

The Weekly Press

SERVING BAKER, CENTRAL, AND ZACHARY

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 22-28, 2020

A PEOPLE'S PUBLICATION

VOL. 43 • NO.31 • FREE

STATE/LOCAL PG 3

SENATORS STALL BILL PROHIBITING EMERGENCY RULES ON CHURCHES

HEALTH PG 5

AS CLINICAL TRIALS HALT, U.S. COVID CASES SURGE

Police Chief Murphy Paul Selected for International Policing Advisory Board



Baton Rouge Police Chief
Murphy Paul

BATON ROUGE, La. — The International Association of Chiefs of Police has selected Baton Rouge Police Chief Murphy Paul for membership on its Policy Center Advisory Group as a subject-matter expert. The members of the advisory group are selected to represent a cross-section of individuals from the field of law enforcement and possess a solid, generalized knowledge of law enforcement; substantial experience in policy development; and superb critical thinking skills.

"This honor comes as no surprise as Chief Paul's leadership and experience have received national attention for some time now. More than two years ago I selected him to lead our Baton Rouge Police Department and I am proud he has now been selected for this prestigious international advisory group," said Mayor-President Sharon Weston Broome. "This is yet another example of how Chief Paul is helping to create a safe, hopeful and healthy society in our community and beyond."

Chief Paul's term of membership is effective immediately and will end in October 2023.

Edwards Expanding Stadium Capacity

Some parishes may expand high school stadium capacity to 50%

Gov. John Bel Edwards amended his Phase 3 order for outdoor high school sports by allowing outdoor stadiums in parishes with lower rates of positive COVID tests

to move to 50 percent capacity, up from 25 percent.

To be eligible, parishes must have percent positivity of less than five percent for two consecutive

weeks based on the most recent report from the Louisiana Dept. of Health, which is updated weekly on Wednesdays.

It is very similar to the ap-

proach Gov. Edwards has taken with reopening bars, however schools, districts or local governments will not have to opt-in. As with bars, if a parish's percent positivity reaches

more than 10 percent for two weeks, the parish must return to the 25 percent capacity limit. The new order becomes effective Friday, October 23, 2020.

"After meeting with the leaders

See EDWARDS, on page 3

Sickle Cell Disease Inspires BR Woman to Become a Nurse

BATON ROUGE, La.—

Lakesha Dickerson was told she wouldn't live past her 30s due to sickle cell disease (SCD) - a lifelong inherited blood disorder that disproportionately impacts African Americans. Now at 36, she is a nurse practitioner at a women's clinic and is sharing her story.

Because of challenges she faced growing up with the disease, Lakesha decided at the age of 15 to become a nurse to help others. She never let SCD get in the way of that goal - eventually earning an advanced nursing degree while raising her daughter at the same time. Lakesha credits her mom for raising her to believe she can do everything people without a serious illness like SCD can do.



Lakesha
Dickerson

The Historic Million Man March

Brooklyn Bridge rally commemorates 25th anniversary



A.T. Mitchell uses a bullhorn to address the gathering. Brooklyn Borough President Eric Adams joined A.T. Mitchell, Executive Director of Man Up! Inc, as they lead a rally with Men of Color in Commemoration of the 25th Anniversary of the Million Man March at Foley Square in Manhattan on Friday. (Theodore Parisienne/for New York Daily News)

NEW YORK -- A march was held across the Brooklyn Bridge on Friday to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the Million Man March.

Brooklyn Borough President Eric Adams and Man Up! Inc. Executive Director A.T. Mitchell led the march across the bridge to Foley Square to highlight the ways men of color are getting involved in their communities.

The march comes amid a challenging year as the COVID-19 pandemic continues to disproportionately impact communities of color while the nation grapples with a legacy of racial injustice and high-profile police killings.

"When we start educating our children on history before slavery, we'll take our communities back," said marcher Vincent Riggins.

Despite the pouring rain, the weather did not dampen the spirit of the event.

"The men of this great city that live in those neighborhoods that are really doing a lot are just very sick and tired of being sick and tired and as serious as any-

See MARCH, on page 1

WEATHER

3 day Forecast BR Area

MON. 10/26
Partly Cloudy
High 85°.

TUE. 10/27
Partly Cloudy
High 85°.

