

THE REAL NEWS LOUISIANA

— LOCAL NEWS • COMMUNITY • LOUISIANA —

VOL. 02 • NO. 17 October 11, 2026, PUBLISHER: LATORRIA FREEMAN

OCTOBER

Breast Cancer Awareness Month

HER HEALTH MATTERS

Know your normal.

Have breast changes checked.

Discuss your screening plan.

Follow up on results.

Support her. Listen to her. Stand beside her.

Eliza Behrendsen Shares Her Breast Cancer Journey

Page 11

BLACK WOMEN & BREAST CANCER

Awareness. Action.

HOPE

Closing the gap starts with listening, timely care and community support.



Black Women and Breast Cancer: Awareness Must Lead to Action

By: The Real News Louisiana

NATCHITOCHES, La. — Behind every breast cancer diagnosis is a woman with people who love her, responsibilities she carries and a future she deserves to live. During Breast Cancer Awareness Month, the conversation must include the unequal burden facing Black women.

According to the American Cancer Society's 2025 report, Black women have a breast cancer death rate 38% higher than White women, despite a lower rate of diagnosis. That gap makes timely detection and access to quality treatment especially urgent. **Continued on Page 4**



Wanda Lucas, breast cancer survivor and author, pictured with her books.

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THE REAL NEWS LOUISIANA

LOCAL NEWS • COMMUNITY • LOUISIANA

A COMMUNITY WITH A VOICE SHALL BE HEARD®

October 11, 2026

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Robert Owsley
Incumbent



Cloyd Benjamin Jr.
Challenger

VS

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BLACK BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT

Aromatic Moments

Candle Studio & Gift Shop

Owners: Patreka and Jerry Watkins Jr. | 628 4th Street • Natchitoches, LA 71457

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67,000
LOUISIANA VOTERS
Mistakenly marked inactive

Inactive voters can still vote

Check your registration at [GeauxVote.com](https://www.GeauxVote.com)

Voter Registration • Page 19

FROM THE PUBLISHER

Your Voice Matters

We all want better for our community. Voting gives us a say in who makes decisions about our schools, safety and future.

Learn about the candidates, ask questions and make a plan to vote. After Election Day, stay involved and hold those elected accountable.

Your voice matters. Use it.

Latorria Freeman

Publisher, The Real News Louisiana

"A community with a voice shall be heard."



“

If you are unhappy about something, change it. Choose what you want in life, create your plan to get it, put your plan into action and follow through with persistence.”

Latorria Freeman

Publisher | The Real News Louisiana

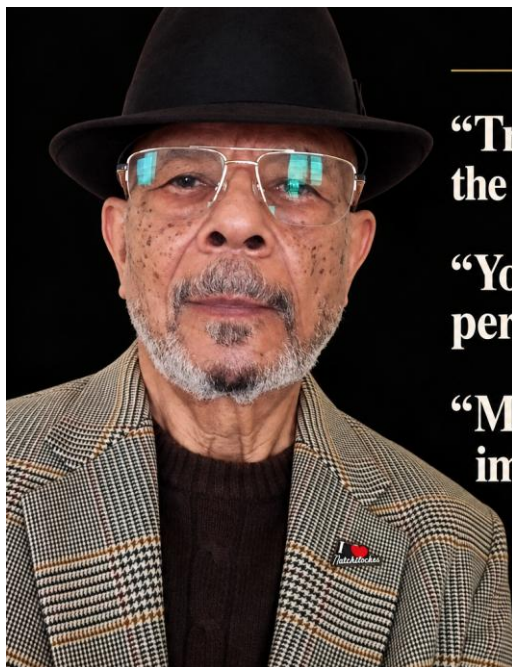
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OPINION

"Trump wants AI to control the world, not help humanity!"

"You can't satisfy a greedy person!"

"Midterm election—most important of our lifetime!"

Randy "The Editor" Stelly.



October 11, 2026

Black Women and Breast Cancer: Awareness Must Lead to Action Continued from Page 1

The reasons are complex. Black women are more likely to develop triple-negative breast cancer, an aggressive form of the disease. Differences in access to quality care and later-stage diagnoses also contribute to poorer outcomes. Closing the gap requires attention throughout diagnosis and treatment.

Knowing what is normal for your breasts matters. A new lump, swelling, skin dimpling, a nipple turning inward or unusual nipple discharge should be checked by a healthcare professional. Many breast changes are not cancer, but they still deserve attention—even after a recent mammogram.



For women at average risk, the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force recommends mammograms every two years from ages 40 through 74. Women should discuss their family history and personal risk with their healthcare provider, because some need a different screening plan.

Here in our community, support can begin with simple acts: helping someone get to an appointment, offering childcare or listening when she says something feels wrong.

Pink ribbons bring visibility. Following through—with appointments, answers and support—gives that awareness purpose. Black women deserve to be heard, cared for and given every opportunity to survive.



Awareness Must Lead to Action.

Listen. Support. Stand with Black women.

