

The Weekly Press

SERVING BAKER, CENTRAL, AND ZACHARY

THURSDAY, APRIL 6-12, 2023

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Zachary to break ground on new police station, training facility

21,000 sq ft facility, in-house training center to house entire Zachary police force under one roof

ZACHARY, La. — The City of Zachary has made an exciting announcement that has been long-awaited by the Zachary Police Department: the construction of a brand new police station and training center. This new facility, spanning over 21,000 square feet, will be a significant upgrade for the department, which has been sharing space with the Zachary City Court for over 35 years.

"I have watched firsthand as the department has outgrown the building, having worked in the police department complex for the past 34 years," expressed Darryl Lawrence, Police Chief of the City of Zachary. "I want to thank the prior administration and city council for allowing us to be a part of all aspects of choosing the architectural firm that designed the new building and selecting the location."

This new police station and training center will bring the entire police force under one roof, providing much-needed space for storage and a dedicated in-house training center to promote the health and wellness of the officers. The City of Zachary has partnered with Grace Hebert Curtis Architects to design the new station, while the financing for the project was provided by Government Capital Corporation of Southlake, Texas.

"We had a very positive experience working with Government Capital on this project," commented Deanna Mankins, CFO of the City of Zachary. "The team delivered a seamless experience, offering open lines of communication throughout the entire financing process."

The construction of the new station is set to begin this month, and the facility is expected to be completed by the end of 2024. With the new station, the Zachary Police Department will have a modern and efficient facility that will enable them to better serve and protect the community.

"We are thrilled to finally see the construction of the new police station and training center come to fruition," said Lawrence. "This new facility will help us provide better service to our community and promote the well-being of our officers."

Marti Sauls, Vice President of Government Capital Corporation, congratulated the City of Zachary on their new police station, stating, "It is an honor to assist Louisiana cities in meeting their goals and objectives."

The City of Zachary's announcement of the groundbreaking for the new police station and training center has been met with excitement by both the police department and the community they serve, as they look forward to the benefits that this new facility will bring.

TRUMP

hit with 34 felony counts of falsifying New York state business records



Former U.S. President Donald Trump arrives for his arraignment at Manhattan Criminal Court on April 4, 2023 in New York City. With the indictment, Trump becomes the first former U.S. president in history to be charged with a criminal offense. (Michael M. Santiago/Getty Images)

BY: JACOB FISCHLER, ASHLEY MURRAY AND JENNIFER SHUTT
Louisiana Illuminator

Former President Donald Trump pleaded not guilty Tuesday to 34 New York state felony offenses related to what prosecutors say were hush money payments to an adult film star.

In a brief but historic appearance in a Manhattan trial court, Trump, the first former president to face criminal prosecution, learned he was charged with falsifying business records 34 times from February to December 2017.

Trump's former attorney, Michael Cohen, paid Stormy Daniels, a porn actor who said she had a sexual relationship with Trump, \$130,000 in exchange for her silence about the supposed relationship during the 2016 presidential race, according to a 16-page indictment and attached statement of facts that were unsealed Tuesday.

Trump then repaid Cohen in 34 payments over the course of 2017, but described them in Trump Organization records as payments for legal services, meant to cover up the payment to Daniels, prosecutors said.

Trump, a Republican candidate for president in 2024, denies having an affair with Daniels.



U.S. Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene, R-Georgia, pushes through the crowd gathered outside the courthouse where former U.S. President Donald Trump was arraigned April 4, 2023 in New York City. (Drew Angerer/Getty Images)

"These are crimes in New York no matter who you are," Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg said following the arraignment.

"Everyone stands equal before the law," he added. "No amount of money and no amount of power changes that enduring

American principle."

Responding to a question asking why Bragg brought charges after his predecessor and federal prosecutors declined to do so, Bragg said his office had new evidence that wasn't available to the prior district attorney and that New York state, as the "busi-

ness capital of the world," had a particular interest in prosecuting business fraud cases.

Trump has accused Bragg of being motivated by politics.

Just before arriving at the arraignment, Trump posted to his social media site, Truth Social.

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Trump warns of 'death, destruction' if charged with a crime

BY KAY MAYWEATHER
Special to WPress

WASHINGTON — Former U.S. President Donald Trump took to his new social media platform, Truth Social, to issue a warning about potential "death & destruction" if he faces criminal charges, just hours after New York prosecutors investigating his hush-money payment to porn star Stormy Daniels said they would not be intimidated.

This latest tweet from Trump on Friday is part of a series of verbal attacks on Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg since last Saturday when Trump incorrectly predicted he would be arrested three days later. Despite his defeat in the 2020 election, Trump continues to claim that the result was fraudulent and inspired his followers to attack the U.S. Capitol on January 6, 2021, in an attempt to prevent Congress from certifying the election of Democratic President Joe Biden.

