

The Weekly Press

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La. lawmaker presents plan to improve women's healthcare

BATON ROUGE, La. The quality of women's healthcare in Louisiana is ranked one of the lowest in the country, and one state lawmaker believes she has a plan to turn that around.



Sen. Regina Barrow

"Women have a lot of different moving parts. We got much plumbing, right?" said Sen. Regina Barrow (D) jokingly Wednesday morning in the Senate Health and Welfare committee.

With the quality of health for Louisiana women at some of the lowest in the country, Sen. Barrow believes her bill is part of the answer to that problem. It would put all women's services the state has to offer under one umbrella in its own office at the state's Department of Health.

To ensure that the delivery of care has somewhat continuity, and it's maximized as it relates to the delivery of care for women," Sen. Barrow said.

The new department would look closely at where women's healthcare could use the most improvements and provide those resources.

"Certainly, maternal health is one of the things that we rank almost last in, behavioral health as it relates to women, and then certainly for aging women," Barrow explained.

Lawmakers unanimously agreed that our women's health af-

See **HEALTHCARE**, on page 5

LAST WEEKS STORIES

- Louisiana lawmakers consider making 'vaccine discrimination' a crime
- Faith our only option
- Louisiana drivers could have to keep their hands off their cell-phones
- High fuel prices won't bring jobs to Louisiana because companies won't drill, expert says
- FDA warns against use of certain unauthorized COVID antigen

WEATHER

MON. 03/28
Partly Cloudy
High 85°.

TUE. 03/29
Partly Cloudy
High 66°.

WED. 3/30
Partly Cloudy
High 83°.

THUR. 03/31
Partly Cloudy
High 72°.

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GOP attack, interrupt in final day of questioning U.S. Supreme Court nominee



Supreme Court nominee Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson, during her Senate Judiciary Committee confirmation hearing on March 23, 2022. Kent Nishimura/Los Angeles Times/Getty Images

BY: ARIANA FIGUEROA

WASHINGTON — On the third day of hearings Wednesday on the nomination of Ketanji Brown Jackson to the U.S. Supreme Court, several Republicans on the U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee interrogated her about sentences she handed down for child pornography offenses, disagreeing vehemently with her judicial decisions.

Republicans grilled her with questions she had already answered about seven cases — out of hundreds she handled as a federal district court judge — that dealt with child pornography in an attempt to paint her as soft on offenders convicted of heinous charges.

Jackson, in response to Sens.

Lindsay Graham, Ted Cruz, and Josh Hawley, defended her record — despite numerous interruptions from the senators — and attempted to explain the complexity of federal sentencing, as she had on Tuesday.

She objected to Hawley and other Republicans' focus on sentencing in such a small number of cases, repeating throughout the day that "no one case can stand in for a judge's entire record."

Democrats on the 22-member committee stressed her qualifications and her high ratings from law enforcement groups like the Fraternal Order of Police. Sen. Jon Ossoff, a Georgia Democrat, invited Jackson to talk about her brother, who is a law enforcement officer, as well as her two uncles who served in law enforcement.

"We looked up to them, and we understood through their service what it meant to give back to your community," Jackson said of her uncles.

New Jersey Democrat Cory Booker used his time not to question Jackson, but to defend her from the attacks launched by Republicans.

Booker called the bombardment "a new low" that "set a dangerous precedent." Jackson is "a mainstream judge," he said. Most federal judges sentence child pornography offenders to less than federal guidelines call for, he said.

Jackson, if confirmed, would be the first Black woman and first former public defender to serve on the Supreme Court. She was

See **NOMINEE**, on page 2

Louisiana schools could face deadline to install cameras in special needs classrooms

Some school systems have yet to start implementation



BY: JC CANICOSA

Louisiana schools may be required to install cameras in special needs classrooms by year's end. But that's only if the state finds the money to support the initiative.

Last year, the Louisiana Legislature approved a law that added that requirement, but some schools have yet to implement the technology.

"Parents would like to see the school districts at least develop a policy," said Sen. Franklin Foil, R-Baton Rouge.

Foil authored last year's bill and Senate Bill 45, which would add a Dec. 31, 2022, deadline for schools to implement policies relating to adding cameras in special needs classrooms.

"So when and if funding becomes available, it can be enacted fairly quickly," said Foil, who's proposal doesn't include funding for the camera.

