



MINDEN PRESS-HERALD

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MINDEN, LOUISIANA

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75 CENTS

Tools of the Trade:

Firemen practice life saving techniques

WILL PHILLIPS
Minden Press-Herald

Firemen of Webster as well as surrounding parishes met up in Fire District 7 Training Center in Dixie Inn in order to receive training from Brothers of the Boot which is a non-profit that aims to equip firmen with the skills and knowledge they will need when providing a response to various emergency situations.

"We're a chapter of the Fraternal Order of Leatherheads Society. That's what the FOOLS stands for. Basically it's a fraternal organization that's really geared toward training," said Bob Callahan, who oversaw Saturday's training.

"We offer some alternative training that they may not see a whole lot of those organizations. It's just extra for the guys that want to go beyond, this kind of training for the guys that want to go, want to go beyond what they have to."

During this session, the firemen present were able to practice vehicle extraction techniques using the Jaws of Life, as well as the practice of lifting large vehicles off of smaller vehicles that may be beneath them, known as a vehicle underride.

In regards to vehicle extraction, firemen used the Jaws of Life in order to practice cutting off doors, taking off roofs, and all manner of dismantling a vehicle so that in an emergency situation they can access anyone regardless of damage to a vehicle.

"These basic skills are used on a regular basis in car accidents. Newer cars are a lot better than the older cars. They're a lot more built, a lot more sturdy. They use some high tension metal. So we don't do as much vehicle extrication as we did, say, 15, 20 years ago. Parish-wide, all the departments probably do 50 to 70 vehicle extrications a year," said Callahan.

On top of vehicles being

better built to protect the passenger, Callahan also spoke of how the technology has gotten better over the years, allowing them to transition from gas powered equipment to battery powered equipment.

"With this is new technology, fire service in general is getting away from gasoline-powered tools and getting more into battery-operated tools, now that battery technology is good enough that we can use these tools for 30 or 40 minutes," said Callahan.

"Now, we're able to run these tools for thirty five, forty, forty five minutes on a battery. It makes it a whole lot simpler, a lot less maintenance and a lot less questions whether that tool is going to start or not when you need time."

The less frequently used but equally important training they conducted Saturday was practicing what's known as a vehicle underride.

"We're going to be using struts, some other tools, and airbags to lift a bus off the car so we can slide the car out. That's called the vehicle underride. So theoretically, we can pull the car out from underneath almost anything."

Admittedly these incidents happen a lot less frequently, but are still not an uncommon occurrence.

"We had an underride vehicle a year ago and it took an hour to get the bus up enough to be able to pull the car. You can get those on the interstate. Basically with all the tractor trailer traffic, it's not common, but it's not uncommon to get a vehicle underride out here in any of the highways. But typically, the interstate is when you're going to see a lot of those vehicles underrides."

Callahan also showed great appreciation towards local businesses Harmon's Automotive & Towing Service Inc. and Gordon's Towing and Recovery for donating the vehicles used in Saturday's training.



WILL PHILLIPS/MINDEN PRESS-HERALD PHOTOS

A fireman seen using the Jaws of Life to dismantle a car door frame Saturday.



WILL PHILLIPS/MINDEN PRESS-HERALD PHOTOS

Firemen from Webster and surrounding parishes gathered in Dixie Inn for training conducted by the Fraternal Order of Leatherheads Society (FOOLS).

Minden Tax Preparer Indicted on Tax Fraud Charges

SHREVEPORT, LA. – A federal grand jury in Shreveport has returned an indictment charging Deborah Cooksey, 56, of Minden, Louisiana, with filing false tax returns, Acting United States Attorney Alexander C. Van Hook announced.

Cooksey is the owner and operator of Cooksey's Tax and Notary Services, LLC, in Minden, Louisiana, with her primary business being the preparation and electronic filing of individual income tax returns. The indictment charges Cooksey with two counts of making and subscribing a false tax return. It is alleged in the indictment that on two occasions, on or about April 15, 2015 and February 11, 2016, Cooksey created and filed her U.S. Individual Income Tax Returns, Form 1040, for calendar years 2013 and 2014.

The indictment alleges that Cooksey's federal income tax return for calendar year 2013 reported gross receipts and sales

See, **INDICTED**, Page 2

Louisiana business group says proposal to increase gas tax will not be filed

(The Center Square) – A Louisiana legislator will not move forward with his planned bid to raise the state's gasoline tax this year, according to a business group that backed the plan.

Erich Ponti, president of the Louisiana Coalition to Fix Our Roads, wrote Thursday in a letter to supporters that Rep. Jack McFarland no longer plans to file his Government Reform in Transportation Act and instead will "focus on identifying alternative funding sources that can gather the votes needed for passage."

The recently passed American Rescue Plan could provide a "significant infusion of one-time resources," Ponti wrote.

Louisiana drivers pay 38.4

See, **TAX**, Page 2

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INDEX
Obituaries 3 Classifieds 12
Editorials 4 Crossword 11
Sports 7 Comics 10

BLOTTER

Recent Arrests in Webster Parish

Jasmine Dhow, 28, of the 600 block of Bradford Street, was arrested for possession of a schedule I substance and possession of drug paraphernalia.

Tracey Moore, 28, of the 300 block of Oak Drive, was arrested for failure to appear in court.

Delondra Washington, 37, was arrested for failure to appear in court.

Dominic Washington, 30, of the 500 block of MLK Jr. Drive, was arrested for battery of a dating partner.

Dedrick miller, 41, of the 1100 block of Shreve-

port Road, was arrested for possession of a schedule II substance and possession of drug paraphernalia.

Andrenia Adams, 19, of the 8100 block of Pines Road was arrested on two warrants.

Patricia Whittfield, 56, of the 100 block of B. F. Martin Drive, was arrested on a warrant.

Mary Walker, 55, of the 500 block of W. R. Reed-er Street, was arrested for failure to appear in court.

