



A
COMMUNITY
REVIEW
PUBLISHED BY THE
MINDEN PRESS-HERALD

2024



Profile





The City of Minden has started 2024 with quite a bang! With a new Mayor, City Council, Chief of Police, and Fire Chief, Minden is heading forward with a fresh start. New ideas, prosperity, and friendly faces and conversation are just a few of the numerous great things offered by the newly-elected and newly-appointed leaders of Minden. Though an ever-changing, growing city, its characteristic charm will remain. From Minden's red-brick Main Street to the historic homes in its neighborhoods, you will find friendly folks with Christian values and a love for outdoor activities that fit the mild climate. The City's leaders are proud of the ability to preserve Minden's rich history while achieving aggressive economic development and growth.



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Andy Pendergrass

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ECONOMY PROFILE 2024

NLTCC's Powerline Worker Program shapes heroes in Northwest Louisiana

BY: KELSEY MESHELL - NLTCC

Since the inception of the Powerline Worker Program in the fall of 2023, Northwest Louisiana Technical Community College (NLTCC) and American Electric Power - Southwestern Electric Power Company (AEP-SWEPCO) have been at the forefront of shaping the future of line workers in the region. The partnership has not only equipped students with valuable training, but has also highlighted the vital role of line workers in our local community.

Led by James Barlow, an instructor and AEP-SWEPCO alumni, the Powerline Worker Program at NLTCC equips students with technical skills while fostering a strong sense of responsibility and community service. Through hands-on training and immersive learning experiences, students develop the confidence and competence required to excel in the demanding profession of linework.

As time has progressed into the spring semester, the inaugural class has made significant strides in their journey. Actively participating in the establishment of the pole yard on NLTCC's Shreveport campus alongside AEP-SWEPCO, they are benefiting from a tailored training program that addresses the evolving needs of the industry. This hands-on program provides students with opportunities to operate bucket and line trucks, set and pull poles, wire transformer banks, climb electrical poles in various weather conditions, utilize AEP-SWEPCO's indoor training facility, and much more. Students also receive their CDL license.

Line workers play a vital role in maintaining a reliable power supply for homes and businesses, contributing significantly to the well-being of their communities. Their hands-on work not only offers job security but also brings a sense of fulfillment as they actively contribute to keeping the community powered. With a growing demand for line workers in the state, there are ample job opportunities for those entering the field.

"Our program is all about putting the skills and the certifications within reach of Ark-La-Tex students to enhance their overall employability and ensure they are job ready," said Dr. Jayda Spillers, NLTCC Chancellor. "We believe we have the opportunity to deliver a program that meets the needs of our local residents and employers like AEP-SWEPCO."

For those interested in joining the program, the next class begins on March 18th, 2024. Entrance requirements include an age requirement of 18 years old, a current driver's license, a satisfactory DOT physical, a high school diploma or equivalent, and no fear of working at high elevations. Additionally, applicants must pass a DOT drug screen immediately before beginning the course.

As the only source of powerline worker training in Northwest Louisiana, NLTCC encourages interested applicants to visit nltcc.edu for more information. The program promises to address the region's workforce needs and offers an exciting opportunity for individuals seeking a rewarding career in this essential field.



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Jimmy Williams

Beloved mayor and community leader, **JIMMY WILLIAMS,** remembered for dedication and service

BY: AMBER MCDOWN - MINDEN PRESS-HERALD

Jimmy Williams, a cherished figure in Webster Parish, renowned for his multifaceted roles as a father, grandfather, mayor of Sibley, businessman, and friend, passed away on Saturday, January 20, 2024, at the age of 68.

Williams, born in Minden in 1955, dedicated the last two decades of his life to the Town of Sibley, where he served as mayor since 2009. His profound impact on the community manifested through numerous achievements, including enhancements to the Sibley water system, facilitation of economic growth, and the establishment of a new subdivision at the town's north entrance.

Notably, in 2019, Williams was elected as President of the Louisiana Municipal Association (LMA), assuming a pivotal role as an advocate for villages, towns, and cities statewide. His exceptional leadership during the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic earned him the LMA's prestigious President's Award in 2022.

Williams's commitment to service extended beyond municipal boundaries, as evidenced by his active involvement with the LMA Executive Committee and his representation of Louisiana and Sibley on a national scale.

