

The Weekly Press

SERVING BAKER, CENTRAL, AND ZACHARY

THURSDAY, AUGUST 20-26, 2020

A PEOPLE'S PUBLICATION

VOL. 43 • NO.25 • FREE

LOCAL & STATE PG 2

CITY MAKING PROGRESS ON DRAINAGE PROJECTS



LOCAL & STATE PG 4

PERFECT MATE DRIVE-IN MOVIE TOUR



OTHER NEWS PG 6

TARA WICKER'S APPEAL DECLINED

Gov. Edwards Declares Emergency Exists for November Election in Louisiana

BATON ROUGE, La. — Gov. John Bel Edwards signed an executive order declaring that an emergency exists for Louisiana's November election because of COVID-19, while also acknowledging that the current emergency election plan from the Secretary of State does not go far enough to protect public health.



Gov. John Bel Edwards

The emergency declaration, which must be requested by the Secretary of State and granted by the Governor, allows the state to move forward with emergency plans to support the election and take into account health and safety issues that might affect voting.

Without the Governor's approval, the Secretary of State's plan cannot be implemented, even with Legislative approval. The Governor does not support the Secretary of State's plan because it does not follow guidance from public health officials and does not provide for absentee mail-in voting options for people who are at high risk for suffering serious issues relating to COVID-19, those who have been exposed and are in quarantine and those who are caregivers for immunocompromised individuals.

Gov. Edwards said: "I want to be crystal clear: you should not mistake me declaring an emergency for this election as approving of the Secretary of State's election plan, because I do not. I believe that we need emergency procedures in place for this election. I do not believe the Secretary of State's current plan goes far enough, because it does not take into account the seriousness of this global pandemic and the health and safety of the voters. Simply put: voting should not be a super spreader event.

See EDWARDS, on page 2

DNC NOMINATES KAMALA HARRIS in a Historic Selection for Vice President



Former President Obama, Hillary Clinton Hail Biden-Harris Ticket, Take Aim at Trump

Speaking to the historic nature of her nomination to be vice president, Sen. Kamala Harris addressed the Democratic National Convention on Wednesday night.

As the first woman of color to be a vice presidential candidate on a major party ticket, Harris' speech also coincides with the 100th anniversary of the passage of the 19th Amendment giving women — though not Black women — the right to vote.

Harris said that while those women of color had helped with the passage of the amendment, "they were undeterred."

"Without fanfare or recognition, they organized, testified, rallied, marched and fought — not just for their vote, but for

See HARRIS, on page 2



Democratic vice presidential candidate Sen. Kamala Harris of California speaks Wednesday, the third day of the Democratic National Convention.

FIRST WARD VOTERS ASSOCIATION

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First Ward Voters Association Endorse Biden, Harris Democratic Presidential Ticket

The BOARD of FIRST WARD VOTERS ASSOCIATION reaffirms our commitment to serve for elections under the leadership of the first elected official from our community, the patriarch leader of our community, Joseph A. Delpit. He was elected to the City Parish Council in 1968 and has remained active in the development & progress of our city, state and nation. For decades, he has directly open doors of power and inclusiveness to all our elected & appointed officials.

He, along with other community leaders have welcomed First Ward Voters Association to join them, as they continue to be a voice for our people. We urge all our supporters to join us in electing the most capable persons to serve, and direct government toward our fullest community prosperity.

On this day we again join hands to wholeheartedly endorse the DEMOCRATIC PARTY TICKET OF BIDEN & HARRIS



FOR PRESIDENT AND VICE PRESIDENT!

First Ward Voters, since 1952 has served as a clearing house for candidates and a voter recommendation organization serving the interest of citizens of this area in particular, as well as Baton Rouge in general. FIRST WARD VOTERS has played a significant role in the creation of voter rights, equal employment, equal opportunity and shared economic benefits to all citizens in the community.

FIRST WARD VOTERS ASSOCIATION

W. T. Winfield, President
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PAID FOR BY FIRST WARD VOTERS ASSOCIATION

Mayor Broome Launches \$1 Million Microgrant Program

BATON ROUGE, La. — August 13, 2020 — Mayor-President Sharon Weston Broome's Restart BR Task Force announced Thursday the launch of a \$1 million microgrant program for small businesses in East Baton Rouge Parish. The Resilient Restart EBR program is intended to help locally based small businesses who have been financially affected by the coronavirus pandemic.



