

# The Weekly Press

SERVING BAKER, CENTRAL, AND ZACHARY

THURSDAY, JAN. 28-FEB 3, 2021

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STATE/LOCAL PG 2

MAYOR BROOME ANNOUNCES LAUNCH OF OPEN BUDGET BR

STATE/LOCAL PG 3

SU SCHOOL OF NURSING RECEIVES 100% PASS RATE

## Cicely Tyson Dead at 96



Cicely Tyson

Cicely Tyson, who forged a path for scores of Black actors on Broadway and in Hollywood, has died.

Tyson was a force in entertainment for decades, but in her early years she had few role models because there were few people of color who were at the top of the Hollywood game.

She won 2 Emmys for Lead Actress in 1974, for "The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman." The year before she was nomi-

See **TYSON**, on page 2

### BLACK HISTORY

#### January 25

Sojourner Truth addressed the first Black Women's Rights Convention, Akron Ohio, 1851



#### January 26

54th Regiment (Black) infantry formed 1863 Executive Order 9981, to end segregation in US Armed Forces signed by President Harry Truman, 1948

#### January 28

John Brown organized raid on Arsenal at Harper's Ferry, 1858 Philadelphia's Free Africa Society organized, 1787

#### January 29

Francis L. Cardoza elected State Treasurer of South Carolina, 1872

### WEATHER

MON. 02/01 Sunny High 56°

TUE. 02/02 Partly Sunny High 59°

WED. 02/23 Mostly Sunny High 66°

THUR. 02/04 Mostly Cloudy High 75°

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# YOUNG ENTREPRENEURS Invest, Revitalize North, South Baton Rouge



Electric Depot Phase II - 100 Multifamily Unite Project

Entrepreneurs are investing in neighborhoods in Baton Rouge and giving back to the Black communities.

#BuyBackBatonRouge was created by partners Jullien Gordon, Tevin Wade, and Anthony Kimble. The entrepreneurial group wanted to build into neighborhoods that truly accommodate "their" people. The men looked at Scotlandville and South Baton Rouge to develop about 184 units. "For us, it's not just about the buildings," Kimble said.

Kimble's interest in real estate started with his parents. The real estate agents taught him investing and retail prop-



Anthony Kimble Development Founder, Kimble Properties



Tevin Wade Construction Founder, CORE Construction



Jullien Gordon REI Investor Founder, Multifamily Movement

erties. Also, a mentor inspired him to begin his real estate business. "When I was heading to college, one of my best friends, Garrett Temple, his dad

(Collis Temple) was one of the first Black men I saw in real estate," he said.

Kimble attended Stanford University, where he worked at

a private equity firm that taught him the importance of ownership. Through the experience,

See **ENTREPRENEURS**, on page 2



Eddie Robinson - 8 Multifamily Unite Project

## Democrats to 'Act Big' on \$1.9T Aid; GOP Wants Plan Split



President Joe Biden speaks in the State Dining Room of the White House in Washington. Biden's \$1.9 trillion COVID-19 relief package presents a first political test. More than a sweeping rescue plan, it's a test of the strength of his new administration, of Democratic control of Congress and of the role of Republicans in a post-Trump political landscape.

WASHINGTON — Democrats in Congress and the White House have rejected a Republican pitch to split President Joe Biden's \$1.9 trillion COVID-19 rescue plan into smaller chunks, with lawmakers appearing primed to muscle the sweeping economic and virus aid forward without GOP help.

Despite Biden's calls for unity, Democrats said the stubbornly high unemployment numbers and battered U.S. economy leave them unwilling to waste time courting Republican support that might not materialize. They also don't want to curb the size and scope of a package that they say will provide desperately needed money to distribute the vaccine, reopen schools and send cash to American households

See **ACT BIG**, on page 2

## Gov. Edwards' Office Confirms Louisiana to Receive an Increase in Vaccines

BATON ROUGE, La. --- The governor's office confirmed they expect to receive an increase in coronavirus vaccines based on what President Joe Biden said Tuesday.

The governor's office estimates the state will receive about 29,250 Pfizer and 38,100 Moderna, which is more than the state has received in previous weeks, assuming the estimates hold.

"Any increase in doses is welcome and we work to get as many Louisianans vaccinated as we can," said Christina Stevens, a spokesperson for the governor's office.



Gov. John Bel Edwards

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# STATE & LOCAL

## Mayor Broome Announces Launch of Open Budget BR

BATON ROUGE, LA – As part of her ongoing commitment to transparency and data-driven decision making, Mayor-President Sharon Weston Broome announced today the launch of Open Budget BR, a web-based platform that provides detailed, interactive views into the City-Parish's annual operating budget.

"One of my top priorities these past several years has involved expanding the public's access to City-Parish data and information, including building new digital tools and platforms powered by this commitment to open data and transparency at all levels," said Mayor Broome. "Open Budget BR takes the complexity of our nearly 500-page annual budget and distills it down into easy-to-understand visuals and information that residents can use to better understand our City-Parish budget along with all the various services and programs it

See **BUDGET BR**, on page 3

## Sens. Cassidy, Kennedy Vote to Dismiss Impeachment

BATON ROUGE, La. — Louisiana republican senators Bill Cassidy and John Kennedy voted Tuesday, Jan. 26, to end President Donald Trump's second impeachment trial before it begins.

They joined with 43 other republican senators in calling the trial "unconstitutional" because Trump is no longer in office. Democrats accuse the former commander-in-chief of stirring up a revolt at the capitol on Jan. 6, prior to President Joe Biden's inauguration.

The measure failed and the trial will begin during the second week of February.

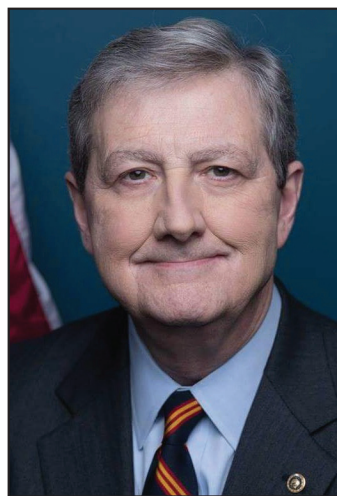
"These proceedings, in part, represent a thinly veiled effort by the uber-elites in our country, who look down on most Americans, to denigrate further those people who chose to vote for President Trump and not vote for President Biden," Kennedy said, in a statement, after the vote.

"As a senator, I am to serve as a juror," Cassidy said. "I'll listen to the evidence and seek out, as much as possible, what the truth is. That will determine how I vote."

He said the rioters should



Senator Bill Cassidy



Senator John Kennedy

be prosecuted as severely as the law will allow, but defended the Trump supporters who came to Washington, D.C. to protest peacefully.

"I had personal friends who came to that event. They are grandparents," Cassidy said. "That entire group - minus the anarchists and insurrectionists - were there to exercise their first amendment rights. They should not be put into the same category."

He laid out a worst-case

hypothetical scenario for Trump in the impeachment trial, where witnesses testify that Trump knew some of his supporters planned to bomb and kill, but encouraged a march to capitol hill anyway.