Trump wrote on Truth Social, "What kind of person can charge another person, in this case a former President of the United States, who got more votes than any sitting President in history, and leading candidate (by far!) for the Republican Party nomination, with a Crime, when it is known by all that NO Crime has been committed, and also known that potential death and destruction in such a false charge could be catastrophic for our Country?"

The Manhattan District Attorney's office, in a letter to Republican committee chairmen in Congress, called their request for communications, documents, and testimony an "unlawful incursion into New York's sovereignty." They also challenged the committee's standing to investigate their office and said that Trump had "created a false expectation that he would be arrested" in his Saturday post.

Trump has denied ever having an affair with Stormy Daniels and has called the payment a "simple private transaction." He has also stated that he did not commit a crime and that the investigation is politically motivated. Many observers have noted that the investigation into the hush-money payment to Daniels is just one of several ongoing investigations into Trump's activities both before and during his presidency. As the investigation continues, it is likely that there will be more developments and revelations to come.

WEATHER



MON. 04/10
Mostly Cloudy
High 75°.



WED. 04/12
Partly Cloudy
High 74°.



TUE. 04/11
Mostly Cloudy
High 79°.



THUR. 04/13
Mostly Cloudy
High 68°.

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The Weekly Press

The eEdition TODAY

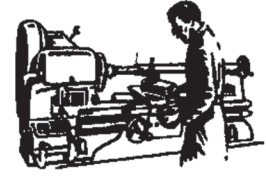
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New bill would raise minimum age to 21 to enter all La. bars



Louisiana State Senator proposes the "Card 'Em Act," a bill to raise the minimum age to enter bars in the state from 18 to 21, in an effort to prevent harm and save lives.

BATON ROUGE, La. - Louisiana State Senator proposes bill to raise minimum age to enter bars to 21

Louisiana State Senator Beth Mizell is proposing a new bill, called the "Card 'Em Act," that would raise the minimum age to enter bars in the state from 18 to 21. Currently, it's not uncommon for 18-year-olds to be allowed in most bars in Louisiana, but they are not allowed to purchase alcoholic drinks.

Senator Mizell's proposal comes after the death of LSU student Madison Brooks, who was involved in a senseless act of violence after leaving a bar in January. Three

of the assailants involved in the incident were under 21 and should not have been allowed in the bar, according to Senator Mizell.

The bill would synchronize Louisiana with the rest of the United States, as most states already prohibit anyone under the age of 21 from entering bars. Senator Mizell believes that the "Card 'Em Act" is a common-sense step that will prevent harm and save lives, and that strong action is needed to prevent underage drinking and ensure the safety of young adults in the community.

However, some LSU students have expressed concern about the proposed bill, stating that it would

limit their social options. One student noted that there isn't much for freshmen to do other than go to bars and hang out with friends, while another student from Wisconsin stated that the minimum age should remain at 18 and that they would like to see what bars are like in Louisiana.

Despite these concerns, a third student believes that raising the minimum age to enter bars to 21 would be beneficial, particularly in the Tigerland area and college bars, where the drinking culture can be excessive.

Under the proposed bill, bars

See **TRUMP**, on page 5



Renowned authority on slave dwellings, Joseph McGill Jr., visits Natchez for a two-day program featuring a lecture and living history campfire conversation as part of his nationally acclaimed Slave Dwelling Project.

Joseph McGill Jr. to bring Slave Dwelling Project to Natchez

NATCHEZ, Miss. -- Joseph McGill Jr., a renowned authority on slave dwellings, will visit Natchez for a two-day program that will feature a lecture at Historic Natchez Foundation and a living history campfire conversation at the Auburn slave quarters.

The lecture, which is titled, "The Education Value of Sleeping in Slave Dwellings: Mississippi Edition," will be presented at 6 p.m. Friday, April 14. The campfire conversation will be held at 6 p.m., April 15. Both events are free and open to the public. They are part of McGill's nationally acclaimed Slave Dwelling Project.

The two-day program is

being hosted by Historic Natchez Foundation, Natchez National Historical Park, and Our Restoration Nation.

Historic Natchez Foundation is located at 108 S. Commerce St. and Auburn is at 400 Duncan Avenue, both in Natchez. Parking is in the rear of Auburn, which is accessed from the second road on the right inside the Duncan Park Gate.

For more information, contact Carter Burns at Historic Natchez Foundation: Call 601-442-2500 or send email to carterburns@natchez.org. Information about the Slave Dwelling Project can be found at <https://slavedwellingproject.org/>

PB To Broadcast Governor's Address to Legislature Live, Statewide

LPB will broadcast Governor John Bel Edwards' address to the Louisiana Legislature live on April 10 at 1 p.m. The address will cover topics like education, healthcare, and the economy. André Moreau and Barry Erwin

will host the event at the LPB studios. The live stream will also be available on LPB's website, app, and social media. For further details, contact Colleen Spillane at (225) 767-4453 or cspillane@lpb.org.



