

# The Weekly Press

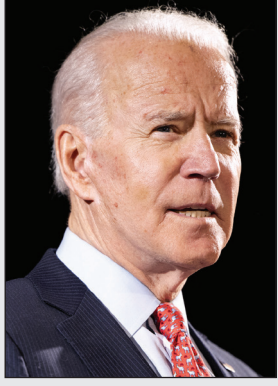
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THURSDAY, NOV. 26 - DEC. 2, 2020

A PEOPLE'S PUBLICATION

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## White House Signs off on Biden Receiving Intelligence Briefs



President-elect Joe Biden

White House signs off on Biden receiving intelligence briefs

President Trump has signed off on President-elect Joe Biden receiving classified intelligence reports, the latest sign the White House is allowing the transition to move forward after a delay.

A spokesperson for the Office of Director of National Intelligence (ODNI) said Tuesday afternoon that the White House gave ODNI permission to provide Biden with the President's Daily Brief, or PDB, to help support the transition process.

The PDB is a written summary of high-level intelligence that the president receives on a daily basis.

A White House official confirmed that Trump, who has refused to concede and continues to challenge the results of the election in court, signed off on distributing the brief to Biden.




It is unclear when Biden will receive his first intelligence report. Trump's approval was necessary in order for Biden to receive the daily report.

A spokesman for the Biden transition declined to comment. Biden, who

See **BIDEN**, on page 2

### WEATHER

#### 3 day Forecast BR Area

	<b>MON. 10/30</b> Sunny High 50°.
	<b>TUE. 11/01</b> Mostly Sunny High 54°.
	<b>WED. 11/02</b> Showers High 61°.

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### STATE/LOCAL PG 3

FOUR NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS TO OPEN YOUTH OPPORTUNITY CENTER

### B BUSINESS PG 5

GAS TAX SUPPORTERS PUSHING A NEW PLAN

## Some in Louisiana Could Receive COVID-19 Vaccine Before Year's End



BATON ROUGE, La. — Louisiana is going back to a modified version of Phase 2, Governor John Bel Edwards announced Tuesday, Nov. 24, but the governor also says there's light at the end of the tunnel in the form of a vaccine for COVID-19.

Gov. Edwards believes some people could get the first doses of a vaccine by as early as mid-December, however, he does not believe the state is moving quickly enough in the right direction to solve the more immediate issues, like hospital capacity. He does predict though that doses of two



Governor John Bel Edwards



Dr. Catherine O'Neal

vaccines should be available to Louisiana in a matter of weeks.

"I believe that in a number of months we're going to finally start to put this pandemic behind us," said Governor Edwards.

That was pretty much the only good news Tuesday, November 24, after the governor rolled back some of the state's reopening. He says a vaccine distribution is very near.

"And we could start this next month in small numbers, in small numbers. And it's going to take a while to get to the general

See **VACCINE**, on page 2

## Louisiana Superintendents Ask for Looser Quarantine Rules



BATON ROUGE, La. — Leaders of several Louisiana public school systems called on state officials Monday to relax coronavirus quarantine rules that have sent thousands of students home from school because they have been in close proximity to someone who tested positive for COVID-19.

But state health officials said they aren't recommending any changes to the quarantine regulations as Louisiana sees its third spike in coronavirus cases, with hospitals cautioning they are concerned the latest surge will overwhelm their facilities.

School superintendents from Ascension, West Baton Rouge, Rapides and Livingston parishes told lawmakers that too many students are missing in-person

See **RULES**, on page 6

## Dow Tops 30,000 for the First Time Ever as Biden Transition Begins

NEW YORK — Investors have a lot to be thankful for this holiday-shortened week — including the Dow passing the 30,000 milestone for the first time as stocks posted solid gains Tuesday to extend Monday's rally.

The Dow finished the day up nearly 455 points, or 1.5%. The blue chip index hit a new all-time high in the process, finally topping the 30,000 mark. The Dow is now up more than 5% in 2020.

The S&P 500 closed 1.6% higher and the Nasdaq ended 1.3% higher on Tuesday, and they too are not far from all-time highs. The S&P 500 has gained 12.5% this year, while the Nasdaq has

surged 34%.

The latest catalyst: It appears that a formal transition from President Donald Trump to President-elect Joe Biden is finally underway.