"If, on the other hand, the president didn't know any of this, and he's basically just giving - like you would at a football game - a 'Fight, fight, fight' - that's another thing. I'm not going to pre-judge. I'm going to listen to the evidence," Sen. Cassidy said.

## Large Gathering Crackdown Expected in East Baton Rouge

BATON ROUGE, La. - A weekend of large gatherings in East Baton Rouge Parish left local leaders fuming and law enforcement agencies on high alert.

Mayor-President Sharon Weston-Broome admonished the gatherings in a social media post saying she was, "disappointed any business would put the lives of their patrons, staff & community in such danger."

The mayor suggests the amount of people seen together inside of venues through videos and images shared on social media websites violate restrictions in place across the parish to slow the spread of coronavirus.

"The seriousness surrounding the coronavirus is real, especially now that there is a new and more contagious variant in Louisiana," Mayor Broome wrote. "If you have attended a mass event, the responsible thing to do at this point is to isolate yourself and seek a COVID-19 test in five to seven days."

Governor John Bel Edwards reported additional cases of those new coronavirus variants found

in the Lake Charles and New Orleans areas.

Louisiana Department of Health Interim Assistant Secretary Dr. Joseph Kanter said the cases already identified in the state are, "the tip of the iceberg" and more cases may have spread across the state.

State officials say even without covid protocols in place, some of the images they've seen show venues packed beyond occupancy limits. Those officials say the overcrowding poses other significant risks besides covid exposure, like creating a fire hazard.

The mayor says law enforcement agencies will continue to be notified of large gatherings going forward. In the past, the mayor has said continued bad behavior could lead to a rollback towards more restrictive safety protocols.

Folks who observe violations of covid restrictions or overcrowding at any venue in the city-parish can make an anonymous report by calling 225-389-8875 or online at brla.gov/covidreport.

## BREC JS Clark Golf Course to Close Monday, Feb. 1

BATON ROUGE, La - BREC Golf's J.S. Clark Golf Course will close for renovations on Monday, Feb. 1. The renovations are part of phase one of the largest single construction project in BREC's history, which will reimagine the Baton Rouge Zoo and Greenwood Community Park.

This renovation of the 9-hole course includes lengthening JS Clark golf course from a 1,861-yard par 31 course to a par 36 and approximately 3,150-yard course; making the course play similar length or greater to BREC's Webb Golf Course with the same 72-par.

In addition to added length, the newly updated J.S. Clark Golf Course will feature larger putting greens and a new irrigation system. Three of the course's nine greens will be adjacent to water features. The new putting greens

will also have multiple holes so players can diversify when playing a second round on the nine-hole course. The renovations are expected to be complete by the end of 2021 with a possible re-opening in October. To see the full scope of the project, visit [brec.org/ReimagineZooGreenwood](http://brec.org/ReimagineZooGreenwood).

In the meantime, local golfers can enjoy Dumas Golf Course, which will temporarily be converted into a nine-hole course as early as mid-March or any of BREC Golf's challenging courses. To submit a public comment or for more information on the renovations, visit [golf.brec.org/whats-next-for-dumas/](http://golf.brec.org/whats-next-for-dumas/). For more information on BREC Golf, visit [golf.brec.org](http://golf.brec.org) or call 225-272-9200.

## ACT BIG from page 1

and businesses.

Biden has been appealing directly to Republican and Democratic lawmakers while signaling his priority to press ahead.

"We've got a lot to do, and the first thing we've got to do is get this COVID package passed," Biden said Thursday in the Oval Office.

The standoff over Biden's first legislative priority is turning the new rescue plan into a political test — of his new administration, of Democratic control of Congress and of the role of Republicans in a post-Trump political landscape.

Success would give Biden a signature accomplishment in his first 100 days in office, unleashing \$400 billion to expand vaccinations and to reopen schools, \$1,400 direct payments to households, and other priorities, including a gradual increase

in the federal minimum wage to \$15 an hour. Failure would be a high-profile setback early in his presidency.

Democrats in the House and Senate are operating as though they know they are on borrowed time. Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi are laying the groundwork to start the go-it-alone approach as soon as next week.

They are drafting a budget reconciliation bill that would start the process to pass the relief package with a simple 51-vote Senate majority — rather than the 60-vote threshold typically needed in the Senate to advance legislation. The goal would be passage by March, when jobless benefits, housing assistance and other aid is set to expire.

Schumer said he drew from Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen's advice to "act big" to weather the COVID-19 economic crisis.

## ENTREPRENEURS from page 1

Kimble learned that standard private equity raises funds through friends, family, and crowdfunding. "I wanted to raise equity and invest in historic neighborhoods that have been divested for the last 30-40 years," Kimble said. "My main focus is to bring resources back to the neighborhoods to the people who look like my partners and me."

The #BuyBackBatonRouge concept came from what Kimble has seen historically with other races. "The other races were able to pull money through economics to add value and ownership for their communities. I think it's time for people who look like me to do that in our own communities," he said.

The group wants to invest in historic neighborhoods in Baton Rouge to build up commercial spaces and commercial properties. "It's about the people also. This is an equity investment." Kimble touched on Scotlandville, specifically, areas around Southern University and A&M College. "They are the next generation. I feel they deserve more," he said. The next project the team is working on is building a seven-unit university place housing. The unit will be placed outside the gates of Southern University.

Currently, the group is looking to continue to grow and look at other markets. They are looking to grow in other cities, such as Shreveport and Birmingham. Over the next five years, they will continue to scale and do more significant projects. The #BuyBackBatonRouge group wants

to bring more people into their business.

"We want people to let us know how they can add value to the company," he said. "We are looking for partners who may have soft funds or grants. Any partners who want to come into the neighborhoods and give people in these communities the amenities they deserve."

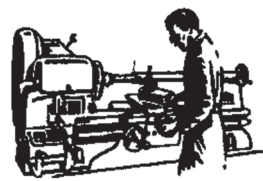
#BuyBackBatonRouge is an investment for partners and the Baton Rouge community. The upcoming projects are looking to host businesses that serve their communities and bring jobs to the community. "We have the chance not just to buy back a block," Kimble said. "We can buy back an entire neighborhood and bring it around."

For more information on upcoming projects visit [www.buybackbaton.com](http://www.buybackbaton.com)



1124 S. 14th Street - 4 Multifamily Units Project

## READER INFORMATION



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## Tyson from page 1

nated for the Best Actress Oscar for the movie "Sounder."

Tyson started her career as a model in NYC. She was on the covers of Ebony, Jet, Harper's Bazaar and Vogue. Still, her mom was none too pleased, telling her she couldn't live in the family house if she pursued entertainment. Her mom didn't speak to her for several years.

Younger audiences would know Cicely from "The Help" and "Fried Green Tomatoes."

She also made her mark on Broadway and won a Tony for Best Actress in a Play in 2013's "The Trip to Bountiful." That made her the oldest recipient ever of a Best Actress Tony.