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THIS MONTH

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ZIPPITY ZOO FEST
 Baton Rouge Zoo
 April 1-2 | 9:30 a.m.-5 p.m.

COMITE CLASSIC
 Comite River Park
 April 1 | 9 a.m.-1 p.m.

FLOWER FEST VOLUNTEER PROJECT
 Howell Community Park
 April 1 | 9 a.m.-noon

LET'S GEAUX TIE DYE
 North Street Park
 April 1 | noon-2 p.m.

WEBB CHAMPIONSHIP GOLF TOURNAMENT
 Webb Memorial Golf Course
 April 1 + 2

CONTINUOUS EGG HUNT
 Independence Community Park
 April 1 | 1-3 p.m.

CAMP-IN Lovett Road Park
 April 7 | 7:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m.

ADULT GAME NIGHT
 Jefferson Highway Park
 April 8 | 6-8 p.m.

GLOW IN THE PARK: VOLLEYBALL
 Anna T. Jordan Community Park
 April 13 | 6-7:30 p.m.

PARTY FOR THE PLANET
 Baton Rouge Zoo
 April 15 | 9:30 a.m.-5 p.m.

ARTIST'S STUDIO: SKETCHING
 Baringer Art Center
 April 21 | 9:30 a.m.-noon

WILD WINE WALK
 Baton Rouge Zoo
 April 21 | 5-7:30 p.m.

SUNSHINE SOCIAL: DANCING IN THE RAIN
 Milton J. Womack Park
 April 21 | 6-9 p.m.

FAMILY GAME NIGHT
 Cedar Ridge Drive Park + North Street Park
 April 21 | 6-7:30 p.m.

ART UNWIND: APRIL SHOWERS
 Baringer Art Center
 April 21 | 6:30-8:30 p.m.

BR BIKE FEST Perkins Road Community Park
 April 22 | 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

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STEM EXPANSION
 Highland Road Park Observatory
 April 22 | 3:30-7:30 p.m.

FAMILY KARAOKE NIGHT
 Independence Community Park Theatre Lawn
 April 28 | 6-7:30 p.m.

FOUR-BALL CHALLENGE GOLF TOURNAMENT
 Beaver Creek Golf Course
 April 29

HOMAGE TO A HERO: SEEDS OF CHANGE - WANGARI MAATHAI
 Baringer Art Center
 April 29 | 10:30 a.m.-noon

INTERNATIONAL ASTRONOMY DAY
 Highland Road Park Observatory
 April 29 | 3-11 p.m.

BREC.ORG/THISMONTH



TRUMP from page 1

"Heading to Lower Manhattan, the Courthouse" he wrote. "Seems so SURREAL — WOW, they are going to ARREST ME. Can't believe this is happening in America. MAGA!"

Trump left the courthouse without commenting but spoke later Tuesday at his Mar-a-Lago estate in Florida.

Trump responds

In a primetime speech from his Mar-a-Lago estate in Florida, Trump barely addressed the New York charges, but offered a general defense that he'd done nothing wrong and was instead the victim of a litany of investigatory incursions from his political opponents.

"The only crime I've committed is to fearlessly defend our nation from those who seek to destroy it," he said near the start of his remarks.

Bragg and Judge Juan Merchan both held grudges against him and would not be fair, he said, attacking the indictment without specifically rejecting its accusations.

"Everybody said, 'This is not really an indictment. There's nothing here,'" he said.

At one point Trump seemed to concede he'd lost the 2020 election, implying he needed a mere 0.1% change in the election results to win. The admission was a change for Trump, whose weeks-long false insistence that he'd won the election led to the Jan. 6, 2021, insurrection.

But at another point in Tuesday's speech, he again claimed Democrats could not defeat him in a fair election, saying the New York charges were a method to stop him.

"They can't beat us at the ballot box so they try to beat us through the law," he said. "These radical-left lunatics want to interfere with our elections by using law enforcement. We can't let that happen."

Payments covered up campaign crime, DA says

Cohen's payments to Daniels in 2016 exceeded campaign contribution limits — and because they were meant to boost Trump's White House bid, should be considered campaign funds, Bragg said. The records of Trump's payments to

Cohen therefore were meant to conceal a crime, making the false business records criminal.

"He could not simply say that the payments were a reimbursement for Mr. Cohen's payments to Stormy Daniels," Bragg said. "To do so, to make that true statement, would have been to admit a crime. So instead, Mr. Trump's said he paid Mr. Cohen for fictitious legal services in 2017 to cover up actual crime committed the prior year."

The indictment said the false business record was done "with intent to defraud and intent to commit another crime and aid and conceal the commission thereof."

The payment to Daniels was part of a pattern Trump's 2016 campaign employed to suppress stories about alleged Trump affairs, according to prosecutors' statement of facts.

A longtime confidante of Trump, Cohen pleaded guilty in 2018 to campaign finance and fraud charges. He also pleaded guilty to lying to Congress.