**BREAST CANCER
AWARENESS**

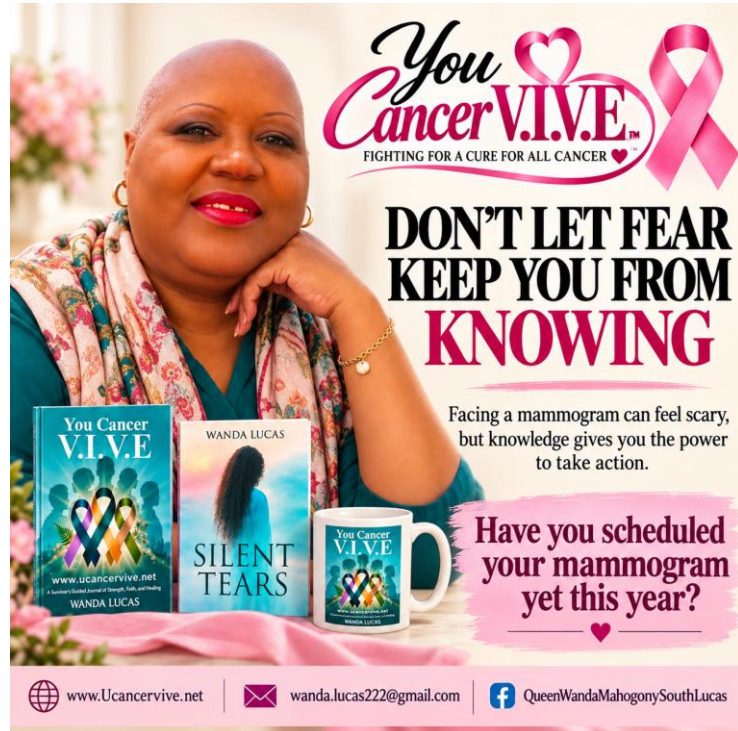


October 11, 2026

**FEATURED
STORY**

Knowledge, Faith and Hope: My Life as a Cancer Survivor

By Wanda Lucas, Author | Survivor | Cancer Advocate | Cancer Buddy



As a 23-year survivor of Stage IV inflammatory breast cancer, I have learned that one of the greatest weapons in the fight against cancer is knowledge.

Fear can keep us from making an appointment, asking questions or acknowledging changes in our bodies. Sometimes we avoid answers because we are afraid of what we might hear. But what we do not know can hurt us. My journey has taught me the importance of paying attention, seeking answers and speaking up for our health.

I encourage people to know their family history, keep up with recommended screenings and talk with a health care provider about unusual changes. We should never assume that something is harmless simply because it does not hurt or because we cannot feel a lump.

Through **You CancerV.I.V.E.**, I have turned my experience into a mission rooted in four principles: Validate, Illuminate, Victory and Educate.

To **validate** means acknowledging each patient's fears, feelings, struggles and experiences. Every journey matters, and every person deserves to be heard.

To **illuminate** means bringing awareness, knowledge, compassion and understanding into moments that can feel overwhelming. Sometimes, knowing someone cares can help a person take the next step.

Victory means celebrating every milestone. Completing treatment, receiving encouraging results or finding the strength to face another day are all moments worth honoring.

To **educate** means helping patients, families and communities ask questions, make informed decisions and advocate for the care they need.

My journey has also taught me that cancer does not discriminate, and neither should our compassion. I advocate for people affected by all cancers, across all races, genders and walks of life. No one should feel that their struggle is less important or that they must face it alone.

If uncertainty has kept you from taking action, I encourage you to ask questions and listen to your body. Encourage someone you love to do the same. You do not have to have every answer before reaching out for help.

Above all, I want people facing cancer to know that their diagnosis is not the whole of their story. There is still room for purpose, love, meaningful moments and hope.

I continue to share my story because I believe we can make a difference—one life, one voice and one act of compassion at a time. Keep the faith, embrace hope and never stop believing in the possibility of tomorrow.

KEEP READING

Meet the candidates before you vote.

Discover Aromatic Moments, a local Black-owned business.

Find fall activities for the family.
Get important voter dates and community resources.

There's more ahead.

Turn the page!



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CAMPAIGN NEWS

WARD 1 CITY COURT JUDGE



Robert Owsley

Incumbent

— VS —



Cloyd Benjamin Jr.

Challenger

NATCHITOCHES, La. — Campaign announcements from Cloyd Benjamin Jr. and Judge Robert Owsley describe their priorities for Ward 1 City Court, with both emphasizing fairness, accountability and support for young people.

Benjamin outlines proposed community partnerships focused on prevention, public safety and second chances. Owsley highlights his service on the bench since 2020 and improvements his announcement says have been implemented during his tenure.

The following comparison is based on the candidates' supplied announcements.

Benjamin's announcement stresses that prevention and second-chance initiatives would complement the court's responsibility to follow the law. His proposed programs would require collaboration with partners who have the authority, expertise and resources to develop and carry them out.