President Obama bestowed a Presidential Medal of Freedom award to Tyson in 2016, saying, "Cicely made a conscious decision not just to say lines, but to speak out. Cicely's convictions and grace have helped for us to see the dignity of every beautiful

See **TYSON**, on page 3

**BUDGET BR** from page 2

funds.” The new Open Budget BR platform replaces an older web-based budget application and complements the City-Parish’s approved 2021 operating budget book with numerous features, tools and integrations that provide an unprecedented view into the expenses the City-Parish incurs to deliver programs and services each year.

In addition to providing users with the ability to drill down into various revenue or spending categories like department-level and service-specific budgets, the platform allows users to easily compare budgeted versus actual expenses incurred in real-time and throughout the year. This feature is available through the platform’s integration with its companion Open Checkbook BR website, which features checkbook-level expenditure data for all City-Parish departments.

Mayor Broome noted the platform will expand in future years to include additional annual operating budgets that allow for comparisons from year to year, as well as capital programs and projects that are multi-year in nature.

Open Budget BR is part of the City-Parish’s award-winning open data initiative that includes Open Data BR and its EBRGIS program, among other tools and resources. In late 2020, the Center for Digital Government ranked Baton Rouge third among all mid-sized cities in the U.S. in its annual digital cities survey, pointing to the City-Parish’s use of data and technology to drive real-time decision making and spur greater citizen engagement.

For more information on Open Budget BR, visit <http://budget.brla.gov>.

**Southern University School of Nursing Receives 100% Pass Rate for FNP Certification Exam**



The Southern University School of Nursing received a 100 percent pass rate for the Family Nurse Practitioner Certification Exam for 2020. Additionally, the 15 students who took the exam passed on the first attempt and yielded an average score of 611, exceeding the national average of 576. Southern’s nursing students who took the FNP exam also met or exceeded the national average on all four testing domains: assessment, diagnosis, planning and evaluation.

“This accomplishment is a

reflection of the level of excellence and dedication of both our faculty and students,” said Sandra C. Brown, dean of the College of Nursing and Allied Health. “Despite the challenges we faced in 2020 due to the pandemic, our faculty persevered and our students excelled. I am grateful that we are able to produce stellar nurse practitioners to serve our communities during this critical time.”

According to the American Association of Nurse Practitioners, a family nurse practitioner (FNP) “is an advanced practice registered nurse (APRN) who

provides a wide range of family-focused health care services to patients of all ages, including infants, adolescents, adults and seniors. FNP’s maintain patient records; perform physical exams; order or perform diagnostic tests; prescribe medications; develop treatment plans; and treat acute and chronic illnesses, conditions and injuries that fall under primary care. FNP’s practice in a variety of health care settings, including community health centers, private practice, health care systems and universities.”

**Baker City Court Providing Amnesty Through February for Outstanding Warrants**

BATON ROUGE, La. - Baker City Court is providing an amnesty period through February to any defendant who has an outstanding bench warrant issued prior to Feb. 1.

The bench warrant will be

recalled without first paying the normal bench warrant “recall fee.” The defendant will be given a new court date and additional time to pay outstanding fees.

Amnesty will allow the defendants to clear all outstanding bench warrants. The clerk’s office

will be open from 8:30 a.m. to 4:15 p.m. to assist with recalling bench warrants.

Please call Baker City Court at 225-778-1866 or Baker Police at 225-775-6000 to find out if you have an outstanding warrant.

**Louisiana NEWS BRIEFS**

**Gov. Edwards Will not Back Gas Tax hike**

Gov. John Bel Edwards says he will not support increasing the state’s gasoline tax this year.

Louisiana’s gas tax has been unchanged for more than 30 years and is among the lowest in the nation. Shawn Wilson, who leads the Department of Transportation and Development for the Edwards administration, says new revenue is needed to upgrade the state’s ailing infrastructure.

But during his monthly radio show, Edwards said he did not think a tax increase could get the necessary votes from two-thirds of the lawmakers in each chamber, citing the current state of the economy. The last push for a gas tax hike died in 2019, which was a state election year.

**Three Candidates Seek Open State House Seat**

Two Republicans and a Democrat are seeking an open Jefferson Parish-based seat in the state House of Representatives.

Eddie Connick and Laurie Schlegel, both Metairie Republicans, and River Ridge Democrat Raymond Delany Jr. have qualified for the race to represent District 82. The election will be held March 20, with a runoff in April if necessary.

The seat came open when Republican Charles Henry stepped down after only about a year in office. Henry has since joined law firm Adams and Reese as a senior government affairs advisor.

**Disaster Food Benefits approved for six parishes**

Residents of six parishes affected by Hurricane Zeta can apply for the Disaster Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program starting Monday, the Department of Children and Family Services announced.

The six parishes recently approved for federal Individual Assistance and DSNAP due to the late October storm are Jefferson, Lafourche, Orleans, Plaquemines, St. Bernard and Terrebonne.

DSNAP provides food assistance to eligible households who don’t receive regular SNAP benefits and who need help buying groceries due to lost income or damages following a disaster. Residents who received SNAP benefits in November are not eligible for DSNAP, while people who began to receive SNAP benefits after November may be, the department says.

**LSU AgCenter: State Farmers Produce Record Sugar Crop**

With the grinding season nearly over, the 2020-2021 sugarcane crop looks to have set a record, the LSU AgCenter says.

“We’re going to produce almost 2 million tons of sugar,” AgCenter sugarcane specialist Kenneth Gravois said. “That’s a record for Louisiana.”

Gravois said dry weather set up good conditions for planting, which mostly was finished before Hurricane Laura made landfall in August. While hurricanes knocked cane down, the main variety farmers use is easier to harvest when lodged, he said.

**TYSON** from page 2

member of the American family -- and she’s just gorgeous.”

Earlier in her career, Cicely starred in a play called “The Blacks.” It was an off-Broadway play in the ‘60s and some of her co-stars were Maya Angelou, James Earl Jones and Louis Gossett Jr.

Cicely was 96.

