperament refers to a judge's demeanor and ability to handle cases with patience, respect, and professionalism. Effective judges remain calm under pressure, listen attentively to all parties, and maintain courtroom decorum. Research candidates' reputations among attorneys, court staff, and litigants. Have they been praised for their composure and respectfulness, or have there been complaints about arrogance or impatience? A judge with a strong judicial temperament fosters trust in the legal system.

3. Legal Expertise: A strong legal background and relevant experience are essential.

Judges should have strong legal knowledge and relevant experience. Check their background and prior rulings, if available.



4. Integrity and Ethics: Judges must have an honest, ethical record free from conflicts of interest.

A judge must have a record of honesty and ethical behavior, free from conflicts of interest or corruption.

A judge's integrity is non-negotiable. They must uphold the highest ethical standards, avoiding conflicts of interest and maintaining independence from political or financial influences. Investigate whether candidates have faced disciplinary actions, ethical complaints, or allegations of corruption. Bar association ratings, such as those from the American Bar Association or local bar groups, can provide insight into a candidate's ethical standing. A judge with a spotless record of integrity inspires confidence in the judicial process.

5. Commitment to Justice: Candidates should aim to serve the public and improve access to justice.

Look for candidates who serve the public, have community involvement, and care about access to justice.

Judges should be driven by a desire to serve the public and uphold justice, not personal ambition or external agendas. Look for candidates who have a history of community involvement or public service, such as pro bono legal work or participation in civic organizations. Their campaign materials and public statements may reveal whether they prioritize access to justice, protecting individual rights, or addressing systemic issues, such as court backlogs or sentencing disparities. *Continued next page...*

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Key Qualities to Seek When Electing a Judge

6. Sound Decision-Making: Judges should make clear, logical rulings and explain their reasoning. Judges should make clear, logical rulings based on the law and provide a clear explanation of their reasoning.

7. Independence: Judges must be free from political or financial influence.

Judges must remain independent from political parties, interest groups, or donors. Avoid candidates who seem influenced by politics or money.

Judges must remain independent from political parties, interest groups, or campaign donors. In judicial elections, be wary of candidates who align too closely with specific political factions or rely heavily on partisan endorsements. Check their campaign funding sources through public records to see if they're tied to groups that might expect favors. A judge's loyalty should be to the law and the Constitution, not to political or financial backers.

8. Respect for Precedent: A good judge follows established law but adapts to new standards when needed.

A good judge respects legal precedent while remaining open to evolving societal and legal standards. They should strike a balance between fidelity to established law and an understanding of when change is warranted, such as in cases involving emerging technologies or shifting cultural norms. Review candidates' statements or past rulings to see how they approach precedent. Do they rigidly adhere to outdated interpretations, or do they demonstrate thoughtful adaptability within the bounds of the law?

9. Community Connection: Judges should understand and engage with their communities. Judges should understand local issues and be actively engaged with their community, while maintaining impartiality.

Judges should understand the community they serve, as their decisions often have a profound impact on local lives.



Candidates with ties to the area—through legal practice, community involvement, or residence—may have a better understanding of local issues, such as economic challenges or cultural dynamics. However, they must balance this connection with impartiality to avoid favoritism. Look for candidates who have engaged with the community in ways that demonstrate empathy and a commitment to accessible justice.

10. Transparency: Judges should be open about their qualifications and their approach to judging.

Judicial candidates should be transparent about their qualifications, values, and judicial philosophy without compromising their impartiality. Attend candidate forums, read their campaign websites, or review voter guides from nonpartisan organizations, such as the League of Women Voters. Have they been open about their approach to judging? Are they willing to answer questions about their qualifications? A candidate who embraces accountability is more likely to serve responsibly on the bench.

Elect judges who are impartial, ethical, experienced, and committed to justice. Do your research to help ensure a fair legal system.

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Key Factors to Consider when Voting for School Board Members.

1. Student Success: Prioritizes achievement and well-being for all.

The primary role of a school board member is to prioritize student achievement and well-being. Look for candidates who demonstrate a genuine commitment to improving educational outcomes for all students, regardless of background.

Review their campaign platforms or public statements to see if they focus on evidence-based strategies, such as supporting literacy programs, STEM education, or mental health resources. Candidates should articulate clear goals for enhancing academic performance and addressing achievement gaps.

2. Policy & Budgets: Understands education policies and finances.

School board members make decisions about curriculum, hiring, and district budgets, so they need a solid grasp of education policy and finance. Seek candidates with experience in education—whether as teachers, administrators, or involved parents—or those who have demonstrated a willingness to learn about complex issues like school funding formulas or state mandates. Check if they've attended school board meetings or served on education-related committees, showing they understand the district's challenges and opportunities.

3. Collaboration: Works well with others and builds consensus.

School board members work as a team to set policies and oversee the superintendent. Effective candidates are collaborative, open to diverse perspectives, and skilled at building consensus. Look for individuals with a track record of working well with others, whether in professional, volunteer, or community settings. Avoid candidates who seem overly confrontational or focused on personal agendas, as divisiveness can hinder the board's ability to make sound decisions.



4. Transparency: Open and accountable to the public.

Voters should prioritize candidates who value transparency and are accountable to the community. School board members should be open about their decision-making processes and willing to engage with parents, teachers, and students. Research whether candidates have a history of responsiveness, such as attending community forums or addressing constituent concerns. Check their campaign websites or social media for evidence of clear communication and a commitment to keeping the public informed.

5. Equity: Promotes fairness and inclusive opportunities.

A strong school board member champions equitable access to education and fosters an inclusive environment. Look for candidates who address disparities in resources, discipline, or opportunities for marginalized groups, such as low-income students, students of color, or those with special needs. Their public statements or past actions should reflect a commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion, ensuring all students have the support they need to thrive. **Continued Next page...**



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Key Factors to Consider when Voting for School Board Members.

6. Fiscal Responsibility: Uses resources wisely for students.

School boards manage multimillion-dollar budgets, so candidates must be fiscally responsible while prioritizing educational needs. Evaluate whether candidates understand how to balance budgets without compromising essential programs like arts, sports, or special education. If they've held roles involving financial oversight, such as in business or community organizations, it's a good sign they can handle the district's finances. Be cautious of candidates promising unrealistic initiatives without clear funding plans.

7. Community: Knows and engages with the district.

Effective school board members are connected to the community they serve. Candidates with ties to the district—through residency, parenting, or volunteering—often have a better understanding of local needs, such as aging school facilities or transportation issues. However, they must balance this connection with objectivity to avoid favoritism. Look for candidates who have engaged with the community through school events, parent-teacher organizations, or advocacy groups.

8. Independence: Free from outside influence.

School board members should make decisions based on what's best for students, not external pressures from political groups, unions, or private entities. Investigate candidates' endorsements and campaign funding through public records to ensure they aren't overly tied to special interest groups. Independent candidates are more likely to prioritize the district's needs over partisan or corporate agendas.

9. Vision: Plans for the district's future.

Great school board members think strategically about the district's future.



Look for candidates who propose forward-thinking solutions, such as preparing students for emerging careers, integrating technology, or addressing enrollment trends.

Their platforms should outline a clear vision for the district's growth while addressing immediate challenges like teacher retention or infrastructure upgrades. Avoid candidates focused solely on short-term fixes or divisive issues that distract from long-term goals.