Owsley's announcement emphasizes continuity and experience, pointing to technology upgrades, courthouse security, juvenile community service and family intervention as examples of his approach.

Editor's note: This comparison summarizes candidate-provided announcements and is not an independent verification of campaign claims. A topic absent from an announcement should not be interpreted as opposition to that policy.

Continued Next Page

CAMPAIGN NEWS

Ward 1 City Court Judge: Candidate Comparison

Continued from page 7

The following comparison is based on the candidates' supplied announcements.

Topic	Robert Owsley- Incumbent	Cloyd Benjamin Jr.- Challenger
Campaign Focus	Emphasizes his record since taking the bench in 2020, fairness, respect, accountability, and practical improvements.	Outlines a vision centered on public safety, accountability, prevention, second chances, and community partnerships.
Fairness in Court	Says every person entering his courtroom should be treated with dignity and have an opportunity to be heard.	Emphasizes a court that remains fair, impartial, and accountable.
Court Technology	Reports implementing updated technology for electronic payments and civil filings to improve access and efficiency.	Technology proposals were not detailed in the supplied excerpt.
Courthouse Safety	Reports partnering with City Marshal Randy Williams to strengthen security for staff and citizens.	Identifies public safety as a central priority; specific courthouse security measures were not detailed in the supplied excerpt.
Youth Accountability	Reports establishing a community service program that helps juvenile offenders take responsibility and reconnect with their community.	Emphasizes accountability, prevention, and second chances; specific youth programs were not detailed in the supplied excerpt.
Early Intervention	Reports helping launch FINS—Families in Need of Services—in 2025 with Anita Dubois to support families and at-risk youth.	Proposes partnerships that connect people with resources and address problems earlier.
Community Partnerships	Cites work with the City Marshal and family support partners.	Proposes collaboration with law enforcement, schools, churches, nonprofits, community leaders, and justice system partners.

Source: Candidate-provided campaign materials. Owsley's reported accomplishments and Benjamin's proposed priorities are summarized as presented. "Not detailed" means the supplied excerpt did not address that topic.

CAMPAIGN NEWS

WARD 1 CITY MARSHAL CANDIDATES

Reprinted from the August 30, 2026, edition



Randy Williams — Incumbent

Experience & Priorities

- **City Marshal** — Serving for 11½ years; seeking a third term.
- **Marshal's Office Experience** — More than 24 years, including 13 years as Deputy Marshal.
- **Law Enforcement** — Retired after 30 years with Natchitoches City Police.
- **Youth Experience** — Served eight years as a School Resource Officer.
- **Community Roots** — Natchitoches resident for more than 50 years.
- **Continued Service** — Seeks to build on the progress made during his tenure.

Source: Randy Williams candidate statement, 2026.

IN THEIR OWN WORDS: ACCOUNTABILITY & TRANSPARENCY

During the Aug. 13 candidate forum, Williams was asked what specific steps he would take to promote transparency and accountability within the City Marshal's Office.

"I had never had that problem yet. I hope I don't, 'cause if they do, they gonna have a knot on their head. I don't think I ever had that problem. Everybody loves my deputies."

Candidate Forum, Aug. 13, 2026



Carl Sias — Challenger

Campaign Priorities

- **Integrity & Fairness** — Leadership based on integrity, fairness and respect.
- **Public Safety** — Prioritizes safe neighborhoods and citizens' rights.
- **Accountability & Transparency** — Pledges honest and transparent leadership.
- **Community-Based Policing** — Supports law enforcement working with the community.
- **Families & Businesses** — Pledges to protect families and support businesses.
- **Trust & Partnerships** — Seeks stronger partnerships and public confidence.

Carl Sias campaign statement posted to Facebook, Jan. 4, 2026

IN THEIR OWN WORDS: ACCOUNTABILITY & TRANSPARENCY

In an Aug. 29 recorded Facebook Live video, Sias discussed accountability and what he would do if he believed something was not right as City Marshal.

"Can't nobody say I lied on anybody. Cause if I become City Marshal, I'ma expose everybody. If I got to go to the Attorney General, if I feel like something is not right... I can't shut up cause God won't let me shut up. Cause God want you to know the truth."

Recorded Facebook Live Video, August 29, 2026

CAMPAIGN NEWS

CAMPTI MAYORAL CANDIDATES



KATRINA EVANS
INCUMBENT

Experience & Record

Evans' campaign materials highlight her service as current mayor, education, infrastructure work, grants and funding, community programs and financial management.

Campaign Priorities

- Invest in the community and improve infrastructure.
- Build financial stability and support families.
- Expand community programs and create a stronger Campti.

Campaign Message

"The Foundation Is Laid; Let's Keep Building."



JASMINE LEWIS
CHALLENGER

Experience & Background

Lewis' campaign materials highlight a criminal justice degree, management and human services experience, community service, faith and values, and a focus on economic development, youth and families.

Campaign Priorities

- Strengthen infrastructure and support local businesses.
- Invest in youth and community revitalization.
- Promote transparency, accountability and community engagement.