Dimitrius Castle, 48, of the 500 block of Babb Circle, was arrested for fail-

ure to appear in court.

Rico Nelson Jr., 22, of the 400 block of Joel Street, was arrested for failure to appear in court.

Joshua Thomas, 26, of the 700 block of Creighton Street, was arrested for disturbing the peace by public intoxication.

Tedrick Glasper, 36, of the 100 block of North 17th Street, was arrested for theft, resisting arrest by flight, and resisting arrest by force or violence.

Quaderick Edwards, 23, of the 800 block of Harris Street, was arrested for failure to appear in court.

Indicted: 2014 receipts were substantially higher than the amount reported

Continued from Page 1

in the amount of \$522,662 from her tax preparation services business for the calendar year 2013, when in fact she knew and believed that the gross sales and receipts for the calendar year 2013 were substantially higher than the amount reported.

It is further alleged in the indictment that Cooksey's federal income tax return for calendar year 2014 reported gross receipts and sales in the amount of \$459,361 from her tax preparation services business for the calendar year 2014, when in fact she knew and believed that the gross sales and receipts for the calendar year 2014 were substantially higher than the amount reported.

An indictment is merely an accusation and a defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

The Internal Revenue Service is conducting the investigation and Assistant U.S. Attorney Mary J. Mudrick is prosecuting the case.

Tax: Last attempt to raise gas tax in Louisiana was in 2019

Continued from Page 1

cents a gallon in taxes on gasoline. The state's portion of 20 cents has not increased in three decades.

McFarland, a Winnfield Republican, had discussed legislation that would increase the gas tax by 10 cents a gallon, then add 2 cents a gallon each year until the increase reaches 22 cents. Each additional penny in tax would raise about \$30 million, and the additional money would help state officials draw down \$780 million in federal money that otherwise would go to other states, McFarland said.

Louisiana, which often is described as having some of the worst roads and bridges in the country, has a \$15 billion road maintenance backlog and a \$13 billion wish list for new projects, according to state officials, which helps drive calls for more revenue.

Tax increases, however, always are controversial and may be even less palatable to lawmakers be-

cause of the current economic uncertainty related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Gov. John Bel Edwards cited that uncertainty to explain why he was not backing the tax increase and why he didn't think it would get the votes of two-thirds of the members of each chamber in the Louisiana Legislature. A two-thirds is needed for a tax increase.

The last attempt to raise Louisiana's gas tax was during the state election year of 2019.

LOCAL

Minden Medical Center Visitor Policy Update and Cafeteria Re-Opening

STAFF REPORT
Minden Press-Herald

Visitor limitations for Minden Medical Center are being lifted and their cafeteria will once again be opened to the public.

"Minden Medical Center has lifted its visitor restrictions and will no longer be limiting patients to one visitor per day. Visitors will still be screened upon entrance to the facility and will have their temperature checked," the hospital's website stated.

"All visitors must adhere to hospital guidelines and must wear a mask. Visitors are allowed to spend the night with their patient if they choose to do so. However, as is usual practice our front doors will lock

at 9:00 p.m. and will not reopen until 7:00 a.m. the next morning. Visitors should remain in the patient's room as much as possible."

Patients who are awaiting COVID-19 test results or who are COVID-19 positive in certain areas of the hospital will still have visitor restrictions to help reduce the spread of the virus.

As stated in a press-release, "The MMC Cafeteria will re-open to the public on Thursday, April 1 (not an April Fool's Day joke - it's really re-opening!) We are looking forward to welcoming people in our community back to enjoy breakfast and lunch at MMC!"

"Masks must be worn unless actively eating or drinking, and social dis-

tancing guidelines will be followed. Cafeteria visitors must also complete COVID-19 screening and temperature check when they arrive at the hospital. The weekly Cafeteria menu will be shared on Minden Medical Center's website: www.mindenmedicalcenter.com/patient-visitor-resources/cafeteria/ as well as on our Facebook page: www.facebook.com/MindenMedicalCenter"

Cafeteria Hours:
Monday - Friday
Breakfast: 7:15 a.m. to 9:00 a.m.
Lunch: 11:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.
Saturday: Closed
Sunday (Lunch Only): 11:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

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MINDEN PRESS-HERALD

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TUE

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Tuesday evening into Wednesday morning rain and storms are back in the ArkLaTex. Tuesday evening storms may bring damaging winds and large hail. The cold front responsible for this will cool temperatures into the 60s for the middle and end of the work week.

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GOVERNMENT

Commission: Dedicate Louisiana sports betting revenue to early childhood education

(The Center Square) – Louisiana lawmakers should dedicate all of the tax proceeds from legal sports betting to early childhood education, a state commission recommends in a new report.

The Louisiana Early Childhood Care and Education Commission is urging the state to immediately invest \$85.8 million in educating children from birth through age 3 and continue to increase spending annually by nearly that amount over 10 years for a total cost of \$839 million. The commission made the same recommendation in a previous report.

Two state legislators, Rep. Stephanie Hilferty and Sen. Beth Mizell, co-chair the commission, which also includes rep-

resentation from the executive branch of state government and leaders from the education, business and nonprofit sectors.

If the state were to invest the recommended initial \$85.8 million in early care and education now, it would see an economic benefit of \$1.8 billion over the next 10 years, the commission’s report said. If no investment is made, the state could see a compounded economic loss of \$12.1 billion over the next 10 years, the commission said.

The federal American Rescue Plan Act dedicates to Louisiana almost \$300 million in Child Care and Development Block Grants and more than \$475 million for child care stabilization. Combined

with previous stimulus grants, Louisiana will receive more than \$1 billion to support child care and families, officials said.

The Louisiana Department of Education, however, has to spend all the money by Sept. 30, 2024. State Superintendent Cade Brumley said that while he embraces the short-term solution the stimulus money provides, “Louisiana should consider investment for long-term funding solutions.”

