

The Weekly Press

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THURSDAY, MAY 11-17, 2023

A PEOPLE'S PUBLICATION

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Manhattan Jury Awards E. Jean Carroll \$5 Million in Trump Defamation Case



Writer E. Jean Carroll and former President Donald Trump.

A Manhattan federal jury has found that former President Donald Trump sexually abused writer E. Jean Carroll in a luxury department store dressing room in the spring of 1996 and then defamed her by denying her claims and suggesting she made up the story. The jury awarded Carroll \$5 million in damages for both battery and defamation.

Carroll, who alleged that Trump raped her in the Bergdorf Goodman department store, filed a lawsuit last November under the New York State Adult Survivors Act, which opened a look-back window for sexual assault allegations with expired statutes of limitations.

While the jury found Trump liable for battery, they did not find that Carroll had proven he raped her. Trump denied all wrongdoing and did not attend the trial, as he was not required to appear in court for trial or any proceedings as a defendant in a civil case.

In response to the verdict, Carroll stated that the victory was not just for her but for every woman who has suffered because she was not believed. Her lead attorney, Roberta Kaplan, stated that "no one is above the law, not even a former President of the United States."

Trump plans to appeal the verdict, as announced in videos posted to his social media platform Truth Social on Tuesday evening. He called the verdict a "disgrace" and a "political witch hunt" and repeated his claim that he did not know who Carroll was.

Trump's attorney, Joe Tacopina, said that he had spoken to the former president and is "ready to proceed and go forward." Tacopina also asserted that the video in which Trump boasted about groping women, commonly known as the "Access Hollywood" tape, should not have been allowed as evidence in the case.

The verdict comes as the 2024 Republican presidential primary field takes shape, with Trump as the early frontrunner. Potential rivals, including Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, have criticized Trump on electability grounds but have stayed away from the former president's legal troubles.

Trump's legal troubles continue to mount, with ongoing

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Louisiana Governor Candidates Make Their Pitches to Oil and Gas Industry Leaders



Five candidates for Louisiana's gubernatorial race, both Democrats and Republicans, pitched their ideas to members of the oil and gas industry at a forum hosted by the Grow Louisiana Coalition. The candidates discussed issues like energy policies, job creation, education, and Louisiana's economy.

Louisiana Gubernatorial Candidates Discuss Energy, Jobs, and Education at Forum Hosted by Oil and Gas Industry Group

BATON ROUGE, La. - Five candidates for Louisiana's gubernatorial race, both Democrats and Republicans, pitched their ideas to members of the oil and gas industry at a forum hosted by the Grow Louisiana Coalition. The candidates discussed issues like energy policies, job creation, education, and Louisiana's economy.

State Senator Sharon Hewitt, Republican candidate, proposed getting rid of the coastal lawsuits facing the industry, saying, "Let's end the coastal lawsuits, tell the industry and those that had left our state, that our state's open for business and we want you back."

Hunter Lundy, an Independent candidate, criticized past government leaders for failing to enforce compliance during the Jindal years, in which Stephen Waguespack, another Republican candidate, was chief of staff for part of the period. Lundy proposed policies that take a long-term view of energy sustainability, stating, "I'm not running for the next four years, I'm looking at 40 years down the road."

State Representative Richard Nelson, also a Repub-



State Senator Sharon Hewitt

lican, focused on job creation and education. Nelson believes that Louisiana's high schools should collaborate more closely with industry and local universities. "Our high schools need to do a better job of opening up their doors and bringing in industry, bringing in the local two-year school, bringing in the local four-year school," Nelson said.

Democrat Dr. Shawn Wilson emphasized the importance of Louisiana's people and their "tenacity" to lead and deliver in new spaces. He also highlighted the need for better STEM education, saying, "It's going to take our ability to take something that's very complicated and make it fun, make it exciting, throughout the educational career from K-12."

Waguespack, the former head of the Louisiana Association of Business and Industry, talked about the emerging energy investments in Louisiana and the importance of investing in the local people who know how to service them. He also criticized Attorney General Jeff



Hunter Lundy, Independent candidate



Democrat Dr. Shawn Wilson

Landry and Treasurer John Schroder, who were absent from the forum.