Campaign Message

"A Voice for the People, Fighting for a Cause."

TWO VISIONS FOR CAMPTI

Both candidates identify infrastructure, community involvement and quality of life as priorities. Evans emphasizes continuing her administration's work, including projects and programs completed or underway.

Lewis emphasizes a change in leadership, community engagement, transparency and new initiatives.

Source: Campaign materials provided by the candidates.

HEALTH & WELLNESS

Eliza Behrendsen Shares Her Breast Cancer Journey and Gratitude for Care

Eliza Brittain Behrendsen is no stranger to breast cancer. Her mother and mother-in-law passed away from it. As life sometimes goes, Eliza was caring for her mother-in-law when she herself felt a bump of sorts in her breast. Thinking it was just a cyst, Eliza thought she might need to get it drained. A busy mother of two- high- school aged sons and active with many projects and community events, Eliza really hoped the bump was nothing. However, somewhat concerned, she mentioned the “cyst” to her sister, Dr. Marguerite (Cissy) Picou. Dr. Picou immediately advised that Eliza get a mammogram. When Eliza had the mammogram, radiologist Dr. Ben Hogg said there was a spot that concerned him. He ordered an ultrasound which led to a needle biopsy of what he believed was a mass. Eliza went to general surgeon Dr. William Ball, Jr., who confirmed the mass was, in fact, cancer.

“My first reaction was to get a mastectomy, but Dr. Ball said there were other options,” Eliza explained. “He first tested lymph nodes, and there were no signs of cancer which was really good news. However, the mass was growing quickly, suggesting an aggressive cancer. I needed to have a lumpectomy as soon as possible.”



Eliza Brittain Behrendsen
Photo Credit: NRMC

“Dr. Ball has extensive training and experience with breast cancer. I knew he can do what surgeons at world renown places can do, and I trusted him to do what needed to be done. I had my surgery at NRMC, and Dr. Ball removed a fairly large mass, but you can barely tell now where it even was. The surgery went well,” Eliza explained.

“From Shay Ball, who is a nurse in Dr. Ball’s practice, to the nurses on the surgery unit, I had excellent care and great support. I felt taken care of and that everyone had my best interests at heart,” Eliza said. “I had the best possible surgery recovery. Chemotherapy and radiation therapy followed the surgery, and I am grateful to my husband who went with me to the treatments, and my supportive brothers and sisters really helped me.”

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- 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



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

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

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AT NORTHWESTERN**

**CAMPAIGN
NEWS**

School Board Showdown: Five Candidates Seek Seats in Districts 1 and 8



NATCHITOCHES, La. — Voters in Natchitoches Parish School Board Districts 1 and 8 will have contested races to consider, with five candidates seeking the two seats.

District 1 will feature a matchup between **Barbara Page** and **Lee Waskom**. Both candidates qualified without party affiliation.

District 8 will feature a three-candidate race between **Chris Bush**, **Linda Davidson** and **J D Samuel Jr.** All three qualified as Democrats.

These races give residents an opportunity to hear how each candidate would approach the needs of students, families and educators. School leadership, student achievement, campus conditions and the responsible use of public funds are subjects voters can ask candidates to address.

As the campaigns move forward, residents are encouraged to learn about each candidate's experience, priorities and plans for representing their district. Public forums and candidate interviews can help voters make informed decisions about who will speak for their communities on the School Board.

Candidate names and party affiliations are based on the qualifying information provided to The Real News Louisiana.

COMMUNITY
NEWS

School's Out, Fall Fun Is In!

Family activities in and around Natchitoches during fall break



743 Hwy 478 • Natchitoches, LA 71457



Checking on Our Elders

By: The Real News Louisiana Staff

A phone call, a short visit or a ride to the grocery store can make a difference in an older adult's day. Checking on our elders gives us a chance to listen, offer help and stay connected.

Ask what they need rather than assuming. Help with errands, share a meal or simply spend time together. Regular contact can also help families notice when someone needs additional support.

Our elders hold family memories and community history worth preserving. Ask about their childhood, their experiences and the lessons they want to pass down.

Caring for those who have cared for others begins with making time.



★ ELECT ★
LEE WASKOM
NATCHITOCHE PARISH
SCHOOL BOARD
DISTRICT 1

★ YOUR VOTE. YOUR VOICE. ★

Paid for by the Lee Waskom for District 1 campaign

Health & Wellness

NRMC Encourages Women to Make Time for Breast Health

By The Real News Louisiana Staff

NATCHITOCHES, La. — During Breast Cancer Awareness Month, Natchitoches Regional Medical Center is encouraging women to make time for their breast health and schedule a mammogram.

NRMC's awareness campaign emphasizes the importance of early detection and having a supportive care team. According to the center, its mammography team works alongside surgical and cancer specialists to provide coordinated care from diagnosis and treatment through recovery and remission.

The campaign brings together the NRMC Breast Center, NRMC Cancer Center and NRMC General Surgery Associates, highlighting care that supports patients through each appointment and stage of their journey.