“The flood of new federal funding from recent stimulus packages will provide Louisiana with an opportunity to address some of the immediate challenges raised by the commission,” said Mizell, R-Franklinton. “However, we know that the state must put together a plan

now for how it will fund early care and education at the appropriate levels once the stimulus funding runs out.”

Among other measures, the commission recommended committing all revenue raised from sports betting to the Louisiana Early Childhood Education Fund. Voters in 55 of 64 parishes legalized sports betting in their areas last year.

The voter referendum didn’t specify how sports betting will operate in the state or what the tax rates or fees would be, leaving legislators to work out the details this year. It’s impossible to know how much money sports betting might raise in Louisiana, though a 2019 study might offer a clue.

Louisiana Economic

Development hired Spectrum Gaming Group to perform a comprehensive analysis of the state’s gaming sector, which included sports betting revenue projections. Spectrum estimated Louisiana could generate between \$237 million and \$332 million annually, adding that legalizing digital gaming and allowing betting on professional and college sports was necessary to maximize the return.

The consultants also said sports betting should be taxed “at a reasonable rate – 15 percent or less – so that gamblers can be offered attractive enough odds to stay in state.” Using Spectrum’s projections, a 15% tax rate would raise between \$35.55 million and \$49.8 million per year.

Legal settlements the state receives, such as from lawsuits involving tobacco or opioids, also could be a funding source, the commission said. The commission also recommends prioritizing early care and education for funding opportunities created during ongoing efforts to overhaul the state’s tax system, though Gov. John Bel Edwards has called for any changes to be revenue neutral, meaning roughly the same amount of money should be raised.

Edwards did not include a spending boost for early childhood care and education in his executive budget proposal, saying he expected the education department to use some of their stimulus dollars for that purpose.

ECONOMY

Dropping gas prices halt after Hold up at Suez Canal

PATRICK DE HAAN
Gas Buddy

(March 29, 2021) - Louisiana gas prices have fallen 1.4 cents per gallon in the past week, averaging \$2.62/g today, according to GasBuddy’s daily survey of 2,436 stations in Louisiana. Gas prices in Louisiana are 23.7 cents per gallon higher than a month ago and stand 80.4 cents per gallon higher than a year ago. According to GasBuddy price reports, the cheapest station in Louisiana is priced at \$2.29/g today while the most expensive is \$2.99/g, a difference of 70.0 cents

per gallon.

“After the feverish rise in gas prices to start the year, increases have largely tapered off and we’re now seeing decreasing prices in most areas of the country, thanks to oil prices that have moderated for the time being,” said Patrick De Haan, head of petroleum analysis for GasBuddy.

The national average price of gasoline has fallen 2.7 cents per gallon in the last week, averaging \$2.84/g today. The national average is up 12.9 cents per gallon from a month ago and stands 87.5 cents

per gallon higher than a year ago.

“As the Suez Canal has remained block for nearly a week, we could see some volatility in the price of oil this week as the market digests any updates as hundreds of ships remain in limbo. Back stateside, refiners have made the switch to summer gasoline and price impacts have been limited thus far, but demand for gasoline remains strong. Last week saw total gasoline demand at yet another pandemic high according to GasBuddy data. As we approach warmer weather and mo-

torists are increasingly getting outside, it could drive prices higher, so long as COVID-19 cases don’t jump along with it and lead to new travel restrictions,” said De Haan.

GasBuddy is the authoritative voice for gas prices and the only source for station-level data spanning nearly two decades. GasBuddy’s survey updates 288 times every day from the most diverse list of sources covering nearly 150,000 stations nationwide, the most comprehensive and up-to-date in the country.

NEW Obituary Submission Guidelines

• All obituaries must be typed to avoid any errors.

• Deadline for obituaries is 3:00 p.m. two days prior to the publication date.

• A proof can be provided via email if requested.

• Obituary cost is \$40/per 400 words and includes a single photo. Payments can be made over the phone once the obit is received. All obituaries are subject to prepayment.

• Obituaries may be submitted by bringing a typed copy by our office at 203 Gleason St., Minden, or emailing to obits@press-herald.com.

If you have any further questions please call our office at 318-377-1866

OPINION

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OTHER OPINION

David: Biden's tax proposal is a bit... disingenuous

Another party shift, another tax proposal. Former President Donald Trump ran on cutting taxes and increasing jobs, it was a major pillar of his campaign. Dutifully, he and congress lowered taxation rates almost across the board, a move which has seen benefit throughout several markets, including a perceived increase in labor supply, and a reduction in energy costs for most Americans. However, just two years removed from the beginning of said breaks, it's still difficult to tell just how much effect the tax cuts will have on the American economy. In truth, the cuts in revenue sources for the government came with no cuts in expenses, a sheet that never balances. And, historically, never works out. But, still, the law seemed beneficial in the onset and Republicans, as well as Trump, believed that eventually the jobs created and the reduced corporate tax rate would cause of a surge of new revenue into government coffers. That hasn't quite materialized just yet, but that also doesn't mean it will never happen - it just hasn't happened, yet. As the political pendulum shifts, however, America will

once again face the immediate shift back to a different tax method and an economic outlook that swings a totally different direction than it has the last four years. And it seems, well, disingenuous. President Joe Biden has proposed an increased tax bracket for those making over \$400,000, increased corporate taxes from 21% (where they fell under Trump's plan) to 28% (still under the 35% from before), and, finally, and increase in the capital gains tax. To focus on the corporate rate, it misses the mark in that most large businesses, or even medium size businesses with a good account department, usually pay no taxes at all, or are taxed on a very nominal rate. The corporate rate is set regarding profits, not income per se. What's the difference? Well, companies are taxes on the money they make in income, after expenses are subtracted,



