



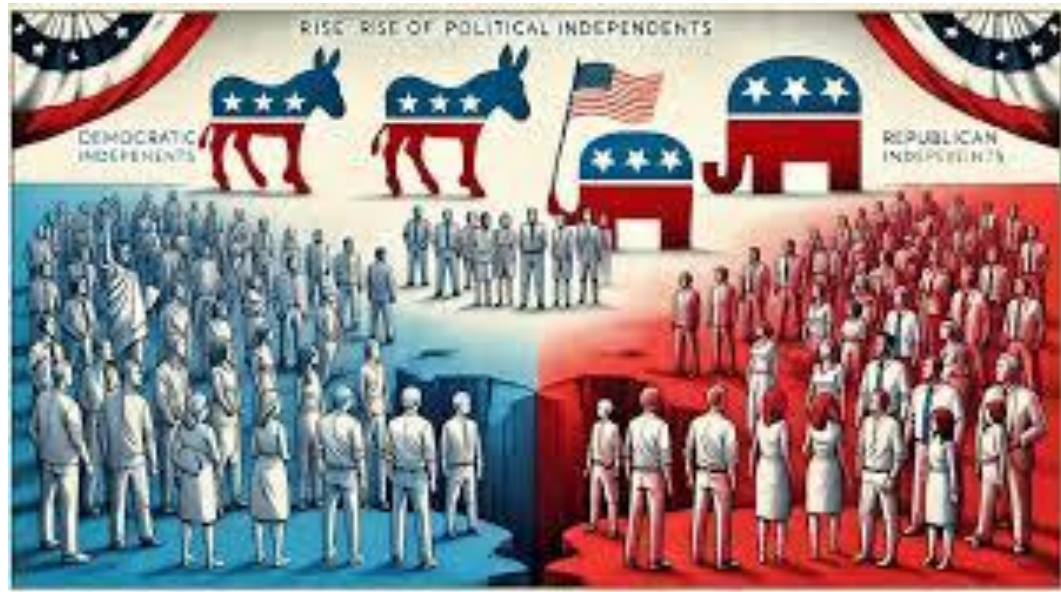
THE REAL NEWS Louisiana

"A Community With a Voice Shall Be Heard" ®

Publisher: Latorria Freeman

America's Political Divide Grows as Independent Voters Surge

November 14, 2025 — The results of the 2024 presidential election have highlighted deepening divisions in the American political landscape. While Republicans and Democrats continue to dominate, a record number of Americans now identify as Independent or No Party Preference (NPP), signaling a shift in national sentiment.



The Republican Party: Conservatism in the Age of Trump

Symbol: The Elephant

Color: Red

Founded: 1854. The Republican Party (GOP) advocates limited government, free-market capitalism, and traditional values. Its base includes working-class voters, evangelicals, and rural Americans.

- Economic Freedom: Tax cuts, deregulation, and opposition to expansive welfare programs.
- Social Conservatism: Pro-life policies, Second Amendment rights, and skepticism of rapid cultural change.
- National Strength: A robust military, "America First" trade policies, and border security.

"Government should do less for you—so you can do more for yourself."

— Common Grand Old Party (GOP) refrain

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What's Inside...



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America’s Political Divide Grows as Independent Voters Surge

The Democratic Party: Progressivism and Government as a Force for Good

Symbol: The Donkey
 Color: Blue

Founded: 1828. The Democratic Party supports government action for social justice, economic equity, and environmental protection. Its coalition includes urban voters, minorities, and professionals.

- Economic Equity: Higher taxes on the wealthy, union support, student debt relief, and universal healthcare expansion.
- Social Progress: Abortion rights, gun safety laws, LGBTQ+ equality, and racial justice initiatives.
- Global Leadership: Climate action (e.g., Paris Accord), diplomacy, and multilateral alliances.

“We rise together when government lifts the floor beneath every American.”
 — Core Democratic belief

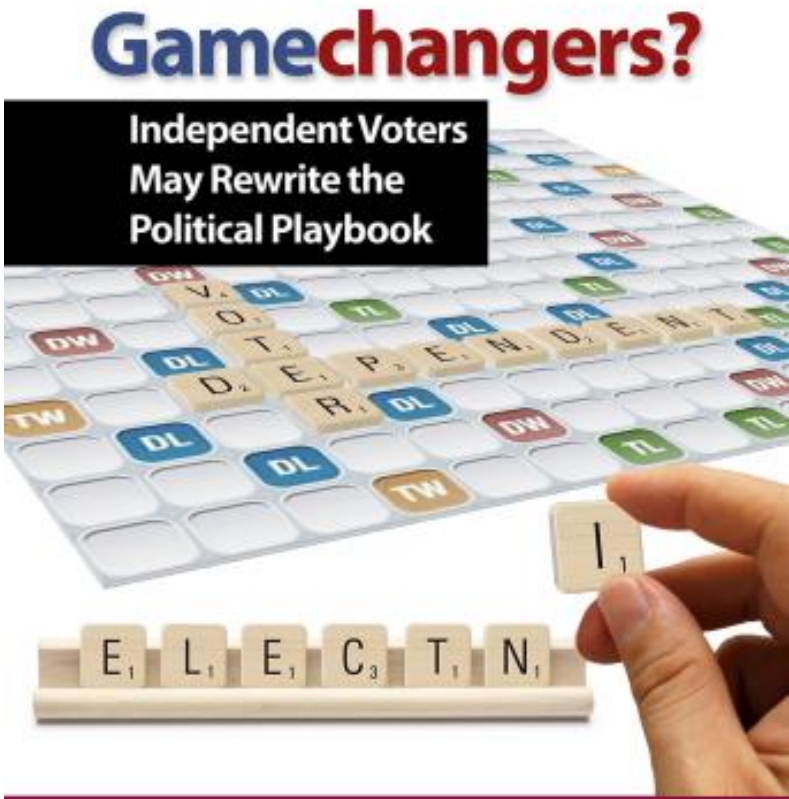
No Party Preference: The Silent Majority?