Mayor Sharon Weston Broome

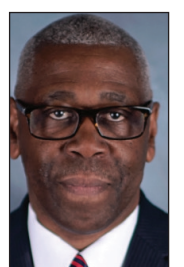
The Resilient Restart EBR Program will support small businesses who are classified as low- to moderate-income individuals based on HUD guidelines, as well as those who own and operate a business in a low-to-moderate-income census tract in East Baton Rouge Parish.

Special consideration will be given to eligible minority-owned,

See PROGRAM, on page 3

Mayor Waites Announces #BetterBaker Initiative

BAKER, La. — Mayor Darnell Waites announces his initiative for a #BetterBaker, #KeepBaker-Beautiful. This effort is aimed to improve property values in the City of Baker with the assistance of Baker Code Enforcement officers, who will be proactively observing properties to aid the Mayor's initiative efforts. We anticipate positive results for our community with this initiative which is strategically focused on three initial areas:



Mayor Darnell Waites

- Removing and/or eliminating salvaged and inoperable vehicles that are currently in view of the public: this includes all salvaged or inoperable vehicles which are parked on lawns, under carports, in driveways or on the street. (Please note that any vehicle, abandoned or inoperable which does not have a license plate or current license plate, inspection sticker, has flat tires, or is otherwise inoperable may be deemed a public nuisance that

See #BETTERBAKER, on page 2

WEATHER

5 Day Forecast BR Area

	MON. 08/24 Thunderstorms High 85°.
	TUE. 08/25 Thunderstorms High 89°
	WED. 08/26 Thunderstorms High 91°.
	THUR. 08/27 Thunderstorms High 91°.
	FRI. 08/28 Thunderstorms High 92°.

INDEX

State & Local2 & 3
Business4
Religion5
Other News6

READ OUR DIGITAL INTERACTIVE EDITION ONLINE @ BRWEEKLYPRESS.COM



STATE & LOCAL

CATS Board to Hold Public Hearing About Millage Roll Forward Rates

BATON ROUGE_ The Board of the Capital Area Transit System will hold a public hearing before its regular monthly meeting on Tuesday, September 22, 2020, regarding rolling forward its millage rates.

When taxes were reassessed in East Baton Rouge, this resulted in an increased value to taxable property in the city of Baton Rouge and the city of Baker. As a result, CATS and other government agencies can opt to keep the tax at the rate residents approved. This process is referred to as "rolling forward"

the tax. For CATS, this action could result in its collecting as much as \$1,020,787.60 in additional revenue for the City of Baton Rouge and \$55,722.91 in additional revenue for the City of Baker.

CATS will consider rolling forward the millage rates for the Baton Rouge and the Baker tax at its regular meeting on Tuesday, September 22, 2020 at 4:35 p.m. or immediately after the public hearing.

For more information about CATS, visit www.brcats.com.

MetroMorphosis to Start a LaunchBR- Green Technology Business Academy Cohort 3

BATON ROUGE, La. – MetroMorphosis will soon offer, for the third year, a LaunchBR Green Technology Business Academy, a fourteen-week, cohort-based business academy that equips entrepreneurs in the construction, landscaping and lawn care sector with the insights, relationships, and tools needed to start or scale their businesses. In addition to learning traditional business development skills, this third cohort of LaunchBR will be able to implement water management and green infrastructure technologies that are cost-effective while making our community more resilient in the face of wet weather events.

MetroMorphosis founder Raymond A. Jetson developed the idea of hosting a business development academy after the successful dissemination of a survey to minority owned businesses participating in the Urban Congress on African American Males. LaunchBR Green Technology Business Academy, as it is called, will utilize the CO.STARTERS

curriculum to expand business ownership within underrepresented populations in underinvested communities. Drawing from the experience of successful entrepreneurs and start-up veterans from around the globe, CO.STARTERS walks creative small-business owners through lean, effective business modeling methods in a simple and intuitive way, and with the help of a supportive community. Rather than treating a start-up like a large corporation and writing a detailed business plan, CO.STARTERS participants are encouraged to build and test small models first. In the process, participants receive real-time customer feedback, update their models to meet customer needs and avoid creating businesses based on incorrect assumptions.

The CO.STARTERS program has a global reach, serving numerous communities across the United States, New Zealand,

See **BUSINESS**, on page 3

#BETTERBAKER from page 1

is unlawfully stored in violation of Baker City Ordinances.)

- Removing and/or trimming excessive grass, weeds trees or other vegetation: grass must be less than 12 inches high on any property or premises

- Removing and eliminating litter, garbage, refuse and rubbish: such as commercial & noncommercial handbills, temporary signs, any printed, written or privately or commercially produced signs etc. that have been deemed to be inappropriately placed in violation of Baker City

Ordinances.

