

THE REAL NEWS LOUISIANA

— LOCAL NEWS • COMMUNITY • LOUISIANA —

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FEATURED STORY

KELLY L. JACKSON

FROM CANE RIVER *to the* WORLD

ROOTED IN CANE RIVER

Family history
inspired a filmmaker
and a festival



A GLOBAL REACH

Connecting
Louisiana
and Ghana

THE NEXT CHAPTER

10th anniversary
in 2027



Continued on Page 3



THE REAL NEWS LOUISIANA

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September 27, 2026

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TURN THE PAGE

FEATURED STORY

From Cane River to the World: Kelly L. Jackson's Vision for Film and Heritage

The founder of the Cane River Film Festival reflects on her family roots, a growing international reach and plans for its 10th anniversary in March 2027.

By The Real News Louisiana

Kelly L. Jackson came to Natchitoches from California searching for her family's history. What she found along Cane River became the foundation for films, a heritage organization and a festival that now welcomes stories from around the world. Jackson traces her father's family to the Cane River Creole community of Isle Brevelle and to Marie Thérèse Coincoin and Claude Thomas Pierre Metoyer. Learning about her ancestors drew her to places such as Melrose Plantation and St. Augustine Catholic Church. It also inspired her to tell their story on film.

"I created the film festival in their honor and memory of the Cane River Creole community, heritage and history," Jackson said in an interview with *The Real News Louisiana*.

Jackson had spent years acting in Hollywood and attending film festivals.



She had considered starting one in Los Angeles, but her move to Louisiana gave the idea a new home. After organizing events celebrating Marie Thérèse Coincoin, she founded the Cane River Film Festival in Natchitoches.

The festival has changed since its early days. Its first edition stretched across multiple locations and included music, vendors and a screening of *Steel Magnolias* on the riverbank. After listening to guests and assessing what worked, Jackson narrowed the focus to films, filmmaker conversations, awards and opportunities for guests to connect.

For Jackson, the festival is also a way to bring visitors and filmmakers into Natchitoches. She hopes they will discover local businesses, venues and filming locations while they are here. Film submissions now arrive from around the world, giving the city an audience well beyond Louisiana.

FEATURED STORY

From Cane River to the World: Kelly L. Jackson's Vision for Film and Heritage

What else are they doing?

Jackson's work extends beyond the annual festival. Through the Resurrection Fern Foundation, she produced the documentary *The Life and Times of Marie Thérèse Coincoin*. The foundation has also begun work on another documentary, *A Matriarch, A Vodou Priestess, and A Saint*, with filming planned in Natchitoches and New Orleans. Its reach is growing internationally, including in Ghana, Africa. Jackson identified Ghana-based board member Derrick Nimako Brefo as part of the team supporting the foundation and festival. She sees that international growth as a significant part of what comes next: building a name for the Cane River Film Festival across the globe while continuing to tell stories rooted in Louisiana.

The March 2027 festival will mark its **10th anniversary**. Jackson said she is excited to bring the event to Northwestern State University's Russell Hall and work with students as volunteers and interns. She hopes the experience will give them practical work and a chance to meet filmmakers.

Jackson wants the festival to remain a place where independent storytellers can be seen and heard. Her advice to young people hoping to make films is direct: "Believe in Yourself!!! Go for your Dreams and Vision!!!"

From a search for her ancestors to an international vision, Jackson's work keeps returning to the same place: Cane River, where the stories first called her home.



