

THE REAL NEWS LOUISIANA

LOCAL NEWS • COMMUNITY • LOUISIANA

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LOCAL NEWS

27th Annual Cane River Zydeco Festival Returns Labor Day Weekend

Two-day celebration brings zydeco music, dancing, food, vendors and a poker run to the downtown riverbank.

NATCHITOCHES, La. — The 27th Annual Cane River Zydeco Festival and Poker Run will bring two days of food, fun and music to the downtown Natchitoches riverbank September 4–5.

Presented by the Magnolia State Peace Officers Association's Cane River Branch, the Labor Day weekend celebration will feature live zydeco performances, line dancing, a dance contest, food and beverage vendors and a motorcycle poker run.

Friday's activities offer free admission, while Saturday admission is \$20. The festival supports community programs throughout Natchitoches Parish. **Continued on Page 3**



The 27th Annual Cane River Zydeco Festival returns September 4–5 to the downtown Natchitoches riverbank.

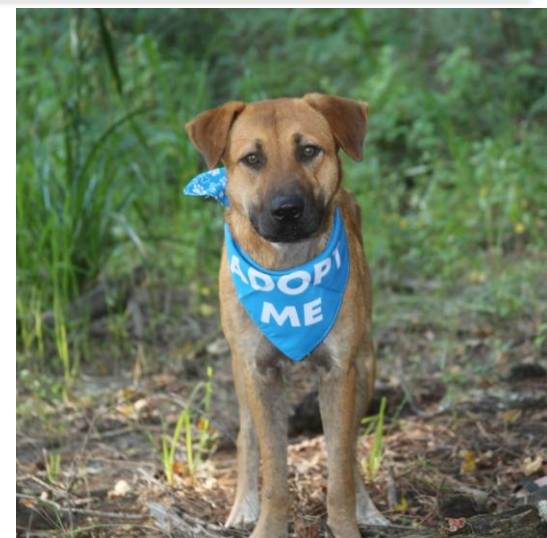


Rusty Metoyer & The Zydeco Krush
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Photo Credit: Kreole Visuals Photography



NRMC Gives Back
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LOCAL NEWS

Cane River Zydeco Festival Offers Two Days of Music, Dancing and Community Fun

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The festival begins Friday, September 4, with free admission. Gates will open at 6 p.m., along with poker run registration. DJ Royal will provide music throughout the evening, and line dancing is scheduled from 7 to 9 p.m. A zydeco dance contest will be held from 9 to 10 p.m., with a cash prize awarded to the winner.

Saturday's events begin at 9 a.m. with poker run registration. The ride starts at noon, and cash prizes will be awarded for the best and worst poker hands. Festival gates open at 2 p.m.

Marcus Ardoin & Da Zydeco Legendz will perform from 4 to 6:30 p.m. Rusty Metoyer and the Zydeco Krush will close the evening with a performance from 7 to 9:30 p.m.

Food and beverage vendors will be available throughout the festival. Proceeds from the event help fund community programs and activities across Natchitoches Parish.

27th Cane River ZYDECO FESTIVAL & POKER RUN
Food, Fun & Music

Sponsored by the Magnolia State Peace Officers Association Cane River Branch

FOOD & BEVERAGE VENDORS

Schedule:

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 4—FREE ADMISSION
6:00-10:30 PM Gates Open
Poker Run Registration
Zydeco Dance Contest
6:00-10:30 PM DJ Royal
7:00-9:00 PM Line Dancing
9:00-10:00 PM
Zydeco Dancing Contest
Cash Prize Best Zydeco Dancing

CASH \$\$\$ PRIZE WINNER OF ZYDECO DANCE

SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 5 ADMISSION \$20
9:00 AM—Poker Run Registration
CASH PRIZES \$\$\$ Best Poker Hand & Worst Poker Hand—\$\$\$
12:00 PM—Ride Begins
2:00 PM—Gates Open
4:00-6:30 PM—MARCUS ARDOIN & DA ZYDECO LEGENDZ

SATURDAY 7:00-9:30 PM
Rusty Metoyer and the Zydeco Krush

Ticket & Event Information:- Melvin Holmes 318-332-7455
Poker Run: Ricky Slick Jones 318-652-1500 & Vendor Info: Sandra Williams 318-527-6959

Labor Day Weekend - Downtown Riverbank
September 4 & 5, 2026
Natchitoches, LA

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The Cane River Zydeco Festival began in 1999 by members of the Magnolia State Police Officers Association, Cane River Branch. The Magnolia State Peace Officer's Association is the state wide organization that started the Toys for Tots program. They also help the community through other various programs such as community service, Shop with a Cop, food baskets and preparing Thanksgiving dinners for underprivileged families. Proceeds from this event assist in funding various community functions around Natchitoches Parish.

FESTIVAL DETAILS

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 4 — FREE ADMISSION

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 5 — \$20 ADMISSION

LOCATION: DOWNTOWN NATCHITOCHES RIVERBANK

Event information: Melvin Holmes, 318-332-7455

Poker Run: Ricky "Slick" Jones, 318-652-1500

Vendors: Sandra Williams, 318-527-6959

Complete festival schedule, performers, sponsors and contact information.

The Cane River Zydeco Festival began in 1999 through the Magnolia State Peace Officers Association's Cane River Branch. Proceeds support community programs and activities throughout Natchitoches Parish, including efforts that assist local families and children.