WED. 10/28
Partly Cloudy
High 81°.

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Federal Judge Halts Trump's Rule That Would Prevent 700K From Receiving Food Stamps

By STACY M. BROWN,
NNPA Newswire
Senior National Correspondent

If the 2020 election's importance wasn't apparent to those casting ballots, a federal judge's decision on Sunday might have underscored the urgency.

In a decision that had far-reaching consequences during a deadly pandemic that's cost more than 219,000 Americans their lives, the court ruled on Oct. 19 against President Donald Trump's order to strip food stamps from nearly 700,000 people.

As the pandemic worsened, businesses shuttered, and unem-

ployment reached record levels, the President announced the implementation of a new rule that would have required more food stamp recipients to work to receive benefits.

Trump sought to limit the ability of states to renounce existing work mandates. The rule was scheduled to occur on April 1, but Congress suspended mandates requiring food stamp recipients to work as part of the CARES Act.

"The final rule at issue in this litigation radically and abruptly alters decades of regulatory practice, leaving states scrambling and exponentially increasing food insecurity for tens of thousands of



"SNAP/EBT Food Stamp Benefits Accepted" is displayed on a screen inside a Family Dollar Stores Inc.

Americans." Chief Judge Beryl Howell of the U.S. District Court in Washington, DC, wrote in a 67-page ruling.

Judge Howell wrote that the United States Department of Agriculture had not adequately explained how the Trump rule "comports with federal statutes nor how it makes sense."

Attorneys general from 19 states, the District of Columbia, and New York City filed a challenge to the rule.

According to estimates, the Trump rule could have resulted in 688,000 non-disabled, working-

See STAMPS, on page 3

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VOTER'S GUIDE EDITION

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PRESS TO THE POLLS

OCTOBER 29th, 2020

- Candidate Endorsements
- Candidate Information
- Polling time and places
- Endorsements and Recommendations
- Sample Ballots (Print & Digital)

You Decide ★2020

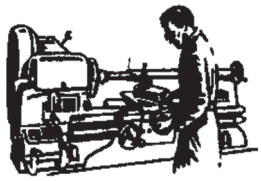
VOTER'S GUIDE

11/03/2020



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The Baton Rouge Weekly Press strives to be fair and accurate. The newspaper corrects any significant errors of fact brought to the attention of the editor. If you think an error has been made, call 225-775-2002

The Weekly Press

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STATE & LOCAL

Louisiana Lawmakers Advance Compromise on Emergency Election Rulemaking Process



Gov. John Bel Edwards and Secretary of State Kyle Ardoin could not agree on a plan for the fall elections, essentially forcing a federal judge to write the new election rules in response to a lawsuit.

BATON ROUGE, La. - A House committee advanced a compromise bill Tuesday, Oct. 20 that would re-work how lawmakers adopt rules for elections held during states of emergency. Under current law, the legislature and governor must each approve the Secretary of State's plan, which may include expanded mail-in voting or an extended early voting period to accommodate the emergency. But there are no opportunities to amend the idea without starting the entire process over, meaning a 'no' vote from any stakeholder kills the idea and delays its replacement.

Gov. John Bel Edwards and Secretary of State Kyle Ardoin could not agree on a plan for the fall elections, essentially forcing a federal judge to write the new election rules in response to a lawsuit. Four weeks prior to the first day of early voting, poll workers were not sure what coronavirus accommodations would be in place for Louisiana voters. "The process was kind of drawn out. Many folks felt like they didn't have enough input, up-front," Sen. Sharon Hewitt, R-Slidell, said. "We didn't have the ability to make the plan better as it was going through the process.

It was kind of an up or down, take it or leave it kind of vote." Under Hewitt's plan, basically re-written in a compromise with Central republican Rep. Barry Ivey, lawmakers would adopt election rules in a manner more like how they pass bills. The Secretary of State would present the idea to a joint governmental affairs committee, which would advance the plan to the full body for a vote. The governor could sign or veto the idea, and the legislature could override a potential veto. But perhaps most important, lawmakers would give the Sec-

retary of State more flexibility to change the proposal as it advances through the process. The bill creates a strict timeline for accomplishing the task. "The committees will work, the legislature will do their job as the policymakers, the governor has veto power and we have the ability to override should we see the wisdom in doing that," Hewitt said. The bill now moves to the full House for debate. It would have to return to the Senate for approval of the committee's re-write before the governor signs off.