SAVE THE DATE

2017

2018

2019

2020

2021

2022

2023

2024

2025

2026

2027



CANE RIVER FILM FESTIVAL

MARCH 20, 2027

Historic Downtown Natchitoches, LA

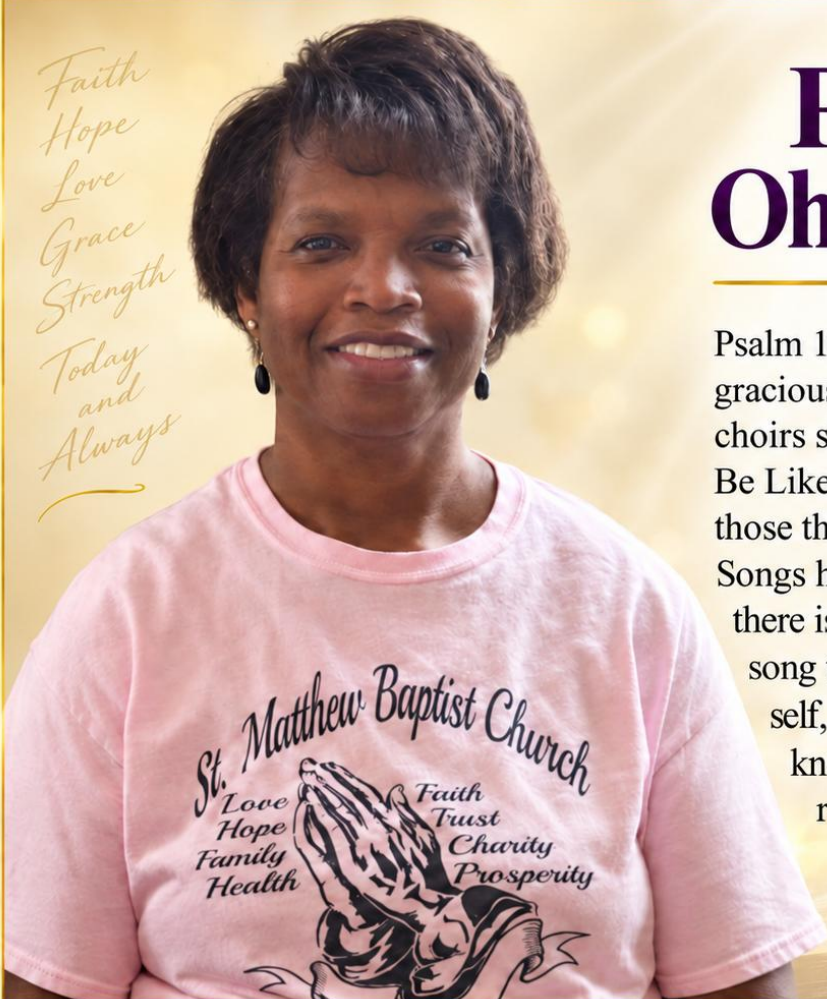
Film Submissions Open • \$1500 GRAND PRIZE

Deadline February 20 • Notification March 02

www.caneriverfilmfestival.com



FAITH & COMMENTARY



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Strength
Today
and
Always

Psalm 103:8 • Oh, to Be Like Jesus

Psalm 103:8 describes the Lord as merciful, gracious, and slow to anger. I've often heard the choirs singing at church as a young child, "Oh To Be Like Jesus". It takes more effort to fulfill 1/2 of those things than it is to even sing the song so freely. Songs have been known to lift heavy burdens and there is a message in every song that we sing. In that song to be like Jesus takes commitment, dying to self, (flesh), being led and direct by the Holy Spirit, knowing and living by the fruits of the spirit, and remaining faithful until death.

Evangelist and Author Bonita G Moses

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INSIDE THIS EDITION

Black Wealth Has Deep Roots in Natchitoches

Community news and local voices

Scholarship recipients and new Amicae members

Plus, more stories from across Louisiana



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BLACK HISTORY

Black Folks Built Wealthy Neighborhoods Across America— Where Are They Now?

By The Real News Louisiana



Photo Credit: Getty Images

Black Americans built thriving neighborhoods with businesses, banks, churches and homes, often while segregation limited where they could live and work. Many of those places still exist, but the wealth their residents built was disrupted or destroyed.

In Tulsa, Oklahoma, Greenwood became known as “Black Wall Street.” A white mob destroyed much of the neighborhood in 1921. Residents rebuilt, and today the Greenwood Rising history center tells their story.

In Durham, North Carolina, Hayti was a center of Black business and community life. Interstate construction and urban renewal devastated the neighborhood beginning in the late 1950s. Its heritage center remains a gathering place today.

In Richmond, Virginia, Jackson Ward was home to Black-owned banks and businesses. Interstate 95 later cut through the neighborhood. Jackson Ward remains a historic district, but its streets bear the mark of what was lost.

These communities are still on the map. Their stories ask us to remember both what Black residents built and what happened to the property and opportunity they hoped to pass down.

BLACK HISTORY

Black Wealth Has Deep Roots in Natchitoches

By The Real News Louisiana



Images supplied for Marie Thérèse Coincoin and Ben D. Johnson Sr.; background is an illustration.

The story of Black wealth in Natchitoches begins long before today's businesses. Along Cane River, Marie Thérèse Coincoin became a landowner and businesswoman after gaining her freedom. She and her descendants helped establish the Afro-Creole community associated with Melrose Plantation. Her success is part of a complicated history: the plantation also relied on enslaved labor.

Generations later, Ben D. Johnson Sr. built one of Louisiana's largest minority-owned enterprises. After starting Winnfield Funeral Home in 1932, he expanded into Natchitoches and established other businesses, including a life insurance company and a casket company. He also supported education, churches, and community programs.

They were not the only ones building an economy. During segregation, Black-owned cafés, boarding houses, barbershops, and other businesses served Natchitoches residents. Horn Street and the area near what is now Martin Luther King Drive and Amulet Street were gathering places and business centers.

These histories show that Black residents did more than earn a living in Natchitoches. They owned property, created jobs, and built institutions that served their neighbors. Their contributions remain an essential part of the parish's economic history.

ROAD CLOSURE

U.S. 84 Crossing Near Clarence Remains Closed as State Plans Replacement

CLARENCE, La. — The U.S. 84 crossing over Bourbeaux Bayou, just east of Clarence, remains closed to traffic. The Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (DOTD) says the box culvert beneath the road has structural deficiencies that make the crossing unsafe. The closure began August 4.