MCHUGH DAVID

as well as other deductible expenses are included - including charitable donations, or federal write offs for specific programs. As you can see, companies with access to the right firms or having a stellar accounting department can quite easily find ways to avoid paying taxes all together, or pay on a profit amount that's, in real numbers, much less than what the company actually made for a given period. It's an interesting model, to say the least, trying to find ways to tax businesses without allowing those businesses to pass the expense on to the customer. In the case of corporate income tax, they don't have to. Now what's interesting about all this, is that the actual rate falls upon the small and some medium size businesses. The individuals and companies who can't fund an accounting department or hire a high-powered CPA are forced to run with the ebb and flow in changes in the corporate tax rate. Which isn't very fun, or easy. Sure, there are plenty of small business owners who have it somewhat figured out by riding the line between profit and loss. That methodology to avoid paying taxes can often bear catastrophe, for a

lot of different reasons, or be too hard to track for individual business owners - who are just trying to keep the door's open - to pay attention. Moral of the story? Even at 21%, most businesses that are paying the two dimes on every dollar sold are small businesses, and sometimes medium. The large businesses, which could end up paying hundreds of millions in taxes, usually pay nothing. Simply Google Amazon, Google (Alphabet), Apple, et. al. Look at Donald Trump's personal tax records - his loss carry-forwards and reports of low profits are considered good financing by most business owners and wealthy people. It's the right game to play - avoid paying taxes. In the end, another tax change is going to affect small businesses the most, and a few medium ones, and it's way too fast - considering how young the last tax cut truly is - to run off and increase it again. What's even scarier? The tax proposal pleases relatively few on either side of the aisle - not a majority.

MCHUGH DAVID IS PUBLISHER OF THE LIVINGSTON PARISH NEWS.

OTHER OPINION

DeSlatte: Louisiana finds vaccine hesitancy as shortages end

Nearly four months after coronavirus vaccinations began, Louisiana is seeing fewer people clamoring for the surging supply of shots, and that fall-off in interest is happening far too soon to contain the spread of the virus. Talk of waiting your turn has ended, replaced with pleas for people to sign up for available vaccine appointments and to urge their family and friends to do the same. Persuading people appears to be harder than public health officials hoped. Now, Gov. John Bel Edwards' administration, state leaders, faith-based organizations, civic groups and others are embarking on the difficult task of cajoling the uninterested, the worried and the iffy across Louisiana - and connecting those who are interested but have encountered obstacles. "We are soon going to get to the point where we're going to have more doses than arms unless we overcome some of this hesitancy and increase our confidence in the vaccines, and that's what we're working on 24 hours a day now," Edwards said in a radio interview. More than 1.1 million people in Louisiana - 24% of the state's total population - have received at least one dose of the vaccine, according to state health department data. Nearly 655,000 people have been fully immunized, about 14%. (The

Pfizer and Moderna vaccines require two doses; the Johnson & Johnson vaccine requires only one.) That's far below the threshold that scientists believe would be needed to stop the uncontrolled spread of the COVID-19 disease caused by the coronavirus - a worrisome situation as more virulent and contagious strains of the virus have reached the United States. Louisiana is falling behind most other states in per-capita vaccine distribution, according to data from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. To try to combat the low numbers, Edwards is throwing open access to the shots to everyone age 16 and older, starting Monday, to end any uncertainty about who might be eligible. The state also is diving deep into vaccination data, to identify which communities they'll target for more direct outreach. The health department is readying a call center, expected to be up and running within



MELINDA DESLATTE

the week, to respond to vaccine concerns and questions and help set up appointments for those with internet issues or who aren't tech savvy. And the agency is working with local organizations on a planned get-out-the-vote-style effort that will have people knocking on doors and making phone calls to areas where few people have been vaccinated. A poll released in February by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research found that while 67% of Americans plan to get vaccinated or have already done so, 15% are certain they won't and 17% say probably not. Many expressed doubts about the vaccine's safety and effectiveness. Dr. Joe Kanter, Edwards' chief public health adviser, said he still believes Louisiana can reach herd immunity. He said more and more people seem to grow comfortable with the vaccine as they see their friends, family, co-workers and neighbors get immunized with no significant side effects. But he acknowledged: "It's very clear to us that there's going to be a lot of work that has to happen ... a lot of outreach, a lot of meeting people where they're at." Some parishes have started delivering vaccines to people who are elderly and disabled at their homes if they have limited mobility. Specialized vacci-

nation events have been held for fishermen, postal workers and teachers. Louisiana has been doing drive-thru and walk-in mass immunizations at convention centers, sports stadiums, fairgrounds, event centers, college campuses and churches - in coordination with hospitals, clinics and pharmacies and using the National Guard to help staff the sites. Dr. Tina Stefanski, the state's medical director for the Acadiana region, said public health officials are working with local leaders to identify underserved communities and steer vaccine doses. For example, she said a nurse helped set up a vaccination event at a Buddhist temple in Lafayette Parish for the local Laotian community. Stefanski's office is working with seafood processing sites in the region to bring vaccine doses to the employees and is reaching out to grocery stores in the Hispanic community to try to set up small vaccine events on site. "It's still kind of word of mouth. It's finding people in those communities who know of areas of need," Stefanski said.

MELINDA DESLATTE HAS COVERED LOUISIANA POLITICS FOR THE ASSOCIATED PRESS SINCE 2000.

INSPIRATION

Now vaccinated, older adults emerge from COVID hibernation

Bill Griffin waited more than a year for this moment: Newly vaccinated, he embraced his 3-year-old granddaughter for the first time since the pandemic began.

“She came running right over. I picked her up and gave her a hug. It was amazing,” the 70-year-old said after the reunion last weekend.

Spring has arrived with sunshine and warmer weather, and many older adults who have been vaccinated, like Griffin, are emerging from COVID-19-imposed hibernation.

From shopping in person or going to the gym to bigger milestones like visiting family, the people who were once most at risk from COVID-19 are beginning to move forward with getting their lives on track. More than 47% of Americans who are 65 and older are now fully vaccinated.