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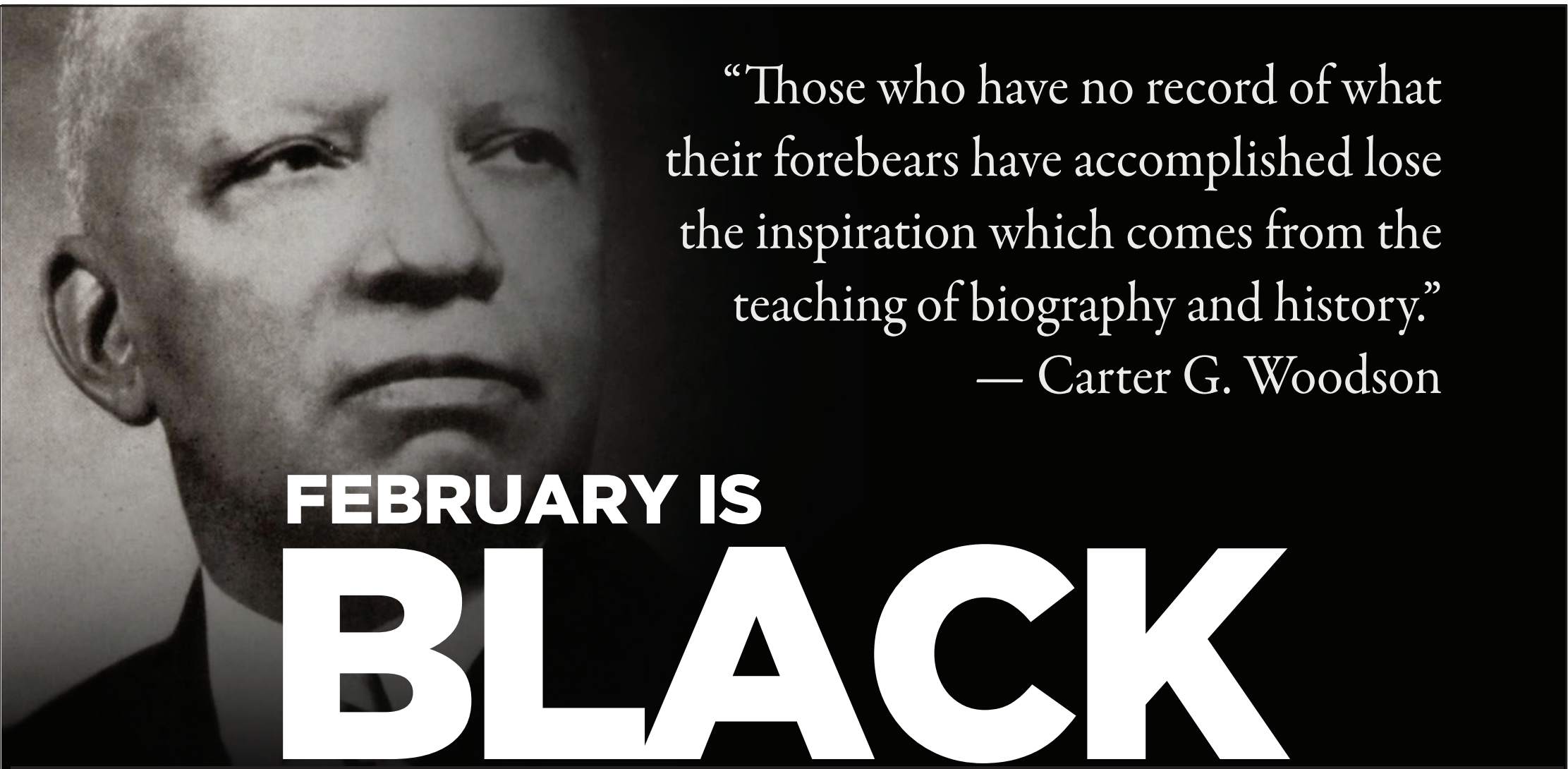
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“Those who have no record of what their forebears have accomplished lose the inspiration which comes from the teaching of biography and history.”

— Carter G. Woodson

FEBRUARY IS

BLACK

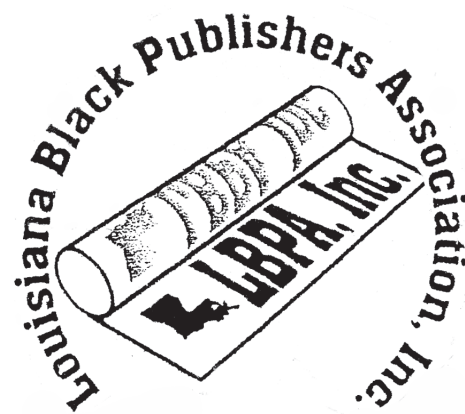
HISTORY MONTH



Black History Month is an annual celebration of achievements by black Americans. The event stems from Negro History Week, the brainchild of noted historian Carter G. Woodson and other prominent African Americans, according to history.com. Every United States president since 1976 has officially designated the month of February as Black History Month.

# Louisiana

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# STRICKLY BUSINESS



Rinaldie Jacobs, Sr.

What a difference a week makes. Joseph R. Biden and Kamala Harris have been sworn in as the 46th President & Vice President. We know that history and "herstory" have been made. Under the previous administration President Trump often proclaimed African American unemployment was the lowest in history. Trump boasted about Opportunity Zones getting more investment in disinvested communities. People who were invested in their companies 401K were doing great he says.

The Trump administration inherited the Obama-Biden recovery. It will be left up to the history books to sort out the facts from fiction. We now turn to the Biden-Harris administration. President Biden has acted using Executive Orders to booster small and Black businesses. A review of documents released from the White House a few things stand out.

Unemployment for minorities even in good times, lags White Americans. Currently, one out of ten African Americans are unemployed. One out of eleven Latin X people are unemployed. The Biden team has moved quickly to make the current COVID 19 burden a bit easier while Congress develops a package to help low- and moderate-income Americans. First, Biden orders are focused on ensuring lower income folks have additional SNAP benefits and continued unemployment benefits. Biden has ordered the US Treasury Department to speed up direct payments due to people from the previous COVID relief package passed in December. COVID 19, has been hurtful to us, because many people work in service-related industries.

Food and shelter are clearly in jeopardy because of COVID. The released orders seeks to prevent people from losing their homes due to unemployment. These executive order increases benefits which go directly to the neediest in our society. There is moratorium on the veterans' administration acting against veterans who financed their homes and now are behind on their mortgages. These enhancements of direct payments, additional benefits, as well as prevention of people being evicted or losing their homes will go to the bottom line of our economy and keep it moving. As people get more money particularly those in low-income areas, they tend to spend that money.

Typically, Conservatives want to use a trickle-down effect of economics of saying a rising tide lifts all boats. During this time this is flawed because if the income is not available the people can't buy from merchants. This increases the number of people at the lower end of the economy and causes even more problems. Biden has offered a 1.9 trillion-dollar projects and funding to help with the COVID crisis. One aspect of this is his buy American products that are directly affected by COVID. It is our belief that we not only should have a buy American program, but we should also have a buy black American program. The federal government is the largest consumer in the country. We as taxpayers contribute to that process. We as taxpayers should have our fair share of business being doled out by the federal government. The details of many of these processes will need to measure the effect on our community.

A strong effort to make sure that COVID vaccinations are given in poor, Black, Brown and disinvested communities. Historically, there has been resistance at embracing many of the medical procedures brought forth by the government. We can never forget the Tuskegee experiments as well as other tests that were performed on black and Brown people for the sake of research. Vaccinations are being brought to for local pharmacies like CVS and Walgreens. But as we know in disinvested communities we don't have as many grocery stores pharmacies medical equipment providers and medical service providers as other communities. The Biden administration is it understands the COVID crisis has hit our communities harder than it has hit others. It has the same effect in many rural areas where state and local governments have closed so many hospitals and medical facilities. This may be opportunities for minority firms to assist in the delivery all the vaccines to our communities.