The candidates also discussed the Industrial Tax Exemption Program and the need for tax code reform.

"I want to give our kids and our grandkids a reason to stay in Louisiana and not a reason to leave," said Sen. Hewitt.

"I have the most world experience, and I've done everything...you'll understand I'll be the best governor you've ever



State Representative Richard Nelson



Waguespack, former head of the Louisiana Association of Business and Industry

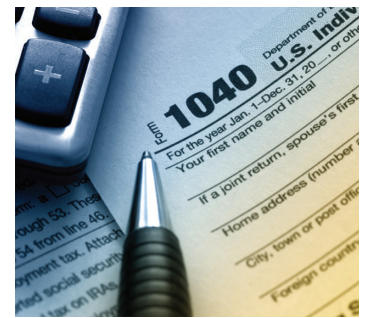
had," said Lundy.

Rep. Nelson promised to change the tax code and focus on education. "I will focus every day on education," he said.

"I am sick and tired of the brain drain," said Dr. Wilson.

Waguespack urged the crowd to vote for change, saying, "if you want the state to continue to be mediocre there are other people that you can vote for, but if you really want to change the direction of this state, then I need your help."

TAX INFORMATION



Louisiana state income tax filing, payment deadline is May 15

Individual income tax returns get automatic six-month filing extension

BATON ROUGE - The filing and payment deadline for 2022 Louisiana state individual income tax is Monday, May 15.

Taxpayers can file their returns electronically through Louisiana File Online, the state's free web portal for individual tax filers. They can also submit their returns using commercially available tax preparation software, or with printed state returns available at www.revenue.louisiana.gov/Forms.

Act 410 of the 2022 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature created an automatic six-month filing extension, available to taxpayers who need extra time to prepare their state individual income tax returns. For tax year 2022, the extended due date is Nov. 15, 2023. Individual taxpayers who cannot file their returns by May 15 do not need to

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Ochsner Health to Lay Off 770 Employees Across Louisiana and Mississippi Due to Economic Pressure

BATON ROUGE, La. - Ochsner Health, a healthcare provider based in Louisiana, announced on May 11 that it will be laying off around 2% of its team, or nearly 770 employees, across Louisiana and Mississippi due to a combination of economic factors. CEO Pete November informed the affected personnel of the pending layoffs in a message on Thursday.

The staff reductions will primarily impact management, administrative, and clerical positions, and will not affect doctors, nurses, and other personnel involved in direct patient care, according to Ochsner. The healthcare provider cited several factors, including increased labor costs, a nationwide shortage of patient care clinicians,

See LAY OFF, on page 5

WEATHER



MON. 05/15
Mostly Cloudy
High 86°.



WED. 05/17
Partly Cloudy
High 86°.



TUE. 05/16
Mostly Cloudy
High 85°.



THUR. 05/18
Mostly Cloudy
High 85°.

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The Weekly Press

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LOCAL & STATE

Fair Chance Ordinance Enacted in Baton Rouge to Augment Employment Opportunities for Ex-Convicts



NO Laurie Adams



YES Denise Amoroso



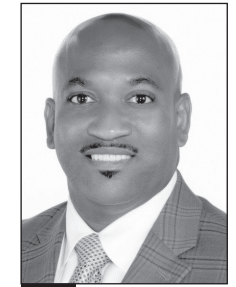
YES Chauna Banks



YES LaMont Cole



YES Carolyn Coleman



YES Cleve Dunn Jr.



NO Rowdy Gaudet



NO Dwight Hudson



YES Darryl Hurst



YES Aaron Moak



NO Brandon Noel



NO Jennifer Racca

BATON ROUGE, La. — The Metro Council of Baton Rouge has enacted the Fair Chance Ordinance aimed at mitigating recidivism rates, championing equity and justice, and fostering an equitable and impartial society. The novel ordinance, advocated by Councilwoman Chauna Banks, intends to furnish ex-convicts with the opportunity to secure gainful employment with contractors in the City-Parish, without disclosing their criminal record until their skill set is evaluated.