Visiting grandchildren is a top priority for many older adults. In Arizona, Gailen Krug has yet to hold her first grandchild, who was born a month into the pandemic in Minneapolis. Now fully vaccinated, Krug is making plans to travel for her granddaughter’s first birthday in April.

“I can’t wait,” said Krug, whose only interactions with the girl have been over Zoom and FaceTime. “It’s very strange to not have her in my life yet.”

The excitement she feels, however, is tempered with sadness. Her daughter-in-law’s mother, who she had been looking forward to sharing grandma duties with, died of COVID-19 just hours after the baby’s birth. She contracted it at a nursing home.

Isolated by the pandemic, older adults were hard hit by loneliness caused by restrictions intended to keep people safe. Many of them sat out summer reunions, canceled vacation plans and missed family holiday gatherings in November and December.

In states with older populations, like Maine, Arizona and Florida, health officials worried about the emotional and physical toll of loneliness, posing an additional health concern on top of the virus.

But that’s changing, and more older people are reappearing in public after they were among the first group to get vaccinated.

Those who are fully vaccinated are ready to get out of Dodge without worrying they were endangering themselves amid a pandemic that has claimed more than 540,000 lives in the United States.

“Now there’s an extra level of confidence. I am feeling good about moving forward,” said Ken Hughes, a 79-year-old Florida resident who is flying with his wife for a pandemic-delayed annual trip to Arizona in April.

Plenty of older adults are eager to hop on a jet to travel. Others are looking forward to the simpler things like eating at a restaurant, going to a movie theater or playing bingo.

Sally Adams, 74, was among several older people who showed up for “parking lot bingo” in Glendale, Arizona. She felt safe because she’d been vaccinated and because she was in her car at the first bingo event in more than year.

Once she fulfills the time to reach peak immunity, she plans to indulge in little things like eating out. Both her and her husband, who is also vaccinated, have only done takeout. Now, they feel like it will be OK to even eat indoors — as long as it’s not crowded.

“We’ll probably go in and take the farthest table from other people just to be on the safe side,” she said.

Indeed, many older adults are taking a cautious approach, especially when the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention declined to ease recommendations for travel.

Frequent traveler Cindy Charest was so excited about the prospect of jetting away for the first time in more than a year that she posted an airplane emoji with a photo of her being vaccinated on social media.

But she’s taking a wait-and-see attitude after the CDC recommended against nonessential air travel, for now.

“I think I got prematurely excited about it,” said Charest, 65, of Westbrook, Maine. But she’s ready to jump when the time comes. She’s watching for changing guidance.

Others are also cautious.

“We’re still in the thick of it,” said Claudette Greene, 68, of Portland, Maine. “We’ve made a lot of progress but we’re not done with this.”

Kathy Bubar said she and her husband are completely vaccinated but are in no hurry to push things. The 73-year-old Portland resident is planning to wait until fall before planning any major travel. She hopes to go on a safari in December.

“My goal in all of this is to not be the last person to die from COVID. I’m willing to be patient and take as long as it takes,” she said.

The Griffins were also cautious before they were reunited with their granddaughter.

Bill Griffin, of Waterboro, didn’t dare have close contact with family members until after being vaccinated because he has lung disease, heart disease, kidney disease and high blood pressure, all factors that pushed him into a high-risk category for COVID-19.

“Everybody wants to live for the moment, but the moment could have been very deadly. We listened to the scientists,” he said.

WWW.APNEWS.COM

INSPIRATION

Why we need laughter

Johnny Wessler made me laugh while I was interviewing him on my cable television talk show years ago. He asked me if I had considered becoming a stand up comedian.

Why me?

Since then I’ve realized that when I’ve missed a lot sleep that I laugh at my own jokes so I can easily assume that sleep deprivation and humor go hand in hand.

As sleep deprived as I’ve been lately it makes me feel better to remember that the Bible says “laughter is like medicine for the soul” affirming what I’ve sensed all along.

According to the CDC thirty-six percent or one in three Americans don’t get the recommended seven hours of sleep.

At seventy-three I’ve noticed that when I’m sleep deprived my silliness comes at random speed.

Not to worry, the world famous Italian psychologist Doctor Buscaglia, wrote so much about our need to reach out to others, not knowing whose life we might save. We all need someone to love, knowing what others are going through. He said we can do anything because they will say “she is either old or she’s crazy” which liberates me to be me.”

Ann Landers wrote “when I was twenty I worried about what people thought about me.

When I was forty I didn’t care what they thought about me. When I was sixty I realized they weren’t thinking about me!”

Self-centered is what we might be.

I think we would be better off if we realized that it’s not all about us.

A friend also told me that being silly can be a sign of a drunk which I’m not as a teetotaler.

All things considered I think we can be way too uptight and it is exhilarating to let go and laugh which I didn’t know how to do as a child born in poverty and in an orphanage.

I am so grateful to know that Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forever and He always gets me to the right place at the right time.


Our needs are never insignificant to God.

Life can be overwhelming at times but without Him I can do I can do nothing!



SARAH HUDSON-PIERCE

CONTACT SARAH AT SARAH9957@AOL.COM



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New project under consideration to preserve Louisiana coastlines

SYDNEY MCGOVERN
LSU Manship School News Service

Thousands of years ago, the Mississippi River Delta was formed from sediment deposited from the river. Layers upon layers of sand, silt and clay make up the land that millions of people live and work on today.

But in the past 100 years, Louisiana has lost over 2,000 square miles of land. That's about the size of Delaware, or the total combined landmass of St. Charles, St. John, St. James, Ascension, East Baton Rouge and East Feliciana parishes.

Man-made levees protect South Louisiana from devastating flooding, but they also prevent the river from depositing sediment to maintain the marshes. Without major action, Louisiana would lose 4,200 square miles of land over the next 50 years, endangering communities and increasing storm surge.

But efforts to halt the erosion are entering a promising new phase over the next four years—one in which the state expects, for the first time since the losses began in the 1930s, to see more land created than it loses. That will come as the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority (CPRA) shifts from planning massive new dredging and sediment-diversion projects to executing them.