Residents can call **318-214-4265** to schedule a mammogram. NRMC's announcement states that **no doctor's order is needed**.

For questions, text **NATTIE** at **318-667-7973**.

Make Time for Your Breast Health.

When it comes to breast cancer, time matters. So does having the right team beside you. At NRMC, our experienced mammography team works alongside our compassionate team of surgical and cancer specialists to provide coordinated care from diagnosis and treatment through recovery and remission.

Because your cancer journey is about more than treating a disease. It's about caring for you every step, every appointment and every moment along the way.

Early detection matters. Schedule your mammogram today by calling 318.214.4265.

No doctor's order needed.

Questions?
TEXT NATTIE

318.667.7973



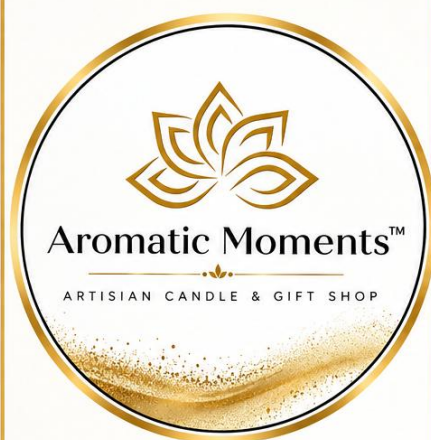
NRMC
Breast Center

NRMC
Cancer Center

NRMC
General Surgery
Associates

BUSINESS

BLACK BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT



Aromatic Moments

Candle Studio & Gift Shop



Owners: Patreka and Jerry Watkins Jr.



628 4th Street • Natchitoches, LA 71457



(318) 521-3410



aromaticmoments18@gmail.com

NATCHITOCHES, La. — For Patreka and Jerry Watkins Jr., **Aromatic Moments** brings candles, gifts and creativity together right here in Natchitoches.

Located at 628 4th Street, the Black-owned candle studio and gift shop features artisan candles and candle-making experiences where customers can explore fragrances and create a signature scent. Its offerings also include pecan praline fudge, adding something sweet to the mix.

Whether choosing a gift or enjoying a creative activity, Aromatic Moments offers a personal way to mark an occasion. The business carries the message “Let Your Light So Shine”—a fitting sentiment for this local business spotlight.

Supporting local businesses helps recognize the people putting their ideas, time and talents into our community.

Visit: 628 4th Street, Natchitoches, LA 71457

Call: (318) 521-3410

Email: aromaticmoments18@gmail.com

Owners: Patreka and Jerry Watkins Jr.

COMMUNITY

Planning & Zoning Department Wears Pink for Breast Cancer Awareness



NATCHITOCHES, La. — Employees of the City of Natchitoches Planning & Zoning Department wore pink in support of Breast Cancer Awareness Month, honoring survivors, supporting those facing breast cancer, and remembering loved ones lost to the disease.

Their show of support serves as a reminder of the importance of awareness and early detection. By wearing pink together, department employees shared a message of hope and solidarity with everyone affected by breast cancer.

Breast Cancer Awareness Month Proclamation on Agenda for October 12 Meeting

RESOLUTION NO. 067 OF 2026

WHEREAS, the City of Natchitoches recognizes October as National Breast Cancer Awareness Month; and
WHEREAS, breast cancer is the second most common form of the disease among women in the United States.

WHEREAS, one in eight women will be diagnosed with breast cancer in her lifetime. That's one person every two minutes in the U.S.; and

WHEREAS, in recognition of the fact that mammography is the best available method of detecting breast changes that may be cancer, long before physical symptoms can be seen or felt, and that breast cancer deaths could decline further if all women age 40 and older received mammograms at regular intervals.

WHEREAS, during National Breast Cancer Awareness Month, we rededicate ourselves to supporting patients and their families, boosting access to care, and raising awareness about the life-saving importance of early screening. We honor all those we have lost to this terrible disease and celebrate the courageous survivors and advocates fighting to beat it, along with the loved ones and medical providers who have their backs every day.

WHEREAS, the theme for Breast Cancer Awareness Month 2026 is "Every Story is Unique, Every Journey Matters,"

This theme encourages individuals, including those diagnosed with breast cancer, their families, healthcare providers, and supporters, to share their personal reasons for advocating breast cancer awareness.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RONNIE WILLIAMS, JR., Mayor of the City of Natchitoches, hereby proclaim the month of October as:

National Breast Cancer Awareness Month

in the City of Natchitoches proclaim and urge all men and women in the City of Natchitoches to join us in the month of October and all year as we reach out to all women throughout the United States with the vital message about early detection and the value of early treatment if breast cancer is detected.

67,000 Louisiana Voters Mistakenly Marked Inactive After ‘Human Error’

BATON ROUGE, La. — Approximately 67,000 Louisiana voters were mistakenly switched to inactive status during routine maintenance of the state’s elections database on October 5, according to the Louisiana Secretary of State’s Office.