10. Integrity: Acts ethically and with honesty. School board members must uphold high ethical standards, as their decisions impact public trust in the education system. Research candidates' backgrounds for any history of ethical lapses, conflicts of interest, or legal issues. Bar association ratings, community endorsements, or local news reports can provide insight into their reputation. Candidates with a strong moral compass and a history of ethical behavior are essential for maintaining credibility.





Is It Always Necessary to Throw Away What's Broken?

By: Evangelist Bonita Moses Arnold

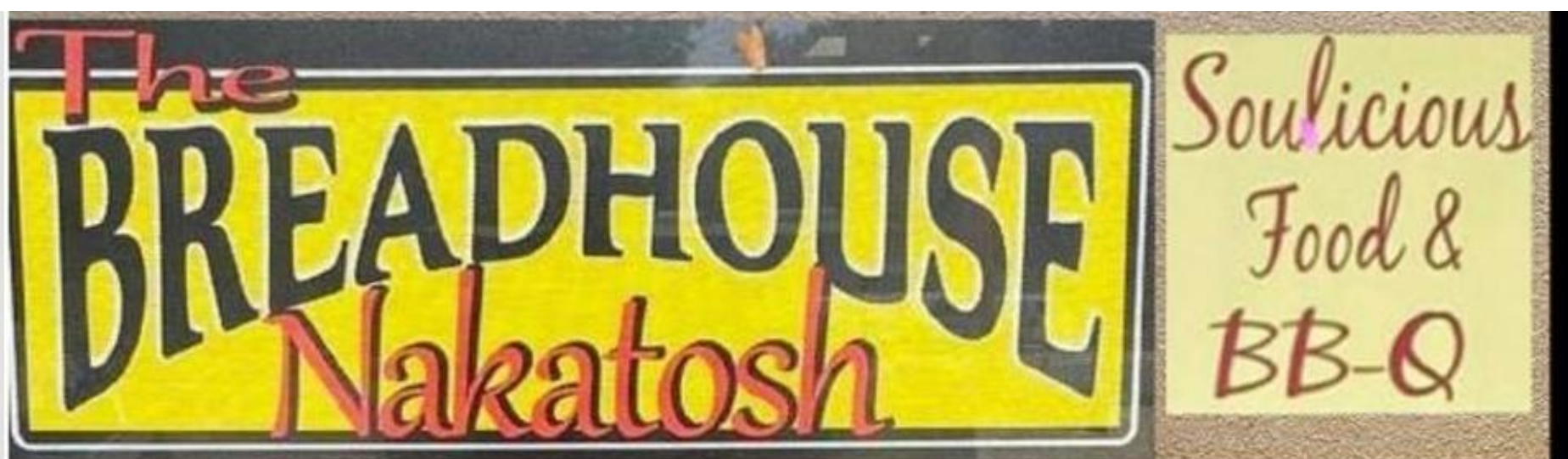
How often do we find ourselves throwing away what's broken? Some things can be repaired. What if Jesus had thrown us away in our brokenness? Instead, he said: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Matthew 5:3 (ESV).

Mama Shug Always Would Say...

"When you spend plenty of time in the mirror, if it's not to see how you look, then you might as well get out of it. If a person doesn't like what you're wearing, they have two choices: They can shut their eyes, or turn their heads".

If you want to
lift yourself up,
lift up someone
else.

- Booker T. Washington



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Scenes from the 10th Annual Initiation & Installation Ceremony

Photo Credits: Dusty Woodruff Grimes



Scenes from the 10th Annual Initiation & Installation Ceremony

Photo Credits: Dusty Woodruff Grimes



Natchitoches Christmas Festival Parade Opens Registration for Participants

NATCHITOCHES, LA — September 17, 2025 — The Natchitoches Christmas Festival Committee is excited to announce that registration is now open for participants in the 2025 Natchitoches Christmas Festival Parade. This year marks the **99th year** of the beloved Natchitoches Christmas Festival, and the parade will once again bring joy, lights, and festive cheer to the heart of Louisiana on **Saturday, December 6, 2025, at 1:00 p.m.**

The Natchitoches Christmas Parade is one of the most anticipated holiday traditions in Louisiana, attracting thousands of spectators from across the region. Local businesses, schools, community organizations, and individuals are invited to take part by entering a float, vehicle, or marching group in this year's event.

"Each year, the parade grows more creative and more vibrant, showcasing the incredible spirit of our community," said HDBA President Sandra Dickens. "As we prepare to celebrate the 99th year of the Natchitoches Christmas Festival, we encourage participants to bring their very best holiday spirit to the streets of downtown Natchitoches."

How to Participate:

Applications to participate in the parade are available online at www.NatchitochesChristmas.com/parade-entry-form. The deadline to apply is **Friday, November 14, 2025**. All participants are asked to embrace the holiday spirit with festive decorations, costumes, music, and performances, while adhering to the parade's standards of excellence.

Event Details

- **Date:** Saturday, December 6, 2025
- **Time:** 1:00 p.m.
- **Location:** Historic Downtown Natchitoches — Parade begins on Tarlton Drive on the NSU Campus



Now in its 99th year, the Natchitoches Christmas Festival of Lights Parade continues to dazzle with beautifully decorated floats, spirited marching bands, dance groups, and community organizations. It is a cherished tradition that brings families and friends together to celebrate the holiday season in Louisiana's oldest city.

The Natchitoches Christmas Festival Parade also provides an excellent opportunity for businesses and organizations to connect with the community and spread holiday cheer. Sponsorship opportunities are available for those wishing to support this beloved event. For more information on sponsorship packages, please contact Christina Friday at (318) 609-2293 or nhdbadirector@gmail.com.

About the Natchitoches Christmas Festival

The Natchitoches Christmas Festival is organized by the Natchitoches Historic District Business Association, a not-for-profit organization made up of local business owners and community leaders who work to promote Natchitoches, encourage visitation, and support events and festivals.

For more information about the Natchitoches Christmas Festival or to submit a parade entry application, please visit

www.NatchitochesChristmas.com.





Championing Animal Welfare in Natchitoches Parish, LA

NATCHITOCHES – Paws for a Cause Week kicks off at Northwestern State University Monday, Oct. 13, launching a week of “compassion, education, and community action to support animal welfare in Natchitoches and beyond,” according to organizers. The week will include pet therapy, speakers, the 12th annual Farm to Table fund raiser dinner and other activities to engage the community and bring awareness to animal welfare.

Paws for a Cause Week is a partnership initiative with Friends All United for Natchitoches Animals (FAUNA), NSU’s School of STEM, NSU’s Department of Veterinary Technology, and NSU’s Office of Economic Development and Advancement.

Monday, Oct. 13 will feature “Paws and Relax,” a stress-relief/pet therapy event in which students can interact with therapy animals provided through FAUNA’s Providing Animal Comfort Therapy (PACT) program. This event promotes student wellness and supports FAUNA’s mission of protecting and caring for animals.

Guest speakers Dr. Herman Soong, M.D. from Tulane University School of Medicine and the Honorable Hillar Moore, District Attorney from East Baton Rouge Parish, will present “The Cruelty Connection: Animal Abuse and Human Violence,” at 6 p.m. Tuesday, Oct. 14 in the Sylvan Friedman Student Union Ballroom. They will discuss how cruelty to animals can be a warning sign of violence against people and how to create safer communities. The event is free and open to the public.