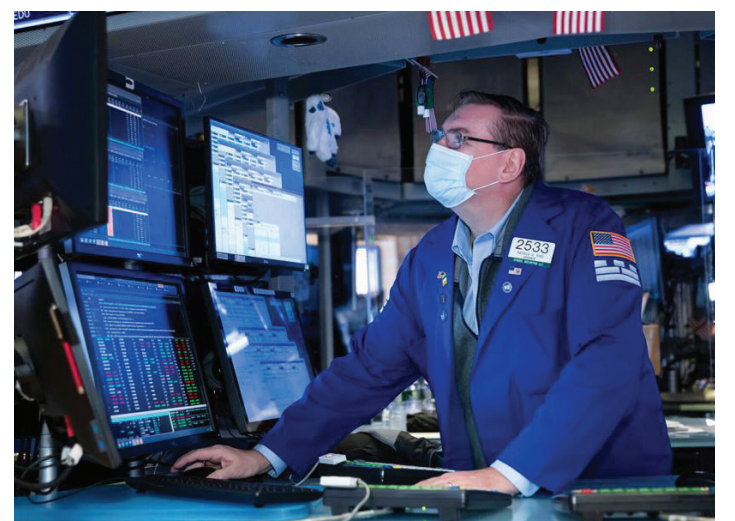
News came Monday that the General Services Administration is starting the so-called ascertainment process, which allows Trump administration officials to coordinate with the Biden team.

And that follows more promising coronavirus vaccine developments on Monday, as well as sources confirming to CNN that former Federal Reserve chair Janet Yellen will be Biden's nominee for Treasury Secretary.

Some market strategists were quick to point out that the Dow's rise above 30,000 is a more psychological milestone than anything else. But it does show just

See **TRANSITION**, on page 5

Specialist Patrick King works at the New York Stock Exchange on Nov. 23. Stocks rose in early trading Monday after investors received several pieces of encouraging news on COVID-19 vaccines and treatments, tempering concerns over rising virus cases and business restrictions.



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# STATE & LOCAL

## Louisiana Virus Aid Programs Run Dry with Requests Pending

BATON ROUGE, La. — Louisiana will run out of federal coronavirus money before it pays out grants to all eligible small businesses and local government agencies seeking dollars from COVID-19 aid programs created by Gov. John Bel Edwards and lawmakers.

Officials running the programs told the joint House and Senate budget committee Friday they received more applications than the dollars available.

“We have plenty of needs,” said Commissioner of Administration Jay Dardenne, the governor’s chief budget adviser.

The dollars come from \$1.8 billion in direct coronavirus aid that Louisiana received from Congress. The Democratic governor and majority-Republican Legislature spent more than half the money to fill gaps in Louisiana’s state budget.

About \$855 million remaining was split by lawmakers among several assistance programs. Nearly \$525 million was earmarked to reimburse local government agencies’ virus-related expenses. Another \$260 million was steered to small business grants. And \$50 million was set aside for one-time payments to front-line workers who stayed on the job in the pandemic’s early days. The remaining \$20 million was set aside to pay for administrative expenses to run those programs.

Dardenne, whose office oversaw the local government reimbursement, said that program has spent all of its money and still has \$431 million in outstanding, eligible expense applications from municipalities across 35 parishes.

“There is a huge outstanding request that is unable to be satisfied right now,” he said.

Red River Parish was the only parish that declined to submit any coronavirus expenses for reimbursement, Dardenne said. Senate Republican leader Sharon Hewitt, of Slidell, objected to the way dollars were divvied up to police juries, sheriffs’ offices, towns, cities and other local government entities to pay for protective equipment, cleaning supplies, overtime expenses and other virus response needs.

She pointed to what she considered discrepancies in how parishes were paid, with her home of St. Tammany Parish receiving reimbursement for 26% of its eligible requests, compared with 73% in nearby Jefferson Parish.

“I just don’t understand

how we can look at that and say that’s an equitable system,” Hewitt said.

Dardenne’s office calculated the maximum reimbursement amount available by parish using a formula based on the parish’s confirmed coronavirus case count and population.

“The math was the math,” he said. “It was not favoring one parish over another.”

New Orleans Mayor LaToya Cantrell unsuccessfully asked lawmakers earlier this year to shift millions more to the local government program. After receiving \$67 million, the city still has more than \$79 million in eligible expenses that the program didn’t reimburse because it ran out of cash, according to data Dardenne provided to lawmakers.

Treasurer John Schroder, the Republican managing the small business grants, said nearly all the program’s money has gone out the door, and the remaining dollars will be sent to applicants by the end of November. About 20,000 businesses will receive money, and Schroder said another 6,000 applicants were deemed eligible, but the program has no money to give them.

The only program that won’t spend all its allocated cash involves the \$250 one-time hazard payments to workers, overseen by the state revenue department. More than 142,000 people received the one-time assistance, and another 40,000 applications remain under review.

But of the \$50 million allocated, Revenue Secretary Kimberly Robinson told lawmakers that more than \$2 million won’t be spent on the \$250 checks because thousands of applicants for the money didn’t meet the income and job eligibility requirements set by lawmakers.

