



# THE REAL NEWS

## Louisiana

"A Community With a Voice Shall Be Heard" ®

### Voting Rights Under Siege: Louisiana Case Could Weaken Black Political Power Nationwide

Publisher: Latorria Freeman

A high-stakes Supreme Court case, *Louisiana v. Callais*, threatens to gut a vital provision of the Voting Rights Act (VRA) and erode Black representation across the South. At the center is Louisiana's congressional map featuring two majority-Black districts — a hard-won remedy after years of litigation proved Black voters' power was being diluted in a state where they comprise about one-third of the population.



For decades, Louisiana had only one majority-Black congressional district despite racially polarized voting. In 2024, following a federal court ruling under Section 2 of the VRA, the legislature drew a new map creating a second opportunity district. Black Louisianans celebrated the breakthrough, with Rep. Cleo Fields winning one seat. Yet white voters challenged the map as an unconstitutional racial gerrymander. The case reached the Supreme Court, which heard arguments in March and October 2025. Instead of a quick ruling, the justices ordered reargument and directed briefs on whether intentionally creating a majority-minority district to comply with the VRA violates the 14th or 15th Amendments.

A decision weakening or striking Section 2 — the last major tool against vote dilution — could trigger a wave of map challenges nationwide. States like Alabama, Georgia, Texas, and Mississippi might eliminate or redraw majority-Black districts, potentially costing Black communities multiple House seats and diminishing their influence in state legislatures and local bodies. This would deepen barriers already faced by Black voters, including strict ID laws and polling changes, while reducing focus on healthcare, education equity, and economic justice.

Civil rights groups, including the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, ACLU, and Southern Poverty Law Center, warn that this could reverse decades of progress. As the Court prepares its ruling — expected by June 2026 — the current map remains in place for the 2026 midterms, but uncertainty looms. Black political power, forged through blood and struggle since Reconstruction, now hangs in the balance. Communities must stay vigilant, mobilize voters, and demand fair maps. The fight for equal representation continues.

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And Much More...



**LOVE THE BOOT week**

**COMMUNITY CLEANUP**  
04/24/2026 @ Noon  
Meet us at the Natchitoches Riverbank Stage

Help us celebrate **America's 250<sup>th</sup>** birthday as we make our community a cleaner, greener place.  
Call 318-357-3838 for more details.

Scan the QR code to sign up

**NATCHITOCHEES**  
WHERE HISTORY LIVES

**NATCHITOCHEES** AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE  
**NATCHITOCHEES** LOUISIANA CONVENTION AND VISITORS BUREAU  
*Keep Natchitoches Beautiful* Keep Louisiana Beautiful Community Affiliate

#lovethebootweek #keepnatchitochesbeautiful

Join us for a community cleanup during Love the Boot Week in partnership with the City of Natchitoches, the Natchitoches Area Convention & Visitors Bureau, and the Cane River National Heritage Area. The cleanup will be on Friday, April 24, and volunteers will meet at noon on the Front Street Riverbank.

This event is open to the public, and participants are welcome to come and go as needed. We encourage community members to drop in, lend a hand, and help celebrate both America's 250<sup>th</sup> birthday and Love the Boot Week by beautifying the places where we live, work, and play.

The QR code on the flyer allows registrants to indicate which areas they are most interested in cleaning up. Based on final registration numbers and survey responses, volunteers will be divided into groups to focus on the most requested locations.

In the spirit of community pride and service, this cleanup is also a meaningful way to celebrate America's 250th year by investing in the beauty and vibrancy of our hometown.



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**LOVE THE BOOT week**

KEEP LOUISIANA BEAUTIFUL

## Natchitoches Crime Stoppers: Anonymous Tips, Cash Rewards

Natchitoches Crime Stoppers partners with local police and the sheriff's office to solve crimes. Report information anonymously—no names, no recordings, no caller ID. If your tip leads to an arrest, you can earn up to \$2,000 or more.