"This is the moment in time in the coastal pro-

gram that we have been waiting on," said Chip Kline, the authority's chairman. "We actually have the political will and the funding necessary to implement these projects that we've envisioned for years."

The biggest is the Mid-Barataria Sediment Diversion project, which will help re-create marshes that will provide storm protection to Plaquemines, Jefferson, Orleans and Lafourche parishes.

The project will replace portions of the Mississippi River levee on the West Bank with large concrete gates that can be opened to allow sediment to flow from the river into depleting wetlands, creating tens of thousands of acres of new land.

The sediment from the river also will help sustain land that the CPRA is creating through dredging projects and extend the benefit from the dredging for 60 to 70 years.

"The Mid-Barataria Sediment Diversion Project is the cornerstone project within the coastal master plan on the restoration side," Kline said. "It gives us a fighting chance to win this battle. It puts us in the ball game to save the Barataria Basin and portions of Southeast Louisiana because that project is designed to mimic the natural process that built this state to begin with."

The project will eventually cost \$1.4 billion, and much of it will be paid for from money provided by the BP oil company to

cover damages from its oil spill in 2010.

Even though the project will harm some areas for harvesting oysters and brown shrimp, it also could provide a model for future sediment diversions along the Atchafalaya River and other points of the Mississippi.

Since the CPRA was formed in 2007 to centralize the state's coastal environment efforts, it has secured over \$21.4 billion for protection and restoration projects in 20 parishes. It has built or improved over 300 miles of levees and 60 miles of barrier islands and dredged over 150 million cubic yards of material, creating nearly 50,000 acres of new land.

Each year, the authority presents a plan to the Legislature outlining project timelines, anticipated costs and funding sources. The fiscal year 2022 plan includes 110 active projects, including nine in Southwest Louisiana, 35 in South Central Louisiana, and 66 in Southeast Louisiana. The authority anticipates over \$887 million in investments in the coming year, with 90% of total expenditures going toward project construction and maintenance.

These projects fall into two basic groups—hurricane protection or risk reduction projects and restoration projects. On the restoration side, the overwhelming majority are dredging projects in which material is taken from the Mississippi River or the continental shelf

and pumped into depleted marshes. The authority anticipates that these projects will create about 15,000 acres of new land.

Other projects include flood gates, surge protection, pump stations and barrier island restoration.

Although the Mid-Barataria Sediment Diversion Project is yet to be constructed, the key to years of careful planning and development is housed in Louisiana State University's Center for River Studies.

The center uses its 10,000-square-foot model of the Lower Mississippi River to perform experiments that recreate the river flow, water levels and sediment travel at a rate of one year of real-life movement for every hour.

Director Clint Willson said that the work conducted at the center provides data that is crucial for the operations of CPRA and the Army Corps of Engineers.

"With the model, we're trying to help the state understand how the sand moves down the river year

to year, decade to decade," said Willson. "Then the state can think about how much sand is going to be available that they can either dredge and pump for marsh creation projects or how much sand will be available when they open the river sediment diversion gates."

Kline said the model was "a game changer for us" in designing the Mid-Barataria Sediment Diversion Project.

"It's an impressive structure, and its value cannot be put into words," Kline said.

"Going into the future," he added, "we plan on using that model to help inform the operations of that structure—when do we need to turn that structure on to capture the most sediment? What kind of flow do we need to operate the diversion?"

The work at the river studies center and the hundreds of coastal protection and restoration projects employed by the state all share a common goal—protect Louisiana residents, conserve the


state's coast and preserve Southern Louisiana's cultural heritage.

As the marshland sinks, scientists project that sea levels will rise as a result of climate change, further complicating the task of saving the state's coastline.

"I'm never going to say, 'I'm just going to walk away because this is a losing battle,'" Kline said. "This is a battle that has got to be fought, now and into the future, to make sure that we continue to live and work in the place that is so unique known as South Louisiana."

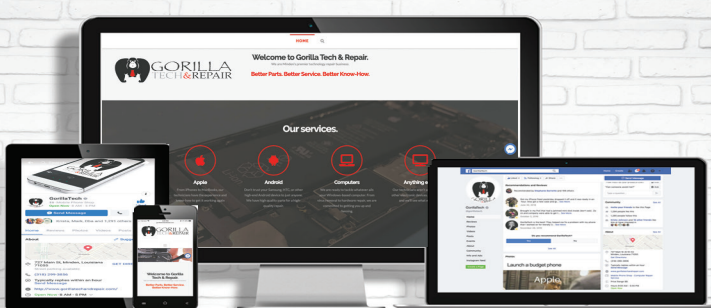
The coastal authority's annual plan awaits approval from the House and Senate Natural Resources committees and the House and Senate Transportation, Highways and Public Works committees before a vote by the full House and Senate.

Members of the public can read the plan at coastal.la.gov and comment on it by emailing coastal@la.gov through Saturday, March 27th.



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FREEZE SHOULD HAVE KILLED GIANT SALVINIA – BUT DID IT?

GLYNN HARRIS
Special to the Minden Press-Herald

Down here in our part of the world, we have things growing and living among us that, quite frankly, we hate.

Fire ants? What purpose do they serve other than to allow us to create new dance steps when we find our ankles wrapped up with these nasty biting critters?

Kudzu? Who needs it? Entire hillsides and margins of rural roads are wrapped with this obnoxious plant that if you find yourself standing in a patch for over five minutes, it will start to climb your ankles.

Pine pollen? We are right now seeing our shiny blue, red or maroon vehicles changing to a dusty yellow color right before us as our eyes water and sneezes begin.

These things are all bad and we would be better off if we didn't have to deal with them but there is another that for the past decade or so has threatened to put an end to something most of us love, and that's getting out on the water to fish, ski and swim.