Ethan Melancon, director of governmental affairs for the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, said finding the money for cameras in the classrooms has been "tricky."

"We have been exploring this for a while... We've reached dead

ends across every avenue we've looked," Melancon told the committee.

While school systems did receive funding from the American Rescue Plan, most of it can only be spent on specific pandemic-related costs such as contact tracing and other COVID-19 costs, Danielle Mitchell, deputy chief of operations for the Louisiana Department of Education, said.

The education department doesn't know how many Louisiana schools have put cameras in special needs classrooms, Mitchell said.

During testimony on Foil's bill in the Senate Education Committee last year, East Baton Rouge parent Mary Elizabeth Christian said her daughter Grace, who has autism, epilepsy and a neuromuscular disorder, was restrained without her consent while in preschool.

"My beautiful curly headed girl had been strapped to a chair every day," Christian said. "I think this bill is another step in protecting our children. Children who cannot speak for themselves and are vulnerable."

Kathleen Cannino of St. Tammany Parish, mother of a child with

See **SCHOOLS**, on page 3

Kyiv counterattack pushes back invaders

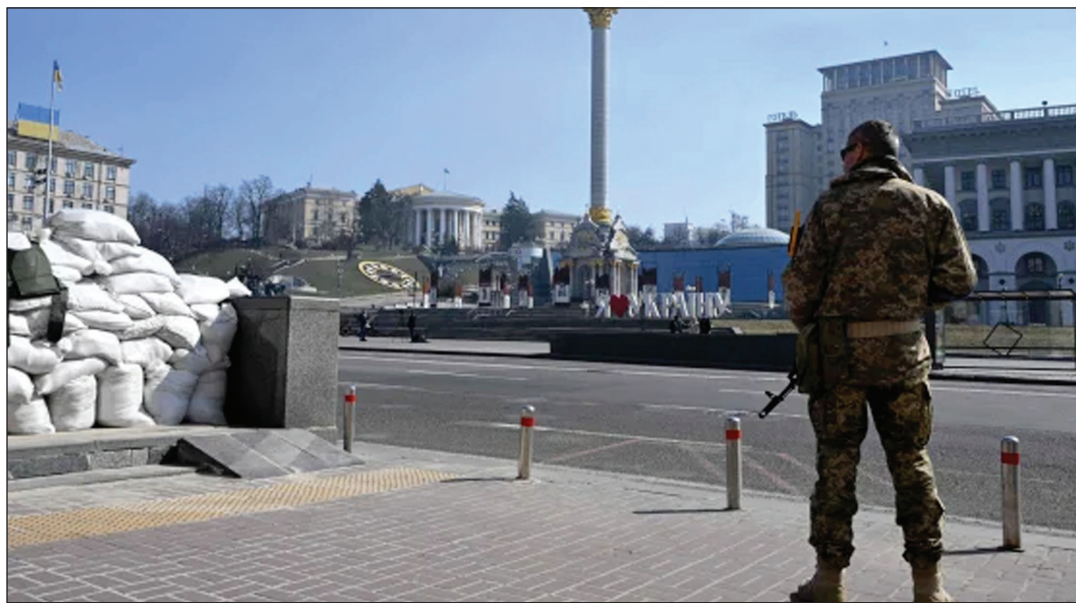
KYIV, Ukraine — As Russian missile strikes continued to cause fires, terrorize residents and turn buildings to rubble here Wednesday, Ukrainian forces seemingly managed to push back Vladimir Putin's invading army from the capital's outer edges.

Inside a city administration building, two Ukrainian generals helping to lead the counterattack pored over a map detailing the movement of their country's forces and the areas they had apparently recaptured. This is where officials from the city's police, military and local government are meeting, planning and monitoring the war.

Gen. Andrea Kryshenko and Gen. Serhii Knyazev said Wednesday that Ukraine regained significant territory around Kyiv in the past two days — a potential sign that the war, which enters the second month, could undergo a shift as Russian forces struggle to advance on the country's capital.

A U.S. defense official corroborated the claim, saying that the Russian military had pushed from the east to as close as 12 miles from Kyiv. After the counteroffensive, those forces had retreated to about 34 miles away from the city, the official added.

But some military experts



A Ukrainian service member stands guard at Independence Square in Kyiv on March 23, 2022.

have cautioned that it's hard to tell whether the gains Ukraine claims to have made in the past 48 hours are real. Even if they are, they say, the coming days will be incredibly important as Putin could deploy even more lethal weapons in his bid to break Kyiv's defenses and as Ukraine struggles to hold the southern port city of Mariupol.