City of Baker Storm Debris Pick-Up

BAKER, La. - Mayor Waites announced that DRC Emergency Services contract to pick-up storm debris related to Hurricane Delta had been executed for the City of Baker; residents are due to begin seeing debris removal as early as this upcoming weekend.



Mayor Waites

"We have been working diligently to assess the damage inflicted by this storm as well as the needs of the residents of our city. It is vital that we ensure residents have adequate time to get debris moved to the appropriate, designated pick-up area before we send crews out to remove it and close coordination is key to meeting the needs of the community. We believe that this schedule will best meet the needs of our residents and ensure public health," said Mayor Waites.

Please place all storm related debris curbside. DRC will collect loose (as in unbagged or unpackage) debris. Please attempt to place debris in an as organized a manner as is possible while not obstructing the roadway.

Please note that Republic Services will continue to run their standard garbage collection schedule and storm related debris should be separated from your standard garbage and recycling collection. Please do not place storm related debris where it will block access to your Republic waste receptacles or where it will block access to mailboxes, water meters, fire hydrants, or other utility structures.

Should you have questions pertaining to storm debris pick-up please direct inquiries to City Hall at 225.778.0300.

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for COUNCIL 6

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EARLY VOTING: OCTOBER 20-27, 2020
 ELECTION DAY: NOVEMBER 3, 2020

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 ELECTION DAY: NOVEMBER 3, 2020

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Senators Stall Bill Prohibiting Emergency Rules on Churches

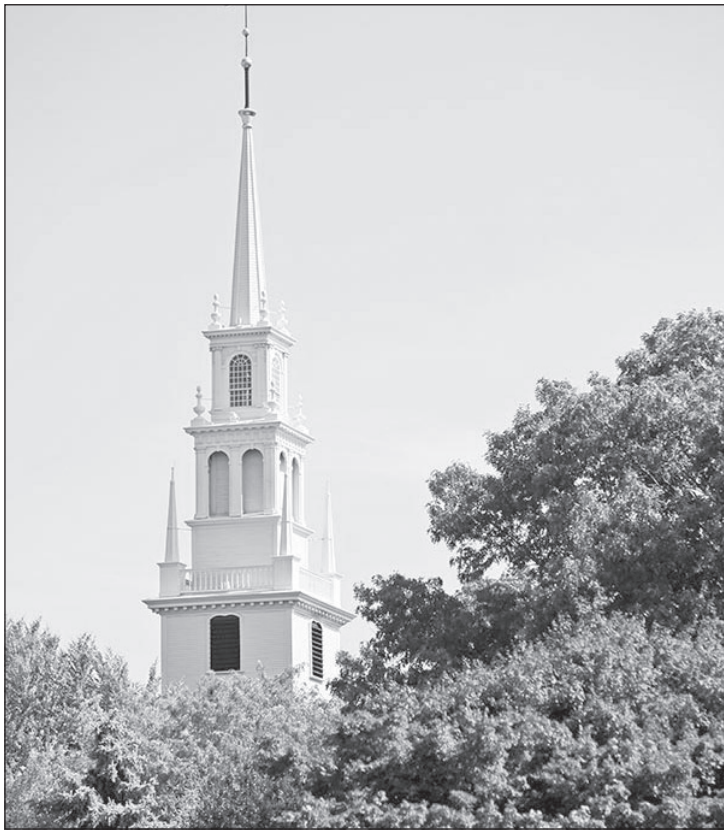
A Senate judiciary committee voted 3-2 to kill the bill

BATON ROUGE, La. — A proposal to keep Louisiana's emergency orders from governing churches and to upend prosecution of a pastor who violated Gov. John Bel Edwards' coronavirus restrictions was narrowly shelved Wednesday by state senators.

A Senate judiciary committee voted 3-2 to kill the bill by Oil City Republican Rep. Danny McCormick that would have prohibited government agencies or officials from being able to fine, penalize or prosecute anyone who attends or conducts a church service during a publicly declared emergency.