Submit tips:

- Call: (318) 238-2388
- App/Online: P3 Tips app or p3tips.com
- Website: natchitochescrimestoppers.com

Speak up anonymously—help make Natchitoches safer today!

**PROTECT OUR COMMUNITY.**

**SEE SOMETHING. SAY SOMETHING.**

**318-238-2388**



**P3TIPS.COM**

FOR MORE INFO VISIT [NATCHITOCHESCRIMESTOPPERS.COM](http://NATCHITOCHESCRIMESTOPPERS.COM)



**NATCHITOCHEES:**

Fork 'Em Demons! BOM Bank is proud to be the Official Bank of NSU Athletics and to support our Demons on and off the field! We were excited to donate cases of water and a snack tub to fuel the team for their trip to UTRGV. Pictured left to right: BOM's Claire Mayeaux, Brody Belanger, Sam Ardoin, Brooks Leonard, Colton Harrison, Head Coach Chris Bertrand, and BOM's Carrie Hough.



**SABINE:**

BOM Bank is a proud sponsor of the Many High School Softball Program, helping with travel, equipment, and game-day expenses. Pictured left to right: BOM's Ashley Parrie, Teagan Rodrigues, and BOM's Tiffany Miller.

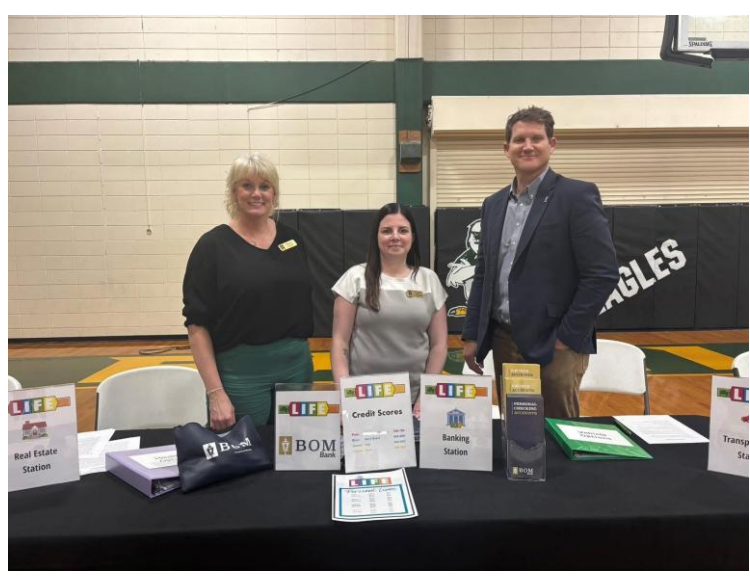


**Caddo/Bossier:**

BOM Bank was proud to sponsor the Senior Night meal for the Benton High School baseball team! BOM's Bre Brown and Aaron Savell treated the team to Johnny's Pizza, a cookie cake, and BOM goodie bags as they celebrate a special night honoring their seniors. Good luck Tigers—we're cheering you on! Pictured left to right: Garrett Clute, Cole Snell, Rydon McCormack, Case Jordan, Kannon Greer, BOM's Aaron Savell and Bre Brown, Owen Patterson, Bud Burns, Beckett Moore, Bryson Gates, and Brody Turnipseed.

**RAPIDES:**

BOM Bank had a blast participating in the Holy Savior Menard Game of Life! BOM's Mandy Futrell, Leah Verheyden, and Daniel Lonsberry had the opportunity to work alongside students for a day filled with real-life scenarios — including real estate decisions, banking basics, understanding credit scores, transportation costs, budgeting, and more. Events like the Game of Life are so important because they give students hands-on experience managing money before they enter the real world. Financial literacy empowers young people to make informed decisions, avoid common financial pitfalls, understand the importance of credit, and build strong financial habits early. At BOM Bank, we believe financial education is one of the most valuable investments we can make in our communities. When students understand budgeting, saving, borrowing, and credit responsibility, they are better prepared for long-term success. We are proud to support programs that help equip the next generation with the knowledge and confidence to navigate their financial future.