COMMUNITY

Let Jesus Take the Lead

By: Evangelist and Author Bonita Moses Arnold

We often find ourselves planning for this day and that. We pray, plead the blood of Jesus over our lives, children, friends, our situation, etc., that no weapon formed against us shall prosper.

We even ask the Lord to order our steps. But what happens when we're faced with circumstances, we're unaware of?



Can we still remember the prayers that we prayed earlier that day? Or did we not know that when we ask the Lord to order our steps, what we're really asking is for Jesus to take the lead? When he does, we no longer try to take matters into our own hands; instead, we trust the process. Be encouraged, patient, and blessed.

“When we ask the Lord to order our steps, we must also trust Him enough to take the lead.”

— Bonita Moses Arnold

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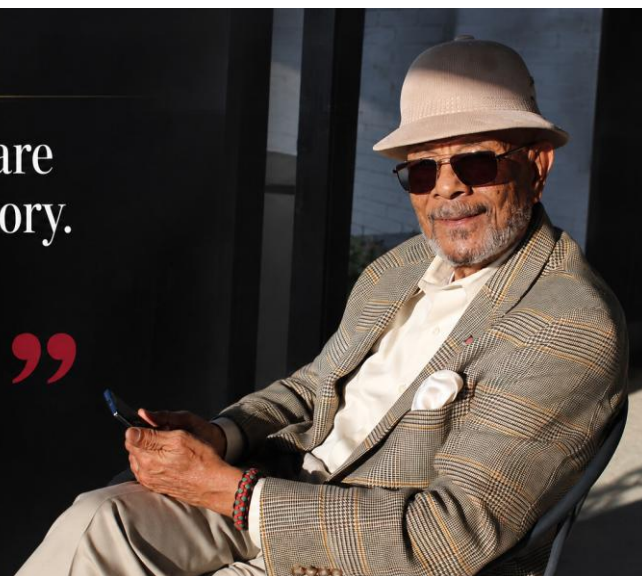
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“Today's events are tomorrow's history. So how are you contributing?”

— Randy Stelly



COMMUNITY

NRMC Supports Local Schools and Student-Athletes



LAKEVIEW JR./SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL



NATCHITOCHES CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL



ST. MARY'S CATHOLIC SCHOOL

NRMC representatives, Garrett Anderson (Director of Rehabilitation Services), Katie Bauer (Athletic Trainer), Kirk Soileau (CEO) presented contributions to athletic programs at Lakeview Jr./Senior High School, Natchitoches Central High School and St. Mary's Catholic School.

NATCHITOCHES, La. — Natchitoches Regional Medical Center recently presented financial contributions to the head coaches of several area high schools to support their athletic programs and student-athletes.

The contributions were presented to representatives from Natchitoches Central High School, St. Mary's Catholic School and Lakeview Jr./Senior High School. The funding will help the schools continue providing athletic opportunities for students who represent their schools and communities with pride.

NRMC is also sponsoring the Battle on the Bricks NRMC Jamboree, which will bring local football teams and fans together to celebrate the beginning of another high school football season.

Hospital officials said NRMC's commitment to the community extends beyond providing healthcare and includes investing in local schools, programs, coaches and students.

NRMC extended its best wishes to all area teams for a safe, successful and exciting season.

FOCUSED

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CAMPAIGN NEWS

Benjamin Outlines Vision for Natchitoches City Court



Candidate for Ward 1 City Court Judge Cloyd Benjamin, Jr., is outlining a vision for the court centered on public safety, accountability, prevention, second chances and strong community partnerships. Benjamin shared key elements of his campaign platform during the Candidate Forum hosted by The Bounce on Thursday, August 13, emphasizing that the City Court can play an important role in strengthening the community while remaining fair, impartial and accountable.

"My vision is not for the court to work in isolation," Benjamin said. "We have law enforcement, schools, churches, nonprofit organizations, community leaders and other justice system partners already working to make our community stronger. As Judge, I want to support partnerships that connect people with resources, address problems earlier and create better outcomes for our entire community."

Benjamin's vision includes working collaboratively with appropriate justice system and community partners to advance several initiatives:

- **Youth/Teen Court Partnerships:** Support collaborative efforts to establish a youth or teen court for appropriate low-level offenses, providing young people with accountability and intervention while helping prevent unnecessary involvement in the traditional court system.
- **Twice-Yearly Expungement Clinics:** Partner with legal professionals, justice system stakeholders, and community organizations to connect eligible individuals with assistance in clearing qualifying minor offenses that may create barriers to employment and economic opportunity.
- **Warrant & Case Resolution Day:** Work with appropriate justice partners to establish designated opportunities for individuals with eligible outstanding warrants, traffic matters, and nonviolent cases to appear and address unresolved matters in an organized setting.
- **Gun Buyback Partnerships:** Support community-based gun buyback initiatives led in partnership with law enforcement and other organizations as part of broader efforts to reduce unwanted firearms in the community and promote safer neighborhoods.
- **School Conflict Resolution:** Encourage partnerships among schools, families, community organizations, and justice stakeholders to address appropriate minor conflicts early and help keep young people from unnecessarily entering the juvenile justice system.

Benjamin also emphasized that repeat violent offenses require accountability and that prevention and second-chance initiatives should complement, not replace, the court's responsibility to follow the law. "We can be serious about public safety while also being serious about prevention," Benjamin said. Central to Benjamin's platform is the belief that sustainable programs require partnership. His vision calls for bringing together organizations with the expertise, authority and resources to develop programs that are legally appropriate, community-driven and capable of producing measurable results.