READ THE COMPLETE COLUMN ON OUR WEBSITE at [WWW.BRWEKLYPRESS.COM](http://WWW.BRWEKLYPRESS.COM)

## Apple: iPhone, iPad Users Should Update Operating Systems to Fix Security Bugs

Apple is urging customers to promptly update their operating systems to fix major security flaws that may have been exploited by hackers.

People who use iPhones, iPads and/or iPods are being encouraged to update their operating systems with Apple's latest security patches, which were pushed out Tuesday as part of the new iOS 14.4 software.

The tech giant has not shared many specifics about the exact flaws, but on its website, the company acknowledges that hackers may have "actively exploited" three security bugs. The issue is a link in an exploit chain, meaning a hacker would need to exploit further bugs for it to be fully executable.

# BUSINESS

## API Outlines Affordable and Accessible Energy in State of American Energy Report

American Petroleum Institute (API) President and CEO Mike Sommers said there's growing confidence that America's future will be brighter and cleaner because of today's natural gas and oil abundance and an adapting, evolving industry.

"Today, I'm going to outline a path, a vision, for an affordable, secure, reliable cleaner energy future one marked by a shared commitment across many industries to innovation, action, and problem-solving," Sommers avowed.

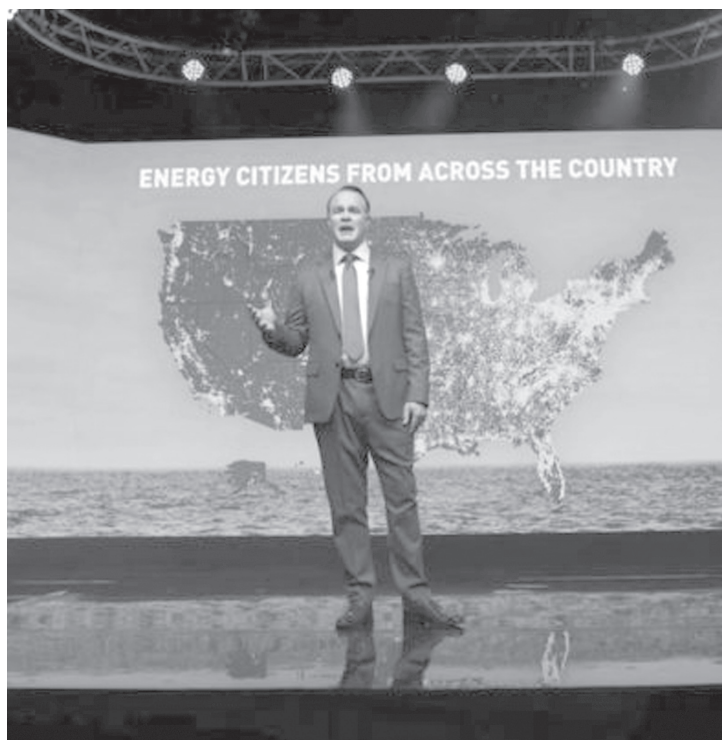
The remarks kicked off API's annual State of American Energy address. Sommers outlined actions the natural gas and oil industry is taking to support the nation's economic recovery and a vision for an affordable, reliable, and cleaner energy future.

The virtual event drew more than 2,000 attendees.

It featured young professionals and energy leaders, including a New Mexico teacher, a Pennsylvania-based union trade leader, and the National Newspaper Publishers Association President and CEO, Dr. Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr.

"We've become conditioned to pitting using energy against making environmental progress, yet history has shown that this is a false choice," Sommers expressed.

"Both developing energy and



API President and CEO Mike Sommers Speaks During State of American Energy/API

reducing emissions are essential to advance our society and protect the environment without energy and environmental progress."

The State of American Energy report revealed that the natural gas and oil industry remains a reliable foundation for America's economic recovery.

The industry stands ready to help the country build - today, tomorrow, and in the future -

of face masks, surgical gowns, and other PPE worn by frontline workers. Our crews worked long shifts to make those products and power hospitals and plants."

He noted that the industry had refrained from political battles and focused on the essential work the nation depends upon in producing and delivering American energy, which contributes to national security, answering the climate changes with action and ingenuity while keeping energy affordable.

"Thanks to American technology and innovation, the United States is now the world's leading producer of natural gas and oil," Sommers told the gathering.

"Securing America's energy future has long been a point of unity since the 1970s, and nine US presidents have focused on American energy security and advocated for reducing our nation's dependence on foreign oil."

He insisted that energy affordability is more important than ever as the country recovers from the pandemic.

"A government that's focused on recovery for all should reject policies that could drive up energy costs and hurt those who can least afford them," Sommers said.



READ MORE of this story ONLINE at [www.brweeklypress.com](http://www.brweeklypress.com)

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# RELIGION

## TV Star "The Rev"- Richard Hartley - Has Come Full Circle With TV Show, New Song, "Highway"

Richard Hartley, star of the USA Network's new docu-comedy series, "The Rev," has been whipping choirs together for superstars such as Mariah Carey, Celine Dion, and Diana Ross – for over two decades. After years of making others sound good, he's finally making his own great sounds with a new track, "Highway," which is available on all digital platforms. "I love taking old songs like 'Highway to Heaven' and making them cutting-edge and current," he says of the bass-heavy, urban-flavored groove. Listening Link: <https://smarturl.it/>