## In an Unprecedented First, NAACP Calls for President Trump to be Removed from Office under 25th Amendment

**WASHINGTON** — The NAACP demands urgent action to invoke the 25th Amendment in response to alarming signs of President Trump's deteriorating health and increasingly delusional behavior. This is the first time the NAACP has ever called for the 25th Amendment to be invoked. The rhetoric and actions emanating from the highest office in the land has reached a level of instability that poses a direct threat to the well-being of millions of Americans and the integrity of our armed forces.



In recent weeks, the president's erratic statements and actions have raised grave concerns about his ability to fulfill the duties of his office. This is not merely a matter of political disagreement; it is a matter of national security, global stability, and the very fabric of our democracy.

"This president is unfit, unwell, and unhinged," said **Derrick Johnson, President and CEO of the NAACP**. "The rhetoric and behavior we are witnessing from Trump isn't just alarming, it's dangerous. When the person entrusted with the highest office in the land demonstrates a disregard for truth, stability, and the well-being of the American people, it's a threat to the entire nation and the world. Trump must be immediately removed from office."

The potential for a leader unable to think clearly or act decisively jeopardizes our military readiness and undermines public trust at a time when unity and strength are paramount.

The 25th Amendment provides a critical mechanism for addressing presidential incapacity, and we cannot afford to ignore its provisions.

Over the weekend, on Easter Sunday, President Trump shared a peculiar and concerning threat on his Truth Social account, which has called many to question his sanity. This is one of many recent actions that has triggered public concern.

The NAACP stands firm in advocating for the rights and safety of all Americans. We urge the Vice President and the Cabinet to act with the urgency this situation demands. Our democracy, our armed forces, and the safety of our citizens depend on decisive action now. We call on all leaders to prioritize the health of our nation and uphold the principles enshrined in our Constitution.

## Bridging the Dream Scholarship for High School Seniors - Applications Now Open

The Sallie Mae Fund has again partnered with [Thurgood Marshall College Fund](#) and is accepting applications for the 2026-27 Bridging the Dream for High School Seniors scholarship. More details on that below:

**Bridging the Dream Scholarship for High School Seniors** – 30 students will receive up to \$10,000 each to help pay for a two- or four-year degree, professional certificate, or vocational training. Eligible students must demonstrate financial need, academic achievement, and extracurricular involvement.

The application window is open for the Bridging the Dream Scholarship for High School Seniors until April 24, 2026.

Visit: <https://www.salliemae.com/landing/bridging-the-dream/>

**2025-2026 BRIDGING THE DREAM SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM**

**NOW OPEN!**

**UP TO \$500,000 IN SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE FOR HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS AND GRADUATE STUDENTS**

**Application Deadline April 25 at 11:59 p.m. ET**

# The NPSO is here to safeguard the lives and property of the people we serve...



Should you have an Emergency, dial **911**

For Non-Emergency assistance, dial 352-6432

For Administration, dial 357-7800

For Investigations, dial 357-7830

For Civil Process and Property Tax Collection, dial 352-4104

For the Natchitoches Parish Detention Center, dial 357-9300

## We are ALWAYS here for you.

## Elevating the Ideal: Mu Omega Zeta Chapter Celebrates Finer Womanhood Month with Service and Distinction

NATCHITOCHES, LA — For the members of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Incorporated, the transition from February to March represents more than just a change in the calendar; it marks a period of intentional service, cultural celebration, and the profound realization of "Finer Womanhood." This year, the Mu Omega Zeta Chapter observed its National Exemplar through a series of impactful community initiatives and high-level civic recognition.



### A Global Impact

Rooted in the sorority's commitment to International Women of Color, the chapter began its observance by looking beyond local borders. Each member contributed a monetary donation to the Cape Coast Historical Library. This global outreach ensures that the history and legacies of women of color are preserved and accessible, reinforcing the sorority's pillar of scholarly advancement on a worldwide scale.