The Louisiana Illuminator reported that Trey Williams, deputy secretary for communications, attributed the mistake to “human error.” Williams said staff identified the problem and began correcting the affected records. The office also added safeguards intended to prevent a similar incident.

In its October 7 report, the Illuminator said officials expected to restore the correct statuses that day. Williams said the temporary error would not affect anyone’s eligibility or ability to vote.

Inactive Does Not Mean You Cannot Vote

Louisiana’s Secretary of State advises that voters listed as inactive remain eligible to vote but must confirm their residential address before casting a ballot. That can be done online, at the parish Registrar of Voters Office, or at the precinct on Election Day.

Natchitoches Parish residents can check their registration through the [Louisiana Voter Portal](#) or the free GeauxVote app. Anyone who notices incorrect information should contact the Registrar of Voters Office for assistance at [\(318\) 357-2211](#).

Not Registered Yet?

Register online at [geauxvote.com](#) by **Tuesday, October 13**, to vote in the November 3 election. You’ll need a valid Louisiana driver’s license or Louisiana special ID card to register online.



• NATCHITOCHES •

Farmers Market

EVERY SATURDAY

October 10 – November 14

8:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Fresh Fruits & Vegetables

Jams • Jellies • Salsa • Bread

Handcrafted Items

For more information, visit the
Natchitoches Farmer's Market
Facebook page.

Pick Up Your Brush Painting classes to be held on Oct. 15, 29

NATCHITOCHES -- Northwestern State University's Office of Electronic Learning and Global Engagement will offer Pick Up Your Brush painting classes on Oct. 15 and 29 from 5:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. on the second floor of South Hall. The fee is \$45.

In these classes, students will learn the art of painting using step-by-step instructions to create their own masterpieces. No special or prior skills are required. Just relax and enjoy each class. Students will take home a completed painting at the end of every class. The painting on Oct. 15 will be titled "Blushing scarecrow." On Oct. 29, the painting will be "Corny cornucopia."

Children ages 7–12 are allowed to enroll, but a parent must accompany the child throughout the class. Parents do not have to enroll unless they participate. All supplies are included.

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 Engagement on Facebook at facebook.com/NSULA.ece.





BOM Bank GIVES BACK



Natchitoches, La. - BOM Bank was proud to present a check to Natchitoches Junior High School in support of the Cheer Team! We love cheering on the students in our communities as they work hard, build confidence and represent their schools with pride. Here's to a great season filled with school spirit, teamwork and plenty of CHIEFS CHEERS! Pictured left to right: Principal Bobby Benjamin and BOM's Jaliyah Joseph.



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CHAMBER
NEWS

Go Natchitoches Awards Nominations Open Through October 21

★ ★ ★ *Go* ★ ★ ★
**NATCHITOCHES
AWARDS**

A Showcase in Excellence

NOMINATIONS OPEN!

GoNatchitoches.com/Nominations

NATCHITOCHES, La. — Community members have until October 21 to submit nominations for the annual Go Natchitoches Awards, recognizing businesses, organizations, and individuals making an impact across Natchitoches Parish.

Community participation guides each stage of the awards process, from nominations and voting to finalist submissions and judging. The Chamber facilitates the process, while nominations, votes, and judging come directly from the community.

The awards offer residents an opportunity to recognize the people and organizations whose work contributes to the parish.

To encourage broad recognition, category winners cannot be selected as finalists in the same category for the three years immediately following their win. Non-member businesses may be nominated but cannot advance to the voting stage.

Questions about the selection process may be directed to Morgan at Morgan@GoNatchitoches.com. Submit nominations at GoNatchitoches.com.



**JOIN
TODAY**

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\$25

A MONTH

Contact Morgan Green
morgan@gonatchitoches.com



Black Women and Breast Cancer: Awareness Must Lead to Action



Support Should Last Beyond October

Pink ribbons fill our communities each October, but women facing breast cancer need support long after awareness month ends. For Black women, turning awareness into action means creating space to be heard, ask for help and receive care without feeling alone.

A woman may be managing appointments while raising children, working and keeping her household together. She may appear strong while privately feeling overwhelmed. Strength should never become a reason to assume she needs less support.

Make Help Specific

“Let me know if you need anything” is well intended, but someone already carrying a heavy load may struggle to explain what she needs. Offer something concrete. Ask whether she needs a ride, help with groceries, a prepared meal or someone to watch the children. Check before visiting and understand that she may need rest more than company. Small, consistent acts can ease everyday pressures. Support does not have to be expensive to be meaningful.

Listen Without Pressure

Every woman’s experience is different. Some want to talk openly; others prefer privacy. Let her decide how much to share.

Avoid comparing her journey with someone else’s or insisting that she remain positive. Fear, frustration and uncertainty deserve room alongside faith and hope. Sometimes the most helpful response is simply, “I’m here, and I’m listening.”

Respect also means asking permission before posting photographs, sharing health updates or organizing public fundraising efforts.