In its August 27 update, DOTD said it was working to secure emergency funding and a contract to replace the culvert with a new structure. The agency had **not announced a reopening date** and advised motorists to prepare for an ongoing detour.

The official detour uses **U.S. 71 and LA 477**. Eastbound drivers should travel south on U.S. 71, then take LA 477 north to reconnect with U.S. 84. Westbound drivers should take LA 477 south to U.S. 71, then travel north to U.S. 84. Drivers should follow posted signs and allow extra travel time.

Residents can check [Louisiana 511](#) for road conditions before traveling. DOTD says it will share a more definite timeline when one becomes available.

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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Northwestern State Wind Symphony to Present “Something Old, Something New, Something Borrowed, Something Blue”

NATCHITOCHES — The Northwestern State University Wind Symphony will open its 2026–27 concert season with a concert titled “Something Old, Something New, Something Borrowed, Something Blue” on Tuesday, Sept. 29, at 7:30 p.m. in Magale Recital Hall. The performance is free and open to the public. A livestream will be available at nsula.edu/livestream.

The program explores the familiar four-part phrase through four works representing different eras, influences and musical traditions.

“The theme seemed to naturally emerge from the music we selected,” said Anthony Pursell, NSU Director of Bands. “We have a work dating to 1913, a world premiere by one of our own students, a work that borrows from other musical traditions and a piece that celebrates the blues.”

The concert opens with Michael Markowski’s “JoyRide,” conducted by Associate Director of Bands Andrew Blair. Written while Markowski was a high school student, the work incorporates Beethoven’s “Ode to Joy” and elements inspired by John Adams’ “Short Ride in a Fast Machine.” Markowski will headline NSU’s Invitational Band Festival in April 2027.

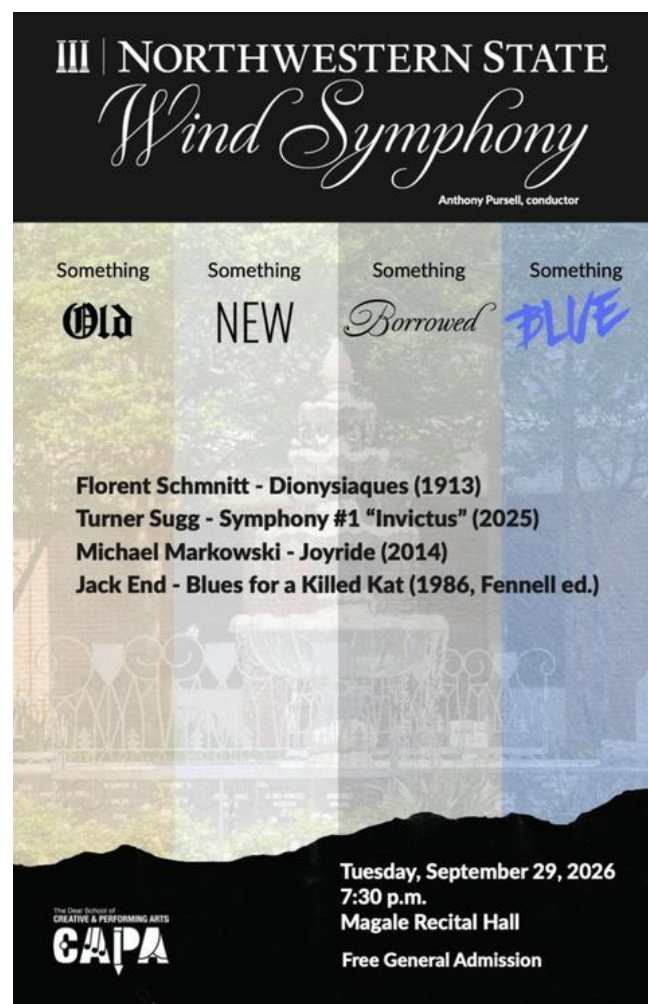
Pursell will conduct Florent Schmitt’s “Dionysiaques,” one of the landmark works of the early wind-band repertoire. Composed in 1913, the work helped demonstrate the potential of the wind band as a serious artistic medium, combining sophisticated harmony, complex rhythms, striking instrumental colors and dramatic contrasts. It is lauded by many in the profession to be one of the most challenging works for winds and percussion.

The program continues with Jack End’s “Blues for a Killed Kat,” a work that provides a distinctly different musical character and features soloists from throughout the ensemble. End was a prominent jazz educator and composer associated with the Eastman School of Music.

The concert concludes with the world premiere of “Symphony No. 1, Invictus” by Turner Sugg, a senior NSU music education student from Henderson, Texas. The work is inspired by William Ernest Henley’s poem “Invictus” and explores themes of resilience, adversity and personal growth.