The measure, which had won House support in a 66-24 vote, sought to apply its provisions to any actions pending when the bill became law. The move was aimed at disrupting the prosecution of Tony Spell, minister at Life Tabernacle Church in Central, for violating Edwards' ban on large gatherings.

Spell was charged in April with several misdemeanor offenses for repeatedly holding in-person church services with hundreds of people not distanced from each other, in defiance of the governor's



restrictions on crowd sizes at the time. Spell also was arrested later on an assault charge after authorities said he drove a church bus toward a man protesting his decision. The cases are pending.

Edwards has since loosened crowd size limits on churches and many other places.

After a quick hearing, vot-

ing to kill the bill were Sens. Joe Bouie, a New Orleans Democrat; Ronnie Johns, a Lake Charles Republican; and Greg Tarver, a Shreveport Democrat. Voting for the bill were Sens. Mike Reese, a Leesville Republican, and Kirk Talbot, a River Ridge Republican. Committee Chairman Gary Smith, a Norco Democrat, didn't vote.

January Trial Date Set for East Baton Rouge School Board Member Connie Bernard

BATON ROUGE, La. - A January fourth trial date has been set for East Baton Rouge Parish school board member Connie Bernard related to the leak of an explicit video in which she appeared to be involved in a physical and verbal dispute with a teenager on Friday, Aug. 10, 2018.

The original video appears to show Bernard entering a neighbor's home, where a party was happening, to investigate and take photos.

One party-goer seized Bernard's phone, offering to return it once she agreed to leave the home.

In the video, Bernard can be heard screaming "call 911"

before grabbing the young man in the neck area and again demanding her phone.

Deputies arrived on scene and issued Bernard a summons for her actions.

Bernard wasn't charged until much later.

East Baton Rouge District Attorney Hillar Moore says he waited months before filing charges in an attempt to allow Bernard's legal team to



Connie Bernard East Baton Rouge Parish school board member

provide information about the incident on her behalf, but a lack of response from them ultimately led to him formally charging Bernard.

Later an attorney pleaded not guilty on her behalf to misdemeanor entering and remaining after forbidden, and simple battery charges.

Both charges carry six months of jail time and potential fines.

Bernard previously served as the school board's vice president before resigning to help a family member facing a health crisis. The incident occurred shortly before that resignation.

MARCH from page 1

one could ever imagine, you can't get more serious than these groups of men from all walks of life and all religions and all backgrounds that came out to celebrate the 25th anniversary," an event organizer said.

For activist and organizer A.T. Mitchell, the march across the Brooklyn Bridge was more than just steps -- it's a movement that

EDWARDS from page 1

of both the House and Senate and considering their requests, I have agreed to make this change in a way that is safe, reasonable and will help more fans enjoy seeing their favorite teams play," said Gov. Edwards. "Using the percent positivity as the guide is important because it helps to determine the rate of community spread, which is the safest, most responsible and consistent way to move forward. Everyone who attends these sporting events will still have to social distance and wear a mask. We know that when people wear masks it slows the spread of this sometimes deadly virus, and that is why the mask mandate will remain in place. As always, it is important for those who have conditions that make them especially vulnerable to COVID-19 not to at-

tend crowded events like football games that could put their health at great risk. Fortunately, Louisiana is not seeing the spike in cases like other parts of the country, a clear sign that our mitigation measures, which align with the White House Coronavirus Task Force, are working. In order for that to continue, we must continue doing those things that are having a positive impact and that we know work even as we expand our activities."

There are currently 26 parishes that are eligible to participate: Assumption, Avoyelles, Catahoula, East Baton Rouge, East Feliciana, Evangeline, Grant, Iberia, Iberville, Jefferson, Lafayette, Madison, Orleans, Rapides, St. Bernard, St. Charles, St. James, St. John the Baptist, St. Landry, St. Martin, St. Mary, St. Tammany, Terrebonne, Vermilion, West Feliciana and Winn.

STAMPS from page 1

age adults without dependents losing food stamp benefits.

It's estimated that since the pandemic began, more than 6 million Americans had signed up for food stamp benefits. Nearly 43 million Americans were receiving benefits in April, according to the latest Agriculture Department data.

According to the nonprofit Feeding America, hunger rose significantly during the pandemic and the U.S. economy's downfall.