"Being Judge is about more than what happens inside the courtroom," Benjamin said. "It is also about leadership, collaboration and helping create pathways that make our community safer and stronger. I am prepared to bring people to the table and work together toward solutions." Benjamin is seeking election as Ward 1 City Court Judge and will continue sharing his vision for a court focused on fairness, accountability, collaboration and community impact throughout the campaign.

CAMPAIGN NEWS

WARD 1 CITY MARSHAL CANDIDATES



Randy Williams — Incumbent

Experience & Priorities

- **City Marshal** — Serving for 11½ years; seeking a third term.
- **Marshal's Office Experience** — More than 24 years, including 13 years as Deputy Marshal.
- **Law Enforcement** — Retired after 30 years with Natchitoches City Police.
- **Youth Experience** — Served eight years as a School Resource Officer.
- **Community Roots** — Natchitoches resident for more than 50 years.
- **Continued Service** — Seeks to build on the progress made during his tenure.

Source: Randy Williams candidate statement, 2026.

IN THEIR OWN WORDS: ACCOUNTABILITY & TRANSPARENCY

During the Aug. 13 candidate forum, Williams was asked what specific steps he would take to promote transparency and accountability within the City Marshal's Office.

"I had never had that problem yet. I hope I don't, 'cause if they do, they gonna have a knot on their head. I don't think I ever had that problem. Everybody loves my deputies."

Candidate Forum, Aug. 13, 2026



Carl Sias — Challenger

Campaign Priorities

- **Integrity & Fairness** — Leadership based on integrity, fairness and respect.
- **Public Safety** — Prioritizes safe neighborhoods and citizens' rights.
- **Accountability & Transparency** — Pledges honest and transparent leadership.
- **Community-Based Policing** — Supports law enforcement working with the community.
- **Families & Businesses** — Pledges to protect families and support businesses.
- **Trust & Partnerships** — Seeks stronger partnerships and public confidence.

Carl Sias campaign statement posted to Facebook, Jan. 4, 2026

IN THEIR OWN WORDS: ACCOUNTABILITY & TRANSPARENCY

In an Aug. 29 recorded Facebook Live video, Sias discussed accountability and what he would do if he believed something was not right as City Marshal.

"Can't nobody say I lied on anybody. Cause if I become City Marshal, I'ma expose everybody. If I got to go to the Attorney General, if I feel like something is not right... I can't shut up cause God won't let me shut up. Cause God want you to know the truth."

Recorded Facebook Live Video, August 29, 2026

CAMPAIGN NEWS

Preston Durr Announces 2027 Bid for Natchitoches Parish Sheriff

I'm a Christian, husband to Misty Durr, father to Devin and Wesley Durr, grandfather to Preslee Durr, a native of Natchitoches Parish and a business owner.

I've been in law enforcement for 26 years. I am a former police chief with training and experience in criminal investigations, homicide, burglary/theft, narcotics, violent crimes, community policing, juvenile services and elderly services.

My Vision and Plan

My vision is to be proactive, not reactive, and to bring back "serve and protect" to law enforcement.

I will work with the Natchitoches City Police Department and town and village chiefs to provide the best law enforcement possible throughout Natchitoches Parish. Being divided is not the answer.

I will establish a violent crimes/homicide unit focused on major violent crimes and active and unsolved homicides. Families affected by homicide will hear from me personally and receive updates about their cases.

I will reopen substations in Campti, Cloutierville and Robeline, expand patrol coverage in rural areas, increase training in the detective's division and expand the juvenile division.

I will work with local pastors and community organizations to provide mentorship and positive opportunities for troubled youth and young adults.

My Pledge to Natchitoches Parish

I pledge to fight the war on drugs and work with our DA to address addiction and establish rehabilitation and work-release opportunities for those re-entering society.

I pledge to create a Triad for our senior citizens, including elderly check-ins and partnerships with programs such as Council on Aging.

As your Sheriff, I will lead by example—with faith, honor, integrity and transparency.

We will be present throughout our communities every day.

Showing actions, not by words.

I pledge to be the Sheriff for all of Natchitoches Parish—from our cities and towns to our rural communities.

Together we are all Natchitoches.



Preston Durr



CAMPAIGN NEWS

Steve Pezant Announces 2027 Bid for Natchitoches Parish Sheriff

Steve Pezant announces his plans to qualify for Sheriff of Natchitoches Parish for the October 9, 2027, election.

For 36 years, Steve has continuously served in law enforcement. As a Deputy with the Pike County (Mississippi) Sheriff's Office, then beginning in 1993 as a Louisiana State Trooper in Troop E, working in Natchitoches Parish as a Parish Trooper. After retiring from the Louisiana State Police in 2019, Steve went to work for the Natchitoches Ward One City Marshal's Office. Currently, Steve serves as the Chief Deputy for the Natchitoches Ward One Marshal's Office.

Steve is a proud graduate of Northwestern State University. Steve has lived in Natchitoches Parish and has served Natchitoches Parish in a variety of ways for 34 years. He and Natchitoches native, Natchitoches Central High School and NSU graduate Tammie Moreau Pezant have been married since June 1992, for 34 years. Steve and Tammie have one daughter, Sonja Pezant Cox, who is also a graduate of Natchitoches Central and Northwestern State University. Sonja is married to Peyton Cox.

Steve will begin to make his way around the parish to visit with residents of the parish. If you need to see or speak with him, please reach out to him by phone at 318-471-4772, Facebook Page "Steve Pezant for Sheriff", or by e-mail at votepezant@outlook.com.