As Banks expounded, the innovative ordinance will aid many ex-convicts who have served their time to obtain gainful employment. She highlighted that enshrining the ordinance into law obviates any possibility of explicit bias. Mayor Sharon Weston Broome issued a statement commending the new ordinance, asserting that ex-convicts should be afforded a chance to vie for employment based on their abilities, qualifications, and latent potential. She added that creating a pathway to employment and entrepreneurship will bolster the economy, champion equity and justice, and curtail recidivism rates.

However, Councilman Dwight Hudson expressed misgivings that the ordinance would unjustly burden city contractors, necessitating them to operate contrary to their standard policies and procedures. Nonetheless, Councilman Aaron Moak, who initially sought to defer the item again, assented to the ordinance. His affirmative vote bolstered the ordinance, securing its passage by a 7-5 vote.

Banks expressed appreciation for Moak's support, underscoring that the ordinance is a pivotal stride toward a more inclusive and diverse society that values equal opportunities and second chances for all.

The new ordinance is poised to engender affirmative effects on Baton Rouge's criminal justice system and employment rates.

Comite River Clearing Project Progresses, Enhancing Drainage and Safety in East Baton Rouge Parish



Dedicated clearing crew hard at work, removing tons of material from the Comite River and making East Baton Rouge Parish a safer place for all.

BATON ROUGE, La. — Mayor-President Sharon Weston Broome announced an update on the ongoing Comite River Clearing Project, a vital project to enhance drainage in East Baton Rouge Parish.

"With every ton of material removed from the Comite River, we are one step closer to a safer and more resilient community," said Mayor Broome. "The progress we have achieved thus far is a testament to the dedication and hard work of the teams involved in this critical project. We remain committed to enhancing our drainage system and protecting our residents from potential flooding risks."

Since the project's commencement, substantial headway has been made, with 1626 tons of materi-

als successfully removed from the channel. The clearing efforts have advanced up to the Central Thruway, covering an impressive distance of approximately 3.75 miles.

The improvements made to the Comite River waterway have rendered it more transparent and navigable, significantly reducing potential obstructions. This achievement underscores the project's significance in enhancing the drainage system's overall efficiency, ensuring the community's safety and well-being.

Looking ahead, City-Parish anticipates receiving the permit from the US Army Corps of Engineers for the second phase in the near future. This significant milestone will mark another step forward in the ongoing efforts to

enhance drainage along the Comite River.

Mayor Broome thanks the dedicated individuals and teams in the Comite River Clearing Project. Their efforts, combined with the ongoing support and engagement of the community, are instrumental in driving positive change and building a brighter future for East Baton Rouge Parish.

TRUMP from page 1

probes in New York, Washington, DC, and Georgia. The former president's goodwill with GOP voters will again be tested in the coming months as primary debates are set to begin in August.

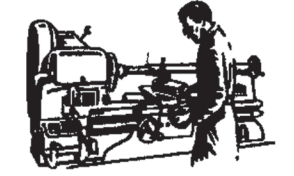
TAX from page 1

submit a paper or electronic extension form to obtain the automatic filing extension.

The automatic extension applies only to the filing of state income tax returns. It does not provide additional time to pay taxes due. Tax payments submitted after the May 15 deadline are subject to interest.

For more information about automatic filing extensions for state individual income tax returns, read Revenue Information Bulletin 23-012: Individual Income Tax Return Filing Extension.

READER INFORMATION



How to Reach Us
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The office is open 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday - Friday and located at 4910 Montecello Blvd. Baton Rouge, LA 70814

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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 225-775-200

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Lawmakers vote down abortion exceptions for rape and incest victims

Two proposed bills to amend the state's strict abortion ban fail in Republican-controlled House committee

Louisiana lawmakers on Wednesday failed to advance two bills that would have provided exceptions to the state's strict abortion ban for victims of rape and incest. The bills were part of a package of legislation filed in the current legislative session to expand abortion access.