Knyazev, the former head of Ukraine's National Police and

now a military and police adviser, said that the city's defenders have used local waterways, ridges and geographic features to help push back the Russian forces.

"The head commander of Ukrainian ground forces manages the Kyiv defenses," he said, "and the tactical moves that they deployed allowed us to take back the settlements that are important for further counteroffensive ac-

tions."

It marks a notable, though fragile, potential breakthrough around which Ukrainians are rallying.

The country's defense ministry said Tuesday that it had taken back Makariv, a town roughly 40 miles west of Kyiv on a key highway. And the Bucha City Council said in a Facebook post that the Ukrainian military had surrounded its

town, as well as the Kyiv suburbs of Irpin and Hostomel, cutting Russian forces off from supplies and support.

With few reporters on the front lines, it is difficult to verify these accounts. But government officials say recent days have brought the biggest counteroffensive since the start of the invasion — and they intend to continue the push.

Other counteroffensives had also appeared effective.

The Russian drive through Kyiv's suburbs in the northwest was stymied, the defense official said, and its army there had started "digging in" and taking up defensive positions. An assault further north of Kyiv, in Chernihiv, had stalled, and the Russian forces had been unable to advance near Mykolaiv in the south.

"We need to liberate all of our territories, so of course we will push them back and destroy them," said Kryshenko, the former Kyiv chief of police who now serves as the deputy head of the Kyiv City Military Administration.

Current and former Ukrainian defense officials said that, at least for the moment, their efforts had helped solve multiple problems for the country's military.



LOCAL & STATE

Over One Billion in Disaster Recovery Funds for Ida, Spring Floods Heading to Louisiana

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The Department of Housing and Urban Development announced a total allocation of nearly \$3 billion in Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) funds to help communities recover from disasters, move back into permanent housing, and build inclusive resilience to climate change.

Louisiana is receiving the following allocation, totaling nearly \$1.3 billion:

- State of Louisiana is receiving \$1,272,346,000.
- Baton Rouge is receiving \$4,648,000.
- Lake Charles is receiving \$10,776,000.

"Today's announcement is yet another example of the federal government showing up for the people of Louisiana," said Congressman Troy Carter. "This more than \$1.27 billion infusion into our state will not only help communities rebuild and recover from Hurricane Ida and recent floods, but will help build long-term strength and resiliency in our systems. These

funds, along with the Infrastructure Law, are historic investments for Louisiana. I am proud to have supported and voted for these efforts."

With today's allocations, HUD has now allocated the remaining funds of the \$5 billion for CDBG disaster recovery funds appropriated from the disaster aid supplemental measure that the House passed on September 30th, 2021. Congressman Carter was proud to vote in support of this measure and bring home billions to Louisiana.

In February, Congressman Carter joined his delegation members in a letter calling for more federal disaster relief resources as well as the allocation of funds from the September disaster supplemental. Today's announcement meets many of the letter's requests.



Congressman Troy Carter

Louisiana lawmakers consider making 'vaccine discrimination' a crime

Asking someone about their shot status could become a crime in Louisiana as lawmakers debate a bill targeting "vaccine discrimination" in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

House Bill 54 by Republican Rep. Larry Bagley of Stonewall would prohibit barring anyone from entering a business, government office, or home-based on his or her vaccine status.

"I think as an American citizen it's my right to choose what I put in my body (without fear of discrimination)," Bagley said as he presented his bill to the House Criminal Justice Committee Thursday.

Bagley, who is fully vaccinated for COVID-19 but hasn't taken the booster, testified he believes the shot caused him to suffer a heart attack that he said caused him to die before being revived.

"I'd rather see something prohibiting the government from enforcing this rather than making it a crime," said Republican Mandeville Rep. Richard Nelson.

"We're now telling businesses what to do?" said Democratic Baton Rouge Rep. Denise Marcelle. "I don't want to impose our laws on private business owners."

There was a motion to move Bagley's bill forward favorably, but Bagley agreed to work on members' concerns before bringing it back for a vote.

Before deferring the bill the committee amended it to eliminate jail time as one of the penalties, limiting the penalties to a maximum \$1,000 fine. The bill would cover all vaccines, not just the COVID-19 jabs.