He has said his crimes were in service of Trump's 2016 campaign and has cooperated with authorities.

House Republicans attack DA

Bragg and U.S. House Republicans have publicly quarreled over the case, with the Republican chairs of the House Judiciary, Oversight & Accountability and Administration committees accusing Bragg of conducting a politically motivated prosecution.

Judiciary Chair Jim Jordan of Ohio and Oversight & Accountability Chair James Comer of Kentucky said in a Tuesday statement that Judge Juan Merchan should not impose an order on Trump not to speak about the case.

"To put any restrictions on the ability of President Trump to discuss his mistreatment at the hands of this politically motivated prosecutor would only further demonstrate the weaponization of the New York justice system," they said.

"To even contemplate stifling the speech of the former commander in chief and current candidate for President is at odds with everything America stands for."

Merchan did not issue a gag order Tuesday. Jordan, Comer and House

Administration Chair Bryan Steil of Wisconsin wrote to Bragg last month calling his prosecution politically motivated and demanding documents.

Greene headlines muted protest

U.S. Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene of Georgia traveled to New York City for a Tuesday morning rally in support of Trump across the street from the Manhattan Court-house.

According to videos and photos posted to Twitter, the Georgia Republican spoke for roughly 10 minutes through a bullhorn as supporters and journalists surrounded her, but counter-protesters largely muffled her comments with drums and whistles.

New York Republican Rep. George Santos, who is under several legal and ethical investigations, made a brief appearance in the crowd prior to Greene's comments, according to news media reports.

House GOP leaders defend Trump

Republicans in Congress posted messages on Twitter criticizing the indictment.

House Majority Whip Tom Emmer, a Minnesota Republican, tweeted Tuesday was "a historic low for our nation."

"The Democrat Party has proven there is nothing they won't do to hold onto power — even if it means weaponizing our justice system to target a political opponent," Emmer wrote.

Fourth-ranking House Republican Elise Stefanik of New York posted to Twitter: "I stand with President Trump."

"Another dark day in our nation's history. The Far Left will stop at nothing to punish Joe Biden's number one political opponent Donald Trump," Stefanik tweeted about a half hour later.

House Deputy Whip Guy Reschenthaler of Pennsylvania blamed the indictment on the "extreme left."

"The Left's weaponization of our criminal justice system for their own benefit is truly un-American," he wrote on Twitter.

Tennessee Republican Sen. Marsha Blackburn said the "indictment is a gross abuse of power by a

See **TRUMP**, on page 5



CITY OF BAKER NEWS

Hit the Links for a Good Cause in April as the Baker Chamber of Commerce Hosts a Charity Golf Tournament!

BAKER, La. — The Baker Chamber of Commerce is hosting its 1st Annual Charity Golf Tournament on April 21, 2023, at BREC Beaver Creek Golf Course located at 1100 Plains-Port Hudson Road in Zachary, Louisiana 70791.

The event is being held to raise funds for Baker area schools and promises to be a great time for golfers of all ages and skills! The event is featuring friendly competition in a four-person scramble which is teams of four players competing against one another. In this format, each team's players hit from the tee box, then the team members choose the best of the four shots for the next shot. All team members then play the second shot from that location and again choose the best shot. Play continues in this manner until the hole is completed. The team then records its score and maintains that format for all 18 holes.

There will also be hole competitions, prizes for the top teams, lunch and refreshments, as well as business networking opportunities! The \$400 per team fee covers greens fees, access to the scramble, and the practice facility at Beaver Creek.

Beyond participation as a golfer, the Baker Chamber of Commerce is also currently seeking Hole Sponsorships for the Tournament. Sponsorships are \$100.00 and will allow each sponsor to have the opportunity to advertise their business at one of the holes on the course. If you are looking for new ways to market your business or find new clients a golf tournament is always a great idea. The

more people that know about your company the better and when your company is associated with a popular event, it reminds the event participants and the larger audience to remember your business.

Additionally, the opportunity to network with the community is a key component of growing your business. One of the most important things to remember about networks is that they constantly grow and change. Most organizations do a great job of assessing their networks when first planning their marketing strategy however as your business grows it is important to also grow your network. Your network consists of sharing information or services about your business with people, businesses, and groups and allows individuals to grow their relationships which are essential for their job or business. Don't miss out on the opportunity to network and fundraise for a great cause!

We are looking forward to a great day moving Baker "Fore"ward in friendship, fellowship, and network and appreciate the opportunity to be out of doors with friends while making new friends at the beautiful Beaver Creek Golf Course!

Donations are welcome through Eventbrite, and checks are payable to Baker Chamber of Commerce. You may register for a four-person scramble, hole sponsorship, or donations at www.eventbrite.com.

If you have any questions feel free to contact the Baker Chamber of Commerce at 225-412-4311.