New Orleans Democratic Rep. Delisha Boyd's House Bill 346 proposed exempting all victims of rape or incest who become pregnant from the abortion ban, but it failed to exit the committee on a 10-5 party-line vote, with Democrats voting for the exceptions and Republicans voting against them. House Bill 549 from Rep. Cedric Glover, D-Shreveport, which sought exceptions specifically for children who suffer rape or incest, also failed along party lines with nine Republicans voting no and five Democrats voting in favor of the bill.

Louisiana Governor John Bel Edwards, a Democrat and a pro-life supporter, had long pushed for rape and incest exemptions to the state's ban, which took effect after the Supreme Court overturned Roe v. Wade last summer. Despite most Louisiana lawmakers opposing abortion, a majority of Louisianans support such exceptions, according to a poll conducted on behalf of pro-abortion groups by John Couvillon, a Baton Rouge-based Republican political analyst.

During the hearing, Representative Boyd shared that she was born to a 15-year-old mother who was raped by a 28-year-old man. She recounted her mother suffering in the aftermath of her rape and said that, although she was grateful to be alive, she wished her mother had had the choice to terminate the pregnancy — a choice she said should be avail-

able to all abuse survivors.

Anti-abortion witnesses offered a full-throated defense of keeping the ban in place in all instances, arguing on religious and moral grounds that the bills would be detrimental to rape and incest survivors. They said a woman's wish to get an abortion is likely a misguided one, regardless of how the pregnancy occurred.

The package of bills before the criminal justice committee Wednesday comprised the bulk

of legislation filed in the current legislative session to expand abortion access. Also before the committee was House Bill 522 by Rep. Aimee Freeman, D-New Orleans, which would make it easier for doctors to navigate the ban by fining physicians instead of sending them to jail for performing abortions. Freeman ultimately deferred a vote on the bill, saying she plans to work on amendments to build support on the criminal justice committee, which holds a strong

Republican majority.

The committee also deferred Slidell Republican Rep. Mary Du-Buisson's House Bill 461, which seeks to clarify that treatment for miscarriages does not fall under the definition of an abortion. Rep.

Candace Newell, D-New Orleans, also deferred her HB 598, which would create exceptions to the abortion ban for ectopic pregnancies. Both measures could be revisited by the House Health and Welfare Committee next week.

The failure of the bills highlights the steep odds supporters of abortion access face as lawmakers, doctors, and activists on both sides of the issue adjust priorities to meet demands of the post-Roe landscape.

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MOVIE IN THE GARDEN: FAE FEST
Independence Community Park Botanical Garden
May 6 | noon-4 p.m.

ZOO + ME MORNINGS
Baton Rouge Zoo
May 9 | 9:30-11:30 a.m.

PLUS NIGHT
Highland Road Park Observatory
May 13 | 7-10 p.m.

SUNSHINE SOCIAL: ROLLING OUT THE RED CARPET
Milton J. Womack Park
May 19 | 6-9 p.m.

FAMILY GAME NIGHT
Cedar Ridge Drive Park
May 19 | 6-7:30 p.m.

HERO APPRECIATION DAY
Liberty Lagoon
May 20 | 10 a.m.-7 p.m.

SOLAR VIEWING
Highland Road Park Observatory
May 20 | noon-2 p.m.

SWAMP BIRTHDAY PARTY
Bluebonnet Swamp Nature Center
May 20 | 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

STEM EXPANSION
Highland Road Park Observatory
May 20 | 3:30-7:30 p.m.

MAKE A SPLASH
Liberty Lagoon
May 24 | 3-6 p.m.

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RELIGION

Crystal Aikin Returns With Power Packed Anthem 'He Can Handle It'



Crystal Aikin, a powerhouse vocalist who blazed a trail as the first winner of BET Sunday Best, has released her new song 'He Can Handle It'.

Aikin has continued to shine her light as a dynamic worship leader and psalmist. Aikin is back at radio with a new single that is sure to stir hearts and captivate the ears of listeners. "He Can Handle It" is a declarative anthem that can be sung amongst congregations across the world. It speaks to the power and presence of Jesus and what He's able to do. The lyrics say "no more heartbreak, no more sadness...He can handle it...I know He can and He will, He can Handle it...". Aikin delivers the drive with such power and conviction.