During Thursday's debate, Bagley questioned the safety of the COVID-19 vaccines, which is contrary to the Food and Drug Administration's determination that the vaccines are safe and effective.

"We've never known if it was 100% safe," Bagley said. "No vaccine is 100% safe. This isn't even close. If I had the chance to make the decision again, I would not make that choice."

Louisiana to receive over \$1.7B in funding for Hurricanes Laura, Delta, and Ida

Baton Rouge will get \$4.6M of allocation



FILE - Debris and electrical wires are piled up in a front yard in Chauvin, La., on Sept. 27, 2021. In the aftermath of Hurricane Ida, Louisiana lawmakers said Wednesday, Dec. 1, 2021 they are seeing slow responses to damage claims, constant switch-ups of insurance adjusters assessing the destruction and low payment offers forcing people unnecessarily into litigation to get a fair deal. (AP Photo/Jessie Wardarski)(Jessie Wardarski | AP)

BATON ROUGE, La. — Louisiana will receive nearly \$1.7 billion from the federal government for Hurricanes Laura, Delta, and Ida that hit the state between 2020 and 2021, state lawmakers announced Tuesday, March 22.

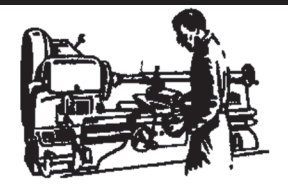
Rep. Garret Graves explained the state is being allocated \$1,287,770,000 in disaster relief for natural disasters thanks to a law passed in Sept. 2021.

Sen. Bill Cassidy explained areas in the state, which were specifically impacted by Hurricanes Laura and Delta, will also receive an additional \$450 million in supplemental disaster aid for those hurricanes.

"Within one month of Hurricane Ida's landfall, we secured billions of dollars in federal funding to help south Louisiana recover and are continuing to work on more funds. This is welcomed news, but it

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READER INFORMATION



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BR Pastor Releases New Book: The Purpose of a Seed

Bishop Charles Wallace comes from humble beginnings. He often refers to himself as a bot from the park, referring to the area of Baton Rouge, Louisiana, named Eden Park, where he was reared. He attributes his success to the grace of God in his life.

He has been married to his wife, Gladys, for forty-nine years. They have been blessed with three beautiful daughters, two sons-in-law, grandsons, Solomon and Samuel, who are the light of their lives.

Bishop Wallace is the Senior Pastor of Oasis Christian Church. Oasis is a church that loves God, hates sin, and is always willing to give. The Purpose of a Seed was inspired by the Holy Spirit. When read and applied, this book will be life-changing.

This book will inform you step by step on how a seed produces the harvest within. The seed is God's way of reproducing. All of nature understands the concept. So, get ready to be informed and inspired for productivity for the Kingdom of God.

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NOMINEE from page 1

born in Washington, D.C., but grew up in Florida and would be the first Floridian to sit on the high court. She graduated from Miami Palmetto Senior High School before going on to Harvard College and Harvard Law School.

It is not yet clear if any Republicans in the evenly divided Senate will back her nomination. If there's a tie 50-50 floor vote on the confirmation, it would be broken by Vice President Kamala Harris. GOP barrage

Time and again Republicans on Wednesday returned to questions about child pornography. Hawley, a Missouri Republican, asked Jackson

if she regretted giving sentences that he believed were not long enough.

"What I regret is that in a hearing about my qualifications to be a justice on the Supreme Court, we've spent a lot of time focusing on this small subset of my sentences, and I've tried to explain —," she said, before Hawley cut her off.

"Do you regret your cases? I don't understand," Hawley said.

Cruz, a Texas Republican, accused her and the chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee, Dick Durbin, of "filibustering" her responses.

Throughout Jackson's exchange with Cruz, Durbin asked him to allow Jackson to respond to his questions instead of interrupting her.

"You don't want her to answer

that question?" Cruz said, later accusing Durbin of trying to hide her response from "the American people."

"You wouldn't let her answer anyways," Durbin said.

Durbin also had to repeatedly intervene with Graham, a South Carolina Republican, to ask that he allow Jackson to answer questions instead of interrupting her.

Graham asked her questions about Justice Brett Kavanaugh and if she would like to be treated the way he was during his confirmation hearing, and if she thought that treatment would be fair. Accusations of sexual assault were made against Kavanaugh in his extremely contentious confirmation hearing in 2018.