### Inspiring the Next Generation

On March 2, the women of Mu Omega Zeta brought the joy of literacy to the halls of Fairview Alpha Elementary School. In honor of Read Across America, members spent the day engaging with Kindergarten and First-grade students. By sharing stories and fostering a love for reading, the sorority continues to invest in the educational foundations of Natchitoches' youngest citizens.

### Civic Recognition and Advocacy

The month's celebrations reached a pinnacle on March 23, when the City of Natchitoches formally recognized the chapter's tireless efforts. The Natchitoches City Council issued Proclamation No. 15, a distinction that honors the sorority's unwavering commitment to community advocacy.

A significant portion of the proclamation highlighted the chapter's dedicated work regarding Autism Awareness. Through targeted outreach and education, Mu Omega Zeta has been instrumental in fostering a more supportive, inclusive, and informed environment for individuals and families within the community.

### The Essence of Finer Womanhood

Finer Womanhood is a hallmark program unique to Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Incorporated. It serves as a time for members to reflect on their principles and rededicate themselves to the community. From international philanthropy and early childhood literacy to receiving city-wide accolades for advocacy, the Mu Omega Zeta Chapter has once again demonstrated that being a "Finer Woman" is defined by one's service to others.

# Elevating the Ideal: Mu Omega Zeta Chapter Celebrates Finer Womanhood Month with Service and Distinction

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Zeta Phi Beta Sorority with Amicae of Natchitoches at City Council Meeting



**READ ACROSS AMERICA 2026**

Zeta Phi Beta Sorority Incorporated  
Mu Omega Zeta Chapter

**With Fairview Alpha Elementary School**

OPEN A BOOK  
OPEN YOUR WORLD

[www.muomgzeta.org](http://www.muomgzeta.org) | Mu Omega Zeta Chapter | Mu Omega Chapter ZPB



(L to R) Julia Davis, Linda Howard, Brooke Williams-Triggs, Principal, Candance Grayson, President, Sandra Williams)

# Elevating the Ideal: Mu Omega Zeta Chapter Celebrates Finer Womanhood Month with Service and Distinction

Continued from Page 8



Donated to Cape Coast Children's Library in Ghana



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**Hours Monday- Friday 8 am- 5 pm**  
**Saturday 9 am- 1 pm**  
**Sunday Closed**



## Building the Future of Our Local Workforce

The Work Natchitoches Summit is an immersive career exploration experience designed to engage 11<sup>th</sup>-grade students across Natchitoches Parish. The event connects students directly with local employers in an interactive setting that highlights real-world career opportunities available right here in our community. Through meaningful conversations and hands-on exposure, students will gain insight into local industries, workplace expectations, and the diverse paths available to them after graduation, helping build a stronger and more informed future workforce.

# WORK NATCHITOCHEES SUMMIT

April 15th, 2026 at the NSU Student Union

PRESENTED BY



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Visit [GoNatchitoches.com/WorkSummit](https://GoNatchitoches.com/WorkSummit) for details!



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\*Eligible 11<sup>th</sup>-grade students who are homeschooled or attend a non-participating school may reach out to request inclusion through the button below. Students attending individually must be accompanied by a parent or guardian.

## The Secret To Living A Good Life

By: Evangelist and Author, Bonita Moses Arnold

Growing up, we all had a little thing called a secret that we shared with our best friend. We trusted them and felt secure in doing so. As we have gotten to be adults and have lived through many years of obstacles, we have learned that a secret is not really a secret unless you really just keep it between you and the good Lord.



We know that there are secret recipes that even the best Chef will not share. As we eat their foods, we don't know what the secret is, but our taste buds recognize almost immediately that there's a secret ingredient in it. The Apostle Paul had discovered the secret to living a good life, a safe and secure life. A place of quietness, peace, and intimacy with God while being in his presence. A reassuring place in which God's everlasting safety is guaranteed to be there. But if you're not going to trust him in that secret place, then there's really no need to go there.