Gospel and urban-influenced praise & worship singer Crystal Aikin grew up in Tacoma, WA, participating early in the choirs and singing groups at her local

See **AIKIN**, on page 6

A Godly Attitude In Times Of Adversity

by Creflo Dollar

Our attitude can make the difference between success and failure. It's one of the first things people notice when they come face to face with us. If we're not careful, we can let the world's influences affect our mindset and make us slip into a wrong way of thinking. Guarding our minds against attacks from the devil by maintaining the right mindset helps us keep the right attitude when trouble hits.

We may not realize how much we depend on ourselves until something happens, and we think we can work things out on our own. This stems from pride, which is all around us. We struggle uselessly until we realize that we need the help of someone much stronger, wiser, and more knowledgeable to guide us through. "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths" (Proverbs 3:5, 6). This is a humbling realization, but it moves us into the place where we need to be in order for God to be able to deliver us.

Life has many moving parts, and only God knows exactly what's up ahead and out of sight



on our Christian walk. Relying on ourselves often leads to failure; relying on Him dramatically increases our chances of success. No one wants to stay stuck in a painful situation and keep suffering. However, God uses it to burn out the self-reliance we didn't even know we had and to refine our trust in Him. "In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed" (1 Peter 1:6, 7, NIV).

Suffering hardships brings us to the place where we have to admit that we need God. We can't

do anything without Him. God is our source for everything; the sooner we learn to rely on Him, the quicker He can get involved in our situation. "I am the Vine; you are the branches. Whoever lives in Me and I in him bears much (abundant) fruit. However, apart from Me [cut off from vital union with Me] you can do nothing" (John 15:5, AMP). Trusting in ourselves cuts us off from God.

Satan is hard at work in the world, causing pain and spreading misery. God isn't to blame for the bad things that happen; however, He uses them to mature us spiritually and strengthen our faith in Him. Suffering provides an opportunity to realign our attitudes to God's way of thinking.

See **ATTITUDE**, on page 5

Tina Campbell, Kelontae Gavin and More To Perform On The 8th Annual Black Music Honors



The 2023 Black Music Honors unveils its awe-inspiring roster of performers, poised to honor the music that has captivated and influenced generations with a special live taping at Atlanta's Cobb Energy Performing Arts Centre on Friday, May 19.

Exhilarating performances are slated by music heavyweights including belting vocalist and Reality TV superstar Tamar Braxton; the sweet-sounding and quartet-influenced Anthony Hamilton feat. The Ton3s; powerhouse singer and Gospel staple Tina Campbell of Mary Mary; falsetto-serenader and diamond-selling recording artist Robin Thicke; Hip-Hop & R&B superwoman Lil' Mo; modern soul man and crooner Kenny Lattimore; influential 90's R&B group 702; three-time GRAMMY-nominated, "The Love King," Raheem DeVaughn; Chicago soulful veteran Dave Hollister; melodic songbird and actress Elle Varner; six-time ASCAP award-winning singer-songwriter Sevyn Streeter; multi-talented singer-songwriter Nicole Wray; southern hummingbird and songstress Tweet; contemporary Gospel vocalist and pastor Beverly Crawford; Gospel soloist and Sunday Best winner Le'Andria Johnson; Gospel award-winning singer-songwriter Zacardi Cortez; member of the multi-platinum R&B group

Xscape and inspirational artist Latocha Scott; raspy-tone Gospel singer and composer Melvin Williams; retro R&B/Soul trio The Shindellas; New Orleans rapper Juvenile; Gospel viral sensation and songster Kelontae Gavin; and dynamic gospel chorale ensemble Kevin Lemons & Higher Calling.

"As we come together to celebrate the rich cultural milestone that is Black Music Month, we get the unique opportunity to showcase the depth and breadth of talent within the Black music community," says Founder and Executive Producer Don Jackson. "The vibrant future of Black music will be epitomized by captivating performances while spotlighting the unforgettable legacies of musical greats and their diverse contributions."