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Councilman Charles Vincent's Friendly Neighbor Keeper Initiative to #KeepBakerBeautiful Big Success on March 19



BAKER, LA – On March 19, 2022 the City of Baker held the Annual City-wide Clean-up event in conjunction with Councilman Vincent's Friendly Neighbor Keeper Initiative. The initiative, which he has been championing since 2016 was a great success with many volunteers participating across multiple districts in both residential and commercial areas.

Alongside Councilman, Charles Vincent was Mayor Darnell Waites, Police Chief Carl Dunn, Councilman Robert Young, City of Baker Public Works Director Timmie Sept and staff as well as City of Baker Buildings and Grounds staff supporting the clean-up efforts. The Baker Chamber of Commerce sponsored the event which was a great opportunity for members of the community and leaders to come together to work toward the goal of a litter-free Baker. Mayor Waites said, "Residents of Baker take pride in the way their city looks and ensuring that we Keep Baker Beautiful is of the utmost importance to my administration and Dr. Vincent has been a key player and champion of litter abatement. I appreciate his long-term efforts and plan to make the City-wide clean-up a quarterly event."

Community clean-ups are important for supporting the local economy and promoting tourism. As we all know litter impacts the image and perception of an area, making it unwelcoming and unattractive. Historically, the City of Baker was

considered the cleanest community in the Baton Rouge metropolitan area. When a community is clean, both in public and private spaces, it increases its value and contributes to building a safe and welcoming environment for everyone.

These efforts also ensure that wildlife is protected by helping to eliminate harmful pollution. There are many instances of illegal dumping that happen in and around the city, and it is paramount to understand that illegally dumped trash is destructive. It harms the water quality of local streams and rivers and can impede the drainage of runoff, which creates a blockage of streams, culverts, and drainage basins which can and does lead to flooding. Economically, property values decrease as a result

of illegal dumping which affects all residents and businesses in the city as well as the local tax base which in turn, affects the ability of the local government to address the needs of the community. Ultimately, if you see someone illegally dumping say something. You can contact the Baker Police Department to report illegal dumping at 225.775.6000.

The Department of Justice notes that crime is less likely to occur in areas that are "clean, well lighted, and used frequently by residents and their friends. By reclaiming an abandoned park or playground, eliminating tall weeds and debris from a vacant lot, or sprucing up sidewalks and public spaces along the street, you'll be making the terri-

tory less attractive to criminals and more attractive to the community, which makes the community safer."

If you have garbage you need to dispose of and are unsure of how to approach the disposal, contact Republic Services directly at (225)778-3800 or Baker City Hall at 225.778.0300 to make a request. The garbage and recycling

vendor provides large item pick-up services on the second regular pick-up day each week. In addition, residents can call for a scheduled pick up. In addition, if your regular garbage is exceeding the capacity of the waste bin you currently have, you can get an additional bin (charges apply). This also is simply handled with a phone call.

Louisiana drivers could have to keep their hands off their cellphones

Drivers in Louisiana may soon be prohibited from holding their cellphones when they drive.

Rep. Mike Huval's (R-Breaux Bridge) House Bill 376, which would prohibit drivers from "holding or physically supporting a wireless telecommunications device in either or both hands or with any part of the body," advanced out of a House committee Monday morning.

Currently, 24 states plus Washington, D.C. have made it against the law for drivers to use handheld cellphones. Huval said to the committee his bill doesn't seek to stop people from using their phones in their cars but instead "promote safer driving."

Drivers would be allowed to use bluetooth connections such as an earpiece, headphones or even a wrist-worn device to conduct phone calls.

If approved, the law would go into effect on Jan. 1, 2023.

Drivers caught using their phones will be fined up to \$100 and

See **CELLPHONE**, on page 5

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a genetic disorder, said that even if Foil's bill is approved and school systems implement policies, they will still drag their feet to actually pay for the cameras.

St. Tammany Parish is "not going to do anything with (camera implementation) until the funding is provided. And if parents want it, they're going to give the bill to the parents, they said," Cannino said.

The pushback on installing cameras is keeping schools from protecting special needs students, she added.

"Every year this goes on, they suffer more," Cannino said.

Committee Chairman Sen. Cleo Fields, D-Baton Rouge, asked Melancon if the state school board can report back to the committee next week on how many schools have put policies in place for installing cameras since's Foil's legislation last year passed.