Lawmakers continue to hope for another round of aid from Washington. Legislative leaders said they intend to shift Louisiana’s unspent dollars — along with \$5 million in federal aid allocated to Louisiana’s judicial agencies that wasn’t used — to other programs in December. They didn’t specify Friday where the money will go.

Congress required the coronavirus dollars be spent by the end of December or states lose whatever aid is remaining.

“I don’t want to return money,” said Senate Finance Chairman Mack “Bodi” White, a Baton Rouge area Republican.

## BIDEN from page 1

introduced his national security team on Tuesday, later told reporters that he has not started intelligence briefings but said they had been offered. He said he planned to receive them on a “regular basis.”

The move comes one day after the General Services Administration (GSA) informed Biden that the Trump administration was ready to begin the transition process. ODNI had been waiting for GSA

to acknowledge Biden’s win before providing Biden intelligence reports, though it was not necessary to do so.

“Following the statutory direction of the Presidential Transition Act, ODNI will provide requested support to the transition team,” the ODNI spokesperson said.

Biden’s agency review team is expected to be on site Monday as part of the transition process.



## Medical Marijuana Company, SU and Others Partner for Turkey Giveaway

On Tuesday, November 24, Southern University and its partner Ilera Holistic Healthcare partnered with Chauna Banks, Capital Wellness Solutions, and City of Baker at the Miller & Daughter Mortuary for a Turkey Giveaway. Over 300 turkeys were given to families in observance of the Thanksgiving holiday.

Dr. Chanda Macias, CEO of Ilera Holistic Healthcare said, “We feel so honored and blessed to come together to support fami-



lies in our community. These times have not been easy for many. Our hearts are filled with joy, seeing the smiles on their faces.”

## Deadline for Repair and Lease Programs is Dec. 28

BATON ROUGE, La.—FEMA is seeking interested, qualified property owners to participate in its Multifamily Lease and Repair (MLR) program and its Direct Lease program.

Feasibility assessments must be conducted to determine if properties are eligible to participate in the MLR program. Eligible property owners will allow FEMA to make repairs to their property and allow FEMA to offer it to hurricane survivors in need of temporary housing.

Under the MLR program:

- Property repairs or improvements are not limited to damages caused by hurricanes Laura or Delta.
- FEMA can consider properties in which two or more units are available, including duplexes or other multifamily residential properties.
- Property owners must provide property management and maintenance services.
- Repairs to the property may include accommodations for those with access and functional needs.
- Grocery stores, laundromats and playgrounds within a reasonable commuting distance are required.

Under the Direct Lease program:

- FEMA may lease existing ready-to-occupy residential

property from qualified property-management companies. These properties may include corporate apartments or other properties not typically available to the general public.

• FEMA is reaching out to property-management companies primarily in Allen, Beauregard, Calcasieu, Cameron, Grant, Jefferson Davis, Rapides and Vernon parishes or other areas within reasonable commuting distance of generally no more than 50 miles of these parishes.

• FEMA also encourages all interested property management companies across Louisiana to consider responding to the request for information (RFI) for possible participation.

• FEMA will enter into a lease agreement with the property owner/property management company and pay rent based on the HUD Fair Market Rent. The lease agreement between FEMA and the property owner/management company may go up to 18 months with an option to extend, if the period of assistance is approved beyond the initial 18 months.

- Modification or improvements may be made to accommo-

date those with access and functional needs



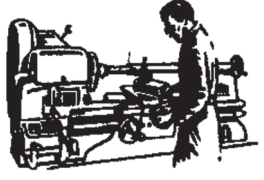
The deadline for property owners to register for participation in the MLR and direct lease programs

has been extended to Dec. 28, 2020. FEMA encourages interested owners or property managers to submit inquiries even after the deadline.

Interested parties that meet the qualifications can visit <https://beta.sam.gov/> to register their property. Responses to the above statements can be emailed to Marvin R. Jennings at [marvin.r.jennings@fema.dhs.gov](mailto:marvin.r.jennings@fema.dhs.gov) or John Clemons at [john.clemons@fema.dhs.gov](mailto:john.clemons@fema.dhs.gov) no later than 5 p.m. EST Dec. 28, 2020. For the Direct Lease program: The subject line shall read RFI 70FBR621100000002 Response: Direct Lease (DL), DR-4559-LA. For the MLR program, the subject line shall read RFI 70FBR621100000001 Response: Multi-Lease and Repair (MLR), DR-4559-LA.

No phone calls will be accepted or returned.

## READER INFORMATION



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

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## VACCINE from page 1

population,” said the Governor.