The late Bobby Caldwell will be recognized with a special salute for his over 25-year career as an acclaimed in-demand songwriter and soul performer. Other honors for the celebration include Music Innovator Icon tapped to be received by Hip-Hop superstar Missy Elliott; Urban Music Icon to be presented to girl group SWV; R&B Music Icon awarded to singer-songwriter Evelyn "Champagne" King; Legends Award snagged by R&B/Soul crooner Jeffrey Osborne; and Gospel Music Icon set to be

See **MUSIC**, on page 5

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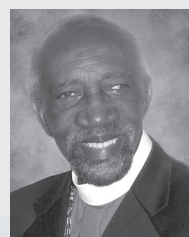
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BUSINESS

African American Jobless Rate Hits Lowest in U.S. History



The employment report for April showed that the unemployment rate for Black people in the United States decreased by three-tenths of a percentage point, which is not an insignificant drop

BY STACY M. BROWN
NNPA Newswire Senior National Correspondent

According to the freshly published jobs report for April, the jobless rate for African Americans in the United States maintained its steady slide to new historic levels, just one month after hitting a record low for the previous lowest level ever recorded. On Friday morning, the Bureau of Labor Statistics revealed that the

unemployment rate for African Americans dropped below 5% for the first time in US history. This is new ground for the labor force in the country.

The employment report for April showed that the unemployment rate for Black people in the United States declined by three-tenths of a percentage point, a drop that cannot be considered negligible.

The employment report for April showed that the unemploy-

ment rate for Black people in the United States decreased by three-tenths of a percentage point, which is not an insignificant drop. That represents a 4.7% decrease overall.

Meanwhile, the unemployment rate for Black men, in particular, and for Black youths, fell.

After Black women reached a historic low in joblessness in March, their unemployment rate slightly increased, according to a jobs report.

Overall, the rate of joblessness in the United States has fallen to its lowest point in half a century, at 3.4%.

The rate includes white workers, and their rate fell one-tenth of a percentage point, reaching 3.1%.

Bharat Ramamurti, the deputy director of the White House National Economic Council, referred to it as "an incredible milestone."

LAY OFF from page 1

a weakened economy, and high inflation, which have caused supply costs to escalate, as the reasons for the layoffs.

"Non-direct patient care positions" are the only positions impacted by the layoffs, and clinical personnel affected by the reductions will be given the option to assume direct patient care roles, Ochsner said. The company remains confident that the workforce reduction will not impact its ability to provide "excellent, compassionate care" to its patients and communities, according to November.

Ochsner Health has no plans for additional system-wide workforce reductions at this time, company officials said.

MUSIC from page 4

received by gospel trailblazers The Hawkins Family.

The dynamic duo of Grammy-winning artist LeToya Luckett and acclaimed comedian DeRay Davis return as co-hosts with their infectious charisma and electric energy. The televised tribute will debut on the Stellar Network TV June 3 with national broadcast syndication

starting June 10 - July 2 and an airing on Bounce TV June 19. The 8th Annual Black Music Honors is presented by Procter and Gamble. Sponsors include AT&T, General Motors, Johnson & Johnson, State Farm, Verizon and Walmart. The 8th Annual Black Music Honors show is Executive Produced by Don Jackson with Jennifer J. Jackson serving as Producer and Executive in Charge of Production; and Michael A. Johnson as Producer and Director.

ATTITUDE from page 4

"Therefore, since Christ suffered in his body, arm yourselves also with the same attitude, because whoever suffers in the body is done with sin. As a result, they do not live the rest of their earthly lives for evil human desires, but rather for the will of God" (1 Peter 4:1, 2, NIV). Suffering is never God's will for us, but letting it burn out all

self-reliance in us is His will. Suffering is only transitory. A godly mindset helps us think past the temporary to the eternal. "But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you" (1 Peter 5:10, NKJV). From this perspective, it's well worth the brief encounter.

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IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF ARIZONA IN AND FOR THE COUNTY OF MARICOPA JUVENILE DIVISION CASE NO. JS21560 NOTICE OF HEARING ON PETITION FOR TERMINATION PARENT-CHILD RELATIONSHIP

In the Matter of:
ELIZABETH MONK DOB: July 22, 2009
Person under 18 years of age.