The 12th annual Farm to Table Dinner will begin at 6 p.m. Wednesday, Oct. 15 at Mariner’s Restaurant.

This popular FAUNA fund raiser will feature a specially curated multi-course menu with wine pairings, highlighting the best of local flavors and seasonal ingredients. Seating is limited. Reservations are available <https://www.npfauna.org/event/farm-to-table/>.

NSU Vet Tech students will present “Paw-traits: Snap. Smile. Support” from 2-4 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 16 on the steps leading to the Columns on Normal Hill. Individuals can bring their pets and get a free photo available for download after the event.

Vet Tech will host a Bathe-A-Dog Day from 8:30 a.m.-2 p.m. Friday, Oct. 17 in Bienvenu Hall Room 106 in which pets can get spa-style treatments that includes a bath, nail trimming, ear cleaning and anal gland expression. Pricing is based on dog’s weight starting at \$13. Proceeds support the Vet Tech Club and their ongoing mission to provide animal care and learning opportunities for students.

“This partnership highlights the heart of our program, preparing students not only as skilled veterinary professionals but also as compassionate community leaders,” said Dr. Rachel Cezar-Martinez, director of Veterinary Technology at NSU. “I am excited for Paws for Cause Week because it will give NSU Veterinary Technology students the grand opportunity to receive hands-on learning experiences that connect classroom training with real-world practice, while instilling the values of service, advocacy, and leadership.”

For more information on Paws for a Cause Week, including event details and registration, contact FAUNA at npfauna@gmail.com. Information on NSU’s Veterinary Technology is available at <https://www.nsula.edu/program/veterinary-technology/>. Information on FAUNA is available at www.npFAUNA.org.

NSU and the Natchitoches Chamber partner to connect students, alumni, and employers through Handshake

NATCHITOCHES – Northwestern State University’s Career Center, the Office of Economic Development and University Advancement and the Natchitoches Area Chamber of Commerce have partnered to expand career connections for students and alumni through Handshake, the nation’s leading early talent network.

Handshake is a three-sided marketplace linking students, universities and employers. Serving as the official career services platform for more than 1,500 academic institutions, Handshake reaches 75 percent of the U.S. university student population. More than one million employers from Fortune 500 companies to local businesses actively recruit talent on the platform.

The Natchitoches Area Chamber of Commerce is working closely with the partnership to recruit employers within a 100-mile radius of Natchitoches to join Handshake. This initiative is designed to create more regional opportunities for NSU graduates and help retain talent in Louisiana after graduation.

“Our alumni are one of NSU’s greatest assets,” said Tiffany Killion, NSU’s director of Career Services. “Handshake allows them not only to benefit from the network themselves, but also to give back by opening doors for the next generation of Demons. Combined with the Chamber’s regional outreach, this effort will keep more of our talented graduates here at home, building stronger communities and businesses.”

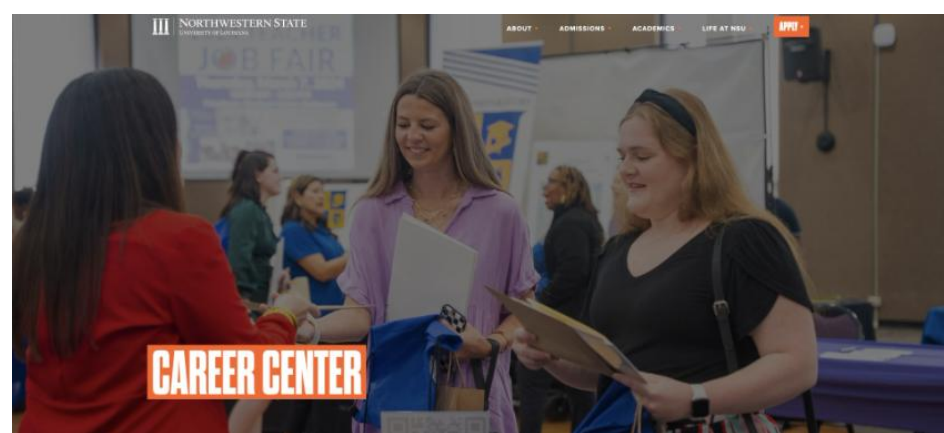
For alumni, this collaboration opens two doors:

- Career Growth:** Alumni can register for Handshake with a non-academic email address to explore job opportunities and build connections across industries.
- Recruiting the Next Generation of Demons:** Alumni business owners, managers and recruiters can easily post internships and full-time roles, directly supporting NSU students while strengthening their own workforce. Killion said that alumni who didn’t provide a personal email address on Handshake before they graduated should contact her at the Career Center for access to the platform.

“By bringing together students, alumni, and employers, this initiative creates a powerful pipeline that fuels both career success and regional economic growth. It ensures that the Demon family remains connected on campus, in the workplace and throughout communities in the region,” Killion said.

“The Chamber and NEDA are thrilled to get this initiative off the ground with a keen focus on connecting our amazing home-grown talent with the ample career opportunities right here in the Natchitoches region,” said Chamber President Laura Lyles. “It is our hope that local employers will take an active role in the recruitment of our higher-ed graduates through Handshake to join us in the effort to retain talent in Natchitoches Parish.”

For details on how alumni can join Handshake as users or employers, visit <https://www.nsula.edu/student-resources/career-center/>. Employers can also connect to Handshake and other workforce connection opportunities at the Chamber’s new Workforce & Career Hub page at <https://gonatchitoches.com/live-and-work-here/workforce-career-hub>



Krewe of Excellence Teen Center

Royal Court XI presented personal hygiene items, snacks, and cash to the newly opened Teen Center of Nat. Together, we can be the difference that our world so desperately needs.



Pictured(L-R): Duke Oghale Eleyae , Duchess Betty Smith-Kirkendoll, King Chad Nelson, Queen Lorie Woodard, and Duchess Matreka Moses.

Not pictured is Duke Korey Davis.