No Party Preference (NPP) and Independent registrations have surged nationwide, reflecting widespread voter dissatisfaction with the two-party system.

Why Go Independent?

- Distrust in Partisanship: “Both sides are corrupt.”
- Ideological Flexibility: You might support gun rights and universal healthcare.
- Protest Vote: Refusing to be boxed in by tribal loyalty.

Continued on Page 4...



Democrats	~30%
Republicans	~28%
Independents/NPP	~42%



Continued from Page 3

America's Political Divide Grows as Independent Voters Surge

Independents(No Party now make up the largest voter group, though most still lean toward either party.

Gallup polls show:

- 45% of independents lean Republican
- 41% lean Democrat

Only about 10–15% are true centrists.

Voting Power

In 2024, unaffiliated and swing voters played a decisive role in key battleground states.



The Future: A Three-Legged Stool?

America's two-party system remains strong, but independents are forcing both parties to adapt. Proposals such as open primaries, ranked-choice voting, or a centrist movement are gaining traction.

- Open primaries in all states? (Let NPP vote in any primary)
- Ranked-choice voting? (Reduces "lesser of two evils" dilemma)
- A centrist movement? (Think: Andrew Yang's Forward Party)

For now, Republicans and Democrats still dominate, but the growing ranks of independents may shape the nation's political future.

WE GIVE THANKS!!!!!! SHARE A MEAL

With the
NATCHITOCHES COALITION ON HOMELESSNESS
WHEN: THURSDAY November 20, 2025

MENU

Chicken
Corn Bread Dressing
Green Beans
Dessert
Soda

Time: 4:00 P.M. to 6:00 P.M.

Location: Martin Luther King Park

616 MLK Drive

Natchitoches, La. 71457

The Natchitoches Coalition on Homelessness

A nonprofit community service organization

(318) 752 - 0010

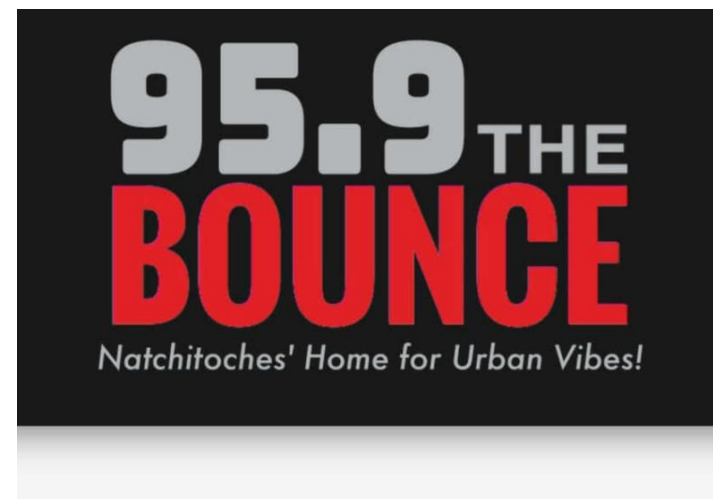


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NATCHITOCHES, LA – Wake up, Natchitoches! The mic is hot, the coffee's brewing, and Pastor Steven Harris Sr. is ready to hear from you every weekday morning. Talk Back Natchitoches has hit the airwaves and will be live Monday through Friday at 7:00 AM, exclusively on 95.9 The Bounce—the new urban radio station shaking up the local airwaves under the bold vision of Latorria Freeman.

Unlike typical radio shows, Talk Back Natchitoches serves as a lively morning show for the community, where listeners are encouraged not only to tune in but also to speak up. Pastor Harris, known for his energetic presence and deep community ties, invites callers to voice their opinions, share stories, raise local issues, and celebrate the unique spirit of Natchitoches. Each episode highlights pressing topics, from city events and local government matters to cultural happenings and neighborhood concerns.

The show also features interviews with local leaders, business owners, and everyday residents, ensuring a platform where all voices are heard. Whether you want to discuss upcoming festivals, talk about changes in the city, or just start your morning with a burst of community connection, Talk Back Natchitoches is the place to be.

With its interactive format and commitment to honest conversation, the program is quickly becoming the heartbeat of the city's morning routine. Tune in, grab your coffee, and join the conversation—because in Natchitoches, it's not just about listening. It's about talking back. www.959thebounce.com



Protecting Natchitoches: If You See Something, Say Something

In Natchitoches, Louisiana, where Southern hospitality and close-knit neighborhoods define daily life, the safety of our community begins with us. From the block watch grandma on the corner to the teenager scrolling through group chats, every pair of eyes, every voice, every act of courage strengthens the shield around the people we love. The mantra is simple, proven, and powerful: If you see something, say something. This call to action is rooted in Black resilience, collective care, and the wisdom of generations who protected their own when no one else would.

“We protected each other before 911 existed. We still do.”
— Elder Marlene Watkins, Oakland Community Watch

Here in Natchitoches, Crime Stoppers of Natchitoches Parish makes it easy and safe to report suspicious activity anonymously. Your tip could help prevent a crime or save a life. By working together and speaking up, we continue a proud tradition of community protection—and prove that looking out for one another is what makes Natchitoches strong.

PROTECT OUR COMMUNITY.

SEE SOMETHING. SAY SOMETHING.