TO: Fadia Erica ElMohamed aka Fadia Monk
Petitioners, Brandon Vincent Monk and Jessica LeeAnn Monk, having filed with this Court a verified Petition to Terminate Parent-Child Relationship between Elizabeth Monk and her Natural Mother, Fadia Erica ElMohamed aka Fadia Monk.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that a hearing on the Petition to Terminate Parent-Child Relationship is scheduled for the 22nd day of June, 2023, at the hour of 9:15 o'clock, a.m. (Arizona time), before the Honorable Pamela Gates in the Maricopa County Superior Court, Juvenile Division at the Old Court House located at: 125 West Washington Street, Phoenix, Arizona 85003, for the purpose of determining whether any parent named herein is contesting the allegations in the Petition for Termination.

The hearing will be virtual. You may contact the division at 602-506-6391. You may use the following link <https://inyurfi.com/jbazznc-ju77> to connect to the hearing or call in at the time of the hearing to 917-781-4590 and use Conference ID: 447-368-555#. You have a right to appear as a party in this proceeding. The failure of a parent to appear at the initial hearing, the pretrial conference, the status conference or the termination adjudication hearing without good cause may result in an adjudication terminating the parent-child relationship of that parent.

Failure to appear at a hearing may result in a finding that the parent has waived legal rights, including the right to trial to a jury, and is deemed to have admitted the allegations in the motion or petition for termination. The parent shall be advised that the hearings may go forward in the absence of the parent and may result in the termination of parental rights based upon the record and evidence presented.

In the event a named parent appears and enters a contest to the allegations, a trial will be scheduled for a later date. If a named parent does not contest the allegations, then that parent's rights shall be terminated on the above date and time.

The above-named individual may obtain a copy of the Notice of Hearing and Petition to Terminate Parent-Child Relationship by submitting a written request to: **Kristy B. Blackwell**, Attorney at Law, 3920 S. Alma School Rd., Ste. 5, Chandler, AZ 85248. A request for reasonable accommodation for persons with disabilities must be made to the Court by parties at least three (3) working days in advance of a scheduled court proceeding.

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Systems Services, Inc seeks an Odoo Developer in Baton Rouge, LA

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Req't: Bachelor of Science (B.S.) in Computer Science, Computer Engineering, or related degree; College-level course work in an Intro U.S. Accounting course; 1 year Odoo development exp, must include customizing existing apps and creating new modules with clean and re-usable code in different Odoo versions (V12, V13, V14, V15); 6 months' programming exp with JavaScript, XML, HTML, and SQL; 6 months' exp using Python, GitHub, Odoo.SH, and Docker; Candidate must be able to successfully extend an Odoo module given a set of customer specifications.

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Travelers of Christ Evangelistic Academy Graduates its First High School Student



Kelsey Sanders celebrates with her baby girl, mom, and aunt at the Travelers of Christ Evangelistic Academy graduation ceremony.

BATON ROUGE, La. — On May 10, 2023, the Travelers of Christ Evangelistic Academy celebrated a major milestone as they graduated their first high school student, Kelsey Sanders. Despite facing numerous challenges along the way, Kelsey remained determined to achieve her goal of obtaining her diploma.

Dr. Joyce Turner Keller, founder of the academy, expressed

her pride in Kelsey's accomplishments and her gratitude for being a part of her journey. Kelsey's family, including her baby girl, mom, and aunt, were also in attendance to show their support and celebrate her achievement.

As Kelsey walked across the stage to receive her diploma, the room erupted in cheers and applause. It was a touching moment that demonstrated the power of

determination and hard work in overcoming obstacles.

Kelsey's graduation is a testament to the success of the Travelers of Christ Evangelistic Academy and the impact it has on its students. As Kelsey moves forward to pursue her career and higher education, she will always have the support and encouragement of the academy behind her.