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Excellence in Cancer Care



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NRMC
Cancer Center



**7TH ANNUAL
FIRE PREVENTION
OPEN HOUSE**

**OCTOBER 9, 2025
5:30PM - 8:00PM**

**ASH I SPARKY! SMOKEY
& OTHER FRIENDS | LIVE FIRE
DEMOS | FOOD, GAMES,
& GIVEAWAYS**

**FIRE TRAINING CENTER
6587 HWY 1 BYPASS
NATCHITOCHES, LA. 71457**



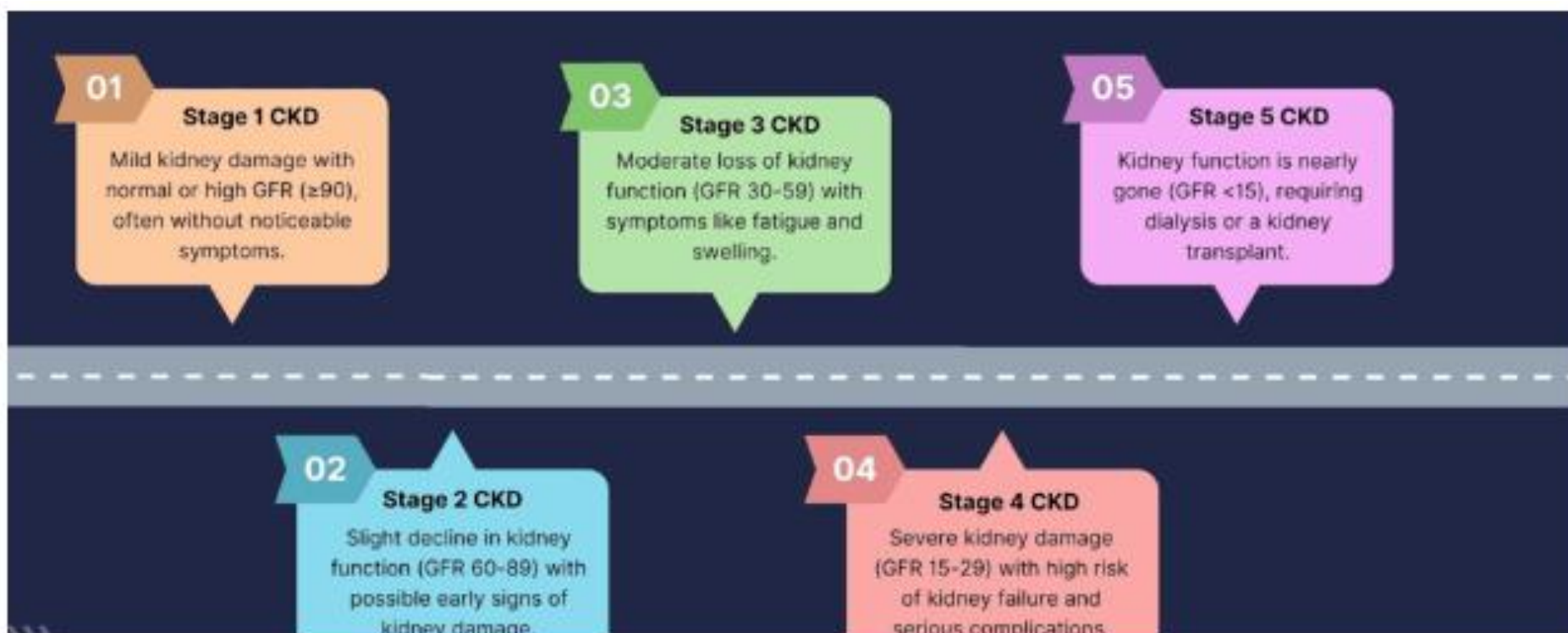
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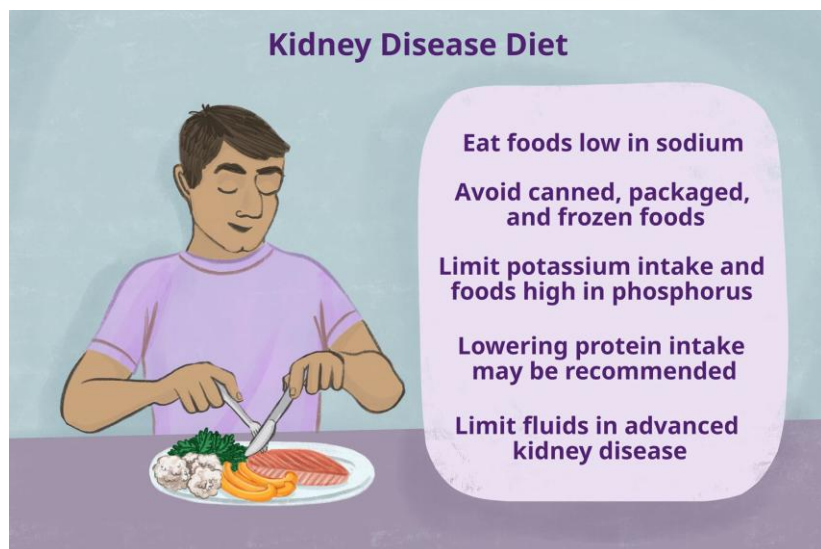


700 Front St. Natchitoches, LA | 318.352.8141 | exchange-bank.com

Stages of Chronic Kidney Disease



Kidney Disease Diet



Welcome

Dr. Carter V. Schwartz, Nephrologist

NRMC is pleased to welcome Carter V. Schwartz, D.O., to its active medical staff as an independent physician. Board certified in both nephrology and internal medicine, Dr. Schwartz specializes in the diagnosis and management of acute and chronic kidney disease. He works closely with patients to address conditions that affect the kidneys' ability to properly filter waste and remove excess fluids from the blood, and his patient-centered approach focuses on optimizing kidney function and improving overall health.

Education:

- Received his Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine at Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine in Bradenton, FL
- Completed his residency in Internal Medicine at Oklahoma State University Medical Center in Tulsa
- Completed a Nephrology Fellowship at University of Mississippi Medical Center in Jackson

For more information or to schedule an appointment, please call **318.238.4604**. Dr. Schwartz's office is located at 617A Bienville Street in Natchitoches.



Natchitoches CRNA Recognized as National Clinical Instructor of the Year

NATCHITOCHES, LA – September 24, 2025 – Natchitoches Regional Medical Center congratulates C. David O'Con, DNAP, MHS, a Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist who partners with NRMC through his independent anesthesia practice, on being named Clinical Instructor of the Year by the American Association of Nurse Anesthesiology (AANA). O'Con received the national award during the AANA's annual congress held in Nashville in August.

With more than 25 years of experience, O'Con is known for advanced clinical expertise and a strong commitment to educating the next generation of nurse anesthetists. He is the only CRNA in Louisiana to complete an acute surgical pain fellowship and applies that specialized training in his clinical practice and teaching.

O'Con creates custom educational materials, presents regional anesthesia lectures, and provides individualized mentorship at various clinical sites, including Natchitoches Regional Medical Center, to help prepare student registered nurse anesthetists for advanced cases. "David's commitment to educating future nurse anesthetists reflects the values we hold at NRMC, which include excellence, compassion, and community service," said Kirk Soileau, NRMC Chief Executive Officer. "His recognition on a national level is a testament to the caliber of professionals who serve our patients and community."

O'Con currently serves as President of the Louisiana Association of Nurse Anesthesiology. He earned both his Doctor of Nursing Anesthesia Practice and Master of Health Science in Nurse Anesthesia from Texas Wesleyan University and completed a fellowship in acute surgical pain at Middle Tennessee School of Anesthesia.

During his acceptance at the AANA Annual Congress, David stated, "I have much gratitude to NRMC and our staff CRNA preceptors Dr. Paul Errington, Roxana Smith and Trent Friedel. This team provides the highest level on anesthesia care available and are all heavily involved in educating the student CRNAs and medical students."



NATCHITOCHES TREASURES ANNOUNCED



2025 NATCHITOCHES TREASURES ANNOUNCED *Recognition Ceremony to be Held Friday, October 10th*

NATCHITOCHES – A recognition ceremony will take place on Friday, October 18th, to honor the 2025 Natchitoches Treasures. The Natchitoches Treasures are a select group of retirees in Natchitoches who have made significant and lasting contributions to the community through their generosity, service, volunteerism, and spirit.

The recognition ceremony will be held at 11:00 a.m. on Friday, October 10, 2025, at the Natchitoches Events Center at 750 Second Street. Light refreshments will be provided. The event is open to the public and the media.

The 2025 Natchitoches Treasures were chosen by a committee composed of previous Natchitoches Treasures. Treasures have been selected annually since 2008 based on nominations from community members.