The state has a rough draft in place for vaccine distribution. Edwards expects Louisiana to receive between 30,000 to 60,000 doses of the Pfizer vaccine by the middle of December. Then a week later, the first doses of the Moderna vaccine could perhaps go out. This is all a part of “Operation Warp Speed.”

“Once that emergency authorization is granted by the FDA, I think he (Secretary Alex Azar) said within 24 hours, a vaccine would be en route to the states, to the locations that we’ve identified we want them shipped to,” said Edwards.

In Louisiana, the first priority for a vaccine will be health care workers, then to high-risk groups, like seniors who live in nursing homes, assisted living centers and people who live in community congregate settings.

But as for you and your family:

“The general public, my family shouldn’t see this vaccine for several months. We still have to make sure that we’re doing all the right things through Thanksgiving and Christmas and really taking care of each other. And making sure we stay safe because I don’t think we will see the true benefit of this vaccine for months and months to come,” said Dr. Catherine O’Neal, with Our Lady of the Lake.








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# Four Non-Profit Organizations to Open Youth Opportunity Center on Government Street

BATON ROUGE, La. - On Nov. 6, the keys to 4385 Government Street were handed over to the leaders of four Baton Rouge youth organizations, Front Yard Bikes, Big Buddy Program, Humanities Amped, and Line4Line. These organizations have met since last year to transform the old church into a hub that will generate economic and social development opportunities for Baton Rouge youth.

The coalition's purpose is to provide a vibrant shared space where Baton Rouge youth have access to a network of relationships and opportunities grounded in the worth and power of young people to realize themselves and transform their communities. According to Big Buddy Program Executive Director, Gaylyne Mack, "There are not enough places in this community where young people are the focus. Youth spaces are often shared with other services. If our community is going to survive economically, youth need to connect to opportunities and experiences that make them positive contributors to our economy. It is our responsibility as adults to invest in young people, who are not liabilities to this community, but rather, our greatest assets."



Former church to serve as youth collaboration center housing four non-profit organizations

An invitation-only ceremonial groundbreaking will take place on November 19, 2020 for the boards, staff, youth leaders, and invited supporters of the four organizations. An open house for the public will take place as part of White Light Night on November 20th at 6 pm. Blue Cross Blue Shield Founda-

tion provided the initial \$250K in funding through an "Angels of Change Award" intended to support past BCBS honorees to collaborate on solving issues for Louisiana's children. Dustin LaFont, of Front Yard Bikes, Gaylyne Mack of Big Buddy Program, Destiny Cooper of Humanities Amped, and O'Neil

Curtis of Line4Line are Angel Award recipients. The Angels of Change award will support the renovation and development of the space, while Baton Rouge General and Baton Rouge Area Foundation provided additional funds to support the project start-up.

The coalition plans to provide a

range of programming at the center to include:

- Front Yard Bike's Mid City Bike Shop is a community-owned bike shop providing sales, repairs, and classes. They will also provide youth professional development courses, certification classes, and employ youth.

- Line4Line's Barber & Beauty Shop is a full-service salon where youth receive hands-on training in barbering and beauty techniques, offer employment and haircuts. The Community Reading Room provides access to books and literacy support, STEAM rich summer, Saturday and afterschool programs with creative learning, hands-on making, and technical art/craft skills that are marketable.

- Big Buddy's youth workforce experiences, skill development workshops, and supports for youth as they acquire industry-recognized certifications which lead to meaningful well-paid employment and success in future endeavors; and

- Humanities Amped's afterschool studio, including peer-supported tutoring and healing circles, WordCrew spoken word poetry Fresh Heat open mics, youth civic engagement projects and conferences, Dreamkeepers college and career readiness, and an array of training for educators, youth workers, and peer leaders.

## Gov. Edwards Requests Major Disaster Declaration Due to Damage from Hurricane Zeta

Gov. John Bel Edwards has requested a Major Disaster Declaration, formally requesting direct assistance to those people and communities impacted by Hurricane Zeta.



Gov. John Bel Edwards

"Hurricane Zeta was the third storm within two months to wreak havoc on communities that were already in the process of rebuilding their homes and businesses damaged by two previous storms," said Gov. Edwards. "Zeta landed as a strong Category 2 storm but was likely a Category 3 hurricane and brought considerable damage to the impacted areas. As we continue to assist families with recovering from these disasters, we are asking for the continued assistance of our federal partners to help them as their hard work continues. We are grateful for

the help that has been provided in previous storms and hope to receive the same attention to this request as well."

A Major Disaster Declaration can only be requested following a disaster. The Governor previously declared a state of emergency on October 26, 2020, and a total of 21 parishes declared states of emergency in preparation for Zeta.