A cornerstone of the Minden business community, Williams played a pivotal role in the success of Minden Athletic, contributing five decades of service to the establishment. His entrepreneurial spirit also led to the founding of Williams Silkscreen, a venture that left an indelible mark on the local athletic apparel industry.

As a proud member of the 1972 Minden High School State Championship Baseball Team, Williams's passion for baseball endured throughout his life, as he continued to engage with the sport both as a player and a coach.

Beyond his professional and athletic endeavors, Williams's devotion to his faith was palpable, as he actively

participated in the Minden Presbyterian Church and generously shared his handyman skills to enhance its facilities.

However, Williams's greatest source of joy resided in his family, particularly his role as "Poppie" to his beloved grandchildren. His home served as a beacon of warmth and hospitality, fostering countless cherished memories for his loved ones.

In the wake of his passing, tributes poured in from across the community, underscoring the profound impact Williams had on the lives he touched. From expressions of grief to fond recollections of his kindness and leadership, the collective mourning reflected the enduring legacy of a remarkable individual.

Williams's legacy as a compassionate leader, devoted family man, and cherished friend will continue to resonate throughout the Minden community and beyond, serving as a testament to a life well-lived and a spirit deeply cherished.

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Tourism thrives in Webster Parish, boosting local economy

BY: AMBER MCDOWN - MINDEN PRESS-HERALD

Tourism in Webster Parish has experienced a significant upswing since the easing of COVID restrictions, according to the annual report released by Webster Parish Tourism for the year 2022. Visitor spending witnessed a notable increase, with expenditures soaring by 11%. This surge translated into a 10% rise in state tax revenues and a 13% uptick in local tax revenues, directly impacting residents by trimming individual tax payments by \$207.

In 2022, visitor spending in Webster Parish approached nearly \$30 million, generating \$1.15 million in local taxes. While comprehensive data for 2023 is pending, initial indicators suggest a continuation of the upward trend.

Apart from the traditional annual festivals in Minden, the growth is attributed to various factors, including the exposure garnered through HGTV's Hometown Kickstart and Camp Minden securing a 10-year contract to host the Archery Shooter Association Pro/AM tournaments.

The surge in short-term rentals, such as bed and breakfasts, has been particularly noticeable. Sara McDaniel, owner of Simply Southern Cottage, has witnessed a surge in bookings across her properties, drawing guests from across the United States and internationally. McDaniel's properties not only contribute to local accommodations but also drive spending in restau-



Serena Gray


rants, souvenir shops, and local stores. "They're eating at our restaurants, they're shopping downtown, and I fully expect to see that continue to grow."

"2023 has been a good year for short-term rentals in Minden," McDaniel stated. "My bookings have steadily increased month over month at all my properties." With her company projected to contribute approximately \$30,000 in state and local taxes, McDaniel anticipates further growth in 2024.

Similarly, Jim and Kim Huffman of Huffman Management reported growth in 2023, with an average daily rate surge of 18% and a 6% increase in occupancy. The international reach of Huffman Management's website underscores the global interest in Minden as a travel destination. Buoyed by their success, the Huffmans are expanding their portfolio with two additional houses earmarked for renovation as short-term rentals.

Serena Gray, executive director of Webster Parish Tourism, expressed optimism about the future, emphasizing collaborative efforts to attract more visitors to the area and foster economic growth across the community. "We are filled with anticipation for where we are headed and believe that, as we continue to work together, we will attract more visitors to our area resulting in economic growth for our entire community."

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Town & Country Health & Rehab administrative staff are local to our area. We are from the Webster, Claiborne and Bienville Parish Communities. Our love and compassion for our community goes all the way to our roots in the community. Our staff has a combined vision for our residents to receive the best care and make sure all needs are met. Stop by and see us some time and ask for a tour. We'd love to show you around our semi-private and private rooms. Give us a call at 318-377-5148 and please ask for Mrs. Jodi Yetman, Admission Director or Mrs. Brooke Sims Snyder, Administrator. We look forward to caring for you or your loved one. You can also follow us on our Town & Country Health & Rehab Facebook page.