The 2025 Natchitoches Treasures are **Alma Alost, Debra Gant, Burley Johnson, Emile Metoyer, Elvin Shields, and Diane Vienne.**

The recognition ceremony will highlight the contributions made by each newly elected Treasure to the City of Natchitoches and the community and pay tribute to past Natchitoches Treasures. For more information about the Natchitoches Treasures, please call City Hall at (318) 352-2772.

2026 UPCOMING ELECTIONS

**OPEN CONGRESSIONAL
GENERAL AND OPEN
PRIMARY**
November 3, 2026

GENERAL ELECTION
December 12, 2026

QUALIFYING PERIOD
July 29-31, 2026

OFFICE TITLES	YEARS OF TERM	BEGINNING OF TERM	EXPIRATION OF TERM	DISTRICTS
OPEN GENERAL				
U.S. Senator*	6	1/3/2027	1/3/2033	—
U.S. Representative*	2	1/3/2027	1/3/2029	6
Associate Justice, Supreme Court*	10	1/1/2027	12/31/2036	3
Public Service Commissioner*	6	1/1/2027	12/31/2032	5
OPEN PRIMARY				
				3-1-B
Court of Appeal Judges*	10	1/1/2027	12/31/2036	3-1-C
District Judges	6	1/1/2027	12/31/2032	10th JDC
District Attorney	6	1/11/2027	1/9/2033	10th JDC
School Board Members	4	1/1/2027	12/31/2030	all
Justices of the Peace	6	1/1/2027	12/31/2032	all
Constables (Justice of the Peace Courts)	6	1/1/2027	12/31/2032	all

- Candidates qualify with Secretary of State.
- All other candidates qualify with Clerk of Court.

QUALIFYING PERIOD

JULY 29-31, 2026

2026 UPCOMING ELECTIONS

Important Dates

QUALIFYING PERIOD

July 29-31, 2026

- District Judges
- District Attorney
- School Board Members
- Justice of the Peace
- Constables
- City Court Marshal
- City Court Judge- Ward 1

ELECTION

April 2026

Village of Natchez

- Mayor
- Chief of Police
- Aldermen

QUALIFYING PERIOD

July 29-31, 2026

Mayors of
Natchitoches' Towns
and Villages through
the Parish

CLOSED PARTY RACE

April 2026

- US Senator
- U.S. Representative
- Associate Justice of the Supreme Court
- Public Service Commissioner



Manager Spotlight Allen Boyd, Director of Financial Operations



Outpatient Medical Center welcomes Allen Boyd as Director of Financial Operations, joining the executive team this July.

Allen Boyd is already making an impact as he steps into his new role. He is focused on the Three-Year OMC Strategic Health Plan, aiming to accomplish unmet goals. His financial objectives include a clean audit in fiscal year 2026 with no repeat findings and improving program income by monitoring billing and collections and setting accountability benchmarks.

Allen brings a servant-leader mindset, empowering his team and providing the tools and coaching they need. He challenges them to deliver accurate, timely results and remain compliant with OMC policies.

Allen is also a member of the Krewe of Tucks, a popular New Orleans Mardi Gras group known for its humor and fun. He has participated for the past seven years.

Every year, he creates custom throws for the parade and supports the Krewe's charitable work.

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FINANCING AVAILABLE

PITSTOP76

Hours Monday- Friday 8 am- 5 pm
Saturday 9 am- 1 pm
Sunday Closed

Line dancing classes until October 14th

NATCHITOCHES – A line dancing class will be offered by Northwestern State University's Office of Electronic Learning and Global Education starting Tuesday, Sept. 9. The class will be taught on Tuesdays from 5:30 p.m. until 7 p.m. through Oct. 14 in Room 127 of the Health and Human Performance Building. The fee is \$65.

Line dancing is a way to exercise your body and mind by dancing to lively, upbeat music. It is a fun way to dance socially without a dance partner. Dancing styles covered in this class will include country-western, zydeco and hip-hop. No dance experience is required. Attire for the class is casual with soft soled shoes required.

For more information or to register for classes, go to checkout.nsula.edu or call (800) 376-2422 or (318) 357-6355. Stay up to date with course offerings by following NSU Electronic Learning and Global Education on Facebook at facebook.com/NSULA.ece.



Natchitoches Parish Sheriff's Office

INTRODUCING OUR NEW APP

Instant access to essential information at your fingertips.

- NPSO Directory
- Submit A Tip
- Sex Offenders
- Inmate Information
- Extra Patrol Requests
- School Resource Officers
- Join Our Team
- Emergency Prep
- + Much More!

SCAN TO
DOWNLOAD



AVAILABLE FOR DOWNLOAD NOW!



FIRST-TIME HOMEBUYER CLASS

SPECIAL CLASS IN NATCHITOCHES

PRESENTED BY:



MORE INFO:



SATURDAY, SEPT. 27
9AM - 3PM
NATCHITOCHES HOUSING
AUTHORITY
536 CULBERTSON LANE

A 6 HOUR COURSE LED BY
A HUD-CERTIFIED
FINANCIAL COUNSELOR TO
GET YOU READY TO BUY A
HOME.



REGISTER NOW AT
[BIT.LY/FIRSTHOMECLASS](https://bit.ly/firsthomeclass)

Join the Natchitoches Housing Authority and Sabine State Bank for a First-Time Homebuyer Class this Saturday. Learn the ins and outs of the homebuying process so you can feel confident about taking the next big step toward homeownership.

Attendees will also receive a 1st-time Homebuyer certificate, valid for one year after completing the class.

A blue promotional graphic with white and yellow text. At the top is the Natchitoches Area Chamber of Commerce logo. The main text reads "JOIN TODAY" in large white letters, followed by "FOR AS LITTLE AS" in smaller white letters, and then "\$25" in very large white letters. Below that, it says "A MONTH" in white letters. At the bottom, it says "Contact Morgan Green" and "morgan@gonatchitoches.com" in white. A QR code is in the bottom right corner.

JOIN
TODAY
FOR AS LITTLE AS
\$25
A MONTH

Contact Morgan Green
morgan@gonatchitoches.com

Natchitoches 23rd Annual Meat Pie Festival Delights Crowds

Natchitoches, LA – The 2025 Natchitoches Meat Pie Festival was an absolute sensation! Under radiant autumn skies, the riverbank pulsed with excitement, laughter, and the mouthwatering aroma of sizzling meat pies. This wasn't just a festival—it was a joyful celebration of Louisiana's tastiest tradition!



From the moment you arrived, the energy was contagious. Downtown Natchitoches came alive with families, friends, and foodies all eager for a bite of the legendary meat pie. Free admission welcomed thousands, and the crowd's enthusiasm was matched only by the non-stop live music and festive spirit in the air.

Friday night set the tone with lively entertainment and family fun, but Saturday was a full-blown extravaganza! From sunrise to long after sunset, festivalgoers devoured endless meat pies—golden, flavorful, and hot from the fryer—while fireworks lit up the night and local bands kept everyone dancing. The festival even featured a meat pie-eating contest and thrilling hot air balloon rides, adding extra flair to an already unforgettable weekend.

Vendors happily scrambled to keep up with demand as meat pies flew off the shelves. Organizers cheered record-breaking attendance, and visitors left with full stomachs and even fuller hearts. For anyone craving authentic Southern flavor and unbeatable community spirit, the Natchitoches Meat Pie Festival was the place to be!