Hurricane Zeta made landfall in Lafourche Parish on October 28 as a very strong Category 2 hurricane with sustained winds

of 110 mph, high wind gusts and heavy rainfall. In addition, the same areas hit by Zeta are also still recovering from Category 4 Hurricane Laura, Category 2 Hurricane Delta and the ongoing battle against the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Governor is specifically requesting Individual Assistance for Jefferson, Lafourche, Orleans, Plaquemines, St. Bernard, and Terrebonne Parishes (6); debris removal (Category A) for Jefferson, Lafourche, Orleans, Plaquemines, St. Bernard, and St. Charles Parishes (6); emergency protective measures (Category B), including direct federal assistance under the Public Assistance program for Acadia, Allen, Ascension, Assumption, Beaufort, Calcasieu, Cameron, East Baton Rouge,

East Feliciana, Evangeline, Iberia, Iberville, Jefferson, Jefferson Davis, Livingston, Lafayette, Lafourche, Orleans, Plaquemines, Pointe Coupee, St. Bernard, St. Charles, St. Helena, St. James, St. John the Baptist, St. Landry, St. Martin, St. Mary, St. Tammany, Tangipahoa, Terrebonne, Vermilion, Washington, West Baton Rouge, and West Feliciana Parishes (35); and Hazard Mitigation statewide.

## LA Workforce Commission Stops Payment on More Than 160K Claims After Spike in Fraud

BATON ROUGE, La. - The Louisiana Workforce Commission says they have halted more than 160,000 unemployment claims after seeing a spike in potential fraud.

In a press release sent out Wednesday, the LWC says they have seen a drastic increase in Unemployment Insurance Claims. There has also been an increase in suspicious claims and fraudulent activity nationwide.

As a result, the LWC has stopped all payments on new

claims filed on or after November 5, 2020. All that have recently applied for unemployment will receive an email requesting more identity verification.

Moving forward, the LWC will now require that applicants upload identity verification documents.

Officials say they are working to minimize the delays in payment as much as possible and will quickly work to implement new security measures.

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# RELIGION

## Leon Coleman Muhammad Founding Member, President of the Louisiana Black Publishers Dies at Age 75

Leon Coleman, Sr. was born September 3, 1945 to Ezelle and Levester "Rodie" Coleman in Farrisville, Texas in Newton County Texas. He was baptized at Jerusalem Baptist Church in Galveston, Texas at a young age. He later joined The Nation of Islam in 1991, under the direction of The Honorable Minister Louis Farrakhan.

Leon was educated in the Texas public school system in Farrisville and in Galveston, Texas, where he graduated from Central High School in 1963.

After graduation, Leon joined the United States Air Force, where he served for four years at Lackland AFB, Texas; Alexandria, Louisiana and Aviano, Italy. While serving in the Air Force, Leon studied business at University of Maryland.

In 1967, Leon married Alice Lorraine Gordon; and to that union five children were born. The family resided in Galveston, Texas; and in 1974, they moved to Pineville, Louisiana.

While living in Galveston, Texas, Leon continued his education and studied business at Galveston College, where he earned an AAS Degree in Office Occupations and an AAS Degree in Business Management.

Leon was employed with United States Public Health Hospital and U. S. Customs Service in Galveston, Texas. He was employed with the U. S. Forest Service in Alexandria-Pineville. He left the Forest Service to pursue his dream of becoming an



**Leon (Coleman) Muhammad**

entrepreneur. Leon and his wife, Alice owned and operated Gor-Col Barber & Beauty Supplies, a chain of stores operated in Alexandria, LA and Natchez, MS. for approximately 25 years.

Leon was very active in the community. He was a founding member and President of the Louisiana Black Publishers Association, a founding member and past president of the Black Business League of Alexandria, a founding member and president of the Imperial Men Social & Charity Club, a member of the Greater Alexandria Chamber of Commerce and a member of the Kiwanis Club.

Leon was preceded in death by his maternal grandparents, Lewis and Lizzie Johnson; his mother, Ezell James; father, Levester "Rodie" Coleman; 2 sons Leon Coleman, Jr. and Brian K. Coleman, Sr.; one daughter, Tahira N. Coleman; two grandsons, Baby Boy Coleman and Akil Coleman; one great-grandson, Hakeem Coleman; four dear sisters-in-law; Leona Foster, Priscilla Bonham, Margaret Monette and Shirley Mitchell; and three brothers-in-law, Lloyd Monette,

Willie Whitley and Levi Bonham.