Baker Code Enforcement officers, upon observation of any violation, shall issue a notice which will be provided to property owners informing them of the need to remove or abate the nuisance. Failure to remove or abate the nuisance may result in fees or costs as specified in Baker City Ordinances.

Thank you to all of the people who help every day to Keep Baker Beautiful, creating a #BetterBaker for everyone!

EDWARDS from page 1

The current plan includes no exemptions for people who are at high risk for getting ill from COVID or those who live with and care for these people. And, most seriously of all, it doesn't offer an option for someone who has known exposure to COVID-19 and is in quarantine to vote by mail. So, people who have been advised by doctors not to leave their homes to avoid potentially exposing others would instead either have to not vote in the election or would have to go against the advice of public health experts and leave their homes.

This puts all of us at risk. From our poll workers to our voters, people must have the confidence that they can safely vote. We need to find a solution that works for the public health of our people and also for the health of our democracy. We had an election plan for the past two smaller elections that worked by expanding early voting but also allowing for an expansion of absentee mail in voting. That we wouldn't continue this for November's election – the highest profile one of the year – makes absolutely zero sense to me."

Dept. of Public Works Says City-Parish Making Progress on Drainage Projects



The Department of Public Works is making progress on two drainage improvement projects in the city-parish. (Source: Office of Mayor-President Sharon Weston Broome)

Baton Rouge, La. – The Department of Public Works announced Wednesday progress on two ongoing drainage improvement programs in East Baton Rouge Parish: the Total Spray Program and the Strategic Canal Cleaning Program.

Total Spray Program

In May 2020, the Department of Maintenance finalized contracts to begin the Total Spray Program, which will use selective herbicide to reduce vegetation in 277 miles of canals across the parish. City-Parish owned canals will be sprayed three times per year, totaling 831 miles of canal maintenance annually, weather permitting.

"In East Baton Rouge Parish, we know we have to consider water

management in everything we do. Our homes, our families, and our community depend on it," said Mayor Broome. "The program will address 1,690 acres of City-Parish canals, so we can improve drainage and protect our community."

The Total Spray Program includes 778 canal segments, which are separated into three major divisions – North, East, and South. The first round of spraying started on June 9, 2020. As of now, 182 canal segments have received their initial treatment. The goal is to complete the first round of spraying around Labor Day, weather permitting.

To track the Total Spray Program visit <https://ebrgis.maps.arcgis.com/home/webmap/viewer.html?webmap=19d0656013304d8d82d920c3ff20f543>

Strategic Canal Cleaning Program

In addition to the Total Spray Program, the Department of Public Works is currently carrying out the Strategic Canal Cleaning Program. The City-Parish has identified critical canals across East Baton Rouge Parish, and is in the process of removing vegetation and sediment from these drainage ways.

Removing sediment and unnecessary vegetation will improve water flow and drainage capacity throughout the parish.

The Strategic Canal Cleaning Program includes the following drainage ways:

- Industriplex (Claycut Bayou)
- Glenn Oaks (Roberts Canal)

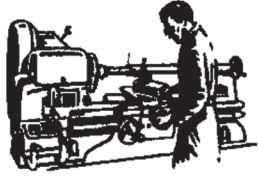
- Badley Road (Monte Sano Bayou)
- Howell Park (Hurricane Creek)
- Catalina (Engineer Depot Canal)
- Florida Blvd. @ Sam Drive (Jones Creek)
- Camelot & Percival (Jones Creek)
- Balis Drive (Dawson Creek)
- Burbank & Lee (Bayou Fountain)
- Bluebonnet & Jefferson (Claycut Bayou)
- Tiger Bend & Timberridge (Jacks Bayou)
- The Strategic Canal Cleaning Program is projected to last through the end of the year, weather permitting.

"The Department of Public Works is working to address drainage as quickly and as effectively as possible. Our goal is to address the problems that are facing the parish today, and create solutions that will improve our drainage infrastructure in the long run," said Kelvin Hill, Assistant Chief Administrative Officer and Director of Public Works.

Major Drainage Capital Projects

Along with these two maintenance initiatives, there are also several capital projects underway to improve drainage in East Baton Rouge Parish, including: The Stormwater Master Plan, The Comite River Diversion Canal, and The East Baton Rouge Flood Risk Reduction Project (5 Tributaries Project). These major projects will be in the works for the next few years, and will greatly reduce potential flood risk for many residents and businesses.