OFFICIAL NATCHITOCHES MEAT PIE RECIPE

Meat Pie Filling

- 1 teaspoon shortening
- 1 pound ground beef
- 1 pound ground pork meat
- 1 bunch green onions, chopped
- 1 pod garlic, minced
- 1 bell pepper, chopped
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- Salt, black pepper, and red pepper to taste
- 1 tablespoon flour

Meat Pie Crust

- 1-quart plain flour
- 2 teaspoons salt
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 2 eggs
- 1/2 cup shortening + 1T
- 1 cup milk



Instructions – TIP: Completely cool the meat filling before you assemble.

Meat Filling:

- 1.Melt shortening in a heavy pot. Add meat. Cook until the pink is gone.
- 2.Add vegetables and season to taste. (Season well, as meat will lose seasoning during frying.)
- 3.When meat is completely done and vegetables glazed, remove from heat and drain excess liquid.
- 4.Stir in 1 tablespoon flour.

Crust:

- 1.Sift dry ingredients together.
- 2.Cut in shortening.
- 3.Beat the egg and add it to the milk.
- 4.Work gradually into the dry ingredients until the proper consistency to roll.
- 5.Break into small pieces and roll very thin.
- 6.Cut into rounds using a saucer as a guide.

To assemble:

- 1.Place a large tablespoon of prepared meat along the edge and halfway in the center of the round dough.
- 2.Fold the other half over, making the edges meet and seal with water. Form edges with a fork.
- 3.Drop in deep fat and cook until golden brown.
- 4.Drain and serve hot.

Meat pies may also be baked:

Place the **meat pies** on a greased cookie sheet or pan. Make a couple of small slits in the dough so the steam can vent out. Brush some of the egg wash over each pie and bake in a 400°F oven for about 30 minutes, or until golden brown.

Makes approximately 18 pies

Jalisa & Cantrell Burton

Congratulations on your wedding day!!



Anisha & Ulysses Akins

CONGRATULATIONS
ON YOUR
Wedding Day



BOM Gives Back

NATCHITOCHES:

BOM Bank is a proud supporter of the Prosper Day Fundraiser! Pictured are Latonya Burton and BOM's Syddah Shultz.



CADDO/BOSSIER:

BOM donated to Legacy Elementary School's annual Bear Tracks Fitness Challenge! This jog-a-thon fundraiser is held at the school's walking track and helps raise money for enhanced technology, classroom materials, professional development, and teacher incentives.

Pictured left to right: Jennifer, Caston, Laura Hartley, and BOM's JD Hartley.

SABINE:

BOM Bank is proud to continue our support of the Many High School football program. Pictured left to right: BOM's Tonya Hall, Tyler Hassell, and Tiffany Miller.



RAPIDES:

BOM is a proud sponsor of the Northwestern State University Cheer Team! This summer, the team participated in the UCA College Camp and brought home several honors — 2nd Place in Timeout, Most Collegiate Recognition, and the prestigious Leadership Award.

Pictured left to right: BOM's Daniel Lonsberry and Ashleigh Moses.

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**Annual Percentage Yield*



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Ribbon-cutting for Northwestern State's \$45M Alost Hall set for Friday, Oct. 3

NATCHITOCHES – Northwestern State University will hold a ribbon-cutting for Dr. Robert Alost Hall, the university's state-of-the-art academic hub that opened this semester. The ceremony will take place at 3 p.m. Friday, Oct. 3 in conjunction with the university's Homecoming festivities.

"This building represents the promise of Northwestern State University," said NSU President James T. Genovese. "Dr. Robert Alost Hall stands as a commitment to academic excellence, innovation and service to Louisiana. As we open its doors, we honor Dr. Alost's legacy and look ahead to the students who will prepare here to lead in classrooms, hospitals, businesses, and communities across our state and beyond."

Alost was president of Northwestern State from 1986-1996 and is credited with initiating substantial progress in academic achievement, athletic success and facility enhancements during his administration.



III | NORTHWESTERN STATE

Construction on the \$45 million Alost project began in March 2023. Looming over Sam Sibley Drive in the heart of campus, the 73,200-square-foot Alost Hall features large multipurpose classrooms that can open into one larger multi-functional area, simulation laboratories for graduate and undergraduate nursing and anesthesia programs, a social work/psychology clinic and training area, a café, a dozen 30-person classrooms, two 40-person classrooms and three 50-person classrooms. The building houses 60 faculty offices and an administrative suite for deans, department heads and administrative assistants, a large conference room and reception area. There are seating areas inside and outside the building for students between classes.

Alost Hall is located at 160 Sam Sibley Drive, the former site of Caddo Hall, a 1960s residential facility that was razed in preparation for the new building. Alost Hall replaces John S. Kyser Hall, constructed in 1968, as the university's main academic building.

Parking for the ribbon-cutting will be available at the adjacent commuter parking lot.

The ribbon-cutting is one event in a full slate planned for Homecoming weekend. For a full schedule, visit www.northwesternstatealumni.com/homecoming.

Natchitoches Parish School Board
NEWS



**NATCHITOCHES PARISH
SCHOOL BOARD**
TOGETHER WE CAN

**OPPORTUNITY FOR
VETERAN
DEPENDENTS IN
NPSB HIGH SCHOOLS**



NATCHITOCHES — The Natchitoches Parish School Board is proud to announce that **Natchitoches Central High School** and **Lakeview High School** have officially been approved by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) as instructional facilities.

This designation allows eligible dependent children of veterans to access valuable Chapter 35 Dependents' Educational Assistance (DEA) benefits while still in high school, providing additional support for their educational journey.

What This Means for Students and Families

- **Monthly Benefits:** Eligible students may receive up to \$1,536 per month in tax-exempt benefits (2025 rate).
- **Additional Support:** Current VA rules allow high school students to receive 5 extra months of benefits without deducting from the standard 36 months of higher education benefits.
- **Greater Value:** This could total up to \$7,680 in tax-free benefits for high school students, without reducing the resources available for college.

How to Apply

- Apply for a certificate of eligibility through the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.
- Once approved, request an appointment for enrollment verification with **Felicia Pinkney**, Director of Student Services at fpinkney@npsb.la

**Natchitoches Parish School Board
Recognizes Math & Science Teacher
Mr. Jordan Guillory**



**ALL-STAR
OF THE WEEK**



Congratulations!

JORDAN GUILLORY

Fairview | Math & Science Teacher

"What truly sets Mr. Guillory apart is not only his deep knowledge of the subject, but also the way he connects with his students. He takes the time to truly know each of them, building trust and creating a classroom where everyone feels heard and valued. His teaching goes far beyond delivering lessons—he inspires curiosity, fosters confidence, and challenges students to reach their full potential."



SEPTEMBER IS SUICIDE PREVENTION MONTH. THINKING OF THOSE WHO..



**ARE FIGHTING
SUICIDAL
THOUGHTS**



**HAVE LOST
SOMEONE TO
SUICIDE**



**HAVE
ATTEMPTED**



**LOVE SOMEONE
WHO IS
SUICIDAL**



**HAVE NO
SUPPORT
SYSTEM**



**ARE SCARED
TO SPEAK UP**

This month, we support those affected by suicide—those struggling, those who have lost someone, and those feeling alone. Mental health challenges are real, but so is hope. Let's break the stigma, support each other, and spread love, compassion, and understanding. If you or someone you know is struggling, please call or text 988 anytime for free and confidential support. The 988 Lifeline is available 24/7/365.