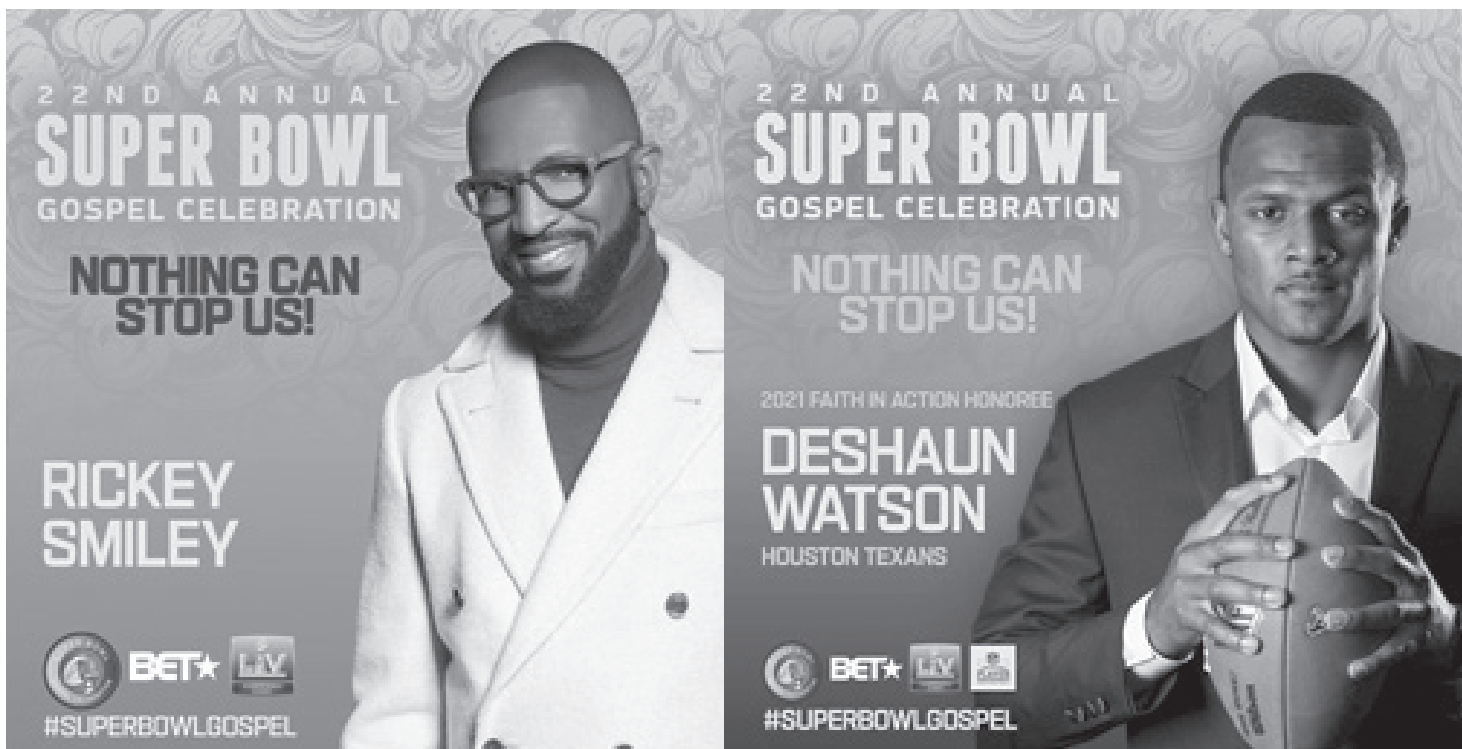
### TheRevHighway

The dance-floor ready song comes on the heels of the recent premiere of "The Rev" (Thursdays 10:30 PM ET/PT), which revolves around Hartley's real-life role as a pastor. The plot centers on Hartley and his real-life family (wife, Stacey, and their adult children, Judea & Jordan) and the hilarious interactions between them and the zany characters at their church in Queens, New York.

"The show is a God-move," says Hartley. "I didn't audition for anybody. A friend filmed one of my choir rehearsals which can be brutal and hilarious at the same time. He sent it to a friend of his in Hollywood who sent it to an agent and the agent sent it to somebody at a production company. A bidding war

started and there were offers from Lifetime, OWN, Netflix and USA Network. They ended up going with USA Networks and here we are."

Hartley began coaching church choirs at the age of six and landed his big break in Vy Higginsen's off-Broadway stage musical, "Mama, I Want to Sing", circa 1987. "I was with that show for 13 years," Hartley says. "That show took me all over the world. Europe, Australia. I've been to Japan 150 times alone. Then, I came back and started training choirs to back superstars." Hartley's been there right under our eyes for years. He was in Mariah Carey's "Anytime You Need A Friend" music video. He led the choir in Diana Ross' 1999 telefilm, "Double Platinum." Visit: <https://www.usanetwork.com/the-rev>



## 22nd Annual Super Bowl Gospel Celebration Returns Saturday, February 6th At 8/7c On Bet

NEW YORK, NY - For the eighth consecutive year, the 22nd Annual Super Bowl Gospel Celebration will air on BET during Super Bowl LV week on Saturday, February 6th at 8/7c.

The theme "Nothing Can Stop Us" is the inspirational message for this highly anticipated night of praise and worship during Super Bowl LV. This year's event will be hosted by national radio and TV personality Rickey Smiley and feature performances by The NFL Players Choir, Erica Campbell, Voices of

Fire presented by Pharrell Williams, PJ Morton, Kierra Sheard, Koryn Hawthorne, Zacardi Cortez, and an exclusive performance by gospel music pioneer and living legend John P. Kee. Additionally, the show will feature appearances from NFL players Deshaun Jackson-Philadelphia Eagles WR and Dak Prescott - Dallas Cowboys QB.

The Super Bowl Gospel Celebration will present Houston Texans QB Deshaun Watson with this

See GOSPEL, on page 8

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Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching. - Hebrews 10:25

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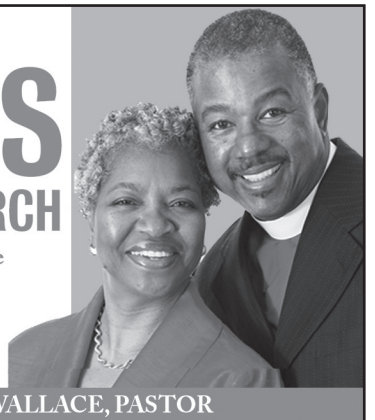
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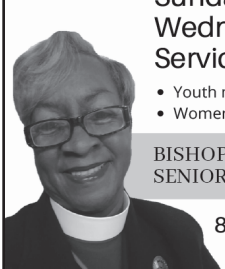
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# HEALTH

## One-Dose Shot Offers Good Protection, New Hope Against Virus

Johnson & Johnson's long-awaited vaccine appears to protect against COVID-19 with just one shot — not as strong as some two-shot rivals but still potentially helpful for a world in dire need of more doses.

J&J said Friday that in the U.S. and seven other countries, the single-shot vaccine was 66% effective overall at preventing moderate to severe illness, and much more protective — 85% — against the most serious symptoms.

There was some geographic variation. The vaccine worked better in the U.S. — 72% effective against moderate to severe COVID-19 — compared to 57% in South Africa, where it was up against an easier-to-spread mutated virus.

"Gambling on one dose was certainly worthwhile," Dr. Mathai Mammen, global research chief for J&J's Janssen Pharmaceutical unit, told The Associated Press.

With vaccinations off to a rocky start globally, experts had been counting on a one-dose vaccine that would stretch scarce supplies and avoid the logistics nightmare of getting people to return for boosters.

But with some other competing vaccines shown to be 95% effective after two doses, at question is whether somewhat less protection is an acceptable tradeoff to get more shots in arms quickly.

"Frankly, simple is beautiful," said Dr. Matt Hepburn of Operation Warp Speed, the U.S. government's vaccine initiative.



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## Black Scientist Who Helped Develop COVID-19 Vaccine Attends Inoculation of Rev. Jesse Jackson



**Dr. Kizzmekia "Kizzy" Corbett, the Black woman who co-led the National Institutes of Health team that discovered Moderna's coronavirus vaccine, lends a supportive hand Friday as the Rev. Jesse Jackson receives the vaccine from Roseland Community Hospital physician Kiran Chekka. It's part of efforts by Black community leaders to battle distrust of the vaccine in that community.**

Viral immunologist Dr. Kizzmekia "Kizzy" Corbett helped lead the National Institutes of Health team that developed Moderna's coronavirus vaccine. Friday, she was there as the Rev. Jesse Jackson was vaccinated, part of an effort to combat Black community distrust.