318-238-2388



P3TIPS.COM

FOR MORE INFO VISIT [NATCHITOCHESCRIMESTOPPERS.COM](https://natchitochescrimestoppers.com)

Pollard named 68th Miss Northwestern – Lady of the Bracelet

NATCHITOCHES – Nilah Pollard of Shreveport was named the 68th annual Miss Northwestern – Lady of the Bracelet Thursday. The event is a preliminary to the Miss Louisiana Scholarship Contest.

Lauren Vernon of Arcadia was the first runner up and Madison Book of Pineville was the second runner up. Vernon won the talent competition and the Liz Carroll People's Choice Award. Book won the Carley McCord Miss Congeniality Award.

Pollard is the daughter of Craig and Alyea Pollard and is a senior social work major. She is Speaker of the Senate for the Student Government Association and secretary of the National Pan-Hellenic Council (NPHC).

Pollard is a member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated, the Baptist Collegiate Ministry and serves as a resident mentor for the Elevate-U Program.

She is also active in the Purple Jacket Honor Society, Alpha Lambda Delta Honor Society, Demon Volunteers in Progress, La Belle Femme and the NAACP. A former member of the 2024–2025 Freshman Connection team and alumna of the President's Leadership Program (PLP), Pollard serves as a PLP mentor. She is the 2025 Miss NSU.



Natchitoches Parish Sheriff's Office

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- Inmate Information
- Extra Patrol Requests
- School Resource Officers
- Join Our Team
- Emergency Prep

● + Much More!

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November is Alzheimer's Disease Awareness Month: What You Need to Know

Alzheimer's disease is a progressive, deadly brain disease for which there is no cure, and it is not a normal part of healthy aging. Researchers are still working to discover the root cause of the disease, but it's widely believed to be due to the buildup of misfolded proteins between nerve cells, which causes brain damage. This damage begins a decade or more before symptoms start to show. It's important to monitor yourself and your loved ones for any signs of mild cognitive impairment (MCI), which can precede Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia.

- Over 6 million Americans are living with Alzheimer's Disease, with 3 million new cases diagnosed each year.
- Alzheimer's is deadlier than **breast cancer and prostate cancer combined**.
- The disease is most prevalent in **women and Black Americans**.
- **11 million** Americans act as unpaid caregivers for a loved one diagnosed with Alzheimer's.
- **Fewer than 1 in 5** Americans are familiar with mild cognitive impairment, which can be an early stage of Alzheimer's.



Source: Alzheimer's Association

The

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Barbershops: The Modern-Day Therapy Rooms

Barbershops have long been more than just a place for a haircut—they're gathering spaces where people connect, confide, and heal. In many communities, the barbershop serves as an informal therapy room, where conversations about life, struggles, and successes flow as freely as the clippers buzz.

The relationship between barber and client often grows deep, built on trust and regular visits. Clients open up about personal challenges, while barbers offer advice or simply listen. This supportive environment helps break down the stigma around mental health, encouraging open dialogue where it's needed most.

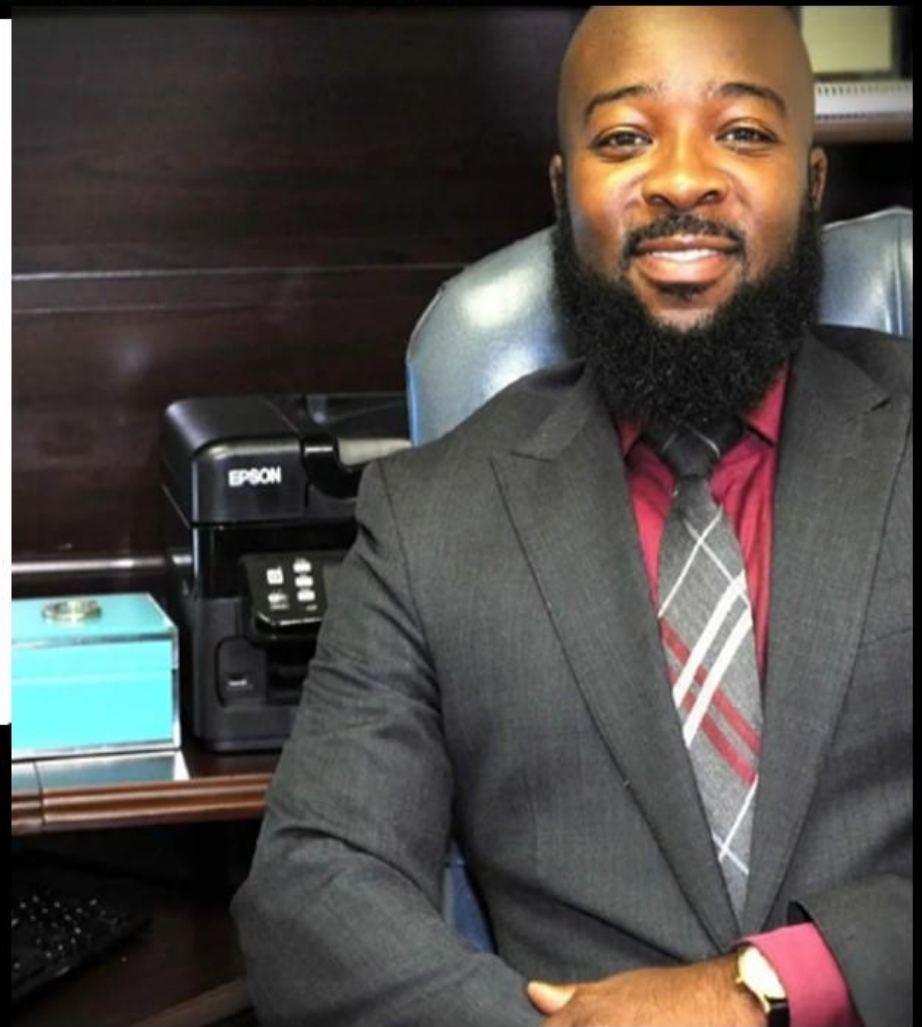
Recognizing this unique role, some mental health organizations now partner with barbers to provide training, turning these community hubs into frontline support spaces. For many, the best therapy takes place not on a couch, but in the barber's chair—where everyone is welcome to share their story. The sense of belonging found in barbershops is a reminder that sometimes healing starts with a simple conversation.