We are in the process of planning a Meet and Greet Event and a sign-and-t-shirt event, and those dates will be out in the next few weeks. Check out the Facebook Page for coming events.



Chief Deputy Steve Pezant



“A Sheriff for Everyone”

EDUCATION

NSU Campus Dining Seeks Student Employees



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NATCHITOCHES, La. — NSU Campus Dining is hiring student employees and offering work schedules designed around their classes and academic responsibilities.

New student employees will receive \$100 in declining balance funds when hired and an additional \$100 after completing 30 days of employment. Current Sodexo student employees can also earn \$100 in declining balance funds by referring a friend who is hired.

Students interested in joining the Campus Dining team can learn more and apply by visiting linktr.ee/NSUCampusDining and selecting “Join the Campus Dining Team.”

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COMMUNITY

Photo Gallery: Gemstone Tea Soirée Celebrates Fellowship and Community

The Natchitoches Coalition on Homelessness hosted its Gemstone Tea Soirée on Saturday, August 29. Guests gathered for an elegant afternoon featuring beautifully decorated tables, creative hats and gloves, shared food and community fellowship. The following photos capture memorable moments from the event.



Guests display their elegant tea attire during the Natchitoches Coalition on Homelessness Gemstone Tea Soirée.



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August 30, 2026

COMMUNITY

Photo Gallery: Gemstone Tea Soirée Celebrates Fellowship and Community

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COMMUNITY

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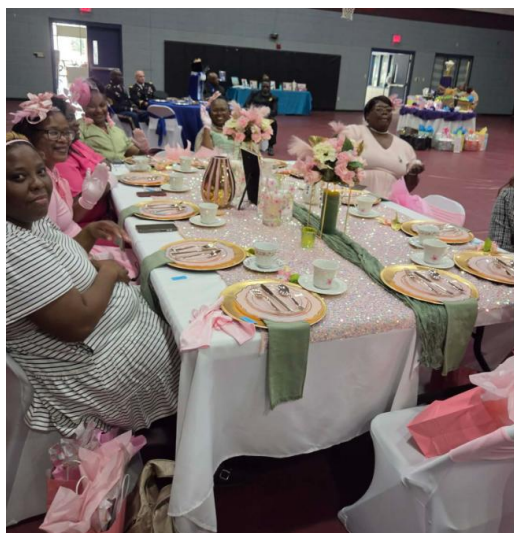


August 30, 2026

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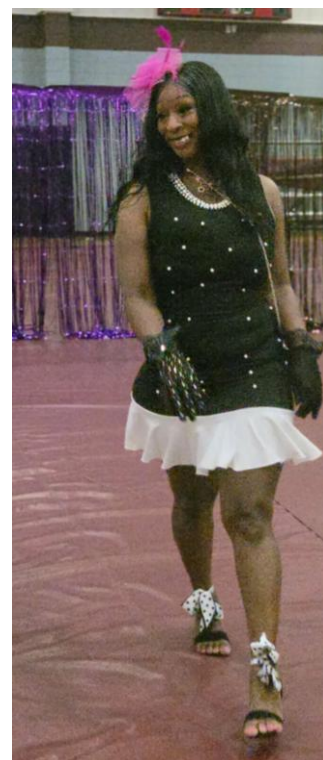


August 30, 2026

COMMUNITY

Photo Gallery: Gemstone Tea Soirée Celebrates Fellowship and Community

Pages 11-15



Dolly Parton Didn't Just Say Black Lives Mattered. She Showed It.

Dolly Parton's impact reached beyond music through her support for racial dignity, her celebration of Whitney Houston's success and her commitment to improving childhood literacy.

By The Real News Louisiana

Dolly Parton built a legacy that extended far beyond country music. While she rarely presented herself as a political figure, she consistently used her influence and success to support dignity, inclusion and opportunity.

In 2020, amid nationwide conversations about racial injustice, Parton publicly affirmed that Black lives matter. Her statement attracted attention because it was direct, sincere and consistent with how she had lived.

That commitment could also be seen in what she did with the success of "I Will Always Love You." After Whitney Houston's recording of the song became a worldwide hit, Parton earned substantial royalties as its songwriter. She later explained that she invested some of that money in an office complex located in a predominantly Black Nashville neighborhood.

Parton affectionately described the property as "the house that Whitney built," recognizing the extraordinary impact Houston had on the song and celebrating their connection.

Her commitment to creating opportunity was also evident through Dolly Parton's Imagination Library. Established in 1995 in honor of her father, who could not read or write, the program mails free, age-appropriate books to children from birth to age 5, regardless of family income.

What began in her home county in Tennessee expanded internationally, placing hundreds of millions of books into the hands of young readers. By June 2026, the program was distributing more than 3.5 million books each month. Parton understood that meaningful support requires more than carefully chosen words. It requires investment, consistency and a willingness to help people gain access to opportunities they might not otherwise receive. Her example reminds us that allyship is not measured only by what someone says during a national conversation. It is also revealed through the lives they touch, the communities they invest in and the doors they help open.

Dolly Parton did not merely say that Black lives mattered. Through her choices, generosity and respect for others, she showed it.