READER INFORMATION



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

Correction Policy

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

The Weekly Press

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BUSINESS from page 2

and Australia.
LaunchBR Green Technology Business Academy Cohort 3 will be implemented and facilitated by Tyra L. Banks, a passionate member of the MetroMorphosis team. Ms. Banks is a successful business owner and a graduate of LSU's College of Business. Other instructors have been tapped to bring value to the class. Banking and financial concepts will be taught by the staff of TruFund Financial. Practical application and maintenance of green infrastructure projects will be taught by Patrick Michaels of PatchLALandscape Architecture. Horticulture concepts will be presented by Stephanie Elwood, licensed horticulturist and principal at The Garden Lady. During each class, case studies that help stu-

dents apply business concepts will be presented by Stacey Baxter, a finance graduate of Southeastern Louisiana University.
The fourteen-week program will kick off October 1st with the support of several community partners including Louisiana Economic Development, Louisiana Small Business Development Center, Baton Rouge North Economic Development District, TruFund and the Greater Baton Rouge Chamber of Commerce. To apply for Cohort 3, contact Tyra Banks at tyra@metromorphosis.net
For more information on CO.STARTERS, visit <https://costarters.co/>. To learn more about LaunchBR, visit www.launchbr.com

PROGRAM from page 1

women-owned and veteran-owned firms, and firms owned by service-disabled veterans.
"Small businesses and microenterprises account for nearly 80% of our local economy and employ many of our residents. The coronavirus pandemic placed an unprecedented financial burden on our businesses — many did not receive federal assistance from the Payroll Protection Program or SBA Loans," said Mayor Broome. "Through the collaboration of leaders in our community, we were able to join together and create a program to offer assistance to our small businesses when they need it most, and without the burden of repayment."
Qualifying microenterprises and small businesses who apply will receive one-time grants of \$2,500. The grant awards do not require repayment, and can be used for assisting with rent, utilities, inventory, accounts payable, fixed costs, employee wages, and benefits.
The \$1 million program's funding is derived from the CARES Act through the Department of Housing and Urban Development's Community Development Block Grant Program; the Louisiana Office of Community Development; Investar Bank; GMFS Mortgage; Urban League of Louisiana; ExxonMobil; and Postlethwaite & Netterville.
"The coronavirus pandemic presented unprecedented adversities to the State of Louisiana — especially the Baton Rouge commu-

nity and its small-business owners. Our community's recovery will take dedication and participation from both our state and our local government," said State Representative Ted James. "I am glad that the state could join Mayor Broome in her effort to provide support, and funding for our small businesses and microenterprises. This effort is helping us close the gap for our community."
"Investar Bank is proud to support Mayor-President Broome's new microgrant program to help small, minority-owned businesses. As part of the Mayor's Restart BR initiative, we hope other businesses join us and contribute so that the program can begin funding those businesses in need," said John D'Angelo, President and CEO of Investar Bank.
In addition to grant funds, the Resilient Restart EBR Program will offer access to entrepreneurial support services through The Urban League of Louisiana's Center for Entrepreneurship & Innovation at no cost to microgrant recipients.
Support services include:
• Small Business Education
• One-On-One Business Counseling
• Comprehensive Business Planning and Support
• Loan Packaging
• Business Certifications
Eligibility requirements and program applications are available at: www.urbanleaguela.org/restartbr.

NATIONAL NEWS
Postmaster says 'No Idea' Mailboxes, Equipment Being Removed

WASHINGTON (AP) — Postmaster General Louis DeJoy said Friday he had "no idea" blue mailboxes and sorting machines were being removed until a public uproar nationwide, as he testifies before a Senate committee digging into disruptions and changes in postal operations being made just as millions of Americans will be relying on mail-in ballots for the November election.
"I was made aware when everyone else was made aware," DeJoy testified.



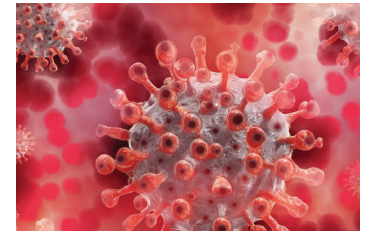
Postmaster General Louis DeJoy, left, is escorted to House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's office on Capitol Hill in Washington, Wednesday, Aug. 5, 2020. Facing public backlash, DeJoy is set to testify Friday about disruptions in mail delivery.