America's Girl of the Year is Naomi DeBerry, a New Orleans native and advocate for organ donation.

By: Jozef Syndicate

At just 13 years old, Naomi S. DeBerry has gotten international attention after being named one of TIME's Girls of the Year

She is the only American on the inaugural list of 10 inspiring young change makers from around the world.



On August 14, TIME's editorial team announced their selection. At the time, Naomi was heading to the University of California at Berkeley to participate in a medical research program for middle school students.

"We don't know how [TIME] found me; it was completely random," she said.

But, it wasn't as if Naomi is tucked away quietly. The young New Orleans native is an advocate for organ donation, speaking at educational conferences, participating in the Louisiana Book Festival, and appearing on television shows, including The Tamron Hall Show. With her caring disposition, she shares her family's transplant story while explaining the critical need for organ donation to youth and adults.

The need extends globally, and through her advocacy, Naomi is making a difference. "It really just shows you that the world is not just limited to where you are and you can impact other people everywhere," she said. "All these other girls from all over the world are doing incredible things."

Author **Rutendo Shadaya**, 16, of New Zealand; athlete **Coco Yoshizawa**, 15, of Japan; innovator **Valerie Chiu**, 15, of China; artist **Zoé Clauzure**, 15, of France; innovator **Clara Proksch**, 12, of Germany; athlete **Ivanna Richards**, 17, of Mexico; innovator **Kornelia Wieczorek**, 17, of Poland; adventurer **Defne Özcan**, 17, of Turkey; and innovator **Rebecca Young**, 12, of the United Kingdom also made the list.

TIME's inaugural *Girls of the Year* list honors young leaders, ages 12 to 17, who are creative, courageous, intelligent, and compassionate.

"These girls are challenging stereotypes, solving real-world problems, and leading with purpose in fields ranging from science and technology to music and activism," said TIME. "Together, they represent a new generation of leadership that starts early and leads boldly."

Continued next page...

Continued from Page 28...

America's Girl of the Year is Naomi DeBerry, a New Orleans native and organ donation advocate.

TIME Studios and the LEGO Group turned the Girls of the Year into LEGO Minifigures and set them to the new LEGO anthem called "She Built That."

"I was such in awe when they said they were going to make a LEGO out of me," said Naomi who loves building complex LEGO sets.

In LEGO Land, Naomi is thrilled to be a transplant surgeon.

When she isn't playing the clarinet or violin, she builds LEGOs because she loves having a good challenge. "You have to work with your hands. You have to think. You have to problem solve. And [building with LEGOs] will help me to become a transplant surgeon."

She has been committed to become a surgeon since her father's 2019 transplant.



WHEN DADDY NEEDED A GIFT

At six years old, Naomi watched her father, Jarvis, experience sudden kidney failure, and her family began searching for a donor. At the time, hospitals were responding to the spread of the coronavirus, and her father would have the last surgical procedure. She remembered, "It was like having two pandemics inside our house." That experience inspired Naomi to learn more and teach children that "we have to try to be there for ourselves" through scary experiences. Her debut children's book, *My Daddy Needs a Gift*, tells their urgent story that ends with a successful transplant.



Naomi DeBerry at the 2024 Louisiana Book Festival. Photo by Kelly Harris DeBerry.

"I was born into this," said Naomi. "My dad had been diagnosed with kidney disease two years before I was born. And he had suffered from the chronic illness for about 10 years."

Continued from Page 29...

America's Girl of the Year is Naomi DeBerry, a New Orleans native and organ donation advocate.

"We couldn't put 10 years of our lives into children's story. We had to make sure to keep the details, the important parts that we thought were necessary to really bring the story together," she said. Her mother, poet Kelly Harris DeBerry, guided Naomi in publishing the semi-autobiography book.

My Daddy Needs a Gift uses vivid descriptions and illustrations to tell the story of a young Naomi who is afraid, inquisitive, and courageous during her father's search for a kidney. The book chronicles his medical treatment from her viewpoint and includes a glossary of terms Naomi learned in the process. After he receives a kidney from a living donor, the transplant is successful.

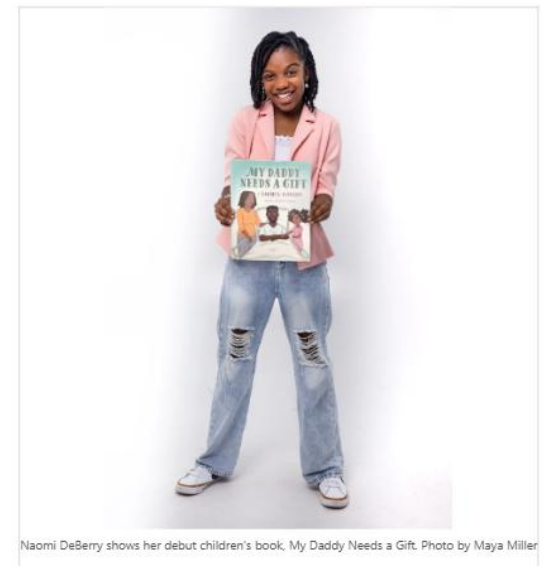
In real life, that donor was a cousin, Aisha I. DeBerry. "(Jarvis) was really suffering in silence," she said. Since the transplant, Aisha has been encouraging others to consider being a donor. "It's something that I would do over and over again...I'm so grateful to know that this small little organ was able to give him life," she said.

Naomi said she sees many dialysis centers as she travels and frequently meets people who have their own organ donation story. "I really thought it wasn't as common as it seems to be." However, there are nearly 2,000 people waiting for a kidney transplant—and nearly 70% of them are Black.

Naomi said, "It's important that not only are we bringing advocacy to the whole issue itself, but to make sure that we are counted as a people." To do so, she is consistently encouraging others to become donors.

She said she won't stop there because she wants to do more than advocate and bring awareness. She's determined to become a transplant surgeon. Thanks to her summer experience at UC Berkley, she learned about surgical fields, how to dissect a lung, and how to handle blood. Now, Naomi said she feels "more confident than ever" to study this field where fewer than 5.5 percent of transplant surgeons are Black.

Even with her growing list of accomplishments, Naomi still makes time to garden and dance the traditional New Orleans second-line.



Naomi DeBerry shows her debut children's book, *My Daddy Needs a Gift*. Photo by Maya Miller

And when asked what she wishes people understood, Naomi was clear: "I think we need, as a people, to have a good support system."

This feeling was strengthened when she had a life-changing visit to Ghana this summer. There she donated copies of her book and shared her message of organ donation. "This experience is a blessing that God has given to me. I think it's really cleared my lens of the world."

She has been invited to the **National Minority Organ Donor Conference** and the N.O. African City Community Reception. "Maybe when (the speaking engagements) die down and stuff, I'll try to get back to writing," the young author said.

Community Events

UPCOMING
TOWN OF CAMPTI
events

OCTOBER

- 23** Hometown Heroes Award Ceremony
CCRC 201 Edenborn Street
6:30 PM
- 24** Zydeco Healthfest
Edenborn Street
8 AM-4 PM
Sponsored by CCDC
- 24** 29th Smokin' on the Red Gospel Fest
Recreational Park
6 PM
- 25** 29th Smokin' on the Red Parade and Festival
Begins at 10 AM
- 31** Trick or Treat on Main Street
Edenborn Street
5 PM- 7 PM

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2ND ANNUAL




RUN FOR ROD

"Let all that you do be done in love."