**CHARGED WITH A CRIMINAL OFFENSE?
INVOLVED IN A CAR ACCIDENT?**



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assistant@howardcondaylaw.com



Natchitoches Native Renita Ward Williams Named Vice Chancellor of Institutional Affairs and Strategic Planning

Baton Rouge Community College has named Renita Ward Williams as its Vice Chancellor of Institutional Affairs and Strategic Planning. In this role, Ward Williams will lead compliance oversight, manage external legal affairs, and oversee human resources, governance, policy development, and institutional strategy for BRCC.

Ward Williams most recently served as Chief Compliance, Regulatory, and Legal Affairs Officer for the Louisiana Community and Technical College System, a position she held since 2023. “We are very proud to have Renita Ward Williams join our team,” BRCC Chancellor Willie E. Smith Sr. said. “She brings a wealth of knowledge to BRCC, in many different areas, from public administration and policy experience, to legal and compliance expertise. She will be a key member of my leadership team as we continue to advance BRCC and our mission to be the preferred talent provider for our region.”



Ward Williams is a veteran public administrator and nationally recognized technocrat in the strategic management of public agencies, organizational transformation, and complex policy navigation. With nearly 20 years of public service, she has consistently driven improvements in efficiency, performance, and integrity across government operations.

A native of Natchitoches, Louisiana, Ward Williams is a proud graduate of the Louisiana School for Math, Science, and the Arts and the Southern University Law Center.

She has held numerous senior leadership roles, including serving as Interim CEO and COO of the Louisiana Office of Group Benefits, Deputy Secretary of the Louisiana Workforce Commission (LWC), Assistant Secretary of the Office of Unemployment Insurance Administration for the LWC, Chief Administrative Law Judge, Chief of Policy and Legislation, and Senior Subject Matter Expert for the National Association of State Workforce Agencies (NASWA).

Ward Williams’ leadership has produced measurable results: she led her teams to achieve the #1 Higher Authority Appeals Division in the nation and the top-ranked Unemployment Insurance Tax Operations in the country. She also conducted the ethics investigation that resulted in the largest fine in Louisiana state history.

She is widely known for implementing processes that enhance employee engagement and for launching initiatives that promote transparency in state government. She received national recognition for pioneering a groundbreaking initiative to level the playing field for employers in Louisiana.

Ward Williams has also served as Chair of both the Unemployment Insurance Interstate Benefits Committee and the Unemployment Insurance Directors Committee, further demonstrating her influence and expertise in national policy leadership.

She officially began her tenure at BRCC on Nov. 3.

NEDA Q3 - The NEDA Economic Outlook

**Wednesday, November 19th, from
8:15 - 9:30 am
Natchitoches Event Center**



Laura Lyles
President/CEO
Executive Director

Our meeting will feature Laura Lyles, President and CEO of the Natchitoches Area Chamber of Commerce and Executive Director of the Natchitoches Economic Development Alliance.

Membership Breakfast Q4

The NEDA Economic Outlook

Come learn what's happening on the economic front right here in Natchitoches Parish. We'll share the latest growth updates, workforce initiatives, and upcoming opportunities shaping our community's future.

**November 19, 2025
8:15-9:30AM
Natchitoches Event Center**

This meeting will be in-person, with virtual option offered.

Join us for a focused conversation on Natchitoches Parish's economic landscape as we close out 2025 and look ahead to the opportunities of 2026. Our discussion will highlight key industry growth, workforce development initiatives, and community investments shaping the year ahead. Attendees will gain insight into current trends, emerging projects, and collaborative efforts driving economic momentum in our region. Come connect, engage, and stay informed about what's next for Natchitoches Parish.

Why Attend?

- Explore Workforce Innovation:** Gain insight into the evolving landscape of apprenticeships, internships, and workforce development shaping our region's future.
- Collaborate for Growth:** Connect with business leaders, educators, and policymakers working together to build stronger talent pipelines and expand local opportunities.
- Engage and Exchange Ideas:** Participate in discussions highlighting emerging trends, successful partnerships, and forward-thinking strategies that drive workforce success.



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morgan@gonatchitoches.com



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Gives Back



Natchitoches:

BOM Bank was proud to support the LA Gold Softball 2nd Annual Golf Tournament. Our team enjoyed being part of this great event and cheering on LA Gold Softball as they continue to make an impact in our community.

Pictured left to right: BOM's Katie Jordan, Natalie Fredieu, and BOM's Brittany Fredieu.

Rapides:

BOM Bank is proud to sponsor the Grant High School Basketball program!

This donation will help the team with travel costs and equipment expenses as they prepare for a successful season. GHS lives by the mission: "Whatever it takes for student success."

Pictured left to right: BOM's Mandy Futrell, Girls Head Coach Zack Atwell, and BOM's Kristina Bagwell.

Bossier/Caddo & Natchitoches:

Congratulations to BOM's Gabe Vargas, Tate Nelson, and Cole Horton — graduates of the 2025 LSU Credit Analyst Education Program! They also earned ABA Certificates in Business and Commercial Lending.