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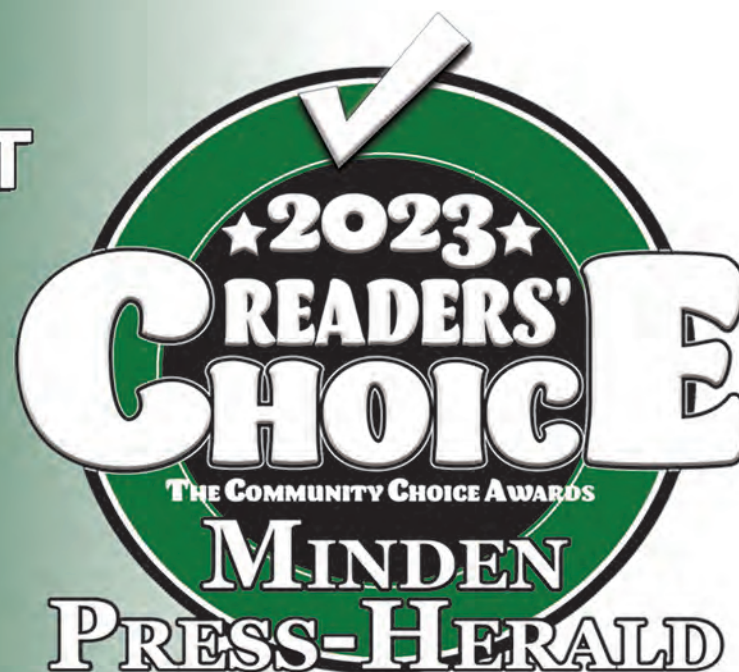


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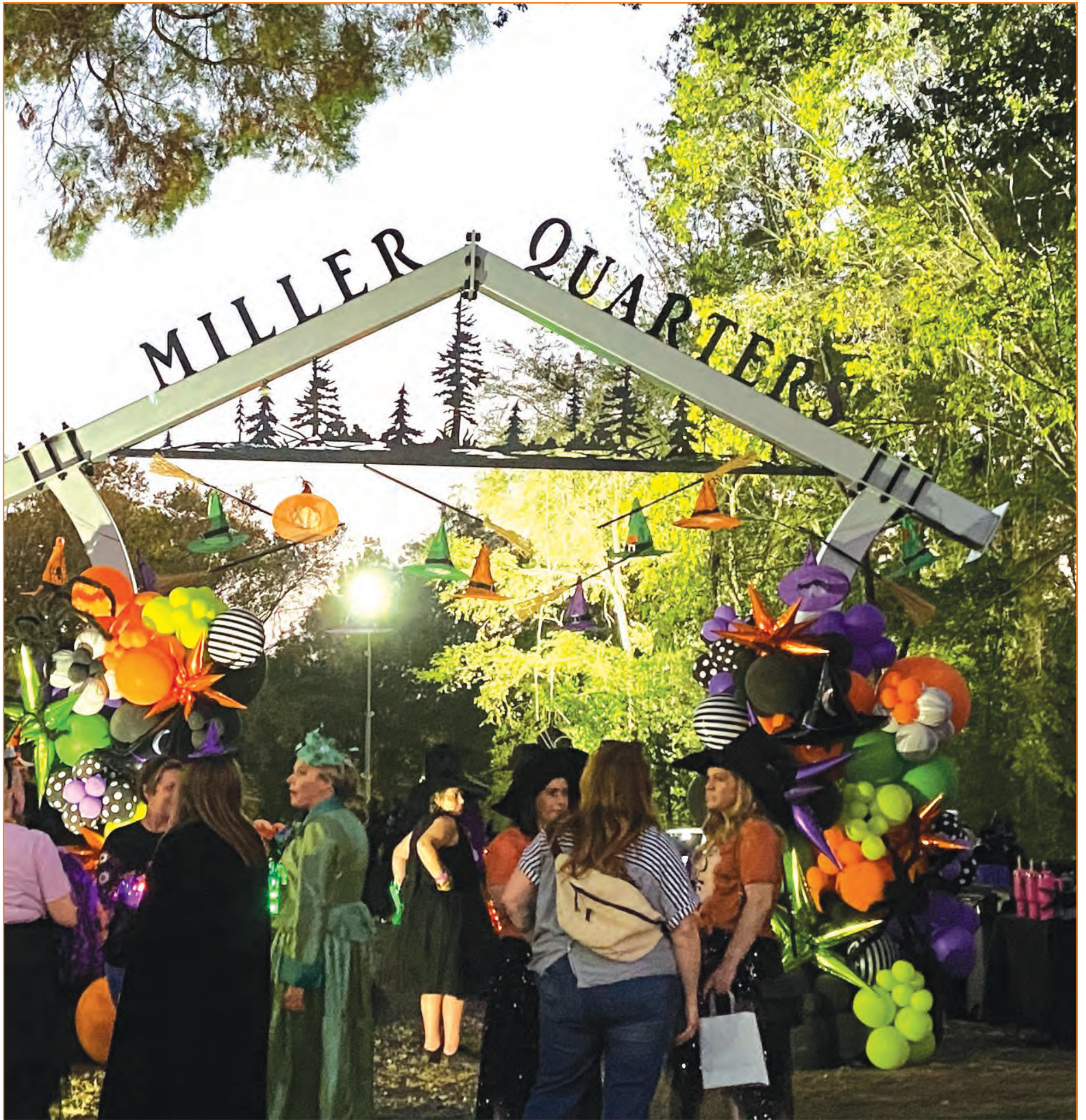
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LA Tech student saves lives in campus attack