He leaves to mourn his passing, a loving and dearly devoted wife, Alice Gordon Coleman of Pineville, LA; one daughter, Sonya Coleman Abdullah (Naim) of Houston, TX; two sons, Russell Coleman of Alexandria, LA and Leon Coleman, III of Pineville, LA; one granddaughter, Jamila M. Coleman of Pineville, LA; six grandsons; Brandon L. Coleman of Houston, TX, Brian K. Coleman, II, Russell L. Coleman, Rennell Coleman, Jamiraco Holmes and Kenzick Coleman, all of Pineville, LA; 5 great-granddaughters, Serenity, Kylee, and Cherish Coleman of Shreveport, LA and Aliyah and Zariah Coleman of Pineville, LA; one daughter-in-law, Lillie Mae Coleman; two sisters; Louise Cleveland (Clarence) of Texas City, Texas and Beatrice James of Galveston, Texas; 3 devoted sisters-in-law, Gilda J. Gordon and Theresa Whitley of Pineville, LA and Azelia M. Scott of Dallas, TX; five brothers-in-law, Lawrence Foster (Leona) and George Gordon (Betty) of Pineville, LA; Albert Gordon (Sherry) of New Orleans, LA; and Ronald Gordon (Bernadine) and Robert (Susan) of Dallas, Texas; and a great number of other relatives and friends.

## The Devastation of a Lie

BY BISHOP CHARLES E. WALLACE  
Senior Pastor Oasis Christian Church



**Bishop Charles E. Wallace**

As children, our parents taught us not to lie. In our mischievousness, we could get away with some things, but not a lie. Our parents knew that if we built our life on lies, that our future would be predictable. They taught us that lying was progressive. They told us that if you lie you will steal, and if you steal you will kill. Nothing good can come from lying.

They told us that if we told the truth, that God would be with us and if we lied, that the devil would get us. We believed that. From scripture, we also learned that God hates lying more than our parents did. (Proverbs 6:16-19). Lying is deceptive. It is told to deceive the one being lied to. However, the liar is deceived as well because all lies will eventually be revealed sooner or later.

All throughout scripture, God shows His displeasure about lying even to the end. (Revelation 21:18). Lying is so seductive that one may think they could lie their way to success, not knowing that anything that is built on a lie will eventually have foundation failure. (Luke 6:46-49).

Lying can ruin your life, family, business, ministry, and the list goes on. Lies should not be told anywhere, at no time, but especially not in the church. The church is the moral compass of

the world. The church is the city on the hill, the lamp full of oil, the salt of the earth. The church are ambassadors for Christ. Sadly, we are hearing more

lies from the church house than the white house, if that is even possible. God dealt with lying in the church for a good reason. (Acts 5:1-11 TLB).

### About Bishop Charles E. Wallace:

Bishop Charles E. Wallace is founder and pastor of Oasis Christian Church in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. He is a preacher, teacher, and leader who has been serving in the ministry since 1980, and pastoring since 1989. Bishop Wallace incorporates a global vision for his ministry that is based on the Great Commission found in Matthew 28:19-20, which states "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen."

**ON EAGLE WINGS MINISTRIES**

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# HBCUs Get \$3M to Help Develop Sensors for Nuclear Plants

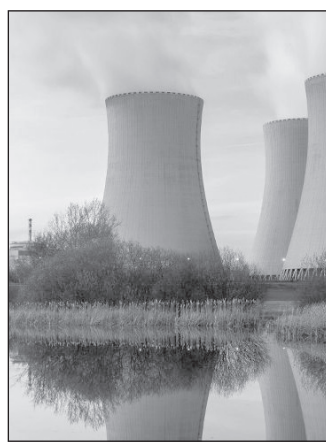
DURHAM, N.C. — Three historically Black colleges have received \$3 million to use in developing devices that can find defects in nuclear facilities as they age.

According to a news release from N.C. Central University in Durham, the National Nuclear Security Administration awarded the money to N.C. Central, Elizabeth City State University and Southern University in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Principal investigator Abdennaceur Karoui is leading a group of research teams comprised of faculty and students from the three schools.

The NCCU team will examine alloys for a composition that is light, but can withstand the impact of nuclear radiation.

Students in the program will have the opportunity to study machine learning research for materials sciences, and they will be given the chance to do summer research at national laboratories.

Trump said he would leave the White House on Jan. 20, Inauguration Day. "Certainly I will — and you know that," he said. "But I think that there will be a lot of things happening between now and the 20th of January, a



lot of things."

One of those things: Trump will campaign for the two Republican senators in the Georgia runoff races on Jan. 5. The White House said he will headline a rally on Dec. 5, and Trump said he may return to the state before the election, if needed. The results of the races will determine whether Republicans retain control of the Senate.

But he refused to say whether he would attend Biden's inauguration ceremonies, as is tradition. And as far as his political future beyond Jan. 20 — Trump also declined to answer.

"Well, I don't want to talk about 2024 yet," he said.

# BUSINESS

## Gas Tax Supporters Pushing a New Plan to Louisiana Lawmakers



BATON ROUGE, La. — A Louisiana coalition of contractors and others intends to push a \$300 million annual state gasoline tax hike in next year's legislative session, despite the recent failure of an earlier tax attempt.