Fields also asked the BESE's legal team if they can find a way to use American Rescue Plan money on camera installation and work around federal spending requirements. He also asked that officials talk to the Senate Finance Committee to "see if you can find the funding for Sen. Foil's bill."

FUNDING from page 2

shouldn't have taken six months for the funds to be allocated. We have hurricane victims that needed these funds back in September when we passed the law. This is a great first step and down payment, but there remains more work to be done to get these funds in motion and to help those still struggling to recover from Hurricanes Laura, Delta and Zeta. We are approaching the 2022 hurricane season – we've got to get these funds moving as soon as possible before any storm inevitably barrels through the Gulf," Graves said.

Congressman Troy Carter said this announcement is yet another example of the federal government showing up for the people of Louisiana.

"This more than \$1.27 billion infusion into our state will not only help communities rebuild and recover from Hurricane Ida and recent floods, but will help build long-term strength and resiliency in our systems," said Carter. "These funds, along with the Infrastructure Law, are historic investments for Louisiana. I am proud to have supported and voted for these efforts."

Dr. Cassidy stressed that for the first time, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) is providing local communities with direct allocations of Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) money.

"This is hard-earned relief for South Louisiana," said Dr. Cassidy. "We still have a long road to go to fully recover, but this level of funding helps tremendously. We will continue to work to address unmet needs."

BREAKDOWN OF THE ALLOCATIONS:

- State of Louisiana is receiving \$1,272,346,000.
- Baton Rouge is receiving \$4,648,000.
- Lake Charles is receiving \$10,776,000.
- Areas impacted by Laura and Delta are receiving \$450 million.

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RELIGION

Faith our only option

By JEROME SMITH, SR.
Brand New Life Christian Center

“Peter remembered and said to Jesus, “Rabbi, look! The fig tree you cursed has withered!”
— Mark 11:21 NIV

““Have faith in God,” Jesus answered. “Truly I tell you, if anyone says to this mountain, ‘Go, throw yourself into the sea,’ and does not doubt in their heart but believes that what they say will happen, it will be done for them.”
— Mark 11:22-23NIV

Hebrews 11:1 says, “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.”

In other words, faith is the expectation, faith is the confidence, faith is the trust and the proof of something that isn't readily visible or attainable.

Let's investigate, should faith be about the things or should it be about the God of our faith.

Most of us grew up believing or having faith for tangible things or a out come that we believe we deserve.

When it comes to our faith, Jesus Christ is clear on where the object of our faith should be, Have faith in God!

The cursing of the fig tree wasn't about having this great power to curse things, he wanted them know and understand that our faith option is God!

Religion has a way of teaching us to put our faith in objects or in a religion system which gives the



glory to man and not God.

We have faith for healings, but not the healer, faith for salvation but not faith in the finish work of Christ, faith for heaven, No faith for a heavenly experience on earth.

We have faith in God's love for us, but fail to have faith to love each other in the way he loves us.

It's the supernatural faith that moves you to discount any thought or doubt you have of coming out of your situation, God is with you.

Requirements of faith in God

*Hebrews 11:6 AMP

But without faith it is impossible to [walk with God and] please Him, for whoever comes [near] to

God must [necessarily] believe that God exists and that He rewards those who [earnestly and diligently] seek Him.”

* John 16:33—NLT

“I have told you all this so that you may have peace in me. Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world.”

*Romans 10:16-17—NIV

“But not all the Israelites ac-

cepted the good news. For Isaiah says, “Lord, who has believed our message?” Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ.”

*John 7:38-39— AMP

“He who believes in Me [who adheres to, trusts in, and relies on Me], as the Scripture has said, ‘From his innermost being will flow continually rivers of living water.’”

But He was speaking of the [Holy] Spirit, whom those who believed in Him [as Savior] were to receive afterward. The Spirit had not yet been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified (raised to honor).”



Pastor Jerome Smith, Sr.



PRAYERFUL, PROMINENT, POSITIONED

BY DR. GAYLE YOUNG,
HHP, MA, JD
Laughter in Your Belly Wellness

now on, I want you in the house at these gatherings.

When you read this, prayerful, submitted, women who love God and those who are just getting acquainted with Him will fill the halls of the SUNO Arts-Humanities-Social Science building to network, learn from each other, and enjoy sessions on Entrepreneurship, Procurement, Manufacturing, Access to Capital, Certifications, Mental Health, Health/Fitness and more.