Remember Life After Treatment

The end of treatment should not signal the end of community support. Ask what would help now rather than assuming everything has returned to normal. Continue checking in. Invite her to participate in everyday life while giving her freedom to decline. See the whole woman—her interests, relationships and goals—beyond her diagnosis.

Here in Natchitoches Parish, families, churches, businesses and neighbors can make compassion a year-round commitment.

Awareness brings attention. Action means showing up—and continuing to show up when the pink ribbons come down.

YOUR VOICE. YOUR VOTE.

Community events and information for voters



NATCHITOCHES ALUMNAE CHAPTER
DELTA SIGMA THETA SORORITY, INC.

PRESENTS

NATCHITOCHES VOTERS SUMMIT

 **Clock It For The Culture**

WHERE RARE, RAW AND REAL CONVERSATIONS TAKE PLACE

 **SATURDAY**
OCTOBER 17, 2026
 9:00 AM – 2:00 PM

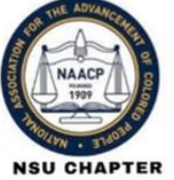
 **NATCHITOCHES EVENTS CENTER**
750 SECOND STREET
NATCHITOCHES, LA 71457

AGENDA

9:00 AM	Lite Breakfast
9:30 AM	Taking Back the Boot
10:00 AM	Pastors in Power: From the Pulpit to Purpose
11:00 AM	Finances, Freedom & The Future (Smart Money & Business Moves)
11:45 AM	Entertainment
12:00 PM	Lunch
12:30 PM	Say Less: From Talking About It To Being About It
1:30 PM	From the Block to the Ballot: Connecting with the Candidates

MORE THAN A SUMMIT

-  **LIVE ENTERTAINMENT**
Local DJs, vocalists, artists, spoken word, and more
-  **SUPPORT LOCAL BUSINESSES**
Shop local vendors and community resources
-  **SOCIAL MEDIA LOUNGE**
Instagram-worthy photo opportunities
#MyVoteMatters
-  **GAMING ZONE**
Cornhole, dominoes, spades and more
-  **VOTER RESOURCES**
Registration, education, polling information and more
-  **GIVEAWAYS**
Prizes throughout the event
(not required to register or vote)
-  **THE FUTURE WALL**
Share one thing you want to change in our community over the next four years.





SISTERHOOD | SERVICE | SCHOLARSHIP | SOCIAL ACTION

Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated is a 501(c)(7) non-partisan organization and does not endorse candidates or political parties.

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.

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.

OPINION

Black Families Deserve Protection When They Ask for Help

“Families deserve to be heard, treated with dignity and supported when they turn to institutions for safety.”

When a family calls for help, they are placing their trust in someone else’s hands. They expect someone to listen, take their concerns seriously and help protect the people they love.

For Black families, that moment can come with another question: Will we be treated as people who need protection, or as a problem to be managed?

Whether a family is reporting threats, seeking help for a loved one in crisis or asking what happened to their child, they deserve a response rooted in care and respect. They should not have to prove that their fear is reasonable before someone listens.

Safety means more than an officer arriving or a report being filed. It means understanding what happens next. It means having questions answered, knowing whom to contact and receiving follow-up when concerns remain unresolved.

A family should not be left wondering whether anyone is still paying attention.

When mental health is involved, the need for a thoughtful response becomes especially urgent. Families may be frightened, exhausted and unsure how to help. Responders need the training, support and judgment to recognize distress and work to calm a situation.

Protecting a person in crisis must remain central to the response.

The responsibility also reaches beyond law enforcement. Hospitals, schools, social service agencies, elected officials and community organizations all have a role. When families are passed from one office to another, responsibility can become scattered while their needs remain unmet.



Here in Natchitoches Parish, we should be willing to ask direct questions. Do families know where to turn? Are their concerns documented and followed up? Is there a clear way to raise questions about how they were treated? Can they do so without feeling intimidated or dismissed?

These questions belong in public conversations because trust grows through actions people can see.

Black families deserve protection without humiliation, answers without unnecessary obstacles and compassion without conditions. Their concerns deserve attention even when they have no influential connections and no public platform.

Community leaders can help by listening, explaining available resources and standing beside families as they seek answers. Institutions must do their part by communicating clearly and accepting accountability when their response falls short.

Calling for help takes trust. What happens after that call determines whether a family will feel safe enough to make it again.

The measure of a community’s commitment to safety is how it treats people when they are most vulnerable. When Black families reach out, they deserve to know that someone will listen—and that help will come with a commitment to keeping them safe.

OPINION

DEFENDING BLACK VOTER POWER

Editor's note: The title and opening excerpt were provided by the NAACP. The accompanying commentary was written by The Real News Louisiana.

Our democracy faces a serious test when the protections meant to ensure fair representation become harder to enforce. The Supreme Court's ruling in *Louisiana v. Callais* raises urgent concerns about Black voting power and the future of equal representation.