The Advocate reports the Louisiana Coalition to Fix Our Roads, whose president is Baton Rouge Republican former Rep. Erich Ponti, is spearheading the effort to address a \$14 billion backlog of road and bridge work in the state with a gas tax increase. Republican Rep. Jack McFar-

land, of Winnfield, has agreed to handle the legislation during the 2021 regular legislative session that begins in April. McFarland said the state needs "a good transportation system to reach our economic potential." He noted that Texas, Mississippi and Arkansas are among the states that have boosted their gas taxes in recent years.

"Everybody has passed an increase in their revenue for roads, but not us," he said. "And we will continue to be last on every list until we decide we are willing to invest."

But he faces a high hurdle to passage, after the most recent push to boost the gas tax died in 2017 without a vote of the full House or Senate because of intense opposition. Lawmakers cool to the idea said their constituents have told them they are not interested in paying more at the pump.

Louisiana motorists pay 38.4 cents per gallon in gasoline taxes, including 20 cents per gallon in state charges.

The latest proposal would boost the state gas tax 22 cents higher over more than a decade:

Adding 10 cents per gallon initially — to raise \$300 million per year — and then adding another 2 cents every other year as an inflation guard until 2033.

Any such increase requires the approval of two-thirds of the state House and Senate, a hefty challenge.

Republican Senate President Page Cortez, a former chairman of the Senate Transportation Committee, said earlier this year that he doubts the Legislature will boost the gas tax during this four-year term.

### TRANSITION from page 1

how bullish investors are.

"Although 30,000 isn't much different than 29,999, there is something special about those big milestone numbers. This is yet another reminder of how far stocks and the economy have come since the depths of March," said Ryan Detrick, chief market strategist for LPL Financial, in a report.

Along those lines, the CNN Business Fear & Greed Index is now showing levels of Extreme Greed.

It's also worth noting that Tuesday's rally comes as many investors get ready for

the Thanksgiving holiday. The stock market in the US is closed Thursday and only open for a half day of trading on Black Friday.

So it may be a mistake to make too much of this week's market moves. It may not be solely about Biden, Yellen and the transition.

"It's also important to keep in mind we're in for a holiday period in the US — and lighter volumes, news flow and attendance could certainly have an impact as well," said Yousef Abasi, global market strategist at StoneX, in a report.

## BBB Tip: Small Business Saturday

After the big Black Friday sales, check out the small, local and independent businesses participating in Small Business Saturday (SBS), a day to celebrate small businesses and all they do for their communities.

Created in 2010 by American Express, Small Business Saturday — the day after Black Friday — is a perfect time to stop in and support your local independent business retailers. The Better Business Bureau of South Central Louisiana is pleased to support Small Business Saturday and urges people to support small businesses in their communities.

BBB offers the following tips to "Shop Small" on Small Business Saturday:

Get involved. Many communities are hosting special events to celebrate and support the businesses that make your hometown unique. Find out what local events are happening in your area on the Small Business Saturday website, or visit your local chamber of com-



merce or merchants' association.

Sign-up for email alerts. Save a few dollars on your holiday budget by signing up for Small Business Saturday email specials offered by the merchants in your area. Keep in mind, you'll probably get additional deals throughout the year, not just during the holidays.

Research the shops nearest to you. Find out what past customers have to say by reading reviews

online, such as those on BBB.org, and learn what shops are participating by going to ShopSmall.org.

Connect with businesses on social media. Many small businesses will advertise their sales via social media. Use #ShopSmall to search for information and share activities.

Invite your friends and family. Turn this shopping event into a "friends and family" extravaganza!

Visit favorite local stores or explore a new one. Take time to get to know the business owners and local community officials, and get a head start on the holidays while enjoying time with loved ones.

Be safe. Be sure to also mask up, bring hand sanitizer and check the capacity limits at the store under Louisiana's Phase 2 guidelines.

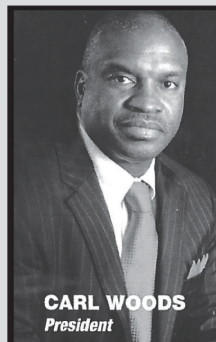
Don't just shop small, eat small! Many people think that shopping at local retail stores is the only way to participate. However, small independently owned restaurants, bakeries, and coffee shops would love to invite in new customers while they're out and about.

Share your experience. Take a selfie at your favorite small business. Share it on social media with the hashtags #BBB and #ShopSmall to tell the world you're a big fan of small businesses. Leave a review on BBB.org. Remember, these shops are open all year as well!