In the monumental effort to build Black community trust of the coronavirus vaccine, the Rev. Jesse Jackson rolled up his sleeve. Famous viral immunologist Dr. Kizzmekia "Kizzy" Corbett placed a supportive hand on his shoulder. And Dr. Kiran Chekka stuck the needle in his

arm. Jackson, founder and president of the Rainbow PUSH Coalition, was on his way to being protected against COVID-19. In a month, he'll return for the second dose, ensuring full vaccination.

A simple act. A huge deal. The 79-year-old civil rights leader and Corbett, the Black woman scientist who co-led the National Institutes of Health team that developed the Moderna vaccine, made for a powerhouse duo of role models.

"We know our history, and we understand from where this hesitancy comes," Corbett, 34,

a rock star in immunology science, told the Chicago Sun-Times afterward.

"It's sad that it's being highlighted in this moment where the need to get vaccinated is so dire. On the one hand, we are the communities most plagued by the pandemic. On the other hand, we are communities least likely to get vaccinated," Corbett said.

"Those two things do not go together. And so it's really time for action from scientists, physicians, etc., to really extend ourselves to reassuring those communities, so we can get the ball rolling. A lot of times, people just

need to see their mirror image."

Presenting mirror images has been a focus of Black community leaders since rollout of the first approved vaccine — by Pfizer-BioNTech — as the national effort to reach herd immunity by immunizing 75% of the population brings a reckoning with racism in health care.

Just days before the vaccine rollout, Jackson joined Illinois political leaders and city and state health officials at a roundtable where public vaccinations of Black leaders was deemed imperative in persuading the Black community to participate in the largest vaccination campaign in U.S. history.

Hesitant Black elders point to the Tuskegee experiment. The younger generation grew up in health care deserts, and is acutely aware they receive lower quality health care than whites.

"One of the things Rev. Jackson has done for decades is lead the community by example," said Corbett. "It is so important in times like this that pillars of the community stand up in that way and say, 'Look, this is important for our health, and in order to show you I really believe in this, I'm going to do it myself.'"

The high profile awareness effort came as the virus killed an additional 126 Illinois residents on Friday, with 9,277 more infected. Illinois now has the sixth highest COVID-19 deaths by state — more than 19,108 dead over the past 10 months, over a million infected.

Statewide, only some 213,000 residents have been

See **BLACK SCIENTIST**, on page 8

## LDH Makes Some Exceptions on Who Can Get the Coronavirus Vaccine Based on Underlying Health Conditions

BATON ROUGE, La.- The Louisiana Department of Health says that if someone is 16 or older and are undergoing home health care and dialysis, they can get the shot even though they are younger than 70.

Dialysis medical directors say this shot is needed to protect their patients considering they are classified as a vulnerable group. The team at Fresenius Kidney Care has received almost 5,000 doses of the Moderna vaccine since December. The Department of Health sent it their way to try and get as many of their dialysis patients vaccinated.

Patients of the clinic like Frankie Shaw has been receiving dialysis for her kidneys for five years, she says, "I was scared about getting the shot, I was asked about it and I turned it down twice. I didn't want the shot, I didn't understand it. When I did research by myself to figure out what the shot was about and talked to the nurses here...it was like okay, I'll take the shot."

The 44-year-old says that even though she was hesitant at first, she does not regret getting the shot, and on the plus side she did not have major side effects.

"Due to the simple fact like you said because of my age, I would have normally had to wait. Second, like I said by me being a dialysis patient it's just...I was blessed because I know I can go out there

See **EXCEPTIONS**, on page 8



## SLEEVES UP

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To end the pandemic and its toll on our communities, we all need to work together. And that begins with everyone getting the two-dose COVID-19 vaccine. We know you have concerns like if the vaccine is safe and if it will be distributed fairly? We hear you and are committed to giving you the facts and making sure you have equal access to the vaccine. **To find out when and where you can go sleeves up and get the vaccine, visit our website or call 211.**



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# SPORTS

## SWAC Announces Band Policy for Spring 2021 Football Season



BIRMINGHAM, Ala.- The Southwestern Athletic Conference (SWAC) has announced revised policy related to member institutions band travel and participation for upcoming Spring 2021 SWAC Football season.

This upcoming season the conference will only permit the attendance of home team bands during football contests held at the designated home facility of league member institutions.

Visiting team bands will not be permitted to travel to regular season contests. Additionally, games designated as classics along

with games identified as neutral site contests will be played with no bands in attendance from either team.

"As we began to make final preparations related to the kickoff of the Spring 2021 Football season, it became imperative for us to make comprehensive decisions that take into full account where we are with the current state of the COVID-19 pandemic," said SWAC Commissioner Dr. Charles McClelland.

"During the process of making those decisions, it became abundantly clear that the elimination

of all travel for SWAC member institutions bands was a significant step toward ensuring an optimal health and safety environment for the upcoming Spring 2021 football season. The health, safety, and welfare of our students and student-athletes will continue to be the driving force behind all of our decisions related to athletic activities and events held within the Southwestern Athletic Conference during this global pandemic."

This revised band policy is currently only in effect for the Spring 2021 football season.

## De'Anthony Nervis Named Men's Track Athlete of the Week

The Southwestern Athletic Conference has named Southern's De'Anthony Nervis and Jackson State's Chris Felix its SWAC Co-Men's Track Athletes of the Week and UAPB's Deandre Fyffe its SWAC Men's Field Athlete of the Week for their outstanding performances during competition Jan. 15-17.

Nervis a freshman from Houston, TX opened his first collegiate meet on Saturday at the LSU Purple Tiger Invitational in the 60-meter dash event. Nervis finished 1st in prelims (6.77) and finished 2nd

overall in the finals with a time of (6.76). He is currently ranked the 22nd best time in NCAA Division I. He also competed in the 4x400 Meter Relay with a split time of (50.03) helping guide the Jaguars to a 1st place finish, currently ranking them 40th in the country.



De'Anthony Nervis

Felix (Bryam, Miss.) 60-meter dash time of 6.73 was a collegiate best and 8th best in the world. His time ranked world-wide at 23rd after the weekend. He placed 1st place in the 60-meter dash at the Blazer Invitational.

Fyffe (Kingston, Jamaica) set a personal best in the shot put competition finishing second with a launch of 16.91m at the Wildcats Invitational hosted by Kansas State. That mark ranked 1st in the conference for week one competition.

### EXCEPTIONS from page 7

any day, any moment and get sick," adds Shaw.

Dialysis is a procedure to treat failing kidneys, medical directors at Fresenius Kidney Care say it's not necessarily about the age of their patients, but how vulnerable this group is that makes it necessary for them to become vaccinated.

"They are immunocompromised and the studies are showing that dialysis patients who do get COVID are 11 times more likely to go into the hospital," says Terry Bellon who is the director of operations for Fresenius Kidney Care.

Other clinics and hospitals in Metro Baton Rouge have also started vaccinating their dialysis patients, hope it can ward off COVID in people who are already dealing with so much.

LDH says they will look into other major health conditions once the state expands into the larger tiers of the vaccination rollout.

### GOSPEL from page 6

year's "Faith In Action Award." The son of a courageous cancer survivor, Watson is one of the NFL's youngest philanthropists and is committed to causes that support families and youth in underserved communities.