BY: AMBER MCDOWN - MINDEN PRESS-HERALD

In a harrowing incident at Louisiana Tech University's Lambricht Sports and Wellness Center on Monday, local resident and LA Tech student Colin Campbell demonstrated quick thinking and courage by swiftly transporting two injured women to the hospital.

His father, Tracy Campbell of Minden, reported getting a message from Colin saying, "Dad, there's been an attack on campus. I'm at the hospital, and I need y'all to come quick."

The event unfolded shortly after 9 AM when reports of a stabbing incident surfaced at the campus facility. Colin, en route to his dorm, witnessed people fleeing the Lambricht Center in distress. Sensing the urgency, he halted his vehicle and discovered two women with stab wounds, one in the throat. Without hesitation, Colin assisted them into his vehicle and drove them to the hospital, maintaining communication with emergency services throughout the transit.

Colin's rapid response drew praise from Emergency Medical Technicians (EMT), who noted that he surpassed the speed of

an ambulance. Another student transported a third victim, contributing to the swift medical attention required.

Tech police swiftly intervened, receiving a call at approximately 9:08 AM and apprehending the suspect, identified as Louisiana Tech student Jacoby Johnson, by 9:12 AM. The attack occurred outside the Lambricht Center as victims were exiting. Johnson fled toward the main campus but was apprehended without incident by campus police.

The motive behind the attack appears to be random, as authorities investigate the incident. Johnson, currently receiving treatment at Northern Louisiana Medical Center for injuries sustained during the initial altercation, faces legal repercussions. Ruston Police Department and the Lincoln Parish Sheriff's Office collaborated on scene control and evidence collection.

Four victims were identified, two of which were transported to a local hospital, one was airlifted to Shreveport, and another declined treatment. Unfortunately, Annie Richardson, the graduate student who was airlifted, died as a result of her wounds. The other three victims were not students.



Colin Campbell

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Miss Minden Maison Wilbanks talks on her community initiative

BY: WILL PHILLIPS - MINDEN PRESS-HERALD

2024's Miss Minden Maison Wilbanks is embarking on a journey to empower individuals through the art of journaling. With a deep-rooted passion for community service and a personal journey of self-discovery, Wilbanks is on a mission to make a meaningful impact on mental health and well-being.

"This is something that I've thought about doing from the very beginning," Wilbanks shares, reflecting on her journey towards becoming Miss Minden. "On the road to becoming Ms. Minden, I had to find a community service initiative, and I've developed my own platform revolved around things that I do in my everyday life, and journaling was the main point I was trying to get at going into Miss Minden."

Wilbanks' own experience with journaling stems from a challenging period in her life during her senior year of high school. "I went through a lot of mental battles. It was a really dark and hard time," she recalls. "I've always been the type of person that keeps everything to myself. I'm very closed and don't share what's going on."

Inspired by a favorite content creator who spoke about the therapeutic benefits of journaling, Wilbanks took the leap to explore this practice herself. "I started talking to the adults who have been mentors for me about journaling, and they pushed me to try it," she explained.

"I let everything out that I had been harboring for so long, and it was like a feeling of freedom," Wilbanks says. "I wouldn't be where I am today without God first of all, but journaling has helped me be-

come the person I am today, especially socially and being able to be as outgoing as I'm able to be."