Giant Salvinia has a strangle hold on most of the lakes in the northern half of our state and with our winters that mostly lean to the moderate temperature side not being capable of killing the plant that dies when faced with freezing temperatures, it looks like we're stuck with it.

But wait. In mid-February we had snow, ice

and temperatures as low as single digits so is there hope that the dastardly plant is finally gone?

Mike Wood is a retired fisheries biologist and when I posed this question to him, here was his answer; "yes and no".

"The cold weather was a blessing for us and it killed Salvinia. Unfortunately, however, there will always be some of the plant, a sprig or two, that found shelter in a hollow log or underneath a blanket of fallen leaves. This is all it takes for the fast growing plant to begin reproducing itself again," Wood said.

According to the biologist, while the plant is in evidence in south Louisiana below Alexandria, it is being somewhat controlled by a bug that feeds on Salvinia.

"The Salvinia weevil is helping control the plant down south but, like the host plant, it is unable to tolerate cold temperatures and the result is that when weevils are introduced to north Louisiana lakes, it does the job for awhile until we get sub-freezing temperatures and then they die," Wood continued.

The lakes that are hardest hit by the Salvinia invasion are some of our older lakes that are full of standing cypress and tupelo gum trees.

"In these lakes, such as Bistineau, Black Lake and Caddo, there is little wind flow and wave action so the plant just sits there and reproduces itself. Also" Wood added,

"lake draw-downs and spraying is not nearly as effective as in lakes with more open water.

"Toledo Bend has had Salvinia since 2006 but so much of the lake is open water where most of the infestation is in some of the arms of the lake," said Wood.

Boaters and anglers are urged to thoroughly inspect their boat and trailer when leaving a lake because should a future outing be to a different lake, a small sprig of Salvinia left on boat or trailer can start an infestation in the next lake visited.

Our pine pollen will be gone in a few weeks but Giant Salvinia? In a manner like fire ants and kudzu, it looks like it'll be here to stay.

FISHING REPORT – 3-24-21

BUSSEY BRAKE – Cooler stormy weather has slowed fishing a bit. Bass have been fair this week. The bream are showing signs of starting to move to the beds. Crappie are slow to fair this week. For latest information, contact the Honey Hole Tackle Shop at 323-8707.

BLACK BAYOU – Crappie are scattered and fair. Bass are fair in the shallows on soft plastics and spinners. Bream are just now starting to hit crickets. Contact Honey Hole Tackle Shop 323-8707 for latest information.

OUACHITA RIVER – The river is still too high. No fishing report this week. For latest in-

formation, contact the Honey Hole Tackle Shop at 323-8707.

LAKE D'ARBONNE – Crappie are making their move to the shallows with best fishing around trees on shiners or jigs. Bass are starting to move up while some are still fairly deep. Best baits this week have been spinners, crank baits, spinners and soft plastics. Bream are just now starting to show signs of life as they're moving to shallow bedding areas and starting to hit worms and crickets. Catfishing continues to be good off the banks on night crawlers and cold worms. For latest reports, call Anderson's Sport Center at 368-9669 or Honey Hole Tackle Shop at 323-8707.

LAKE CLAIBORNE – Bream are beginning to show up around shallow spawning areas with some caught on crickets and worms. Catfishing has been fair to good on jugs and trotlines. Crap-

pie fishing has been best at night fishing shiners off the piers and docks with a good many caught on yo-yos baited with shiners. Also, fishing has been good for crappie below the spillway. Bass are fairly shallow with some caught on Carolina rigs and wacky worms. No report on stripers this week. For latest information, call Tim Loftin at Kel's Cove at 927-2264.

CANEY LAKE – Bass fishing has been best fairly shallow with trick worms, jigs and spinners picking up a few. No heavy weight bass were reported this week. The chinquapin bite has started with fish moving shallow and hitting worms and crickets. Crappie fishing is good with most of the bigger fish moving shallow while some average sized fish are still being caught beneath the Highway 4 bridge on shiners and jigs. No report on catfish. For latest information contact

Bateaux on Caney Lake at 259-6649, Hooks Marina at 249-2347, Terzia Tackle at 278-4498 or the Honey Hole Tackle Shop at 323-8707.

LAKE POVERTY POINT – The turn to cooler weather has moved the crappie off the banks and slowed the fishing this week. Catfishing has been fair while bass and bream are slow. For latest reports, call Poverty Point Marina at 318/878-0101.


LAKE ST. JOHN – Cooler weather and rain have slowed down the crappie bite. Bass have been fair to good early mornings on soft plastics and jigs. Catfishing has slowed this week. For information, call Ken Mahoney at 318-201-3821.

LAKE YUCATAN – The water is very high and rising. No fishing this week. For information, call Surplus City Landing at 318/467-2259.

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SUDOKU

SUDOKU

1			9		5			
4	3		2		8			7
	6				7		2	
8		6		5			7	1
3				9				6
7		2				4	3	
			4					
2					6	9	5	4
6	4			7				2

Level: Beginner

Here's How It Works:

Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken down into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. You can figure out the order in which the numbers will appear by using the numeric clues already provided in the boxes. The more numbers you name, the easier it gets to solve the puzzle!

2	1	8	3	7	5	9	6	4
9	6	9	1	6	8	3	2	7
3	6	7	6	3	5	8	1	4
9	3	6	8	1	4	7	2	5
6	8	5	2	9	7	4	3	1
8	9	6	3	5	4	2	7	1
9	6	8	1	4	7	3	2	5
4	3	5	2	6	8	1	9	7
1	2	7	9	3	5	6	4	8

ANSWER:

Fun By The Numbers

Like puzzles? Then you'll love sudoku. This mind-bending puzzle will have you hooked from the moment you square off, so sharpen your pencil and put your sudoku savvy to the test!