“Turner has written music that is thoughtful, meaningful, engaging, and exciting to perform,” said Pursell. “We are particularly proud to present the first performance of this work and to celebrate his accomplishments as he completes his degree at Northwestern State.”

Sugg describes the work as a reflection on the role of change in personal growth. “Symphony for Band,” as suggested by its subtitle, is based on the poem ‘Invictus’ by William Ernest Henley.



“This poem has long been one of my favorite pieces of literature, and speaks to the importance of resilience, especially in the face of adversity,” said Sugg. “As someone who has not always been the most comfortable with change, undertaking this passion project and creating something so personal around this message has taught me to look at change in a new light. Change shouldn’t always be seen as something bad, but as a force that can bring forth the beauty in life.”

The performance of “Symphony No. 1, Invictus” will mark the work’s first public performance and will be professionally recorded later this year.

For more information about the Northwestern State University Band Program, visit <https://www.nsula.edu/academics/colleges-and-schools/school-of-creative-and-performing-arts/spirit-of-northwestern/>.

Natchitoches Parish Schools Offers Support for Students Facing Housing Instability

Students experiencing a change in housing can still enroll in school and receive support through the Natchitoches Parish School Board's McKinney-Vento Homelessness Program.

According to the school board's program graphic, students may enroll immediately, even if they do not have all the usual paperwork. Eligible students can receive transportation to their school of origin, academic services, after-school programs and referrals to local community services. School uniforms are also available for qualifying applicants.

Families can complete the Louisiana Student Residency Questionnaire using the QR code on the graphic. For help, contact Alexa Bernard-Conday, Ed.S., coordinator of homeless services and federal programs, at Alexa.Bernard@npsb.la or **(318) 238-0702**.

The program aims to help students stay connected to school and learning while their families navigate housing transitions.

MCKINNEY-VENTO HOMELESSNESS PROGRAM



ENSURING EDUCATIONAL STABILITY FOR
STUDENTS NAVIGATING HOUSING TRANSITIONS

Stay In School

- ✓ Immediate enrollment with or without paperwork

Transportation

- ✓ Transportation provided to the student's school of origin

Student Support

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

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



By The Real News Louisiana Staff

A church needs money to keep its doors open. Utilities must be paid, buildings maintained and ministry supported. Giving has long been part of church life, and many people give gladly because they believe in the work.

But what happens when someone is asked to buy a ticket before they can hear a sermon?

There is a difference between **inviting people to give** and **requiring them to pay to enter**. A church may charge for a banquet, concert or fundraiser to cover its costs. It should say clearly what the money supports. A worship service or message of hope raises a different question: Would someone who cannot afford the price still be welcome?

For many in the Black community, the church has been a place to turn during grief, hardship and uncertainty.

People have walked through its doors needing prayer, guidance or simply a place to sit among others.

A price at the door can turn away the very person who needs that welcome most.

That does not mean pastors, musicians or church workers should be expected to serve without support.

It means churches should think carefully about how they raise that support. Voluntary offerings, sponsors and clearly identified fundraising events give people a chance to contribute without making access to worship depend on their ability to pay.

Churches can also ask a practical question when planning an event: **If a neighbor arrives with no money, can they come in?** The answer says a great deal about the welcome being offered.

Faith communities will make different decisions about their events. They should be open about those decisions and willing to hear from people who feel left out. The gospel can inspire generosity. Its message should remain within reach of the person who has nothing to give.



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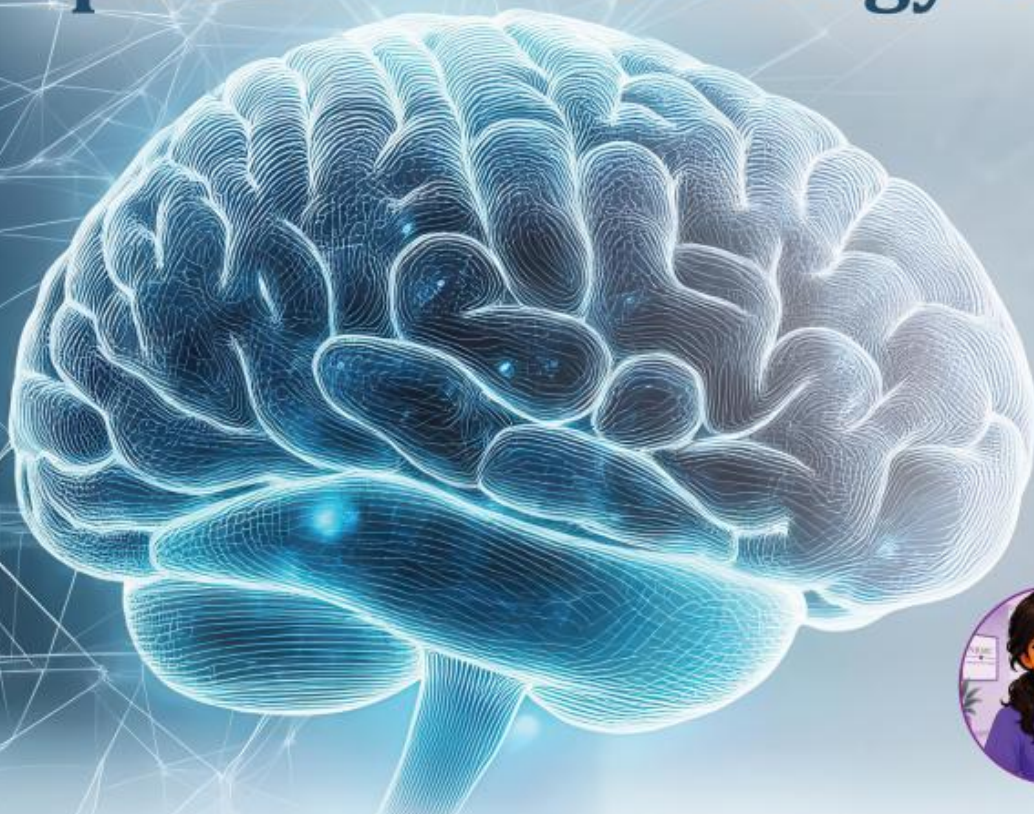