Fuelled by her own transformative experience, Wilbanks is passionate about sharing the benefits of journaling with others, particularly in a time when mental health struggles are pervasive. "Since it helped me so much, I really want to share that with other people, because mental health is a huge problem in modern times, and after COVID it's just gotten worse," she emphasizes.

With a vision to reach beyond the scope of Minden, Wilbanks is expanding her efforts by offering journaling workshops throughout the state, including Natchitoches, where she is attending school, and her hometown in DeRidder.

"Bringing it to life has been so much fun," Wilbanks expresses with enthusiasm. "It's something that I want to share with other people, so they can learn how to properly combat the battles they are going through mentally, so they don't have to feel like they have to be isolated, feel like they're unheard, feel like they're unimportant."

Through her dedication to community service and her unwavering commitment to uplifting others, Miss Minden Maison Wilbanks is not only leaving a lasting impact on those she encounters but is also fostering a culture of self-care and resilience that extends far beyond the confines of her title. As she continues to spread her message of hope and healing through journaling, Wilbanks stands as a beacon of light, guiding others on their journey towards mental wellness and self-discovery.

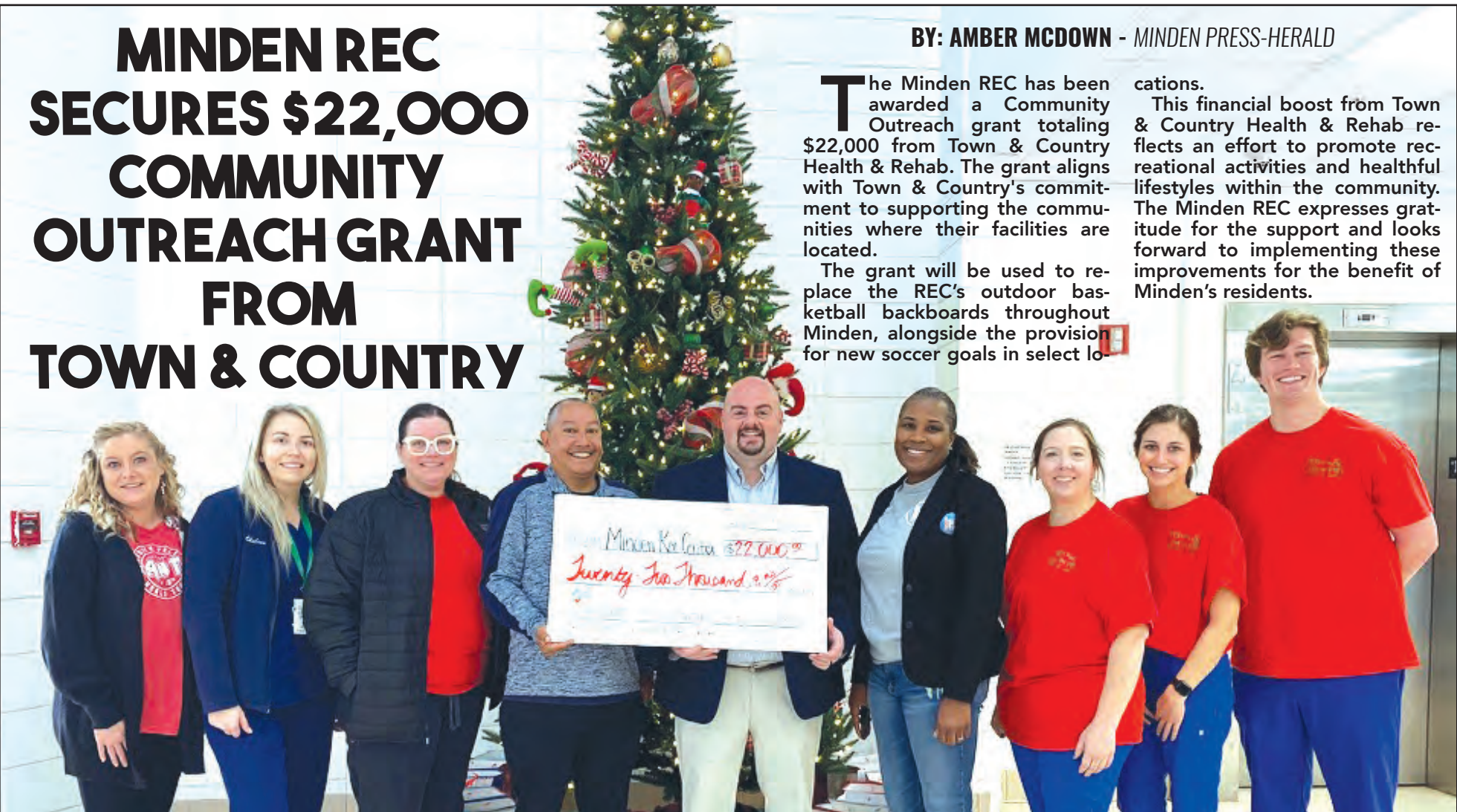


MINDEN REC SECURES \$22,000 COMMUNITY OUTREACH GRANT FROM TOWN & COUNTRY

BY: AMBER MCDOWN - MINDEN PRESS-HERALD

The Minden REC has been awarded a Community Outreach grant totaling \$22,000 from Town & Country Health & Rehab. The grant aligns with Town & Country's commitment to supporting the communities where their facilities are located. The grant will be used to replace the REC's outdoor basketball backboards throughout Minden, alongside the provision for new soccer goals in select lo-

cations. This financial boost from Town & Country Health & Rehab reflects an effort to promote recreational activities and healthful lifestyles within the community. The Minden REC expresses gratitude for the support and looks forward to implementing these improvements for the benefit of Minden's residents.



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Haynes Mandino named 2023 Young Professional of the Year in Minden

BY: AMBER MCDOWN - MINDEN PRESS-HERALD



The Greater Minden Chamber celebrated the announcement of the 2023 Young Professional of the Year on October 24, during a ceremony held at the Minden Civic Center. Haynes Mandino emerged as the deserving recipient among the 15 candidates under the age of 40.

Haynes Mandino, an educator at Minden High School, holds the dual role of a baseball coach while also serving as a dedicated volunteer firefighter. Additionally, he takes on the role of a student minister at Emmanuel Baptist Church.