Join the Effort to Keep Baker Beautiful: City-wide Clean-Up Event on April 10th Needs Volunteers!

BAKER, La. - The City of Baker in Louisiana is organizing a city-wide clean-up event on April 10th, and is calling on volunteers of all ages to participate. The event's objective is to remove litter, graffiti, and beautify the city. The event is part of the city's ongoing efforts to promote sustainability and environmental responsibility.

Interested individuals can sign up for the City Wide Clean-Up event by visiting the official website of the City of Baker at www.cityofbakerla.com or by calling City Hall at (225) 778-0300. Volunteers are encouraged to wear comfortable clothing and closed-toe shoes, and to bring their own gloves, sunscreen, and water bottles.

Last year's event drew hundreds of volunteers and resulted in a significant reduction in litter and other environmental hazards throughout the city. This year's event aims to make an even greater impact, with the goal of creating a cleaner, safer, and more vibrant community for everyone.

Mayor Darnell Waites said, "We need everyone's help to make this event a success. Our city is a wonderful place to live and work, and we want to keep it that way. By volunteering for the clean-up, you are helping to make a real difference in our community."

Volunteers will be tasked with a variety of

clean-up efforts, including litter removal, graffiti removal, and general beautification projects. The City of Baker is grateful for everyone who is willing to give their time and energy to help keep the city beautiful.

Let's work together to make a positive impact in the community. Sign up today to participate in the City Wide Clean-Up and help Keep Baker Beautiful!

To stay up to date on what is happening in the city subscribe to email and text messaging at <https://cityofbakerla.com/wp/subscribe/>.

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RELIGION

BMI Celebrates Gospel Music Superstars Tamela & David Mann At The 2023 BMI Trailblazers Of Gospel Music Awards

Gospel music superstars Tamela & David Mann and Dr. Bobby Jones were celebrated today at the 2023 BMI Trailblazers of Gospel Music Awards held at Flourish in Atlanta, GA. The awards show paid tribute to the best in the Gospel music community and honored BMI's Gospel Song of the Year, Songwriter of the Year, Publisher of the Year and the top 25 Gospel songs of the previous year. BMI's President & CEO, Mike O'Neill and Vice President, Creative, Atlanta, Catherine Brewton hosted the event.

The inspirational luncheon began with a celebration of music and joyful worship with Jonathan McReynolds, Chandler Moore and Kirk Franklin performing a medley of three of BMI's award-winning songs, "Grace," "Jireh" and "Kingdom," before moving to the event's main honorees and award-winners.

As a Trailblazer of Gospel Music honoree, Dr. Bobby Jones was saluted for his legendary career, mentorship of the next generation and his tireless contributions to the genre. The tribute performances honoring Jones' legacy kicked off with The Company singing "What a Friend," followed by a beautiful rendition of "Bring it to Jesus" featuring Beverly Crawford.

Tamela and David Mann were celebrated as BMI Trailblazers of Gospel Music for their exceptional success in the genre and beyond, both as stellar songwriters, artists and actors. The musical tributes to



(L-R) BMI's Wardell Malloy and Catherine Brewton, Tamela Mann, David Mann and BMI President & CEO Mike O'Neill attend BMI Trailblazers of Gospel Music Awards on March 30, 2023 in Atlanta, Georgia. (Photo by Paras Griffin/Getty Images for BMI)

The Manns kicked-off with Zacardi Cortez and Anaysha Figueroa-Copper giving a moving performance of "Now Behold the Lamb," followed by Lisa Knowles-Smith who gave a powerful rendition of "Take Me to the King." After accepting the honor and thanking those who

have helped the husband-and-wife team along the way, Tamela Mann surprised the audience with an explosive performance of her megahit, "Change Me," which spent 23 weeks at number one on Billboard's Hot Gospel Chart.

Throughout the event, BMI

saluted the Top 25 most-performed Gospel songs of the previous year, leading up to the coveted BMI Gospel Song of the Year, which went to "Believe For It" written by CeCe Winans and Mitch Wong (APRA). The song spent 12 weeks at the number one spot on Billboard's Hot

Gospel Chart and garnered multiple accolades including two GMA Dove Awards and a GRAMMY for Best Contemporary Christian Music Performance/Song. BMI's Gospel Songwriter of the Year was a tie between Dante Bowe and Jonathan McReynolds for each writing two of

the most performed Gospel songs of the previous year. Bowe was honored for "Joyful" and "Promises" and McReynolds for "Brighter" and "Grace." BMI's Gospel Publisher of the Year went to Be Essential Songs for having award-winning songs "Brighter," "Jireh," "Promises" and "Something Has to Break," among its repertoire.