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FAITH & COMMENTARY

A Strong Community Makes Room for Everyone to Rise

By The Real News Louisiana Staff

Faith is often described as believing in what we cannot yet see. For many Black families, it has also meant working toward a better future while facing the problems right in front of us.

Our churches have long been places to worship, grieve, celebrate, organize and help a neighbor through a hard week. That work still matters. So does what happens after the service ends.

A young person needs more than a reminder to “stay out of trouble.” They need adults who will learn their name, notice their gifts and make time to guide them. A parent carrying too much needs more than advice to “keep praying.” They may need a ride, a meal, a job lead or someone willing to listen without judgment. Prayer can steady us for that work. It can give us courage to make the call, offer the help and have the difficult conversation.

We also need to make room for people who have stepped away from church. Some are searching for faith; some have been hurt by people they trusted. They deserve compassion and the freedom to be heard. Our care for one another should reach beyond any church door.

In Natchitoches and communities like ours, we do not have to wait for a grand program to begin. We can check on an elder, mentor a student, support a local business, show up at a public meeting or help a neighbor find the services they need. Small acts become powerful when we keep showing up.

Faith asks something of us. Let our answer be visible in how we treat our neighbors.



ST. PETER BAPTIST CHURCH

159th Church Anniversary

Sunday, October 4, 2026 • 2:00 p.m.
234 Barnum Street • Campti, Louisiana

Pastor Rev. Alfred Williams III

Special Guest: Rev. Byron King
Assistant Pastor, Mt. Pilgrim Baptist Church of Clarence

All are welcome to worship with us.

CHAMBER
NEWS

\$2.5 Million Investment to Expand Natchitoches Parish Port Warehouse Capacity

By The Real News Louisiana Staff

NATCHITOCHES PARISH, La. — A \$2.5 million Louisiana FastSites investment is expected to nearly double the Natchitoches Parish Port's existing 62,000 square feet of warehouse space.

The expansion will provide additional capacity for manufacturing, storage, fabrication and cargo handling. The Port connects businesses to the Red River, CPKC Railway and highway transportation.

In a post announcing the investment, the Natchitoches Chamber of Commerce said space is available for lease at the Port now, with more capacity planned through the project. The Natchitoches Economic Development Alliance congratulated Port Director Travis Tyler and the Port Commission on securing the investment. According to the alliance, the FastSites funding will be repaid to the program and reinvested in future site development projects across Louisiana.



Photo Credit: Natchitoches Chamber of Commerce

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COMMUNITY

Zeta Amicae Celebrates Scholars and Welcomes New Members



SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

Raychel Wilson Regan Davis Caitlyn Martin

NEW AMICAE AUXILIARY MEMBERS

LaTravia Rhodes Ruby Watson
Mesha Fields Shaneekqua Toliver



COMMUNITY

Zeta Amicae Celebration | Photo Gallery

A DAY OF CELEBRATION

The Zeta Amicae of Natchitoches recognized three scholarship recipients and welcomed four new members. More moments from the gathering are pictured here.



NATCHITOCHES PARISH COUNCIL ON AGING

Community Moments • September 2026

PHOTO CREDIT: Natchitoches Council on Aging



Monthly Senior Breakfast: Natchitoches Parish Council on Aging members gathered for breakfast sponsored by Jim Rogers of Blanchard-St. Denis Funeral Home. Natchitoches Regional Medical Center representatives shared information about sepsis and provided door prizes, while Preston Durr and volunteers helped serve the meal. The Natchitoches Police Department also visited and announced it would sponsor next month's breakfast.