Sources: Billboard and Dolly Parton's Imagination Library



Photo by Curtis Hilbun/Wikimedia Commons, licensed under CC BY 3.0. Cropped from original

***I understand
people having to
make themselves
known and felt
and seen.***

**— Dolly Parton,
Billboard interview,
2020**

EDUCATION

Demarion Sowell Named Top Male Scholar of the Year



Demarion Sowell was honored as Southern University's Top Male Scholar of the Year

Demarion Sowell was honored as the Top Male Scholar of the Year during the Southern University Athletics Gala. Sowell graduated from Southern University with an outstanding 3.9 cumulative GPA. The accomplished Jaguar is now headed to graduate school, where he will continue pursuing academic excellence and building upon his impressive achievements. Congratulations, Demarion! Your dedication, hard work and success are making your family, Southern University and the entire community proud.

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Coordinator of Homeless Services and Federal Programs at

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EDUCATION

LTC Etta Wheeler is Honorary Captain at NSU home opener



LTC Etta Wheeler was the honorary captain during NSU's football game against Louisiana Christian University Aug. 27. From left are MSG Michael Blakeley, Wheeler, Vic the Demon and SLTC Tyrek Swaby.

NATCHITOCHES – Continuing its tradition of honoring those who serve in the nation's Armed Forces, Northwestern State University recognized the military service of Lieutenant Colonel (LTC) Etta Wheeler as the honorary captain during the football game against Louisiana Christian University Aug. 27.

Wheeler serves at Grambling State University as the professor of Military Science for the Army ROTC programs at Grambling, Louisiana Tech University, Northwestern State and the University of Louisiana at Monroe.

Wheeler, a native of Bossier City, enlisted in the United States Navy in 2004. She graduated from Louisiana Tech in Ruston with a Bachelor of Arts in Humanities. She commissioned Second Lieutenant (Ordnance) in the United States Army through a service transfer and Officer Candidate School in 2007. She earned a Master of Science in Strategic Leadership from Central Michigan University in 2012.

She comes to the program from Tulane University where she served as the Professor of Military Science. Before that, she was a Logistics Course Director and Distinguished Instructor for the Army Sustainment University.

LTC Wheeler has robust operational and tactical experience as a Logistician. She served as the Future Operations Plans Officer (G35) for the 21st Theater Sustainment Command, the Executive Officer and Support Operations Officer for the 16th SB in Germany.

She also served as an Observer, Coach Trainer in Hawaii and Aide de Camp. She commanded the 24th Ordnance (Ammunition) Company at Ft. Stewart, Georgia.

She deployed to Kandahar, Afghanistan, in support of Operation Enduring Freedom in 2013 and has supported Atlantic Resolve (Poland), Operation Allies Welcome (Germany) and Sustained Logistics Support in the Defense of Ukraine.

LTC Wheeler is a graduate of the Logistics Captains Career Course and Command and General Staff College. Additional education includes the Theater Sustainment Planners Course, Operational Contract Support, Support Operations and Joint Logistics Course. She was also the first Army graduate of the Marine Corps' Advanced Expeditionary Logistics Operations Course.

LTC Wheeler's awards and decorations include the Bronze Star Medal, Meritorious Service Medal (3 awards), Army Commendation Medal (3 awards), Army Achievement Medal (4 awards), National Defense Service Medal, Southwest Asia Service Medal, Afghanistan Campaign Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Humanitarian Service Medal (2), Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, NATO Medal and Basic Army Instructor Badge.

She is married to Brian Wheeler who also served in the Navy and is a Northwestern State alumnus, Class of 2010. She enjoys spending time with her daughter, son-in-law and grandson in Haughton.

LTC Wheeler was escorted on field by NSU President James Genovese, and U.S. Army Captain Armando Lopez, head of NSU's Department of Military Science.

COMMUNITY

From Natchitoches to McNeese's Hall of Fame: Jessie Burton's Lasting Legacy

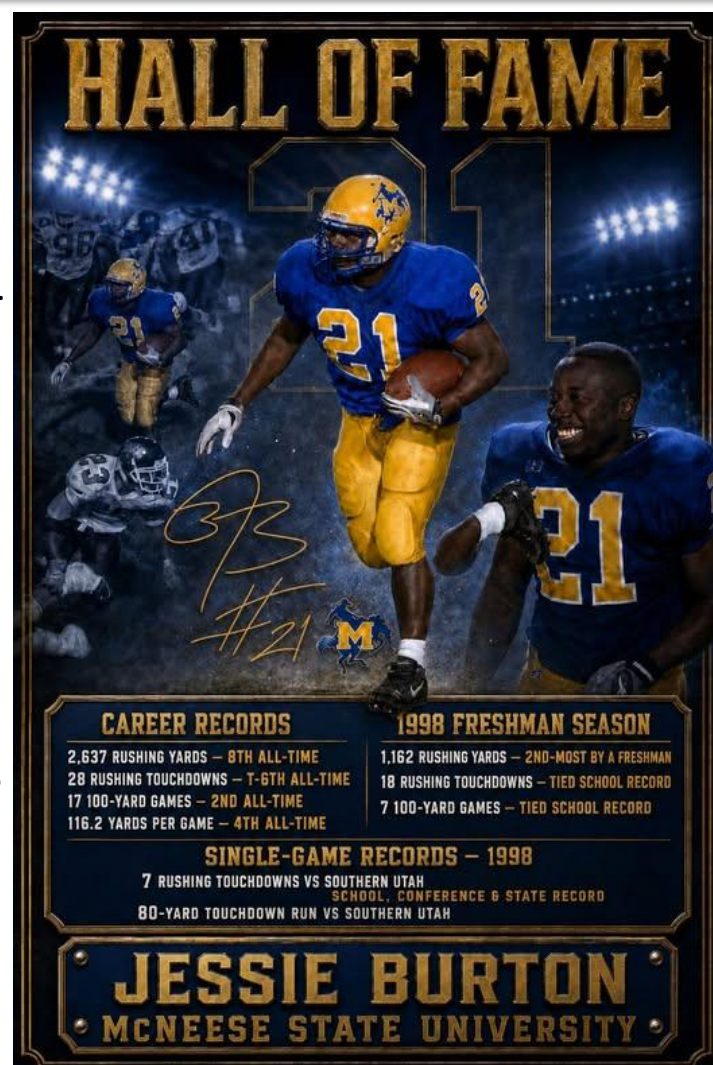
Natchitoches native Jessie Burton carried the pride of his hometown with him as he built a record-setting football career at McNeese State University.