The new postmaster general faces a public backlash over changes and delivery delays since he took the helm of the Postal Service in June. President Donald Trump praises DeJoy, a Republican donor and ally. But Democrats warn his cost-cutting initiatives are causing an upheaval that threatens the election.
Trump raised the stakes by saying he wants to block agency funds to make it harder for the Postal Service to handle the expected surge of mail-in ballots during the COVID-19 crisis.
Republican Sen. Ron Johnson, the chairman of the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, defended the postmaster.
"So this isn't some devious plot on your part," Johnson said.
DeJoy promised the Postal Service "is fully capable and committed to delivering the nation's election mail securely and on-time."
He said, "This sacred duty is my No. 1 priority between now and Election Day."
The morning hearing was being held remotely as Congress is on recess and lawmakers have been conducting much of their business during the coronavirus outbreak in virtual settings.
It's unclear if Sen. Kamala Harris of California, the Democratic vice presidential nominee, will be among those beaming into the session.
The outcry over mail delays and warnings of political interference have put the Postal Service at the center of the nation's tumultuous election year, with Americans rallying around one of the nation's oldest and more popular institutions.
With mounting pressure, DeJoy abruptly reversed course this week, vowing to postpone any further changes until after the election, saying he wanted to avoid even the "perception" of

any interference. Blue mailboxes were being removed, back-of-shop sorting equipment shutdown and overtime hours kept in check.
Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin, whose role in postal operations is being questioned by Senate Democrats, said in a letter to Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer that he had no hand in "recruiting or suggesting" DeJoy for the job.
"In fact, I was surprised to learn that Mr. DeJoy was a candidate for the position," Mnuchin wrote in a letter late Thursday to Schumer.
As he gavelled open the session, Johnson dismissed the "false political narrative" that DeJoy is trying to "sabotage" the election.
But House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said DeJoy told her in a subsequent phone call he had no intention of restoring the equipment.
An internal directive to postal staff said, "They are not to reconnect/reinstall machines," according to an email obtained by The Associated Press.
House Democrats are pushing ahead with a rare Saturday session to pass legislation that would prohibit the actions and send \$25 billion


to shore up postal operations. Some 20 states, along with voting rights advocates, have sued to reverse the changes.
During an interview Thursday on Washington Post Live, Pelosi said Republicans "have been after the post office for a
See **POSTMASTER**, on page 6

Free COVID19 Testing August 28, 2020 At Miracle Place Church



The City of Baker has again partnered with Southeast Community Health Systems to provide free COVID19 testing.
Testing will be administered on Friday, August 28th from 9 AM until 12 PM.
The testing location will be the Miracle Place parking lot which is located at 2080 Main Street in Baker.
As in previous testing, registration packets will be available for pickup at City Hall.
Registration packets need to be completed and returned to City Hall by August 25th at 12 PM.
Onsite registration will be available until 11am; however pre-registration is highly encouraged.

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RELIGION

Director, Film Maker Aaron Williams to Launch Perfect Mate Drive-In Movie Tour

BATON ROUGE, La. — The Weber's are excited to team up with Director/ Film Maker Aaron Williams to bring you the Perfect Mate Movie along with The Marriage Boot Camp Study Session. There are a lot of movies that goes to the big screen, but how many movies can you name that also in addition to the film come with a relationship boot camp. This movie is a Christian Romantic Comedy and

has very skilled actors such as Lawrence Hilton Jacobs, Jackee Harry, Chico Benymon, KD Aubert, Britany Lucio, and many more. This movie will have you laughing, but at the same time relating to things that we all face in relationships. The Weber's have been together for 30 plus years and they have a deep desire to help give others a new perspective and deeper understanding of the principles of oneness.

They are accomplished authors and motivational speakers that have written three selfhelp books. One was entitled TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE YOU HAVE TO BE DIFFERENT which was nominated for best faith culture book of the year. They also have JUST WHAT THE DOCTOR ORDERED, and THE MARRIAGE BOOT CAMP STUDY SESSION which is an instructional and motivational book on relationships. These two books are centerpieces for the movie THE PERFECT MATE. Their Marriage Boot Camp Study Session & Just What the doctor ordered book will discuss topics such as intimacy, balancing work with your relationship, and handling conflicts with the right mindset. These books also have activities and applications that you

can apply to your relationships. For more information, visit gottobedifferent.com, and theperfectmate-movie.com. 225-933-5816

Starting August 20th until we reach 26 States, Director Aaron Williams and his staff will launch a Drive In Movie Tour. This tour will go from city to city and state to state bringing hope, laughter, and encouragement by releasing this never seen before movie The Perfect Mate. He will start in his hometown of Louisiana where he already has 15 dates scheduled. With this tour we will set up a 40 ft. inflatable screen/projector and while we are still social distancing we will have car hoppers to give you the drive in movie experience. The director

See TOUR, on page 5



Grammy-Award Winner Hezekiah Walker's Hit Single "Every Praise" Certified Platinum By RIAA

BROOKLYN, NY – August 20, 2020 – The luminous hit song "Every Praise", which was certified Gold in December of 2019, is now certified platinum by the RIAA. After Hezekiah Walker performed "Every Praise" at the Minneapolis memorial service for George Floyd, there was a massive renewed interest from people wanting to add a dose of faith-filled inspiration to their personal playlists during one of the most challenging times of social unrest in recent history.