In the book of Psalm 91: 1 & 2( KJV), the Apostle Paul explains his experiences in dwelling in the secret place of God like this...

“He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.”

“I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust.”

### Mama Shug would always say...



Children never complain about what they don't have because there is always someone else worse off than they are. You may be complaining that you want a new pair of shoes, when there may be someone who doesn't even have feet to wear them. As I've lived and have become spiritually wiser and learned what true contentment really was, I reference what Mama Shug was saying was none other than that of the Apostle Paul in Philippians 4:11-13: to summarize it is to say that no matter what came Paul's way he was going to remain humble, he was going to keep the faith, and remain content no matter what.

## LA Lightning Wins USSSA MLB Opening Day Classic in Bossier 12U



Team LA Lightning 12U out of Natchitoches, LA won the USSSA MLB Opening Day Classic in Bossier. The team won unique #22 Juan Soto rings as a part of the tournament. Pictured left to right: Back row- Coaches Luke Mahloch and Evan Gandy. Middle row- Jax Errington, Murphy Linebaugh, Liam Mahloch, Hendrix Johnson, Adam Todtenbier, RJ Braden, and Luke Fair. Front row - Archer Johnson, Gavin Key, and Carter Hough.

### Compassionate Care...



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Certified Menopause Practitioner

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## LOUISIANA MAIN STREET OFFERS MAIN STREET RESTORATION GRANT OPPORTUNITY

Natchitoches, LA – Louisiana Main Street is accepting grant applications to assist with building restoration projects on historic commercial structures located within designated Main Street districts.

Applications may be submitted by commercial building owners and/or business owners. This grant opportunity provides grants ranging from \$2,500 to \$10,000. Restoration projects can be on the interior and/or exterior of the commercial structure. The application deadline is May 29, 2026.

To be eligible for Louisiana Main Street Restoration Grant funds, a building must be located within the designated Main Street district, be used for commercial purposes, and be at least 50 years old.

In addition, the proposed work must be approved by the local historic district commission (exterior work only) and Louisiana Main Street, while also conforming to the guidelines set forth by the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation.

The Louisiana Main Street Restoration Grant application guidelines, details, and deadlines are available from the Natchitoches Main Street Office. For more information, call (318) 357-3822.

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# NATCHITOCHEES Main Street



A vibrant, tropical-themed poster for the Summer Splash event. The background is light green with various tropical plants and flowers in shades of red, pink, and yellow. At the top, it says "The City of Natchitoches Presents" in a simple font. Below that, "SUMMER SPLASH" is written in large, bold, green capital letters. To the right of the title is a green starburst shape with the words "FREE ENTRY!" in white. Below the title, there is a paragraph of text: "Looking for fun activities to keep your child active and entertained during the upcoming summer months? Be sure to stop by Summer Splash, a free informational fair for children and parents, to find out what programs, camps, and opportunities are offered in our area." In the center, there is a dark green rounded rectangle containing the date and time: "TUESDAY, APRIL 28" and "4 PM TO 6 PM". At the bottom, there is another paragraph: "For additional information, please call the Main Street office (318) 357-3822".

**NATCHITOCHEES** – The City of Natchitoches Main Street Program invites local organizations, camps, and community groups to take part in this year’s Summer Splash, returning on Tuesday, April 28, 2026.

Summer Splash will take place from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. at the Natchitoches Events Center. This annual event is free and open to the public and serves as a one-stop opportunity for families to explore summer programs and activities available throughout the community.

Summer Splash, organized by the Natchitoches Main Street Program, is designed to connect families with local organizations offering summer camps, educational programs, recreational activities, and youth opportunities. Attendees will have the chance to gather information, meet program representatives, and register for upcoming summer offerings.

The Main Street Program is currently seeking vendors and participants for the event. Local businesses, nonprofits, camps, and organizations that host summer programs or provide services for youth and families are encouraged to participate. This is a great opportunity to promote programs, share information, and engage directly with the community as families plan their summer schedules.