Fall Prevention Awareness Week: Natchitoches Parish Council on Aging participants heard presentations from Ryan Andrews of HealthPRO Heritage and Janiel Moore and students from Northwestern State's School of Kinesiology. Mobility assessments helped participants learn about their fall risk. Preston Durr provided lunch.



Honoring caregivers: The Natchitoches Parish Council on Aging thanked local caregivers for their dedication to seniors during a September 16 luncheon. Community partners contributed door prizes and helped serve the meal.



Members of the Natchitoches Parish Council on Aging gather at the Sabine Council on Aging's Fall Fest at the Zwolle Fairgrounds. The group enjoyed music, bingo, prizes and food during the September event.

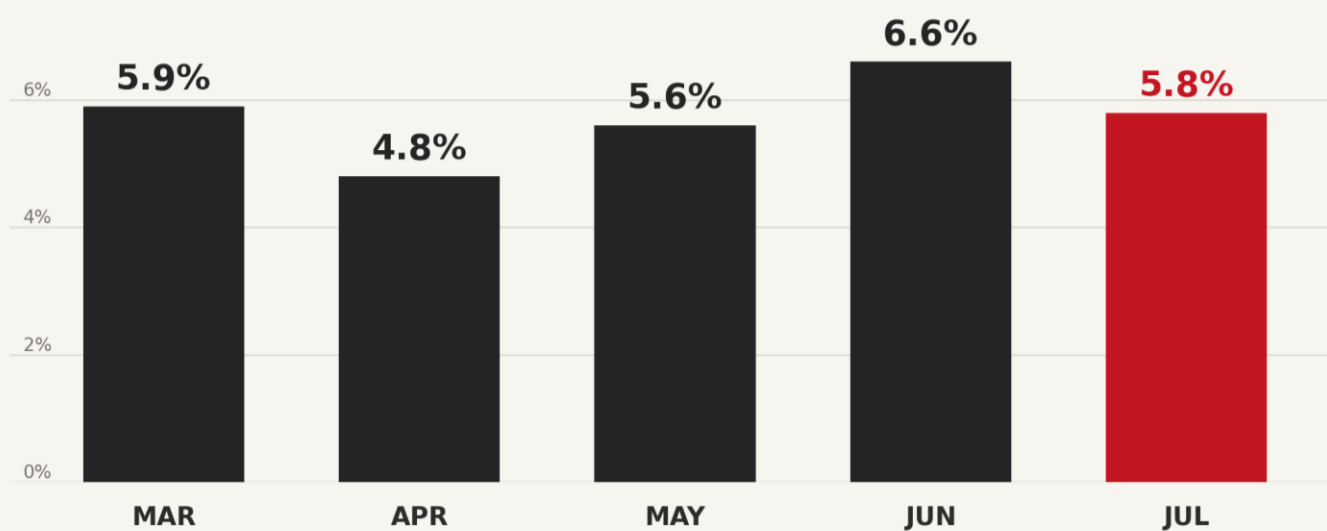
OPINION

A Lower Jobless Rate Is Good News, but Natchitoches Needs More

By The Real News Louisiana Staff

NATCHITOCHES PARISH UNEMPLOYMENT RATE

Monthly rate | March-July 2026 | Not seasonally adjusted



LATEST AVAILABLE: JULY 2026

5.8% applies to the entire parish labor force; it is not a city-only or race-specific rate.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics, via FRED (LANATC9URN).

Rates may be revised. Data checked September 26, 2026.

Natchitoches Parish's unemployment rate fell from 6.6% in June to 5.8% in July 2026. That improvement is welcome news for residents looking for work. Still, the rate was higher than it was in April, when it stood at 4.8%.

The chart shows how quickly the local picture can change from month to month. A lower unemployment rate tells us that fewer people in the labor force were counted as unemployed in July. It does not tell us whether every new job pays enough to support a family, offers reliable hours or provides room to advance.

Those questions matter here. Residents need paths into dependable work, including training that connects to actual openings and transportation that makes it possible to get to a job and keep it. Employers, schools and local leaders should listen to job seekers about the barriers they face and measure whether their efforts produce lasting results. July's decline is a step in the right direction. The goal should be more than a better number on next month's chart: it should be greater opportunity for people across Natchitoches Parish.



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.



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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.

NATIONAL NEWS

First Black Smithsonian Secretary to Retire Amid White House Pressure

He says White House pressure did not cause his decision to retire.

By The Real News Louisiana Staff



Lonnie G. Bunch III, the first Black secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, announced he will retire at the end of 2026. Photo: Smithsonian Institution.

Lonnie G. Bunch III, the first Black person to lead the Smithsonian Institution, announced Sept. 8 that he will retire by the end of 2026. His departure will close a seven-year tenure during which he defended the institution's work telling the full story of American history. Bunch's announcement comes as the Trump administration challenges how Smithsonian museums present the nation's past. A July executive order accused Smithsonian leadership of advancing an ideological view of history and directed federal officials to seek changes.