"Every Praise" is featured on Walker's 14th album Azusa: The Next Generation, which was released in 2013. The song had a 26-week #1 run at Gospel radio, and was on the Billboard Hot Gospel Songs chart for an incredible 67 weeks. In 2019, "Every Praise" was named Gospel Song of the Decade by Billboard Magazine.

"Every Praise" is the epitome of worship and its proper direction," said singer and radio host Yolanda Adams when the song was first released. It has served as a mainstay for Christians around the world, and this is not the first time that it has provided a reference for healing and strength during immense challenge.

In 2014, a young boy in Georgia sang the song for nearly three hours straight while he was in the back of a car after being



Hezekiah Walker holds his newly minted platinum plaque for the hit single "Every Praise." Photo by Daryl Tillman

kidnapped from his driveway. His kidnapper kept telling him to "shut up," but he didn't – and he was ultimately released unharmed.

"When I first heard 'Every Praise,' I knew it was a song that I needed to record. To know that the song physically saved a young child's life is the greatest feeling that no award or crowd can give," says Walker. "I love the song because it is simple and

See WALKER, on page 6

Pastor Patricia Hatch Haynes "A Woman Called By God With A Vision"

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Bishop H. Hayes, Pastor

Hour of Power 12 Noon Each Wednesday
Sunday School 8:00am
Church Service 9:00am
Communion Service 2nd Sunday 9:00am
Bible Study Wednesday 7:00pm
Sister/Brotherhood Meeting 6:00pm

New Jerusalem Faith Fellowship

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Phone: 225-775-9756
Web Address: saintjohnbc.org

Dr. Donald Ruth, Pastor

Worship Times:

CrossWalk Classes: Sundays 9:30 AM - 10:30 AM
Sunday Worship Experience: 11:00 AM
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HOLY COMMUNION
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Websites: www.newhopebr.com

Rev. Leo Cyrus Sr., Pastor

CHURCH SCHEDULE

Sunday Morning Worship 10:45 AM
Lord's Supper 3rd Sundays
Sunday School 9:30 AM
Prayer Service Wed. @ 6:00 PM
Bible Study Wed- @ 7:00 PM

Mission Statement: New Hope Baptist Church is a family of baptized believers who worship the Lord our God in spirit and in truth, teach the saved to reach the lost and minister to the needs of others, while encouraging one another through acts of love and living in obedience to Gods Word

BUSINESS

\$205 Million in Oil Spill Restoration Funds Approved for La. Oyster, Marine Mammals, and Marsh Creation Projects

BATON ROUGE, La - Gov. John Bel Edwards announced the Louisiana Trustee Implementation Group (LA TIG), the entity responsible for the oversight, planning, and implementation of Deepwater Horizon oil spill Natural Resource Damage Assessment settlement funds in Louisiana, has approved \$204.7 million for a variety of projects aimed at helping the state continue its recovery from the 2010 oil spill. These projects, approved in two recent restoration plans, will assist in the development of Louisiana oyster beds, increase oyster production, improve the response effort for stranded dolphins and whales, and create approximately 1,200 acres of marsh in the upper Barataria Basin.

"This funding advances the largest marsh creation project that the LA TIG has approved to-date and distributes almost the entirety of Louisiana's oyster settlement allocation, two major feats in our effort to restore coastal Louisiana following the Deepwater Horizon oil spill," said Gov. John Bel Edwards. "I would like to thank the Louisiana Deepwater Horizon Trustees for advancing these critical projects for our state."

"These projects will enable us to fulfill the priorities Gov. John Bel Edwards stated earlier this year at the start of his second term," said Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority (CPRA) Chairman Chip Kline. "The governor wants state agencies to partner with each other to achieve sustainability for our economy and



environment, and specifically called for new initiatives to help the oyster industry. CPRA and our sister state agencies are putting those words into action."

Oyster-related projects total \$25.6 million and will be led by the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF). They include:

Two brood reefs (10-acres each) will be constructed in St. Bernard Parish to increase spawning oyster populations in the Lake Machais/Mozambique Point and

Petit Pass/Bay Boudreaux areas. These brood reefs will be closed to harvesting, but are located near open harvesting areas to promote habitat connectivity and provide a source of young oysters for harvestable reefs.