Louisiana Senate Committee approves bill to raise minimum wage to \$14 per hour by 2028

A bill proposing an increase in Louisiana's minimum wage to \$14 per hour by 2028 has been approved by the Labor & Industrial Relations Committee of the Louisiana State Senate. Sponsored by State Senator Gary Carter, SB149 received a 3-2 vote in favor of the proposed increase. The bill calls for a gradual increase in minimum wage, starting with \$10 an hour from January 1, 2024, \$12 an hour from January 1, 2026, and \$14 an hour from January 1, 2028.

This proposed increase in the minimum wage is part of Louisiana Governor John Bel Edwards' legislative package. In response to the committee's decision, Edwards expressed gratitude and emphasized the urgency of the matter. "It is embarrassing and immoral that our minimum wage is still the federal minimum of \$7.25 an hour in 2023. I urge the full Senate to pass this bill," said Edwards.

Despite this, a companion bill in the Louisiana House failed to make it out of committee. The National Federation of Independent Business opposed SB149, describing it as an ill-conceived, harmful, and unnecessary bill. The organization argued that small business owners are already paying more than the federal minimum wage to attract and retain the best candidates. If the state minimum wage is increased to \$10 an hour, employers will be forced to make difficult decisions to balance higher wages with rising costs. This could mean cutting positions or reducing hours, which would ultimately harm the very people the supporters of the bill seek to help.

SB149 will now be debated

by the full Senate. This increase in the minimum wage could benefit many Louisiana residents, giving them a fairer wage and potentially lifting them out of

poverty. However, the bill's opponents have warned of potential negative consequences, making the debate over the bill's passage all the more important.

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AIKIN from page 4

church. Eventually she found herself taking on more and more lead singing and directing duties, even as she worked long hours as an emergency room nurse at a Catholic hospital in Tacoma. Everything changed, though, when she became a contestant on the first season of BET's high-profile gospel competition Sunday Best in 2007. Aikin was clearly a fan favorite and was the first season winner, turning the exposure into a record and production contract. Her debut album, the self-titled Crystal Aikin, appeared in 2009 from Zomba Gospel.



NEW FROM THE CITY OF BAKER NEWS

BREC Strategic Planning Community Advisory Committee Accepting Applications

The BREC Strategic Planning Community Advisory Committee is seeking applicants who will set the foundation for future Community Advisory Committees, as well as future Friends of BREC Parks, through their new Community Engagement Policy.

This committee will be a part of making their community's voice heard.

BREC is looking for a diverse group to comprise this 15-member committee.

Being recipients of a grant from the Trust for Public Land for this project will allow BREC to compensate each CAC member a total of at least \$1,000, with eligibility for additional funds

for those members who qualify for financial assistance.

If you are interested or if you know a community resident that would be interested in being a part of this endeavor with us, please encourage them to apply at the link below.

BREC will begin reviewing applications by May 22, 2023, so that they can begin the selection process by the beginning of June.

Apply today at Survey Participation visit <https://survey.sogolytics.com/survey1.aspx?k=RQsRTSSRYsQQXsPsPsP&lang=0> (sogolytics.com)

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Louisiana Housing Corporation

Phase 1 of the rehabilitation will initially start with homes located in the historic Leland Community. This is for qualified owner-occupied properties needing not more than \$40,000 in repairs.

How Can I Qualify

- Home must be located within the incorporated city limits of Baker
- Single-parent households with child(ren) under the age of 18;
- Elderly person age 62 or older) and/or
- Disabled person with specific physical or mental impairment.
- Clear title to the property
- Proof of hazard insurance
- Annual household income classified as "very low income" not to exceed 50% of area median income for Baton Rouge Metro (see chart below)

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BR PARISH	31,050	35,500	39,950	44,350

2022 INCOME GUIDELINES

What Documents Will I Need?

Acceptable Forms of Proof of Income

- Check Stubs
- W-2
- 1099
- Social Security Award Letter

Proof of Ownership

- Deed
- Mortgage Statement
- Current Year Property tax receipt

Proof of Insurance

- Policy Declarations Page
- Payment Receipt

Picture ID Required before meeting with the intake personnel.

APPLICATION INTAKE LOCATION

CONTACT
Reatha Wright (225) 615-4174
Juandrika Allen (225) 975-0007

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