Like the other 400 plus women, like you there will be women in attendance who have claimed their place in the mountain tops of their local, national, and regional communities; women who must lead their churches to change their impact and better serve women who have been abused, left without resources or support to provide for themselves. And others who can barely dream of those heights but were encouraged to come by a friend.

As people and women, we have battles set before us, sometimes before we are conceived or born. God's expectation for women is crystal clear: He expects us to fight as Jael did and use the weapons we have. Jael made a difficult decision. She was heroic; she was faithful to God. She was a woman warrior, and so are you.

In 12 hours, 400 plus women will gather in New Orleans to attend the Louisiana SBA's 2nd Annual 101 Women in Business Conference. The first year the conference was virtual; women gathered in person this year. From

See POSITIONED, on page 5



Dr. Gayle Young

Desperate, I found my way to the simplest scripture. I needed God to lead me to the atomic bomb of scriptures He did not. Be He used the most specific words to give me the most straightforward message. I was needy, faithless. He said, Gayle, I already told you, ... “strength and dignity are your clothing, so you can rejoice in the future.” Proverbs 31:25.

Thankfully, our merciful God saw my life and purpose differently than I did. He saw me the way He sees you – leading and essential to your church, family, and community. He sees you chatty with Him and prayerful, always leaning on Him, trusting Him with your dreams. He knows you are called to serve in the marketplace as a businesswoman. He sees you taking care of His business. He has already told you that He will prosper, prepare, and position you for success.

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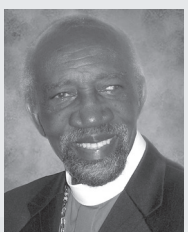
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Sunday School	9:30 AM
Prayer Service	Wed. @ 6:00 PM
Bible Study	Wed- @ 7:00 PM

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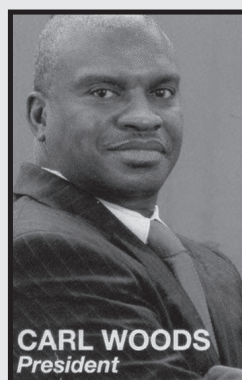


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BUSINESS

High fuel prices won't bring jobs to Louisiana because companies won't drill, expert says



Gasoline prices are above \$4 per gallon in Hammond, La

WES MULLER
Louisiana Illuminator

Rising fuel prices typically lead to job growth in an energy hub like Louisiana, but experts say the state is unlikely to see much of a benefit this year as fossil fuel companies have so far been hesitant to spend more on drilling and production.

The energy sector, in Louisiana and the world at large, is still recovering from the decline in demand from the coronavirus pandemic combined with supply collusion from foreign oil suppliers. The market is now dealing with the added disruption of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, which has caused gasoline prices to surge above \$4 per gallon in Louisiana.

Dr. David Dismukes, an economist and policy analyst at LSU's Center for Energy Studies, said most U.S. oil companies are not ramping up production. "We're just not getting that supply response, and I don't see a real big boom coming from this," Dismukes said. "If anything, it might hurt more than it helps. For us as a state, we're more of a net energy consumer than we are a net energy producer."

Dismukes said high fuel prices will likely put a strain on transportation and other sectors such as housing and agriculture. Home builders, particularly, are likely to face higher prices for petroleum-based materials such as carpets, paint and insulation, he said.

The LSU AgCenter projected last week that sugarcane and corn farmers will likely suffer from the rising prices of diesel and nitrogen fertilizer, which tend to track with natural gas indices.

Russia and its ally Belarus are major exporters of nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium fertilizers, supplying more than 40%

of crop nutrient needs for Brazil, a top producer of soybeans and corn. Brazilian farmers, who also are contending with a drought, are scrambling to locate fertilizers, further increasing commodity prices, the AgCenter reported.

During past price surges, Louisiana's oil and gas sector saw job growth, but Dismukes said oil companies are not putting much money into drilling.

Some Republicans and oil lobbyists have claimed U.S. companies could increase oil production if it weren't for President Joe Biden's climate policies. They blame him for hamstringing the industry by slow-walking federal drilling permits on public land and canceling the Keystone XL pipeline.

Biden has pointed to the issuance of 9,000 drilling permits for federal land where he said producers "could be drilling right now" to increase production and lower prices. While it is true that there are 9,173 drilling permits approved as of the end of 2021, that number includes permits approved under both Trump and Biden, according to FactCheck.org.