Identification and construction of additional spawning stock reefs in public oyster grounds with currently-low larval supplies that have conditions suitable for increased productivity.

Two new public oyster reefs (200 acres each) will be created

using limestone cultch material in the Grand Banks area of the Mississippi Sound and Terrebonne Parish's Sister (Caillou) Lake Public Oyster Seed Reservation. Additional reefs will be built in other public oyster grounds where conditions are suitable for oysters. These two reefs will not be opened until performance criteria are met.

Production of at least 500 million oyster larvae at LDWF's Michael C. Voisin Oyster Hatchery in Grand Isle, with 75% to be distributed to established reefs in

Louisiana's public oyster areas in need of rehabilitation, and 25% dedicated to oyster restoration activities in protected areas.

"This is a fantastic outcome for Louisiana with long-range benefits," said LDWF Secretary Jack Montoucet. "Our department thanks CPRA and LA TIG for the funding as it will enable us to perform very important restoration work for these species."

The Marine Mammals Project dedicates \$3.1 million to increasing capacity and improving rapid

response for injured and dead dolphins and whales, and facilitate a better understanding of the causes of injury and death. The efforts include infrastructure, equipment, and supplies, and will be led by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) in partnership with other federal and state agencies.

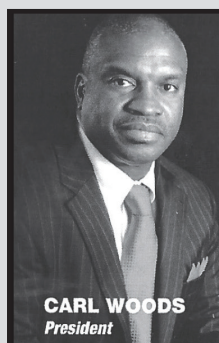
The LA TIG also approved \$176 million for the Large-Scale Barataria Marsh Creation: Upper Barataria Component, a project that will use 10.5 million cubic yards of sediment dredged from the Mississippi River to build 1,200 acres of marsh in Jefferson Parish below the Jean Lafitte area known as The Pen. This project continues the process of using restoration funding to restore wetlands, coastal, and nearshore habitats in the Barataria Basin, where the greatest oiling impacts from the Deepwater Horizon spill occurred, and expands land building westward along a permitted long-distance sediment pipeline corridor previously used to build over 1,900 acres of marsh through projects funded by CPRA and its federal CWPPRA funding partners.

"The approval of this funding will enable the construction of one of the largest marsh restoration projects in Louisiana history," said Bren Haase, Executive Director of the Louisiana CPRA, the agency serving as Lead Trustee for the State of Louisiana on the LA TIG.

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TOUR from page 4

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- Sept 18-19 Harvest Time Christian Center 1295 Hwy 18 Edgard La.
- Sept 25-26 Living Faith Christian Center 6375 Winbourne Ave. BR

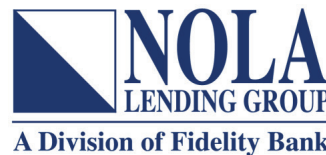
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PUBLIC NOTICE
Request for Proposals Drug and Alcohol Testing Services - Third Party Administrator Solicitation #2020-DrugAlcohol-004

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

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Tara Wicker's Appeal Declined by La. Supreme Court, Wicker Responds

BATON ROUGE, La. — Metro Council member Tara Wicker is fighting for her spot in the upcoming Baton Rouge mayor's election.

It has been a bumpy journey for the metro council member on her way to be the next mayor-president for the city of Baton Rouge. A lawsuit was filed in late July, stating that the representative for District 10 did not file her income taxes this year. Three parish residents claimed that Wicker also did not file her taxes for the years 2016 and 2018. The residents, Millard F. Cranch Jr., Richard J. Brazen Jr., and Glenn R. Ducote, received this information from the public records from the Louisiana Department of Revenue. The plaintiffs noted the requirement that all candidates running for mayor must prove that they have filed their taxes or have requested extensions before their

candidacy.

Wicker and her campaign denied the allegations, saying the lawsuit was a "politically motivated" strategy to block her chance of running for mayor, according to Wicker's legal team noted that the response from the Louisiana Department of Revenue "was vague" and that the men who filed the suit didn't produce the actual records request correctly. The team continued to say that without that specific request introduced into evidence, there's no way of knowing if the men sought the correct information from the Revenue. In the appeal the team filed, reported that it



Metro Council member Tara Wicker

stated, "Without these documents, the Court could not determine whether the department's inability to 'confirm' filings resulted from inaccurate information in the initial request."