Burton rushed for 2,637 career yards and scored 28 rushing touchdowns. His 17 games with at least 100 rushing yards remain among the best totals in McNeese history.

As a freshman in 1998, Burton rushed for 1,162 yards and tied the school record with 18 rushing touchdowns. He also delivered an unforgettable seven-touchdown performance against Southern Utah—a school, conference and state record.

His induction into McNeese's Hall of Fame recognizes more than impressive statistics. It celebrates the determination of a Natchitoches native whose talent and hard work created a legacy that continues to make his hometown proud.

Burton's journey is a reminder to young athletes that extraordinary accomplishments can grow from local roots.



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BUSINESS

BOM Bank Breaks Ground on New Toledo Town Location

Expansion into Sabine Parish reflects continued growth and commitment to community banking.



BOM Bank leaders and community representatives break ground on the bank's new Toledo Town location in Sabine Parish.

Over the past 19 years, BOM Bank has grown from four locations to an organization expected to operate 28 locations by 2027. Bank representatives credit that progress to the loyalty of customers, the dedication of employees and the continued vision of the bank's leadership.

Throughout its expansion, BOM Bank has remained committed to community banking and supporting the areas it serves. Its employees have built lasting relationships, celebrated important milestones and participated in programs that benefit local families, organizations and communities.

TOLEDO TOWN, La. — BOM Bank recently celebrated the groundbreaking of its new Toledo Town location in Sabine Parish, marking another important milestone in the community bank's continued growth.

The ceremony brought together BOM Bank leaders, employees, customers and community supporters to recognize the expansion. The new location will strengthen the bank's presence in Sabine Parish while providing additional access to financial services for residents and businesses in the surrounding area.

The Toledo Town groundbreaking represents more than the construction of another location. It reflects BOM Bank's continued investment in Sabine Parish and its commitment to growing alongside the people and communities it serves.

Additional information about the new Toledo Town location, including an anticipated opening date, will be announced as the project progresses.

GROUNDBREAKING CEREMONY



Scenes from BOM Bank's Toledo Town groundbreaking ceremony in Sabine Parish, including the future branch site, community representatives and bank leaders celebrating the expansion.

August 30, 2026

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EVENTS

Air Force Band of the West to Perform at NSU Sept. 10

NATCHITOCHEs – The United States Air Force Band of the West will present a concert at Northwestern State University on Thursday, Sept. 10 at 7:30 p.m. in Magale Recital Hall. Admission is free, but tickets are required. Tickets can be reserved at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/steel-of-resolve-usaf-concert-band-northwestern-state-university-tickets-1997722751527>.

Based in San Antonio, Texas, the USAF Band of the West is comprised of 61 highly trained professional musicians who have dedicated themselves to serving their country through music. Whether performing for live, radio or television audiences, these airmen are dedicated to enhancing community relations, promoting esprit de corps and connecting with millions each year.

As musical ambassadors of the United States Air Force, the Band of the West travels more than 125,000 miles annually and provides hundreds of free performances to military and civilian audiences throughout Texas and the surrounding states. The band is made up of multiple large and small ensembles and can blend seamlessly into any event.

For more information, go to airforcebands.com.



The U.S. Air Force Band of the West will perform at 7:30 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 10, in Northwestern State University's Magale Recital Hall. Admission is free, but tickets are required.

Courtesy photo/U.S. Air Force

EVENT DETAILS

U.S. Air Force Band of the West

Date: Thursday, September 10

Time: 7:30 p.m.

Location: Magale Recital Hall, NSU

Admission: Free

Tickets: Required

Information: airforcebands.com

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COMMUNITY NEWS

FAUNA Seeks Executive Director to Lead New Pet Adoption and Welfare Center

NATCHITOCHES, La. —

Friends All United for Natchitoches Animals, commonly known as FAUNA, is seeking an experienced leader to serve as executive director of shelter operations for the new Edwina & Sam Friedman Pet Adoption & Welfare Center.

The full-time position offers an opportunity to help shape the future of animal welfare in Natchitoches Parish. FAUNA is looking for a candidate with strong leadership skills, vision and a passion for improving the lives of animals.

The executive director will help launch and lead the new center while supporting its mission of giving dogs and cats an opportunity to find safe, loving homes. The position will also involve strengthening shelter operations, encouraging community involvement and helping the growing organization create a lasting impact throughout the parish.

Applicants who are ready to build something new and inspire positive change for both animals and the community are encouraged to apply.

READY TO LEAD THE FUTURE?

Learn more about the position and apply online.

fauna.bamboohr.com/careers/23




JOIN OUR MISSION
NOW HIRING

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF SHELTER OPERATIONS

Lead the future of animal welfare in Natchitoches Parish.