The awards ceremony, hosted by Mandi Hart and Greg Lee, marked a significant occasion as it honored the late Mayor Terry L. Gardner, who was a steadfast sponsor of this prestigious award. Last year, the accolade was renamed the "Terry

"I'd like to thank the community of Minden and the business leaders, and all the people who had a hand in raising me. I urge you to love your Lord first and then to love your community and the people you are around. Influence them in a positive manner and, more importantly, I urge you not to give up on the youth of our community. I see firsthand every day the next generation of young professionals."

... Haynes Mandino

L. Gardner Young Professional of the Year" in his memory. Mandi Hart, one of the emcees, noted, "Terry truly believed in young professionals growing professionally. He inspired everybody to know that there is a

leader inside of them, and that little things make a difference when you serve your community."

Brandi Cade, the 2022 Young Professional of the Year, had the privilege of announc-

ing Haynes Mandino as this year's recipient. She described him as "an old soul living in a 20-something-year-old's body" and praised his dedication to selfless service and servant leadership. Cade emphasized

Mandino's positive impact on the community, stating, "Haynes Mandino makes Minden a better place. He is changing our city by investing in the lives of others."

Upon receiving the award, Mandino expressed his gratitude, saying, "I'd like to thank the community of Minden and the business leaders, and all the people who had a hand in raising me. I urge you to love your Lord first and then to love your community and the people you are around. Influence them in a positive manner and, more importantly, I urge you not to give up on the youth of our community. I see firsthand every day the next generation of young professionals."

This recognition underscores the significance of community engagement and mentorship, exemplified by Haynes Mandino in Minden.

Cora Lou Robinson

presented with Women in Arts Recognition Award

BY: WILL PHILLIPS - MINDEN PRESS-HERALD

A reception was held in honor of Cora Lou Robinson, celebrating her being given the Women in the Arts Recognition Award by the National Society Daughters of the American Revolution. Friends, family, and members of the local community gathered at the Minden First Methodist Church in order to recognize her accomplishments in capturing a unique period of time in Minden's history through her paintings.

"We started the process through the National Daughters of the American Revolution to have her designated as Woman in the Arts. A lot of times they are turned down. It's a very selective process. So after we got together recommendations, a bio from her, copies of pictures, sent it all off and waited with bated breath to make sure she was approved, she was actually approved in 24 hours," said Cindy Madden.