The Smithsonian's Board of Regents has said

the institution should remain free from political influence.

Bunch has said White House pressure did not cause his decision to retire. He plans to continue defending the Smithsonian's independence through the end of his tenure. Before becoming secretary in 2019, Bunch was the founding director of the National Museum of African American History and Culture, which opened in 2016. His retirement leaves the Smithsonian preparing for a change in leadership while the debate over how its museums tell American history continues.

COMMUNITY

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

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.”



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.

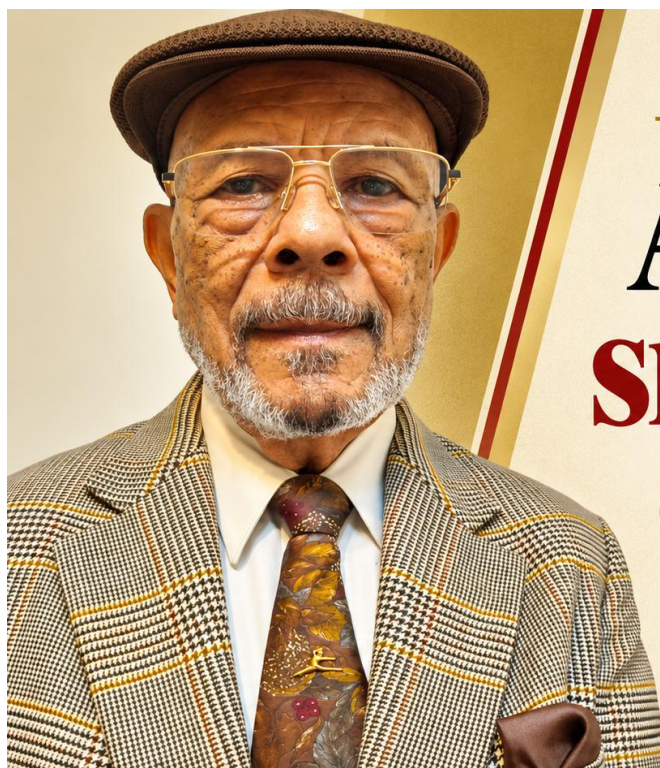
TOWN HALL MEETING
TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 29TH
6:00 PM
ABUNDANT LIFE CHURCH
618 BEN DR.
NATCHITOCHES, LOUISIANA
DR. AILL R. HARRIS JR., PASTOR

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



A.I.

Are we too smart for our own good?

— Randy “The Editor” Stelly

ENTERTAINMENT

Angola Prison Rodeo Celebrates 60 Years, Tickets on Sale Now

ANGOLA, La. — The Angola Prison Rodeo is marking its 60th anniversary this fall with events every Sunday in October at Louisiana State Penitentiary. The 2026 dates are **October 4, 11, 18 and 25**. Known as “The Wildest Show in the South,” the rodeo features bareback riding, bull riding, wild horse races and chariot racing. Gates open at **8 a.m.**, giving visitors time to explore the grounds before arena events begin at **2 p.m.** Live music and other entertainment are also planned throughout the day.

A major part of the event takes place outside the arena. Visitors can browse hobby craft made by incarcerated people, including jewelry, leather goods, furniture, woodwork and paintings. Cash and major credit cards are accepted for hobby craft purchases; food concessions require cash.

“The Angola Rodeo has lasted 60 years because it offers something truly unique,” Louisiana Department of Public Safety and Corrections Secretary Gary Westcott said in the department’s announcement. He described the event as an opportunity for visitors to see the talent and craftsmanship found beyond the arena.

Tickets are available through angolarodeo.com or by calling **(225) 655-2030** or **(225) 655-2607**. Rodeo organizers warn buyers to avoid third-party sellers. Visitors are encouraged to arrive early because large crowds and entry delays are expected.

Guests should review the [rodeo’s entry rules](#) before leaving home. The facility prohibits smoking and does not allow outside food, drinks or ice chests. Bags must be clear and are subject to search.



A bull rams inmates seated at a card table in the Convict Poker event at the Angola Prison Rodeo in Angola, La., Saturday, April 26, 2014. Professional rodeo bullfighters dressed as clowns distract the animals once the riders are thrown.

(AP Photo/Gerald Herbert)

RE-ELECT
RANDY WILLIAMS
CITY MARSHAL
WARD 1

Leadership ★ Service ★ A Safer Natchitoches



NAACP

THE FIGHT AGAINST PROJECT 2025

Source: NAACP

Today, Project 2025 is no longer a warning, it's something people are already living with. We've seen real harm as protections were weakened, support was cut, and hard-won rights were rolled back, hitting Black communities and everyday Americans first and hardest.

In 2025, we fought back, spoke out, organized, and pushed forward for a better vision. That fight continues. We reject the backward agenda of Project 2025 and advance Our 2025, a plan for better wages, stronger schools, fairer justice, and real opportunity for all. In 2026, we keep fighting.