FULL-TIME • NATCHITOCHES, LOUISIANA

 Leadership
  Shelter Operations
  Animal Care
  Community Impact

SCAN TO APPLY

fauna.bamboohr.com/careers/23

Edwina & Sam Friedman Pet Adoption & Welfare Center

FAUNA is hiring an executive director of shelter operations for the new Edwina & Sam Friedman Pet Adoption & Welfare Center.

“Bring your leadership, vision and passion for animals to a growing organization serving Natchitoches Parish.”

NSU
ELEMENTARY
LAB SCHOOL

**SUBSTITUTE
TEACHERS
Wanted!**

Make a difference.
INSPIRE. SUPPORT. EMPOWER.

SUPPORT AMAZING STUDENTS
FLEXIBLE SCHEDULES
MAKE AN IMPACT

INTERESTED?
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COULD BE HERE!**

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communities.

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support@therealnewslouisiana.com

COMMUNITY

Annual Music Faculty Showcase to be presented Sept. 1



NATCHITOCHES - The Department of Music at Northwestern State University will present its annual Faculty Showcase on Tuesday, Sept. 1 at 7:30 p.m. in Magale Recital Hall. Admission is free and open to the public. A livestream will be available at <https://www.nsula.edu/livestream/>.

Faculty from the voice, strings, winds, keyboard and percussion areas will be performing. Those taking part in the showcase are Paul Christopher, Sofiko Tchetchelashvili, Oliver Molina, Andrew Blair, Steven Wimberley, Leah Forsyth, Paul Forsyth, Douglas Bakenhus, Stephen Clark, Andrej Kurti and Chialing Hsieh.

Pick Up Your Brush Painting classes to be held on Sept. 17

NATCHITOCHES -- Northwestern State University's Office of Electronic Learning and Global Education will offer Pick Up Your Brush painting classes on Thursday, Sept. 17 from 5:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. on the second floor of South Hall. The fee is \$45.

In these classes, students will learn the art of painting using step-by-step instructions to create a masterpiece of your own. No special or prior skills are required. Students will take home a completed painting titled "Beautiful Fall Trio" at the end of the class.

Children ages 7–12 are allowed to enroll, but a parent must accompany the child throughout the class. Parents do not have to enroll unless they participate. All supplies are included.

For more information or to register for classes, go to checkout.nsula.edu or call (800) 376-2422 or (318) 357-6355. Stay up to date with course offerings by following NSU Electronic Learning and Global Education on Facebook at facebook.com/NSULA.ece.



FEATURES

Voting Rights Act Marks 61 Years

By The Real News Louisiana Staff



Voting rights activists protest outside the U.S. Supreme Court on October 15, 2025.
Photo by Bill Clark/CQ-Roll Call, Inc via Getty Images.

August 6, 2026, marked the 61st anniversary of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, one of the nation's most important civil rights laws.

Signed by President Lyndon B. Johnson on August 6, 1965, the law prohibited discriminatory voting practices, including literacy tests that were used to prevent Black Americans from voting.

The anniversary honors the civil rights leaders and citizens whose courage and sacrifice helped expand access to the ballot. It also serves as a reminder that voting is both a protected right and an important responsibility.

Eligible citizens are encouraged to register, remain informed and participate in local, state and national elections.

**“A MAN WITHOUT A VOTE
IS A MAN WITHOUT PROTECTION.”**

— LYNDON B. JOHNSON



COMMUNITY

Level Up Conference Announces Lead Track Speakers

The 2026 Level Up Conference will bring professionals together for a day of leadership development, networking and practical career-building skills.

Lead Track speakers Jesse Mogle, Dr. Jasen Anderson and Dr. April Giddens will present sessions on modern management, leadership well-being and navigating difficult conversations.

The conference will be held September 11 from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the NSU Student Union. Register at GoNatchitoches.com/LevelUp.

MEET THE 2026 LEAD TRACK SPEAKERS



JESSE MOGLE
Speaker & Executive Coach
CHANGING THE PLAYBOOK



DR. JASEN ANDERSON
Executive Director & CEO, LSMSA
STILL HUMAN



DR. APRIL GIDDENS
Interim Director, School of Education, NSULA
SAY IT ANYWAY

2026 LEVEL UP CONFERENCE • SEPTEMBER 11 • NSU STUDENT UNION

EVENT DETAILS

2026 LEVEL UP CONFERENCE

Date: September 11, 2026

Time: 8:00 AM–3:00 PM

Location: NSU Student Union



JOIN TODAY
FOR AS LITTLE AS
\$25
A MONTH

Contact Morgan Green
morgan@gonatchitoches.com



COMMUNITY

Community Awareness Helps Keep Natchitoches Safe

Residents can help protect the community by remaining observant and reporting credible information about suspicious activity.

When making a report, provide helpful details such as the location, time, descriptions of individuals, vehicle information and direction of travel. Never confront anyone or place yourself in danger.

Tips may be submitted to Natchitoches Crime Stoppers at **318-238-2388** or **P3Tips.com**. Call **911** when witnessing a crime in progress or facing an immediate emergency.

One responsible report could help prevent a crime or assist law enforcement in solving a case.

It takes all of us to help keep each other safe!



Illustrative image created with AI

PROTECT OUR COMMUNITY.

SEE SOMETHING. SAY SOMETHING.