WORD SLEUTH

WORD SLEUTH

STARS IN THE SKY

F J H E B Y V T Q O L I G D B
Y W T R P M K S I F E D B Y W
U S C O P E R N I C U S Q O M
K N S I F D B K Z R G X W U S
Q O A I N L K C O C A E P J H
F D C U R F I O A Y H L H W V
T S V E G A Q R P T L N O L K
I H F G T N L N E E A C G P I
B Z Y L N G A O W N S S G Z V
U S A A Y A N I S N A M A R Q
P S N M L J K L T I R R R W H

Monday's unlisted clue: TWINS

Find the listed words in the diagram. They run in all directions - forward, backward, up, down and diagonally.

Tuesday's unlisted clue hint: A BOOK OF MAPS

Amansinaya
Copernicus
Fang
Hoggar

Irena
Izar
Kang
Lionrock

Peacock
Polaris
Rasalhague
Solaris

Tianguan
Vega
Wasat

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3/30

HISTORY

Continued from Page 10 is aired for the first time. The program, which is still on the air today, is one of the world's most popular game shows.

1867 - The United States buys Alaska from Russia. The territory at the north-western tip of North America cost only \$7.2 million.

1865 - The Treaty of Paris is signed, ending the Crimean War. Russia lost the war to a coalition of the Ottoman Empire, France, Britain, and Sardinia.

COMICS

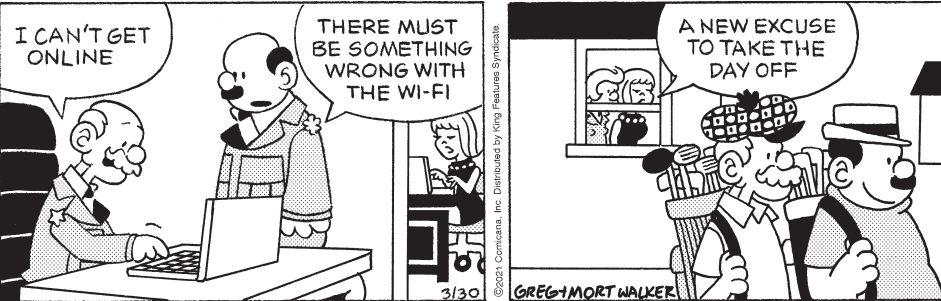
BABY BLUES | RICK KIRKMAN AND JERRY SCOTT



BLONDIE | DEAN YOUNG AND JOHN MARSHALL



BEETLE BAILEY | MORT & GREG WALKER



FUNKY WINKERBEAN | TOM BATIUK



HI AND LOIS | BRIAN WALKER, GREG WALKER AND CHANCE BROWNE



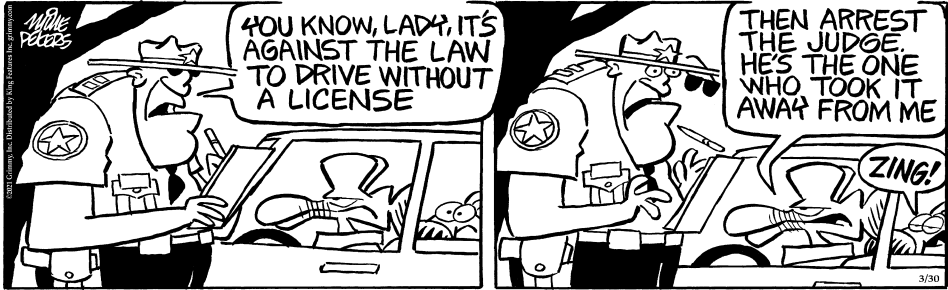
HAGAR THE HORRIBLE | CHRIS BROWNE



SAM AND SILO | JERRY DUMAS



MOTHER GOOSE & GRIMM | MIKE PETERS



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GOVERNING THE TOWN OF COTTON VALLEY AND THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE SALE OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES

WHEREAS, the Town of Cotton Valley ("Town") has conducted an election pursuant to La. R.S. 26:581, et seq., and the voters have approved the sale of alcoholic beverages of both high and low alcoholic content, for consumption both on and off the premises of sale, within the limits of the Town.

WHEREAS, the Mayor and the Board of Aldermen of the Town desire to enact certain rules and regulations regarding said sales of alcoholic beverages. NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED by the Mayor and the Board of Aldermen of the Town of Cotton Valley, Louisiana, in due, legal and regular session convened, as follows: ARTICLE A-IN GENERAL. Section 3.1 - Definitions.

The following words, terms, and phrases, when used in this Chapter, shall have the meanings ascribed to them in this Section, except where the context clearly indicates a different meaning: Alcoholic beverage means any fluid or solid which is capable of being converted into fluid suitable for human consumption and containing more than one-half of one percent alcohol by volume, including malt, vinous, spirituous, alcoholic or intoxicating liquor, beer, porter, ale, stout, fruit juice, cider or wine. Alcoholic beverage handling employee means any alcoholic beverage permit holder or employee, agent, partner, or other person connected with or employed by an alcoholic beverage permit holder, who physically handles, sells or serves any alcoholic beverage or

container thereof, for consumption on the premises, including, but not limited to, waiters, waitresses, barmaids, bartenders and managers. Alcoholic beverage permit or permit means a permit required by and issued pursuant to the provisions of this Chapter. Beverage of high alcoholic content means alcoholic beverage containing more than six percent alcohol by volume. Beverage of low alcoholic content means alcoholic beverages containing not more than six percent by volume. Chief of Police as used in this Chapter shall be the person holding the office of chief of police or the person designated by him to act for him. Motor vehicle means a motorized vehicle designed to convey person from one place to another on public streets and highways. Open container means any container or receptacle containing any alcoholic beverage; wherein the stamp or seal has been broken, or any container, bottle or can that contain any alcoholic beverage that has been opened subsequent to the filling of such can, bottle or container by the manufactory, brewery or distillery of such alcoholic beverage. Alcoholic beverages contained in drinking glasses, cups, including plastic glasses and Styrofoam cups, regardless of whether such containers have a top affixed thereto, shall be deemed an open container.

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March 9, 2021
March 12, 2021
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