During the ceremony, the late legendary soul singer/songwriter Otis Redding was honored with four BMI Million-Air Awards, a distinction that recognizes songwriters whose works have achieved the rare feat of surpassing one million broadcast performances on radio. Originally written and recorded by Otis Redding in the 1960's, the songs were "Sweet Soul Music" (4 million performances), "Hard to Handle" (7 million performances), "Respect" (7 million performances) and BMI's Song of the Year in 1968, the incomparable "(Sittin' on) the Dock of the Bay" (12 million performances). Attending the ceremony were members of Redding's family, including his wife Zelma and their daughter Karla Redding-Andrews, who accepted the honors on behalf of her father and the Otis Redding Foundation.

Additional performances included a special tribute to the late singer/producer/choir director Kevin Lemons, who was known for his work with Donald Lawrence and The Company, and his own dynamic

See **AWARDS**, on page 5

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Bible Study Wednesday	7:00pm
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Disciple Bible Study	Wednesday 5:30 p.m.
Prayer Ministry	Tuesday 6:00 p.m.

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BUSINESS

Proposal would let parishes keep more oil and gas taxes



from the current 50% requirement. The bill defines excess remittances as any amounts greater than the amount in the 2022-23 fiscal year. "To me, it's a tradeoff," he said. "The more severance tax parishes can keep, the less money we have to give to them in capital outlay for roads and bridges."

Louisiana collected about \$302 million in severance taxes during the fiscal year that ended June 2021. McFarland said the state forgoes a lot of oil and gas revenue because it suspends the severance taxes on the first two years of a well's life, which are the most productive years.

As a constitutional amendment, the bill faces a difficult journey to enactment. It must receive a two-thirds vote in both chambers of the legislature and then receive voter approval in the fall election.

Severance tax revenue to be used on infrastructure projects

BY: WESLEY MULLER
Louisiana Illuminator

A Louisiana lawmaker has proposed a constitutional amendment to allow parish governments to keep a larger share of oil and gas taxes.

House Bill 278, sponsored by Rep. Jack McFarland, R-Win-

field, would apply to severance taxes on all natural resources other than sulfur, lignite or timber. It proposes that parish governments get to keep the lesser of either \$2.85 million or the aforementioned tax revenue.

Severance taxes are levied on natural resources when they are taken from the earth. Oil and gas collections account for almost 92% of all severance tax collections in Louisiana, according to the state Department of Natural Resources.

The bill proposes that the \$2.85 million limit shall be adjusted annually for inflation according to the average annual increase in the Consumer Price Index.

Currently, the Louisiana

Constitution allows parishes to keep a maximum of roughly \$1.14 million in severance taxes and allows annual inflation adjustments. Current law also has triggers that could potentially increase the amount to \$2.85 million if revenue forecasts reach a certain threshold. McFarland's bill would repeal those triggers.

"When all these severance taxes were passed, the original intent was to help with roads, bridges and schools," McFarland said in a phone interview. "Over the years, the state started depending on the revenue."

McFarland's proposal would also require parish governments to use 100% of any excess severance tax remittances on transportation and infrastructure projects, up

TRUMP from page 2

found violating the age limit could be fined anywhere between \$50 to \$15,000, depending on the number of violations. The bill would also increase the cleansing period to 10 years from the first offense.

Debates on the bill are set to begin on April 10, 2023, when lawmakers return to the Louisiana State Capitol. Reactions to the proposed bill among LSU students remain mixed, with some concerned about its potential impact on their social lives, while others believe that it could help prevent underage drinking and ensure the safety of young adults in the community.

TRUMP from page 3

Democrat DA to get an outcome that the left has wanted for years."

Utah Republican Sen. Mitt Romney began his statement by saying that he believes Trump's "character and conduct make him unfit for office."

"Even so, I believe the New York prosecutor has stretched to reach felony criminal charges in order to fit a political agenda," he continued.

Other Republican members of Congress, however, were not focused solely on Trump.

Oklahoma Sen. Markwayne Mullin tweeted photos of a visit to Guymon, saying it was the first stop on his statewide tour.

"We discussed the ongoing drought, inflation, and the existential threat of communist China. Thanks to Mayor Kim Peterson for

hosting us!" Mullin wrote.

Georgia Rep. Rich McCormick tweeted a photo of himself shaking hands with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy as part of a congressional delegation to the country.

"I was able to ask questions AND witness firsthand the accountability of equipment and impact that our assistance is having," McCormick wrote. "I will continue to fight to hold the Biden Administration accountable for doing the right things and for doing things right."

Nebraska Sen. Pete Ricketts shared photos of a meeting with the Columbus Rotary in the afternoon after congratulating Finland for joining the North Atlantic Treaty Organization earlier in the day.

"We heard firsthand about Finland's highly capable military during my recent official visit. They'll be a critical asset

to the trans-Atlantic Alliance in the face of Russian aggression," Ricketts wrote.

Other charges possibly looming

As he readies for another White House run, Trump faces other criminal investigations.

The U.S. Justice Department is investigating his role in the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the U.S. Capitol after the congressional committee tasked with probing the causes of the insurrection made a criminal referral to the department.