318-238-2388



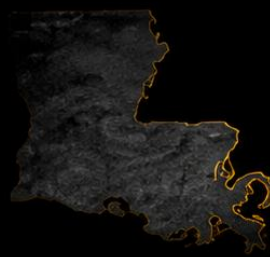
P3TIPS.COM

FOR MORE INFO VISIT [NATCHITOCHESCRIMESTOPPERS.COM](https://natchitochescrimestoppers.com)



THE REAL NEWS LOUISIANA

LOCAL NEWS • COMMUNITY • LOUISIANA



COMMUNITY EVENTS



Upcoming Events • Meetings • Community Announcements

Family Story Time

Tuesday's
10:30 AM

With Ms. Dianna



Main Branch – Children's Department

No sign up needed!

Themes vary each week for stories and crafts.

Stories and crafts are geared for children up to age 5.



Painting for Kids

Ages 9-12

Tuesday, September 1

6-7:30 pm

Main Branch – Children's Dept.



Sign Up Required!!

Sign up in person
or by calling
318-238-9222.

Children must be
accompanied by an
adult in order to stay
for the program.



Kid Gamers Club

Ages 6-12

Saturday, September 12

2-3:30 pm

Main Branch-Children's Dept.

Club Activities:

- Bring your own devices to play with new friends!
- Wii and board games available for play!
- Snacks provided!



Sign Up Required!!
Parents may sign up in
person or by calling
238-9222.

Children must be
accompanied by an
adult in order to stay
for the program.



NATCHITOCHE PARISH LIBRARY

READ
LEARN

CREATE
CONNECT



PROGRAMS FOR
EVERY AGE

YOUR LIBRARY.
YOUR COMMUNITY.

Finger Painting Fun

Ages 1-4

Tuesday, September 15
6-7PM

Main Branch – Children's Floor

SIGN UP ONLY!!



Parents may sign up in
person or by calling
238-9222.

Children must be
accompanied by an adult in
order to stay for the
program.



Sign Up Required!!
Parents may sign up in
person or by calling
238-9222.



Children must be accompanied
by an adult in order to stay for
the program.
Snacks Provided!!

Explore, taste,
and learn about the importance of
eating fresh, local food

Thursday, September 17
6pm

Main Branch –
Children's Floor

Ages 3-12

COMMUNITY EVENTS



Upcoming Events • Meetings • Community Announcements

OPEN MIC NIGHT

LOCAL
TALENT
WELCOME!

THURSDAY, 9/10

STORYBREW COFFEE CAFE

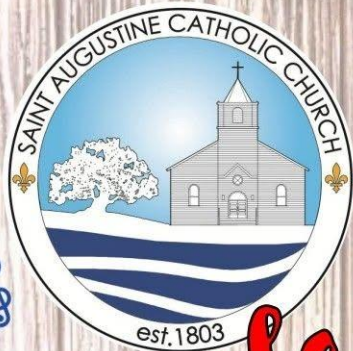
MUSIC • COMEDY • POETRY

780 FRONT STREET

6:00 PM-7:30 PM

FREE
ENTRY

Celebrating Culture, Cuisine, Faith, Family & Friends



Creole AND Family FESTIVAL

OCTOBER
9th - 11th

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PLEASE NO PARKING ON
THE RIVERBANK

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IS ON THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF
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SPACE AVAILABLE!!

FRIDAY

6PM — 10PM

- FRIED FISH & TRIMMINGS
- FESTIVAL T-SHIRTS
- MUSIC BY DJ JOEY



SATURDAY

8AM — Until

- 3RD ANNUAL "RUN FOR ROD" Run/Walk in Loving Memory of Chadwick "Rod" Nelson

10AM — 5PM

- FUN & GAMES
- BINGO & RAFFLES
- GUMBO, MEAT PIES, TA-MALES & DINNER PLATES

5PM — 6PM

- MASS
- 6PM — 11PM
- FESTIVAL ACTIVITIES

9PM

- FIREWORKS SHOW!

6:30PM — 10:30PM



GERARD
DELAFOSE
& THE
ZYDECO
GATORS!

ZYDECO CONCERT!!

SUNDAY

10:30AM

- MASS

11:30AM - 3PM

- FESTIVAL ACTIVITIES RESUME

Natchitoches Alumnae Chapter of
Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated

Presents the
**3rd ANNUAL
SICKLE CELL
AWARENESS EVENT**

IN COLLABORATION WITH

OUTPATIENT MEDICAL CENTER

SCARF
Sickle Cell Anemia
Resource Foundation

ZETA PHI BETA SORORITY, INC.
MU OMEGA ZETA CHAPTER

THE KREWE OF EXCELLENCE

AWARENESS
SUPPORT
HOPE
CURE

SATURDAY
SEPTEMBER 19,
2026

10:00 AM -
12:00 PM

660
MARTIN LUTHER
KING JR. DRIVE

SAVE A LIFE-
Donate Blood!

LifeShare Blood Center—Alexandria's
Mobile Blood Unit will be on site
accepting blood donations.

Your donation can help
patients living with sickle
cell disease and others in
need of lifesaving transfusions.

TOGETHER, WE CAN RAISE AWARENESS,
SUPPORT FAMILIES, AND HELP SAVE LIVES.

Every Drop Counts.
Every Life Matters.

For more information, email natchitocheschapter@yahoo.com



THE **REAL NEWS** LOUISIANA

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A COMMUNITY WITH A VOICE SHALL BE HEARD.



The Real News Louisiana is committed to bringing you local news that matters, inspiring stories, community events, and information that empowers our communities.



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