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## Mayor Broome Signs Latest Executive Order to Protect Small Businesses in East Baton Rouge Parish

BATON ROUGE, La. — Statement by Mayor-President Sharon Weston Broome: “This holiday season, it is critically important for the City-Parish to take every action within our purview to help our business community, while remaining vigilant in our fight against the coronavirus. Since the beginning of the pandemic in March, I signed four different executive orders to assist our small businesses.



Mayor Sharon Weston Broome

Today, I signed an executive order to grant a 30 day extension for East Baton Rouge Parish businesses filing local sales taxes. The returns for November 2020 will be considered timely if filed on or before January 20, 2021. I signed the same order on March 17, 2020 for the sales tax deadlines in April and May.

Also, on March 30, 2020 I signed an executive order to exempt businesses from forfeiture of their 2020 liquor & beer license for unpaid local taxes, fees, penalties

and interest.

Finally, on August 18, 2020 I signed an executive order instituting a Local Sales Tax Penalty Amnesty Program, effectively waiving all penalties on delinquent tax payments for all 2020 tax periods made from September 20, 2020 through January 31, 2021.

I understand the challenges small businesses face as they seek to retain employees and keep their doors open. I can assure you that keeping our economy open and maximizing opportunities for businesses are at the forefront of my mind during this pandemic.”

All four executive orders are attached above.



President Trump took questions for the first time since he lost the election to Joe Biden after he spoke to troops serving overseas on Thanksgiving.

## Trump Is In No Mood To Concede, But Says Will Leave White House

President Trump this week acknowledged that the transition for President-elect Joe Biden to take office is going ahead. But on Thursday, he made clear he's in no mood to concede the election, even after the Electoral College formally votes this month.

“It's going to be a very hard thing to concede because we know there was massive fraud,” Trump said, without evidence, complaining that the

U.S. election was “like a Third World country.”

Trump has kept a low profile since losing the election to Biden on Nov 3, appearing on camera only a handful of times, and steering clear of reporters' questions.

But on Thanksgiving, after talking to troops serving overseas, Trump held forth, venturing into the weeds of the allegations that the election was rigged —

baseless claims of widespread fraud that courts have repeatedly rejected.

“There's no way that Biden got 80 million votes,” he said, repeatedly.

When a reporter pushed back against his claims, Trump got angry. “Don't talk to me that way,” he said. “You're just a lightweight ... I'm the president of the United States. Don't ever talk to the president that way.”

## Salvation Army Says Some Kettles Will Stay in Storage Unless More Bell-Ringers Volunteer



BATON ROUGE, La.- The Salvation Army says it will have to leave roughly 25 kettles in storage this winter because there are not enough people willing to man the usual number of donation stations in the Baton Rouge area.

Bell-ringers will set up outside about 35 stores when the local Red Kettle drive begins Nov. 20.

“It's a struggle right now,” Maj. Don Tekautz, who heads the Baton Rouge Salvation Army, said. “We're struggling just hiring employees to be in our family store to keep it up and running too.”

Tekautz says the local shelter is full almost every night, and more people are asking the Salvation Army for help with rent and utilities than any time since the 2016 floods.

“You already think about people who are living on a margin who are in trouble,” he said. “We're facing now, families who have never come to us for help.”

Tekautz says demand for social services and mental health assistance has increased by 155% since 2019. The Salvation Army aims to raise about \$220,000 during its kettle drive this winter.

### RULES from page 1

classroom instruction because they have been sent home for 14 days to quarantine.

“We have a lot of healthy kids who are home when they don't need to be,” West Baton Rouge Parish Superintendent Wesley Watts told the House health committee. “We're not asking to do away with quarantine. We're just asking for some modifications.”

That argument hasn't persuaded the Louisiana Department of Health, which helped set the school quarantines based on advice from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

“We continue to follow CDC guidance on quarantine and so are not recommending any changes to

K-12 guidance at this time,” health department spokeswoman Aly Neel said in a statement after the hearing.

More than 11,000 new infections of the COVID-19 disease caused by the virus have been confirmed in the state over the last week, and 6,039 people in Louisiana are confirmed to have died from the disease since March, according to the health department.

Louisiana's schools are required to follow virus safety guidelines adopted by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, based on recommendations from the health department.

“We are losing what is supposed to be the best year of high school because of COVID,” said Brennan Falgout, a senior at Central Lafourche High School. He told lawmakers: “I'm hoping we can find an answer to this and try to save the

“We have made great progress in the last four years but there is more work we need to do for our parish. This is our last chance to vote in 2020 to keep moving forward. Let's keep moving forward with a vision of peace, prosperity and progress for everyone.”

— MAYOR SHARON WESTON BROOME



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— GOVERNOR JOHN BEL EDWARDS

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