Federal authorities are also investigating Trump's handling of classified documents after his presidency. FBI agents retrieved boxes of classified material Trump took from the White House to his South Florida residence when he left office.

And a Georgia grand jury is looking into potential election

interference from Trump during his reelection campaign in 2020. Trump was taped shortly after Election Day 2020 asking the Georgia secretary of state to "find" enough votes to overturn the state's election results in his favor.

AWARDS from page 4

group known as Kevin Lemons and Higher Calling. Members of Higher Calling hit the stage for a soul-stirring performance of "Perfect Peace" accompanied by Donald Lawrence and The Company. Other award-winning songs performed throughout the evening included "Just Like God" by Evvie McKinney, "Great" by Kelontae Gavin and "Wonderful is Your Name" by Melvin Crispell.

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SPORTS

LSU women's basketball blasts Iowa to win National Championship



LSU players celebrate a last second shot during the first half of the NCAA Women's Final Four championship basketball game against Iowa Sunday, April 2, 2023, in Dallas. (Darron Cummings | AP)

LSU women's basketball won the National Championship on Sunday afternoon in Dallas, beating Iowa 102-85.

The Tigers set a record with 59 first-half points and ultimately cruised to a win over Caitlin Clark and Iowa. The Hawkeyes were able to get as close as 7 points in the second half, but LSU's offense was simply too much for

Iowa to handle. LSU's 102 points are a record for any team in the women's NCAA Tournament National Championship Game.

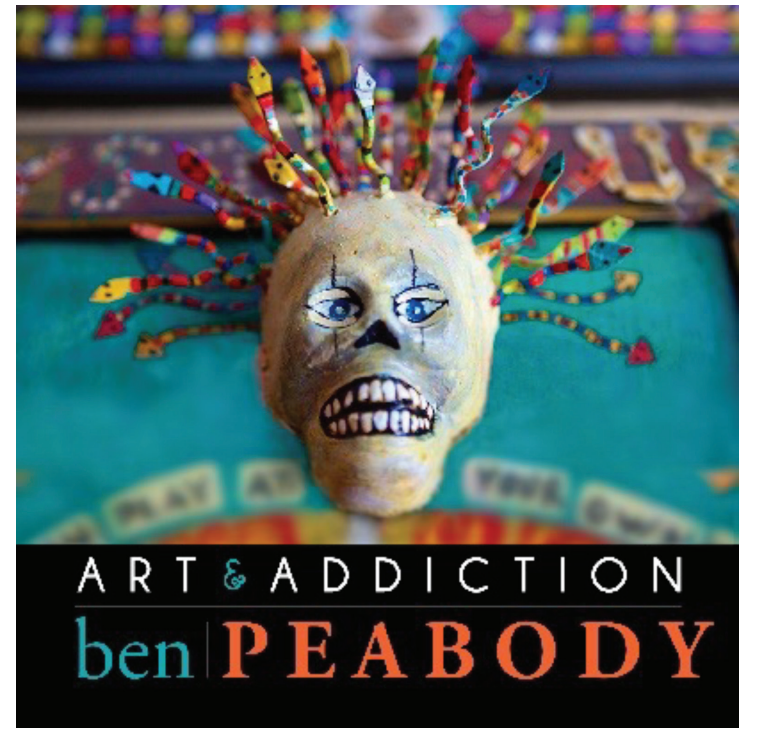
LSU shot 54.3% from the field and 64.7% from 3-point range in the win. This victory, which comes in Kim Mulkey's 2nd year as head coach, gives LSU its 1st National Championship in program history.

The Tigers held Clark to 30 points on 22 shots. Clark was efficient, but foul trouble — including a pair of offensive fouls — prevented her from having an out-sized impact on the game.

For LSU, Angel Reese was dominant on the boards. She had 14 points, 10 rebounds and 4 assists in the win. Six of those boards came on the offensive glass.

LSU's first-half offensive explosion was led by Jasmine Carson, who went 5-for-5 from 3-point range before the break. She finished with a game-high 21 points off the bench.

LSU went 34-2 this season. This is the 4th National Championship of Mulkey's career, with the previous 3 coming during her time as Baylor's head coach.



West Baton Rouge Museum to Host Ben Peabody's Art Exhibition on Addiction

PORT ALLEN, La. — Through his journey of recovery, Baton Rouge based artist Ben Peabody has created a compelling series of work titled, Art & Addiction. The collection consists of over 40 fascinating pieces of detailed two- and three-dimensional works of art. A captivating carnival-like theme sets the mood for the exhibit and shows the mystifying hold drugs and alcohol have on those who are addicted.