Judge Howell's decision still leaves at least two other motions by the Trump administration to restrict or eliminate access to food stamp benefits.

Other administration proposals could see at least 3 million people losing their benefits, leaving an estimated 500,000 children without access to free school meals.

"This is why we need to vote like never before," declared Cindy Richmond, a voting rights advocate in Brooklyn, N.Y. "Imagine that we have a president who denied that the pandemic was real, knew it was deadly but hid it from us, and then he wants to take away food assistance from needy American families and children."

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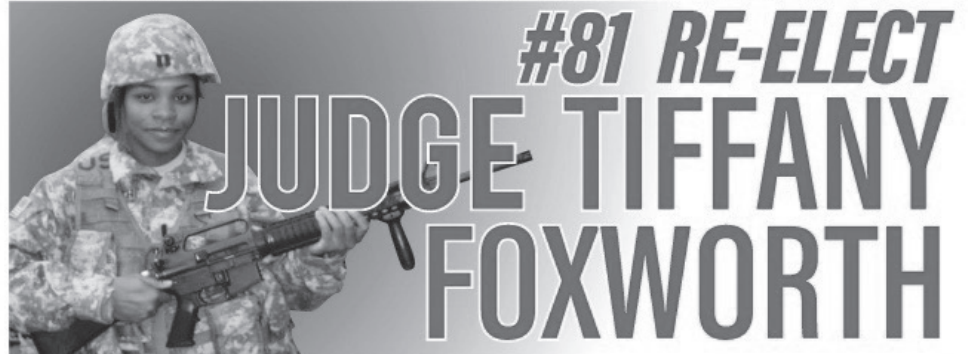
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#81 RE-ELECT
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FOXWORTH

Dr. Jonathan Roberts, MD, Judge Tiffany Foxworth, Christian - Registered Nurse - Army Veteran & Tiffany Elle

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EARLY VOTING: OCTOBER 16-27 2020 • 8AM-7PM

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District 2



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RELIGION

God's Call to Repentance

Luke 15:11-24
 BY CHARLES STANLEY

In the Parable of the Prodigal Son, the younger brother asked to receive his inheritance early so he might live as he chose. Once the father gave him his share, he made many unwise choices that led to hunger and destitution. What happened next illustrates the principles of godly repentance.

After squandering all his money, the young man found work feeding pigs, a bottom-of-the-barrel kind of job. One day he came to his senses and recognized his terrible plight. His repentance began with an awareness of his wrong choices and the fact that his bad situation was due to them.

Knowing that his difficulties came from his sinful behavior, the prodigal grieved over his mistakes and acknowledged that he had sinned against the Lord (v. 18). He declared he was no longer worthy to be his father's son. Godly sorrow and confession led the young man to leave that place and go home. His repen-



tance was made complete when he turned away from his old ways and returned to his father. The Lord likewise calls us to repent and return to Him.

What a welcome the prodigal son received. Upon seeing him, the father was filled with compassion and ran to embrace

him. Forgiveness and acceptance were extended to the son. Both are blessings that God freely offers to whoever asks Him.

The prodigal son did not clean himself up before returning home. He simply left his old life, turned toward home, and trusted in his father's mercy. The heav-

enly Father calls us to repent and offers us forgiveness when we turn away from our self-centered ways and move toward godliness (1 John 1:9).

For more biblical teaching and resources from Dr. Charles Stanley, please visit www.intouch.org.

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Anthony Brown & group therAPy
Stuck in the House
 THE PANDEMIC PROJECT

Anthony Brown Reveals Cover For Timely New Album Stuck In The House

Gospel star Anthony Brown reveals the cover to his timely new album, *Stuck in the House: The Pandemic Project*.

The album is a follow-up to 2econd Wind: Ready (Key of A / Tyscot / FairTrade), which debuted at No. 1* on the Billboard Gospel Album Sales chart and generated over 1 million on-demand streams in its first week.

"One of my favorite Nina Simone quotes says that we (artist) have a responsibility to speak to the times. These last few months have been life-altering to me, and I felt compelled to

share my heart through music. These songs will take you on the journey that many of us have been through over the last few months: fear, anxiety, self-motivation, shift, change, desperation, and ultimately the unquenchable fire through it all to just KEEP GOING.