For more information or to request a participation form, please contact the City of Natchitoches Main Street Office at (318) 357-3822 or email [ewhitlow@natchitochesla.gov](mailto:ewhitlow@natchitochesla.gov)

# 2026 UPCOMING ELECTIONS

**OPEN CONGRESSIONAL  
GENERAL AND OPEN  
PRIMARY**  
**November 3, 2026**

**GENERAL ELECTION**  
**December 12, 2026**

**QUALIFYING PERIOD**  
**July 29-31, 2026**

OFFICE TITLES	YEARS OF TERM	BEGINNING OF TERM	EXPIRATION OF TERM	DISTRICTS
<b>OPEN GENERAL</b>				
U.S. Senator*	6	1/3/2027	1/3/2033	—
U.S. Representative*	2	1/3/2027	1/3/2029	6
Associate Justice, Supreme Court*	10	1/1/2027	12/31/2036	3
Public Service Commissioner*	6	1/1/2027	12/31/2032	5
<b>OPEN PRIMARY</b>				
Court of Appeal Judges*	10	1/1/2027	12/31/2036	3-1-B 3-1-C
District Judges	6	1/1/2027	12/31/2032	10th JDC
District Attorney	6	1/11/2027	1/9/2033	10th JDC
School Board Members	4	1/1/2027	12/31/2030	all
Justices of the Peace	6	1/1/2027	12/31/2032	all
Constables (Justice of the Peace Courts)	6	1/1/2027	12/31/2032	all

- Candidates qualify with Secretary of State.
- All other candidates qualify with Clerk of Court.

## QUALIFYING PERIOD

# JULY 29-31, 2026

# 2026 UPCOMING ELECTIONS

# Important Dates

## QUALIFYING PERIOD



**July 29-31, 2026**

- District Judges
- District Attorney
- School Board Members
- Justice of the Peace
- Constables
- City Court Marshal
- City Court Judge- Ward 1

## ELECTION



**April 2026**

Village of Natchez

- Mayor
- Chief of Police
- Aldermen

## QUALIFYING PERIOD



**July 29-31, 2026**

Mayors of Natchitoches' Towns and Villages through the Parish

## CLOSED PARTY RACE



**April 2026**

- US Senator
- U.S. Representative
- Associate Justice of the Supreme Court
- Public Service Commissioner

# COMMUNITY EVENTS



## NATCHITOCHE PARISH HIGH SCHOOLS GRADUATION DETAILS



**LAKEVIEW HIGH SCHOOL**

Thursday, May 14 at 7PM  
Lakeview Football Field



**NATCHITOCHE CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL**

Friday, May 15 at 7PM  
NSU Prather Coliseum

**Natchitoches Provisional Learning Center:**  
Seniors graduate with their home based school

*United Missionary Baptist Church  
9166 Highway 1 South  
Natchez, La  
Rev. Ocie Lee Charles Jr., Pastor*

*We cordially invite you to our*

**37<sup>th</sup> Year Church Anniversary**



**Sunday, April 19, 2026 @ 3pm**

*Pastor William Sapp and Jabez Missionary Baptist Church  
will be our special guest.*

*Matthew 16:18 And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this  
rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against  
it.*

**NEW LIGHT**  
6:00 PM  
FRIDAY  
APRIL 17<sup>th</sup>

*Part of  
Night of Praise*

*Pre  
Celebration  
Service*

*A Night of Praise Musical*  
PASTOR, CYNTHIA LEE COLE

• LIVE

TWO SEPARATE CELEBRATIONS

**Theme: "Preach The Word" 2 Timothy 4:2**

*Pastor Cole's  
16<sup>th</sup>  
Love Day  
Anniversary  
Appreciation*

SUNDAY  
1:30 PM  
APRIL  
19<sup>th</sup>

• LIVE

**Guest Pastor/Chur**  
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...*

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