Sabine:

BOM Bank proudly made a donation to the Sabine Parish School Board Universal Preschool Program! This early childhood education program helps children and families in the community gain access to the high-quality childcare and education they deserve.

Pictured left to right: Brittany Founds and BOM's Kylie Miller.

NSU educator major will serve as State Educators Rising president

NATCHITOCHES – Shae'Aunna Johnson of Many has been selected as state president of the Louisiana Association of Future Educators (LAFE) and Educators Rising Louisiana for the 2025-26 academic year.

Johnson is a freshman at Northwestern State University, majoring in early childhood education, grades PreK-3. She is also involved with TRIO and the Archery Club.

“When I was four, I said I wanted to be a teacher and that dream never changed,” Johnson said.

“Working as a Pre-K paraprofessional has strengthened my passion for early childhood education and shown me the power of small victories in the classroom. Having my own educational hardships has taught me resilience and empathy, reminding me that every challenge can become a source of strength.”

Dr. Kristen Authement, coordinator for NSU’s School of Education Educators Rising organization, said that although Johnson is a recent active member, she has already made a positive impact through thoughtful contributions at chapter meetings.

“I am thrilled about the leadership role she will take on as the new president of the Louisiana Association of Future Educators and Educators Rising Louisiana. I have no doubt that she will excel in this position, and we are proud to have her representing our NSU chapter,” Authement said.

Aimee Barber, state coordinator of LAFE and Educators Rising, said Johnson’s “leadership, passion for education and commitment to making a difference” stood out in her application and that Johnson “will help lead Louisiana’s student movement to elevate the teaching profession and inspire future educators across our state.”

“As President of LAFE and Louisiana Educators Rising, my goal is to inspire future educators to lead with compassion, create safe spaces for students, and believe in the lasting impact of their work.” Johnson said.

Information on LAFE is available at <https://www.lae.org>. You can follow NSU’s chapter of Educators Rising on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/nsula.edrising/>. Information on NSU’s School of Education is available at www.nsu.la/SoE.



24th Annual McGrath Math Competition to be held on November 20, 2025

Natchitoches, LA: Schools from across Louisiana will soon gather to compete in the 24th Annual McGrath Math Competition at the Louisiana School for Math, Science, and the Arts in Natchitoches, LA, on Thursday, November 20th, 2025. Teachers have until Friday, November 14th, to register contestants for this event, which has become a cornerstone opportunity for Louisiana's young mathematicians. Registration and parental consent forms are available at www.lsmsa.edu/mathcompetition.

The competition welcomes students in grades six through nine who have not yet taken Algebra II or higher mathematics courses to compete in both individual and team portions. Exercises are drawn from algebra, geometry, and other areas of mathematics, with questions designed to challenge students to think logically and synthesize a range of concepts.

Schools may enter an unlimited number of students for the individual test; however, only 12 students may participate in the team competition.

While one might envision a math competition as a completely quiet affair, Dr. J. Bradford Burkman, Department Chair and Senior Lecturer in Mathematics and Computer Science at LSMsa, says that is not always the case: "The team competition is especially fun for everyone. Fingers fly on pencils and calculators; students argue emphatically about solutions, and a runner from each team bolts to the answer table. It's raucous and nerdy at the same time."

The McGrath Math Competition is named in honor of long-time Math and Computer Science Department Chair Dr. Mike McGrath, in recognition of his 32 years of service to education.

A red-themed advertisement for Pit Stop 76. The background features a large, stylized number '76' and a silhouette of a person working on a car. Text includes the owner's name, Jason Brock, and the phone number 318-228-8848. The address is 1908 HWY 6 NATCHITOCHES, LOUISIANA 71457. Services listed are Tire Shop, Repair Shop, and Financing Available. Social media icons for Facebook and Instagram are shown. Hours of operation are listed as Monday-Friday 8 am-5 pm, Saturday 9 am-1 pm, and Sunday Closed. The name 'PITSTOP76' is also displayed.

Owner
Jason Brock

318-228-8848

Tire Shop

Repair Shop

1908 HWY 6 NATCHITOCHES, LOUISIANA 71457

FINANCING AVAILABLE

PITSTOP76

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

Annual American Indian Crafts Day to be held Dec. 6

NATCHITOCHES – Craftspeople from throughout the region will display, demonstrate, and sell their arts and crafts at the Annual American Indian Crafts Day at Northwestern State University on Saturday, Dec. 6. Crafts Day is from 9 a.m. until 3 p.m. in the Williamson Museum in Room 208 of Kyser Hall. Admission is free and open to the public. The event is held each year on the same day as the Natchitoches Christmas Festival.

Basketry, file', beadwork, drums, leatherwork, wood carving, and other handmade items will be for sale. Craftspeople are expected from several Louisiana tribes.

American Indian Crafts Day is sponsored by the School of Social Sciences and Applied Programs, the American Indian Studies Program, the Williamson Museum, and the Native American Student Association. For more information, contact Dr. Pete Gregory at gregoryh@nsula.edu.



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Break the Cycle: Step Into Freedom

By: Evangelist Bonita Moses Arnold

You don't have to stay trapped in the same cycle just because it's familiar. Like a merry-go-round, going around in circles can leave you feeling lost and confused. Remember, your decisions shape your destiny. Step out in faith, break away from unhealthy relationships, and trust God to guide you to freedom and restoration. The Potter is ready to make you whole again.



Mama Shug always told us, “Play with everyone, no matter their color.” She taught that kindness—and bias—begin at home. Children see friends, not skin color, unless they're taught otherwise.