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 Gives Back

Investing in Our Communities

NATCHITOCHEs

Supporting Neighborhoods



BOM Bank donated to the Coach De Foundation, founded by "Coach De" Sanders. The nonprofit brings resources and support to underserved and low-income neighborhoods.

Pictured: De'Andrea Sanders with BOM's Carrie Hough, Micah Murchison and Zach George.

RAPIDES

Back to School in Woodworth



BOM Bank joined the Town of Woodworth for its Back to School Bash, helping local families get ready for a new school year.

BOM representatives: Holly Cloessner, Mika Elliot and Katie Farmer.

SABINE

Backpacks for Students



BOM Bank donated backpacks to the Pendleton Assembly of God Back to School Bash to help local students start the school year prepared.

Pictured, left to right: Donna Hensley and BOM's Twyla Lovelady.

CADDO/BOSSIER

Celebrating 10 Years



BOM Bank celebrated Houghton Branch Manager Melinda Williams' 10 years of service. The bank recognized her leadership and commitment to customers and the community.

Pictured: Melinda Williams, Houghton branch manager.

CRIME VICTIM
RESOURCES

When Crime Happens, Help Is Available

By The Real News Louisiana Staff

Crime can leave victims and families unsure where to turn. If you are in immediate danger, call 911. To share information about a crime in Natchitoches, contact Crime Stoppers using the number or website below. For information about victim services, visit Louisiana Crime Victims Services at lcle.la.gov.

PROTECT OUR COMMUNITY.

SEE SOMETHING. SAY SOMETHING.

318-238-2388



P3TIPS.COM

FOR MORE INFO VISIT NATCHITOCHESCRIMESTOPPERS.COM



**EMERGENCY
CALL 911**

NATCHITOCHES CRIME STOPPERS
318-238-2388
P3TIPS.COM

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



HEALTH & WELLNESS

Law Enforcement Suicide Awareness Day Reminds Officers: Help Is Available

September 26 marked **National Law Enforcement Suicide Awareness Day**, a time to remember officers lost to suicide and remind those still serving that they do not have to carry stress or trauma alone. The observance was created by Blue H.E.L.P.

Police officers may encounter difficult events at work while also facing the pressures of everyday life. Checking on a colleague, listening without judgment and making it easier to ask for help can matter. Families and friends need support, too.

Officers and their loved ones can call **COPLINE** at **1-800-267-5463** to speak confidentially with a trained retired officer, 24 hours a day. Anyone needing emotional or crisis support can **call or text 988**, also available around the clock.

As the community recognizes those who serve, it can also make space for an honest message: asking for help is a step toward care.

LAW ENFORCEMENT SUICIDE AWARENESS DAY

September 26

You do not have to face it alone.

Call or text 988 • 24/7 support

COMMUNITY EVENTS



Upcoming Events • Meetings • Community Announcements

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/iMpmumt3>

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



NATCHITOCHE PARISH
Council on Aging

HEALTH FAIR

MONDAY,
NOVEMBER 2
10:00-12:00

Take a step
toward a
healthier
future at our
Health Fair!

Special Bingo 9-10AM
prizes awarded

EVENT HIGHLIGHTS:

- Information & Screening
- Vision
- Hearing
- Blood Pressure
- Glucose
- Legal Services
- *Open enrollment assistance



VENDORS
PLEASE
BRING 2
DOOR
PRIZES



1016 KEYSER AVENUE
WWW.NPCOA.ORG
318.357.3250

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

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

NATCHITOCHES ALUMNAE CHAPTER
DELTA SIGMA THETA SORORITY, INCORPORATED

Heart My Sister
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
AWARENESS PROGRAM

Guest Speaker:
Minister Shermane Reed
of Esther's Corner

Community Partners:
Project Celebration, Inc. &
Community Counseling Center at Cane River

Support Educate
Empower Break the Silence

Saturday,
October 17, 2026
10 a.m.

Natchitoches Events Center
750 Second Street
Natchitoches, LA 71457

Refreshments will be provided.

Please register in advance using the link
<https://bit.ly/4hkjRXh>

Registration is open until 10 p.m. October 14th.

A FAITHFUL PASTOR
A STRONG COVERING
A LASTING Legacy

27TH 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

ZWOLLE
TAMALE FIESTA
★ 50TH ANNIVERSARY ★
DANCE CONTEST

Music Heals the Soul

1ST PLACE
★ \$500.00 ★
2ND PLACE
★ \$300.00 ★
3RD PLACE
★ \$150.00 ★

NO SIGN UP FEE

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



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.



DIGITAL FIRST

Read anytime, anywhere on your computer, tablet, or phone.



COMMUNITY FOCUSED

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



TRUSTED REPORTING

Accurate, timely, and reliable news you can count on.



ALWAYS UPDATED

Stay informed with the latest news as it happens.



VISIT US ONLINE
therealnewslouisiana.com



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318-354-7712