From start to finish, I firmly believe that *Stuck In The House: The Pandemic Project* is what God has impressed on me to share, and it is my gift to you. Enjoy it." says Anthony Brown.

CHURCH DIRECTORY

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

Church directory ads starting at \$10 per week call us for details 225.775.2002

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Dr. Donald Ruth, Pastor

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 Sunday Worship Experience: 11:00 AM
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HEALTH

As Clinical Trials Halt, U.S. Covid Cases Surge

By **STACY M. BROWN**,
Senior National Correspondent
NNPA Newswire

Eli Lilly announced this week that it would pause a government-sponsored COVID-19 clinical trial because of a potential safety concern.

The drug manufacturer did not specify the concern, but the experimental vaccine is reportedly similar to the one President Donald Trump has claimed cured him of the coronavirus.

Earlier, Johnson & Johnson put the brakes on a COVID-19 vaccine trial after the company noted an "unexplained illness" reported by a participant.

In September, Great Britain officials held off on a potential vaccine when a participant reported a concerning reaction.

The difficulty in producing a vaccine for the deadly virus comes as a new wave of COVID-19 infection has begun.

Data provided by Johns Hopkins University in Maryland revealed that the U.S. surpassed 51,000 new daily cases on Oct. 13, marking the first time in over two months that the number exceeded 50,000.

The average daily number of new cases stands at 48 percent higher than two months ago when 34,354 were reported.

More than 36,000 COVID-19 patients were hospitalized on Oct. 13, the highest number recorded since August.

Statistics from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reveal that African Americans remain three times as likely as whites to contract the coronavirus, five times as likely to end up in the hospital, and twice as likely to die from COVID-19.

While the race and ethnicity of those who contract the virus are known in just 52 percent of cases, 7 of the 10 U.S. counties with the highest death rates from COVID-19 have populations where people of color make up the majority, according to data compiled by USA Today.

Of the top 50 counties with the highest death rates, 31 are populated mostly by people of color.

"Put simply, America's history



The difficulty in producing a vaccine for the deadly virus comes as a new wave of COVID-19 infection has begun. Data provided by Johns Hopkins University in Maryland revealed that the U.S. surpassed 51,000 new daily cases on Oct. 13, marking the first time in over two months that the number exceeded 50,000.

of racism was itself a preexisting condition," study authors wrote for USA Today.

Additionally, one report noted that had African Americans died at the same rate as whites; approximately 20,800 Black people would still be alive.

Dr. James Hildreth, the president of the historically Black Meharry Medical College in Nashville, Tennessee, told the Black Press that his school is among four HBCUs preparing to host on campus COVID-19 clinical trials.

Dr. Hildreth previously advised against any vaccine touted by Trump, where the president exclaimed would be ready before Election Day.

"It's true that Black people have little trust in clinical trials, and that's understandable," Dr. Hildreth stressed. "We've engendered a level of trust with communities of color that other organizations just don't have, and it's imperative for us as HBCUs to rise to this occasion."

Dr. Hildreth noted that Me-

harry's trial would feature a vaccine made by Novavax.

"I'll be the first patient," Dr. Hildreth said, again punctuating the trust that's needed to secure African American participants.

"By engaging with the four Black medical schools, [participants] will have individuals who look like them, sitting across the table, having these conversations, and we think that's going to make a huge difference."

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The Capital Area Transit System (CATS), a political subdivision of the State of Louisiana, operating the public transit system in EBR Parish is accepting Offers for Drug and Testing Services. Sealed offers are due to CATS Procurement Department by September 8, 2020 at 10:00 AM (local time) at 2250 Florida Blvd., Baton Rouge, LA 70802. A copy of this RFP can be found on CATS website at: <https://www.brcats.com/page/procurement>. Written questions will be accepted through August 21, 2020 via email at: catsprocurement@brcats.com. Offers are reminded to check CATS website often for addenda and other important dates in reference to this RFP. CATS is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

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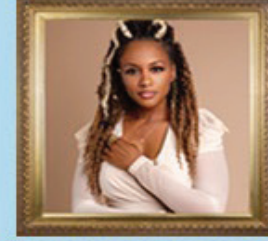
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