Her wisdom shaped how we treated others at school and in our neighborhood. Because of Mama Shug’s example, we welcomed classmates of every background, learning that empathy and openness build true community. The lessons we absorbed at home echoed in our actions, proving that a child’s heart is open by nature—and it’s up to adults to keep it that way.



Caring for Your Family Like Our Own

Choosing the right place for yourself or a loved one is one of life's most important decisions. At the Courtyard of Natchitoches, we provide more than just care — we offer comfort, community, and peace of mind. Our residents enjoy personalized care tailored to their individual needs.

Whether you're seeking independence with a little extra help, or a vibrant community where you or your loved one can thrive, choose the Courtyard where care meets compassion and your loved one is more than a patient – they're family.

**Call 318.214.4545 today
to schedule a tour.**

NRMC

**The Courtyard
of Natchitoches**

NRMC Earns Third Consecutive “A” Hospital Safety Grade from The Leapfrog Group

Fall 2025 Safety Grade Recognizes NRMC’s Continued Commitment to Patient Safety

NATCHITOCHES, LA, November 13, 2025 –

Natchitoches Regional Medical Center (NRMC) has once again earned an “A” Hospital Safety Grade from The Leapfrog Group, a national nonprofit watchdog organization that sets standards for excellence in patient safety. This marks the third consecutive “A” rating for NRMC, reflecting the hospital’s ongoing dedication to protecting patients from harm and delivering exceptional, high-quality care.



Leapfrog assigns letter grades of “A,” “B,” “C,” “D,” or “F” to general hospitals nationwide, evaluating more than 30 national performance measures including errors, accidents, injuries, infections, and systems designed to prevent them.

“This recognition is a direct reflection of the extraordinary work our team does every single day,” said Kirk Soileau, Chief Executive Officer at NRMC. “It takes commitment at every level, from physicians and nurses to technicians and support staff, to create a culture where safety is second nature. Our community can take comfort knowing they have a hospital that truly puts patients first.”

“Patient safety does not happen by chance. It is the result of constant attention, collaboration, and a shared sense of responsibility,” said Sarah LaCour, Chief Nursing Officer at NRMC. “Our nurses and clinical teams take tremendous pride in caring for our patients as if they were family. Achieving three consecutive ‘A’ ratings is a milestone that belongs to our entire NRMC family.”

“The Leapfrog Hospital Safety Grade recognizes the hospitals that prioritize patient safety day in and day out,” said Leah Binder, President and CEO of The Leapfrog Group. “We congratulate NRMC for demonstrating a steadfast commitment to protecting patients from preventable harm.”

The Leapfrog Hospital Safety Grade is the nation’s only hospital rating program exclusively focused on preventing medical errors, infections, and injuries that contribute to more than 500 patient deaths daily in the United States. The program is peer-reviewed, fully transparent, and updated twice each year in the spring and fall.

To learn more about NRMC’s grade and view details of hospital performance across the country, visit www.hospitalsafetygrade.org.

Coca-Cola Caravan will be at NSU's Nov. 20 tailgate

NATCHITOCHES – The Coca-Cola Caravan is coming to town. The Coca-Cola Santa Truck will be at Northwestern State University from 3:30-6 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 20, and families are invited to take a free family photo.

The visit coincides with the Northwestern State Demon football game against the Stephen F. Austin Lumberjacks in Turpin Stadium. Kick-off is at 6:30 p.m.

The Santa truck will be parked outside Turpin Stadium near Collins Pavilion, where the NSU Alumni Association will host a pregame tailgate with food and beverages from 4-6 p.m. The cost is \$10 for Alumni Association members and \$15 for non-members. The cost for children 12 and under is \$7.

Information on game tickets is available at <https://nsutickets.universitickets.com>.



SMOKING
Causes Lung Cancer
Screening Saves Lives.

Lung cancer is one of the deadliest cancers in Louisiana. Smoking tobacco is the leading risk factor, and secondhand smoke isn't far behind. If you smoke, you are not only increasing your risk of lung cancer but also increasing the risk of those around you.

NRMC Pulmonology Associates urges adults over 50 with a history of smoking, and anyone experiencing a persistent cough or chest pain that worsens with deep breaths, to get screened.

 **NOVEMBER**
Lung Cancer
AWARENESS MONTH

NRMC
Pulmonology
Associates

Schedule today by calling 318.214.5770. Screening saves lives. Awareness starts with YOU.

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
throughout the Parish

CLOSED PARTY RACE

April 2026

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

BOM GIVES BACK

**Cheers to
One Year, Texas!**

**CUSTOMER
APPRECIATION DAY**

FRIDAY, NOV. 21

Enjoy sweet treats, giveaways, and exclusive
BOM Bank swag as we celebrate YOU!



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BOM Bank is proud to support Aubrey Rachal with Elite Cheernastics! For more than 30 years, Elite Cheernastics has been a cornerstone in the Natchitoches community—offering high-quality, affordable cheerleading, tumbling, and gymnastics. We're excited to celebrate their impact and commitment to local youth.

Pictured left to right: BOM's Shonterika Payton, Aubrey Rachal, and BOM's Jaliyah Addison.

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OPINION**Natchitoches at a Crossroads: Can New Blood Revive Old Institutions?**

By: Ava Black

NATCHITOCHES – Every year when the Christmas Festival lights flicker on and the scent of meat pies drifts down Front Street, this city remembers why it endures. But six weeks later, when the decorations come down and the tourists leave, the same nagging questions resurface: Why do parish council meetings feel like reruns of a show no one asked to renew? And why, despite a river of state and federal dollars, are we still arguing about the same potholes and flood-prone ditches we debated a decade ago?