5K RUN / WALK

Lace Up for Fun and Fitness at Our Run & Walk Event to kick off the 2025 St. Augustine Creole & Family Festival!

ALL PROCEEDS BENEFIT ST. AUGUSTINE CATHOLIC CHURCH

STARTS AND ENDS NEAR ST. AUGUSTINE CHURCH HALL

FEE: \$35 - \$40 PER PERSON (INCLUDES OFFICIAL RUN T-SHIRT)

***** To guarantee T-shirt for the run, please complete registration and payment by 5pm on October 5, 2025 *****

SATURDAY
► **OCTOBER 11, 2025**
8:00AM

REGISTRATION BEGINS @ 7:00AM

FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL :
(318) 663-2506 or (318) 332-6586
OR email: run4rod@gmail.com

Location:
2262 Hwy. 484 Natchez, LA 71456

To Register ↓



Registration Scan Here



T-Shirt Only Scan Here

NATCHITOCHES Car Show

ANNUAL CAR SHOW

OCT. 3RD - 4TH



NSU HOMECOMING

OCT. 4TH



Community Events

TASTE OF FIRST BAPTIST

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
1116 Amulet St.
Natchitoches, LA

SATURDAY, OCT 4TH: 5:00PM
Rev. Thomas Carter Sr., Pastor

ENTREES
We will have over 50 delicious entrees, and sides as well as refreshing drinks

TICKET PRICES
Tickets for this **ALL-YOU-CAN-EAT EVENT**
ADULTS: \$15.00
CHILDREN: \$7.00

TICKET INFORMATION
For tickets or more information contact:
Sis. Cindy Baptiste @ 318-352-7693
FBC Secretary, Sis. Lille Jones @ 318-352-3314






GREENVILLE BAPTIST CHURCH

26 PASTORAL Anniversary

Celebration
OCTOBER 12, 2025 - 2:00 PM

Guest Speaker
Pastor Brian Small
Goodwill Baptist Church

394 Clark Road - Clarence, Louisiana




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HOMEcoming

FAMILY & FRIENDS DAY!

OCTOBER 5, 2025
11:15 AM

NORTH STAR M.B.C.
734 Highway 485
Natchitoches (Powhatan), LA

Pastor William B. Roberson, Bishop

Special Guest:
Pastor Steven Harris
& The St. Matthew B. C.
(Creston, LA)
Attire: Fall Colors



North Star M.B.C. Fall Revival 2025

Pastor William B. Roberson, Bishop
734 Highway 485
Natchitoches, (Powhatan, LA)

Guest Evangelist:
Pastor Isiah Anderson
St. John B.C. Mansfield, LA



7:00 PM

Meet us at The Star!
You're invited to join us each night for revival at The Star! There is a Word for you! These three nights will consist of power packed preaching that you don't want to miss!

Tuesday, October 7th
Wednesday, October 8th
Thursday, October 9th

We are a Bible preaching, Bible teaching church.
If God said it, we believe it!

Community Events

The Pantry *Fall Hours*

Monday - Thursday

9:00 am - 4:00 pm

Friday

9:00 am to 11:00 am



The Pantry will be closed when the university is closed, unless noted otherwise.

Cane River Creole National Historical Park	
FREE	PAINTING WORKSHOP
	
Image courtesy Betty Metoyer Roque and George N. Balthazar	
Learn from Cane River Creole professional artist KELLY JACKSON	
Oakland Plantation	
Reservations required - Limited to 12 adults	
All supplies provided	
SATURDAY, OCTOBER 4	
9:00AM-11:00AM	
For information and to reserve a spot email CARI_Interp@nps.gov	

BETA OMEGA SIGMA CHAPTER

NEW OR REACTIVATED MEMBERS

Referral & Win

CONTEST

NSU HOMECOMING WEEKEND

OCTOBER 4, 2025

BETA OMEGA SIGMA CHAPTER (BOSS) OF SIGMA GAMMA RHO SORORITY, INC. WILL BE LAUNCHING ITS "WELCOME BACK CAMPAIGN". AN INITIATIVE AIMED AT CELEBRATING, AND WELCOMING NEW AND INACTIVE SORORS BACK.

FROM JULY 22, 2025-OCTOBER 4, 2025 ANY SOROR WHO HAS REACTIVATED OR ENCOURAGES A NEW MEMBER TO JOIN SIGMA GAMMA RHO SORORITY, INC. "BETA OMEGA SIGMA CHAPTER" WILL BE ENTERED INTO A DRAWING FOR SEVERAL AMAZING PRIZES, INCLUDING

2026 REGIONAL CONFERENCE REGISTRATION
\$100.00 TOWARD YOUR LOCAL CHAPTER DUES
\$50.00 GIFT CARD

LET'S COME TOGETHER LAMBDA THETA AND REMIND SORORS THAT THERE'S ALWAYS A HOME WAITING FOR THEM IN SIGMA GAMMA RHO SORORITY, INC.

CONTACT MONIQUE SARPY 318-332-8264

E-MAIL: BETAOMEGASIGMA.1922.SGRHO@GMAIL.COM

St. Savior Baptist Church-Grand Ecure
161 Saint Savior Church Road Natchitoches, La 71457

110th Church Anniversary



Dr. Altorio Holden, Sr.
Host Pastor

Guest:
Pastor Brian Small,
The Goodwill Baptist Church,
Natchitoches, La

Theme:

Matthew 16:18 - Founded Upon the Rock

Sunday,
September 28, 2025

1:30 p.m.

Community Events

NATCHITOCHES ALUMNAE CHAPTER OF DELTA SIGMA THETA SORORITY, INC.

INVITES OUR FELLOW D9 MEMBERS

& THE PUBLIC TO

STROLL TO THE POLLS



STROLLING TO THE POLLS DURING EARLY VOTING

September 27, 2025

1:00 p.m.

200 CHURCH ST.

NATCHITOCHES, LA

Celebrating Culture, Cuisine,
Faith, Family & Friends



Creole AND Family FESTIVAL

OCTOBER
10th - 12th

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.

FOR MORE INFO, CALL 318-379-2521

FREE ENTRY &
FAMILY FRIENDLY

LIMITED VENDOR
SPACE AVAILABLE!!

FRIDAY

6PM — 11PM

- FRIED FISH & TRIMMINGS
- FESTIVAL T-SHIRTS AVAILABLE TO PURCHASE
- MUSIC

SATURDAY

8AM — Until

- 2ND ANNUAL "RUN FOR ROD" Run/Walk in Loving Memory of Chadwick "Rod" Nelson

10AM — 5PM

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

5PM — 6PM

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

6:30PM — 10:30PM

- GERARD DELAFOSE & THE ZYDECO GATORS! ZYDECO CONCERT!!

SUNDAY

10:30AM

- MASS
- 11:30AM - 3PM
- FESTIVAL ACTIVITIES RESUME

CITYBANK
& TRUST COMPANY

11TH ANNUAL FIRST RESPONDERS

Appreciation Lunch | OCTOBER 17th | 11:00am-1:00pm



WHERE TRADITION MEETS TOMORROW

CONTACT US

Phone: (318) 354-7712

Email:

support@therealnewslouisiana.com

www.therealnewslouisiana.com

P.O. Box 1082 Natchitoches, La 71458