Wicker didn't let that stop her. Earlier this month, Wicker's campaign team provided a signed letter from her accountant, declaring that he had prepared her taxes in the last five years. Wicker affirmed that when she submitted her Notice of Candidacy forms back on July 22, she was not aware of being delinquent on her taxes. This letter, among other documents, was provided to Judge Tim Kelly earlier this month in court over Zoom. The judge ruled in Wicker's favor. Judge Kelly told media outlets, "Mrs. Wicker's testimony is credible and very matter of fact."

The plaintiffs then appealed to the First Circuit of Appeal,

where the judges reversed Judge Kelly's ruling in a 3-2 decision. Their ruling disqualified Wicker in the running for mayor in the upcoming November election.

The metro council member is not giving up without a fight. Wicker and her team believe a hearing before the high court could happen that could have her winning her spot to run for mayor. She is taking the high road in the case. She made a public statement after hearing the decision rendered by the First Circuit Court of Appeals, repeating a quote she heard, "Never be bullied into silence. Never allow yourself to be made a victim. Accept no one's definition of your life; only go with the definition that God has."

As of now, the current Mayor-President Sharon Weston-Broome, Steve Carter, Eric Guirard, C. Denise Marcelle, Jordan Piazza, Frank Smith III, and Matthew Watson are running for Mayor of Baton Rouge.

Red Cross Recommends a Few Extra Items for Your Hurricane Prep Kit During Pandemic

BATON ROUGE, La. — The American Red Cross is encouraging families to get a head start on their emergency preparedness plans, which could look a little different during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Experts recommend talking with your family to determine the safest sheltering options should you need to evacuate. Having a travel bag ready is also a good idea. A spokesperson with the Red Cross says there are few other items families should consider having.

"We encourage folks to pack in some hand sanitizer, have a mask, at least one or two for every single member of the family, and then of course to have gloves. So if you are in an area where you are around a lot of people, you don't have to worry about touching some-

thing that is contaminated," said Stephanie Wagner with the Red Cross.

Wagner also recommends families reevaluate their emergency plans during the pandemic.

"So since we're dealing with COVID-19, the emergency plans that you may have put in place actually may change, so you want to review your evacuation plans to know if you're going to your friend's house or if you're going to a relative," said Wagner.

Wagner says they're also adding additional shelter options in case of an emergency evacuation this storm season.

The Red Cross is currently accepting volunteers, including virtual opportunities. Click here for more information.

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POSTMASTER from page 3

while" as they try to run it more like a profitable business.

"A business? No it's a service," Pelosi said.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell is eyeing a \$10 billion postal rescue as part of the next COVID-19 relief package.

"The Post Office is not in trouble," the GOP leader said Thursday during a home-state stop in Paducah, Ky. "We're going to make sure that they are able to deliver our ballots on time."

The White House has said it would be open to more postal funding as part of a broader virus aid package.

The Postal Service is struggling financially under a decline in mail volume, rising costs from the coronavirus pandemic and a rare and some say cumbersome congressional requirement to fund in advance its retiree health care benefits.

For many, the Postal Service provides a lifeline, sending not just cards and letters, but delivering prescription drugs, financial statements and other items that are especially needed by mail during the pandemic.

In a statement, the Postal Service said DeJoy has made all required financial disclosures but that he might have to divest some holdings if conflicts arise.

WALKER from page 4

has a purity about its worship essence. I believe those are also the elements that draw people in, and that make it a song that — once you hear it — just stays with you. The fact that 'Every Praise' is still a reminder of God's faithfulness and presence during challenging times, even seven years after it was recorded, is humbling. It's a constant reminder that no praise belongs to us, but all praise belongs to Him. I'm grateful to everyone who has been a part of 'Every Praise' being certified platinum."

Hezekiah Walker is a Gospel music pioneer, and the traditional sound and energetic style of his Love Fellowship Choir has influenced a generation of great singers and ensembles. His passion for choirs led him to launch HezHouse Entertainment as a platform for keeping progressive choir music alive. The first two artists signed to HezHouse, which is distributed through RCA Inspiration, are Vincent Bohanan & SOV and Kevin Lemons & Higher Calling. Walker says that both of these groups embody "the strength of the new millennial sound of choirs."

Hezekiah Walker is senior pastor of Love Fellowship Tabernacle, with locations in Brooklyn, New York and Bensalem, PA. He is also a Bishop in the Pentecostal Church through which he oversees 28 churches in the U.S. and South Africa. The Brooklyn native is a dedicated New Yorker and a seminal fixture in his home borough. He will break ground soon on HezHouse Apartments, an affordable and supportive housing development by Hezekiah Walker & Love Fellowship Tabernacle, Brooklyn Community Housing & Services, and



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