The Biden administration alone approved 3,557 federal permits last year, which is still more than the Trump administration approved in any year from 2017 through 2019, according to USAfacts.org. Biden even set a record for the largest offshore lease sale last year in the Gulf of Mexico. Regardless, most of America's petroleum — more than three-quarters of crude oil and 86% of natural gas — comes from private and state lands, and it can take years before oil is extracted from a newly-permitted area.

The administration has also challenged claims that the Keystone XL pipeline would have kept gas prices in check. Only 8% of the pipeline had been built when Biden revoked its permit on his first day in office, Jan. 21, 2021. Even if it were to somehow be completed this year, the pipeline would have had little if any impact on gasoline prices, according to energy expert and Forbes contributor Robert Rapier, who opposed cancellation of the permit.

Both sides have been spinning half-truths about the cause of high fuel prices, according to FactCheck.org. The real obstacles to domestic

oil production and the causes of high gasoline prices are very much global in nature, according to Dismukes.

The current situation can be traced back to just before the COVID-19 pandemic when oil prices plummeted after Russia and OPEC (the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries, which includes Saudi Arabia) colluded to flood the market and drive U.S. oil producers out of business, he said.

Many American companies went bankrupt or had to take on enormous amounts of debt just to stay afloat, Dismukes said. In late 2019, the U.S. had become a net exporter of petroleum as global supply outpaced demand. Crude oil prices began to increase in 2021 as COVID-19 vaccination rates improved, leading to looser pandemic restrictions. The growing economy caused global petroleum demand to rise faster than the supply could keep up with, according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration.

Supply became even more strained with Biden's ban on Russian oil imports. According to the American Fuel and Petrochemical Manufacturers, Russia accounted for roughly 3% of U.S. crude oil imports and about 1% of the crude oil processed at U.S. refineries.

While some call for U.S. energy independence, Dismukes said many oil companies are saddled with too much debt to risk current profits on new drilling when prices could fall by next year or sooner.

"The market could turn around tomorrow," he said. "Most of them are trying to tackle and negotiate balance sheets that are kind of turned upside down with lots of debt and lots of leverage. They're just trying to get their footing back together."

However, if oil prices stay too high for too long, such as last week's levels of \$130 per barrel, it could very well cause "demand destruction," in which consumer behavior adjusts to lower the demand, he said.

"When you get those high gasoline prices, consumers react to those," Dismukes said. "They start to drive less. They start to curtail some of their discretionary travel. They do a lot of different things that can ultimately ripple back through to these refineries in a negative way from a profitability perspective."

Louisiana Credit Unions Provide Tips to Safely Help Ukraine

NEW ORLEANS — Many Americans are looking for ways to support the people of Ukraine as the Russian invasion continues, but experts say there are several things you should consider before opening up your wallet.

"Scammers are already trying to take advantage and the Better Business Bureau has issued a warning to be on the lookout," said Lacey Weaver of the Louisiana Credit Union League. "You need to do your research first to make sure your money really goes toward relief efforts."

Make certain the charity you are giving to is experienced in providing emergency relief and whether they have the capacity and ability to deliver aid quickly, especially to an area under invasion.

If the group is asking for food and clothing, see how they will get those items overseas. Major relief organizations may have the capacity, but smaller ones should give you pause.

If you believe you have been the victim of fraud, you can report it to the Federal Trade Commission. Visit reportfraud.ftc.gov for more information.

HEALTHCARE from page 1

affects the health of everyone in our communities. A spokesperson with Women's Hospital said they agree.

"If we had this office, it would help to look at women in other lights, other avenues. Such as behavioral health, intimate partner balance, other unique needs that women have in terms of cancer and screening, and even women with disabilities," said Cheri Johnson, Chief Nursing Officer at Women's Hospital.

Johnson said data from Women's Hospital shows we're starting to make changes to improve outcomes.

"Especially for maternal care. And this would just broaden that work," Johnson added.

The bill received zero pushback from lawmakers Wednesday, but it still needs to go through a couple of hurdles before it reaches the governor.

CELLPHONE from page 3

receive up to 30 hours of community service on their first offense. On the second offense, maximum penalties increase to \$300 and 30 hours of community service. For the third offense, the fine limit remains \$300 but a judge can sentence an offender up to 90 hours of community service.

Huval said the proposal is "basically the same bill" he introduced last year that passed in the House but died in the Senate.

The bill moves to the full House for a vote.

POSITIONED from page 4

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