The answer, increasingly, is stagnation—and a political class that mistakes longevity for leadership. Take the parish’s water system. In 2023, the Louisiana Legislative Auditor flagged Natchitoches Parish Waterworks District No. 1 for “material weaknesses” in financial controls. Translation: millions in customer payments and grant money were sloshing around with less oversight than a high-school bake sale. The response? A new board stacked with the usual suspects—retired sheriffs, former councilmen, and a cousin of somebody’s campaign donor. No engineers. No CPAs. No one under 50. The district’s director, a holdover from the Edwards administration (the John Bel one), still earns \$120,000 a year to preside over boil-water notices that arrive like clockwork every hurricane season. Meanwhile, the city’s own utility director retired last spring after 38 years, triggering a succession fight that reads like a soap opera. Two finalists emerged: a 34-year-old civil engineer from Lafayette with a master’s in public finance, and the longtime deputy who once coached the mayor’s son in Little League. Guess who got the nod. The engineer withdrew, citing “a process that values relationships over resumes.” He’s now modernizing Alexandria’s grid. We kept the coach. This isn’t petty gossip; it’s a symptom and disease.

Natchitoches Parish operates on a currency of favors, where a vote for your zoning variance today buys my silence on your nephew’s no-show job tomorrow. The ledger is invisible but ironclad. Break the code, and suddenly your festival permit is “under review,” your grant application needs “additional documentation,” or—my favorite—the parish road grader develops a mysterious flat tire the week your street floods.

Yet cracks are showing. A slate of thirtysomething candidates filed for school board and police jury seats this cycle, driven more by exhaustion than ideology.

Continued next page...

OPINION**Natchitoches at a Crossroads: Can New Blood Revive Old Institutions?**

By: Ava Black

They campaign on boring but revolutionary promises: live-streamed budget workshops, open RFP portals, and term limits for appointed boards. One candidate, a nurse practitioner who grew up in Provencal, posts TikToks explaining millage rates in under 60 seconds. She's polling neck-and-neck with a three-term incumbent whose platform is literally "Experience You Can Trust."



The old guard calls them "carpetbaggers with iPhones." The kids call the incumbents "analog dinosaurs." Both sides are half-right. What Natchitoches needs isn't a purge—it's a transfusion. Keep the institutional memory, but pair it with new arteries. Imagine a hybrid parish council: three seats reserved for residents under 40, elected at-large, serving staggered four-year terms. Mandate that every appointed board include at least one credentialed expert in the relevant field—engineers on water boards, educators on library commissions, data analysts on tourism authorities. Require every contract over \$50,000 to be bid competitively online, with winning proposals posted within 48 hours. Sunshine laws with teeth.

None of this requires a constitutional amendment; it simply requires political will and a willingness to offend a few relatives. The stakes are higher than bruised egos. Northwestern State University, the parish's largest employer after the school system, has experienced a 12 percent enrollment decline since 2019. Hospital revenues are flat. The Port of Natchitoches, once touted as a logistics game-changer, moves less cargo annually than a single Walmart distribution center in Texas. Young families tour the historic district, fall in love with the brick streets, then check the broadband speeds and the obstetrician waitlists, and keep driving to Benton or Youngsville. Redemption stories exist. Look at the Natchitoches Historic District Development Commission, which in 2021 hired a 29-year-old preservation planner from New Orleans. She secured a \$1.2 million REIT grant, converted three vacant upstairs apartments into short-term rentals, and generated enough tax revenue to repave Trudeau Street without increasing the millage rate. The commission's chair, a 72-year-old retired banker, calls her "the best decision I never thought to make." That's the model: respect the elders, but don't idolize them. As qualifying closes and yard signs sprout like spring onions, voters face a choice sharper than any in a generation. Re-elect the comfortable or gamble on the competent. Cling to the devil we know or demand the details we deserve. The meat pies will still fry, the river will still roll, and the Christmas lights will still dazzle. But whether those lights illuminate progress or just another season of the same old show depends on who we trust to flip the switch.

Community Events

THE NATCHITOCHES INTERDENOMINATIONAL MASS CHOIR
PRESENTS

NOV 23
3:00PM

THE Celebration OF MUSIC

Special Guest
PASTOR JOHN P. WILLIAMS
AND THE PLEASANT GROVE
BAPTIST CHURCH OF RUSTON, LA

THE ABUNDANT LIFE CHURCH
620 BEN DRIVE
NATCHITOCHES, LA

DR. AIL HARRIS JR, HOST PASTOR PASTOR JOHN P. WILLIAMS

THE MOGEE MAN
GLAZING IT UP

THANKSGIVING 2025

HE WILL PROVIDE THE MEAT!	YOU BUY! HE WILL MOGEEFY!
RIBS \$30 PER SLAB	RIBS \$15 PER SLAB
BRISKET \$150 (SLICED & GLAZED)	BRISKET \$100 (SLICED & GLAZED)
TURKEY \$65 (SMOKED)	TURKEY \$50 (SMOKED)

DROP OFF YOUR MEAT- SAT. 11/22/25
PLACE ALL ORDERS BY- SUN. 11/23/25
HAVE A SPECIAL REQUEST? CONTACT THE MOGEE MAN!
CALL OR TEXT 318-210-4623
TO PLACE YOUR ORDER!