In collaboration with the Super Bowl Gospel Celebration, the American Cancer Society will highlight the need to eliminate barriers to prevention and treatment in the black community during the broadcast. African Americans have the lowest survival rate for most cancers, and the pandemic has caused a devastating drop in cancer screenings. Viewers will be encouraged to donate during the show on BET by texting HOPE to 20222 to donate \$10 to the American Cancer Society.

Originating at Super Bowl XXXIII in 1999, the annual event joins key NFL Players, top Gos-

pel/Contemporary Christian, and mainstream GRAMMY® Award-winning artists, and special guests all on one stage to bring audiences an evening of uplifting music and inspirational messages.

Super Bowl Gospel Celebration (SBGC) is the largest multicultural event during the Super Bowl weekend. In its 22-year run as an NFL-sanctioned event, SBGC has featured artists including Patti LaBelle, Yolanda Adams, Gladys Knight, Natalie Grant, Mary Mary, Fantasia, Donnie McClurkin, Anthony Hamilton, among many others.

For more information, visit [superbowlgospel.com](http://superbowlgospel.com) and join the social conversation using #SuperBowlGospel and #NothingCanStopUs.

### BLACK SCIENTIST from page 7

vaccinated, with surveys showing Blacks still wary of such government projects. Nearly 40% of Black respondents in a Kaiser Family Foundation survey had no interest in being vaccinated.

Meanwhile, Blacks are hardest hit by coronavirus deaths, dying at twice the rate of whites.

Corbett became interested in science in high school, attended the University of Maryland Baltimore County, then interned at the NIH at age 19.

She received her Ph.D. in microbiology and immunology at the University of North Carolina before joining NIH's Vaccine Research Center as a postdoctoral fellow in 2014.

"I didn't wake up with this mission. I've been in vaccine development since I was 18 years old, as nerdy as it is to say," Corbett said Friday, reflecting on how she, along with her boss, Dr. Barney Graham, led what has been called one of the greatest scientific feats of the 21st century.

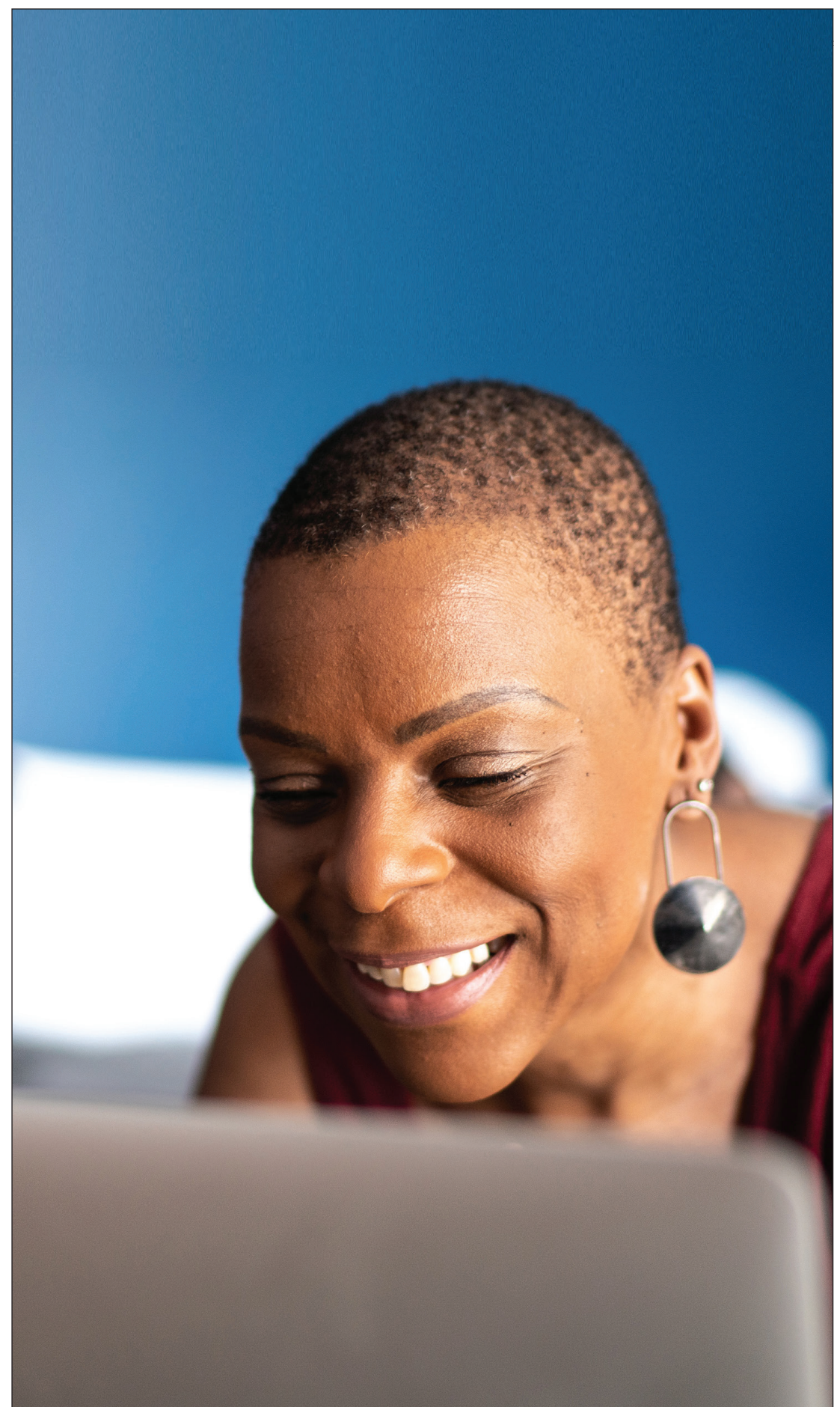
COVID-19 has killed 368,296 Americans.

"There have been centuries of medical injustice on communities of Black and Brown communities that no one can deny. It is now time for us to, No. 1, own up to and apologize for it, and, No. 2, provide an end for those communities to receive equitable health care and vaccine like we are trying to do

today," Corbett said.

"The only thing that we can do is to become more trustworthy. I am here today to serve as a liaison to what is real behind the vaccine, and to the science of the data. Many times, there has not been anyone like myself who has been able to break down scientific information, out in the community like this," she added.

"I would say to our community: I understand, and I empathize with their hesitancy and with the distrust and mistrust, based on the history," she said. "And so I'm here out of empathy, out of care, out of my onus to start to lay some of those bricks. We're not going to get over that hump of hesitancy with this one incident, but hopefully as time progresses, we can start to rebuild some of that trust."



Girls' nights IN  
are gonna take  
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We don't get enough laughs these days. But, wherever they are, our friends are as close as a click. Vaccines are coming. But until enough of us are vaccinated, we still need to slow the spread. We can watch our distance, and not let COVID-19 keep us apart.

Learn more about vaccines and slowing the spread at [cdc.gov/coronavirus](http://cdc.gov/coronavirus)



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