On April 29, 2026, the Court struck down Louisiana's congressional map that included a second majority-Black district. The majority concluded that the Voting Rights Act did not require that additional district and that the state's use of race in drawing the map was unconstitutional. The ruling also narrowed the standards for challenging discriminatory district maps under Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act.

The justices sharply disagreed about the consequences. The majority framed its decision as enforcing constitutional limits on race-based districting. The dissent warned that the ruling undermined the law's ability to protect minority voters against discrimination.

For Louisiana communities, representation is more than lines on a map. It affects whose concerns reach Congress, whose neighborhoods receive attention and whose voices help shape public policy.

The distinction between voter suppression and vote dilution matters. This case concerns district boundaries and electoral representation rather than a direct restriction on casting a ballot. But access to the ballot and a fair opportunity to elect representatives are both essential to a healthy democracy.

Protecting Black voting rights requires sustained work beyond Election Day. Community organizations, churches and civic leaders can provide accurate election information, help residents check their registration, explain district changes and create opportunities to question candidates about issues that matter locally.

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.

CRIME VICTIM
RESOURCES

COMMUNITY SAFETY & VICTIM SUPPORT

Speaking Up Can Help Keep Natchitoches Safe

A safer community starts with looking out for one another. If you have information about a crime, you can share an anonymous tip with Natchitoches Crime Stoppers at 318-238-2388 or through P3Tips.com. Even a small detail may help investigators.

For victims and families, knowing where to turn matters. Visit lcle.la.gov for information about Louisiana's victim assistance and crime victims' compensation programs.

If someone is in immediate danger or needs an emergency response, call 911.

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



COMMUNITY EVENTS



Upcoming Events • Meetings • Community Announcements

Rally. Get Ready. Geaux.
= BLOCK PARTY =
Sunday, Oct. 18 • 4 PM
Ben Park
616 MLK Dr.
FOOD • MUSIC • GAMES
Canvas Signup

Monday, Oct. 19
Beat the Block
Canvas & Caravan
5 PM Meetup at 400 MLK Dr.

Sponsored By





Natchitoches PARISH FAIR
OCTOBER 11-17

FRIDAY OCTOBER 16 TH	SATURDAY OCTOBER 17 TH
Gate opens at 5 pm	Gate opens at 11 am
\$5 gate admission (cash only) 2 and under free	\$5 gate admission (cash only) 2 and under free
Carnival opens at 6 pm	Carnival opens at 12 pm
Armbands \$25 Individual tickets also available for purchase	Armbands \$25 Individual tickets also available for purchase



ATM WILL BE ON SIGHT



ALL BAGS WILL BE CHECKED AT GATE



NO OUTSIDE FOOD OR DRINKS



NO WEAPONS

For more information visit our website
www.Natchitochesparish fair.com
or call Lynn LaCaze (318)332-0419

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

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 Sherman 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.

TOWN OF CAMPTI PRESENTS

SMOKIN' ON THE Red

FESTIVAL
CELEBRATING 30 YEARS
FAMILY • COMMUNITY • GROWTH

VENDORS
SPOTS AVAILABLE

BBQ CONTEST
SPOTS STILL AVAILABLE

FRIDAY OCT 23	SATURDAY OCT 24	SUNDAY OCT 25
6:00 PM GOSPEL FEST An evening of worship, praise, and celebration!	8:00 AM PARADE LINE UP 10:00 AM PARADE STARTS 11:00 AM FESTIVAL STARTS SPECIAL GUEST JEREMY FRUGE 	PINK OUT SUNDAY WEAR PINK 1:00 PM COMMUNITY CHURCH SERVICE 2:00 PM COMMUNITY PICNIC 5:30 PM RIDE LEAVES

CAMPTI RECREATIONAL PARK
ON MILL ST, CAMPTI LA 71411

★ Three Decades. One Community. A Legacy That Continues. ★

KREWE OF THE 9

SALUTING THE 9 AT MARDI GRAS

Since 1906 ALPHA PHI ALPHA
Since 1908 ALPHA KAPPA ALPHA
Since 1911 KAPPA ALPHA PSI
Since 1911 OMEGA PSI PHI
Since 1913 DELTA SIGMA THETA
Since 1914 PHI BETA SIGMA
Since 1920 ZETA PHI BETA
Since 1922 SIGMA GAMMA RHO
Since 1963 IOTA PHI THETA

TICKETS ON SALE NOW!
KREWE OF THE 9
PURCHASE BY
DECEMBER 19, 2026
TICKET PRICE: \$109
PAY VIA CASH APP
\$kreweofthe9

FOR INFORMATION, CALL:
REVELER HAYES AT (318) 663-4452
OR REVELER REMO AT (318) 554-8984

NEW ORLEANS & NATCHITOCHES BRASS BAND



THE **REAL NEWS** LOUISIANA

LOCAL NEWS • COMMUNITY • LOUISIANA



A COMMUNITY WITH A VOICE SHALL BE HEARD.



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



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



COMMUNITY FOCUSED

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



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



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Stay informed with the latest news as it happens.



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