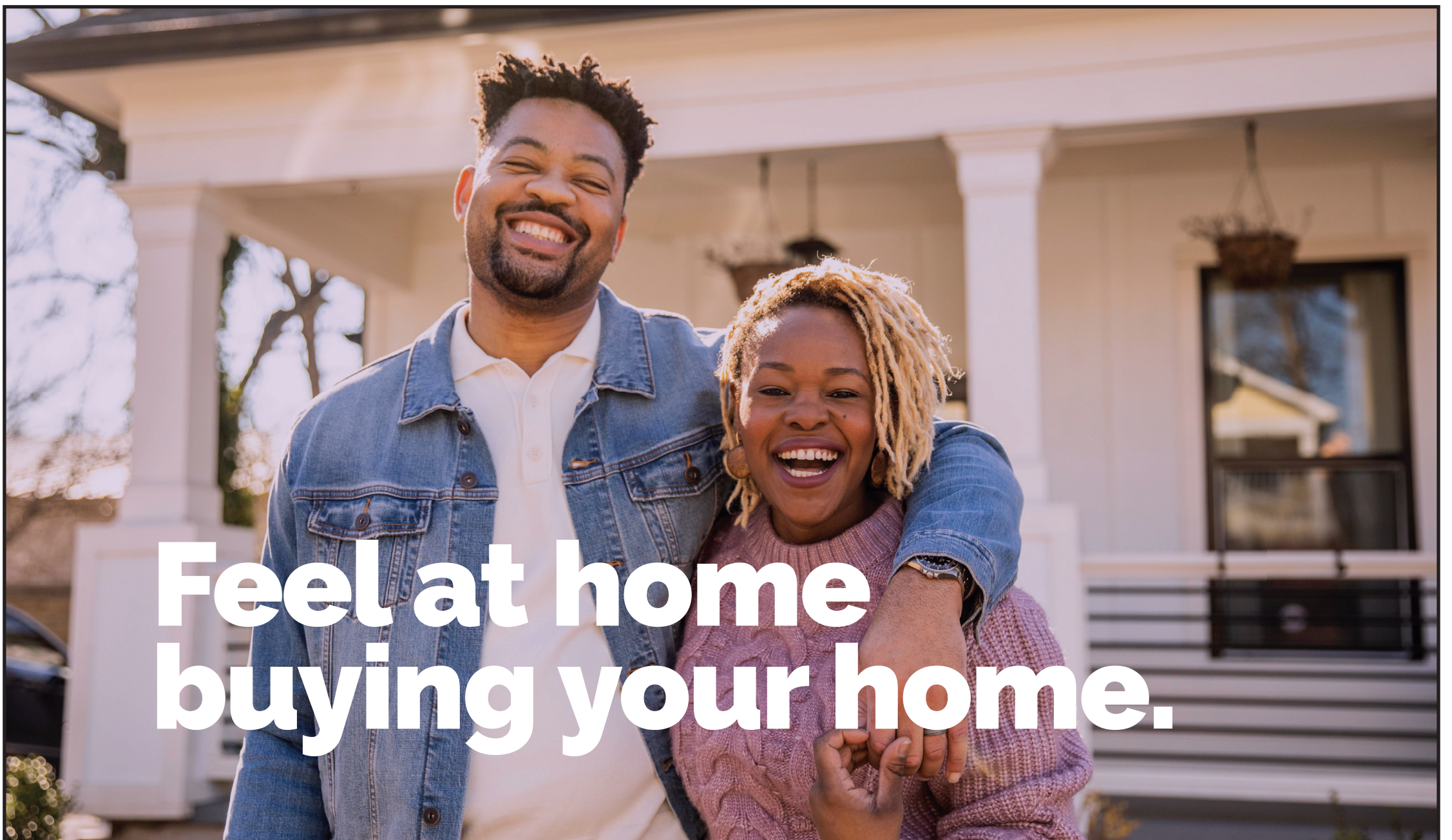
During his time as an administrator and art instructor at Baton Rouge Community College, Peabody was very open about being in Alcoholics Anonymous. In return, the students came to him with their own stories of substance abuse and recovery. It was his students who pressed him to create a series illustrating his struggle with addiction, and that series ultimately lead to a larger body of work on the subject. The response he got from these pieces convinced Peabody that he could spread awareness of the deadly epidemic of substance

abuse and addiction in the United States.

Every year there are over 100,000 substance abuse related deaths across the nation. Awareness and education is a start to combating this issue. With this exhibit, it is the artist's intention to provoke questions rather than provide answers on this serious subject that touches us all in some way. Art & Addiction: The Art of Ben Peabody opens April 15th and runs through June 4, 2023.

For more information about the programs and activities associated with the exhibition call (225) 336-2422 or visit www.WestBatonRougeMuseum.org. The museum is open Tuesday through Saturday, 10AM to 4:30PM and Sunday 2 to 5PM. The West Baton Rouge Museum is located at 845 N. Jefferson Avenue in Port Allen.

If you, or a family member needs help with mental or substance abuse issues, call SAMHSA's National/confidential 24-hour helpline at 1-800-662-HELP (4357).



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