Pick up: North Star MBC 734 Highway 485 (Powhatan, LA)
Wednesday, November 26, 2025
4:00-6:00 PM

THE COACH DE FOUNDATION
PRESENTS

JACKET JAM

FORMALLY KNOWN AS COACH DE'S CLOSET: WINTER EDITION

SUNDAY
11/16/2025
BEN JOHNSON PARK
3PM-5PM

WINTER CLOTHING (JACKETS, HATS, ETC.)
SHOES
ENTERTAINMENT
MUSIC
SNACKS

SCAN TO BECOME A VENDOR OR SPONSOR

WEBSITE: WWW.THECOACHDEFUNDATION.COM
EMAIL: THECOACHDEFUNDATION@GMAIL.COM
INSTAGRAM: @THECOACHDEFUNDATION
FACEBOOK: THE COACH DE FOUNDATION

SPONSORS
EMILY AND EDDIE HARRINGTON **Super 1 Foods**

WINTER COAT DRIVE

Join the Krewe of Excellence Natchitoches as we keep our local children warm and toasty this season.

You are invited to donate new coats, gloves, socks and hats to be donated to a local elementary school.

Drop off location is at Le'Chic Salon, 99 South Drive #C
Deadline December 5, 2025

KREWE OF EXCELLENCE NATCHITOCHES

Community Events



Thanksgiving

TURKEY GIVEAWAY

WAKD FOUNDATION INC

Let's Give a Little Joy to Families to Celebrate Thanksgiving Day

Accepting Donations Through **Saturday November 22**

Pick-up Location: **St. Peter's Baptist Church**, 234 Barnum Street, Campti, LA 71411, 9:00 AM

For more information: +1 (318) 663-1938 or wakdfoundation.com



THE KURATORS BAYOU SOUL

AFTER PARADE DAY PARTY

DAY BREAK

1PM-UNTIL

BOURBON ON TEXAS!

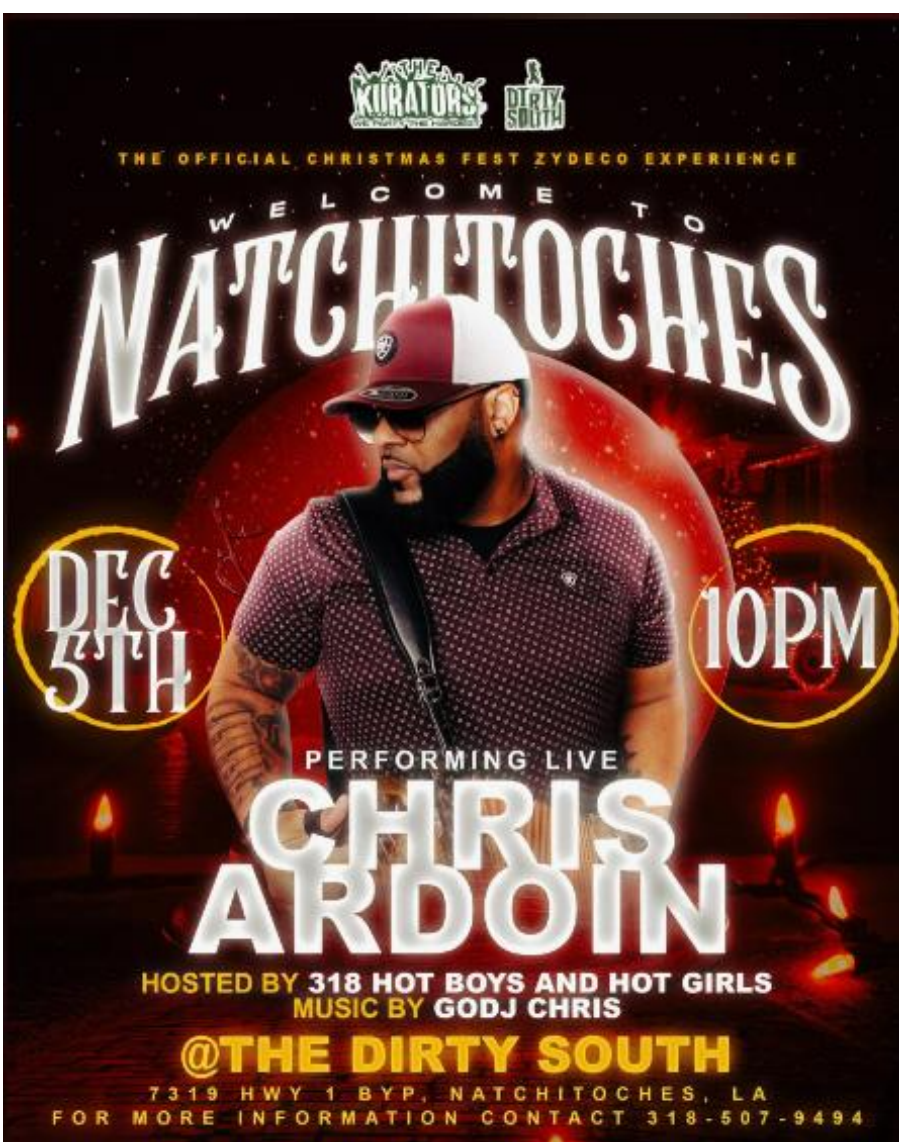
SOUNDS BY DJ ROB REAL, GODJ COREYLAMAR, GODJ CHRIS

DRINKS, LIVE MUSIC, FOOD

Texas St, MLK Dr.

WELCOME TO HISTORIC NATCHITOCHES CITY OF LIGHTS

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 6TH @BAYOU SOUL 510 TEXAS ST. NATCHITOCHES, LA



THE KURATORS DIRTY SOUTH

THE OFFICIAL CHRISTMAS FEST ZYDECO EXPERIENCE

WELCOME TO NATCHITOCHES

DEC 5TH 10PM

PERFORMING LIVE **CHRIS ARDOIN**

HOSTED BY 318 HOT BOYS AND HOT GIRLS MUSIC BY GODJ CHRIS

@THE DIRTY SOUTH

7319 HWY 1 BYP, NATCHITOCHES, LA FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT 318-507-9494

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