"Not only is she an artist, which is awesome, but she did scenes of Minden, and has captured forever things in Minden that are historical and important that we don't ever want to forget. Very few communities have an artist that can do that."

Mary Long from Ruston, in charge of the American Heritage Committee, presented the National American Heritage Award and the Dorcheat-Bistineau Chapter Award. Along with the award, Robinson was also presented with an exclusive pin only given in this circumstance, pinned on Robinson by past Dorcheat-Bistineau DAR Chapter Regent Kathy Johnson.

Mayor Nick Cox was also at the event on behalf of the city, reading a proclamation that officially designated September 24, 2023, in Minden as Cora Lou Robinson Day.

"When I think about things like the old Minden High School or Hunter's playground, things like that, things I was never able to see myself, those images in my mind were painted by Cora Lou Robinson. She's very special in our history, so it's a real honor today to present her with this proclamation," said Mayor Cox.

Lastly, Courtney Rodgers, daughter of Robinson, shared some loving words to her mother.

"I was thinking, as we were celebrating my mom today, of one of my favorite poets, Maya Angelou. One of her quotes came to mind, 'If you're going to live, leave a legacy. Make a mark on the world that can't be erased.' My mother has done just that. Not only with her artwork, as amazing as it is, and the beautiful things that she captures for everyone in this community, but also for the love and support she has shown those who have the pleasure of knowing her.

"Mom, you always have kind words, and you always make those around you feel so special. You always have, with your students, your family, your friends. You have left a mark on the world with the strokes of your brush, sharing memories of times past, your many gifts and hours of service to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital and the auction, the Dorcheat Museum, the community, and all those around you. Thank you for being you. We are blessed because of you and that can never be erased. You've made a really big mark on the world. Happy Cora Lou Robinson Day," said Rodgers.





Pearls of Purpose donates \$10,000 to community initiatives

BY: AMBER MCDOWN - MINDEN PRESS-HERALD



Pearls of Purpose, the nonprofit behind the popular Witches Ride, proudly allocated checks of \$5,000 each to We're Here We Care and the Miller Quarters renovation. The funds were raised during the event held on October 19 in downtown Minden, where over 400 participants congregated.

Sarah Overall, representing Pearls of Purpose, expressed appreciation for the community's support in making the event a resounding success. "This event was executed in a few short months; it took a lot of hard work," Overall stated. "We had over 400 participants show up on October 19 in downtown Minden. We feel like it was a great success."

Emphasizing the altruistic spirit of Pearls of Purpose, Overall spoke of the motivation behind the chosen beneficiaries. "We're all, pretty much, healthcare providers, and we wanted to be able to give back," she explained. "We like the mission of We're Here We Care, and we like the fact that he helps children. Since it was a bike ride parade, we chose him to be able to buy bikes for Christmas for kids."

Furthermore, the decision to contribute to the Miller Quarters renovation reflects Pearls of Purpose's commitment to enhancing the community. "We also know that there's lots of plans in the works to expand Miller Quarters, and we wanted to be able to do something for the entire community," Overall elaborated. "We're hoping that this is the jumpstart to get that process going."

Riding on this year's success, plans for next year have already begun. The 2024 Witches Ride is scheduled to take place on October 24.





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That's how much the Minden St. Jude Auction raised this year!



The Minden St. Jude Auction was a big success this year, with people donating not only locally but from all over the world.

MINDEN ST. JUDE AUCTION SETS ANOTHER RECORD-BREAKING YEAR

The Minden St. Jude Auction saw another record-breaking year with the event raising a whopping \$2,538,444 for the Children's Research Hospital. This feat was only attainable through the efforts of volunteers who worked throughout the weekend to make the auction function, the sponsors who helped the event, whether through funding, raffle items, or auction items, and most importantly the generous viewers who chose to help fight the fight against children's cancer all while taking home some great items at the same time.

Despite the adverse weather conditions, the Minden Run for St. Jude demonstrated remarkable community support, amassing an impressive total of \$100,230, underscoring the collective commitment towards advancing the cause of pediatric healthcare and research at St. Jude's Research Center.

The event, aimed at supporting the St. Jude's Research Center, commenced

with the Kids Fun Run, where young athletes from the region showcased their spirit. A. Ramsey of Minden clinched the top spot, followed by B. Marks of Haughton in second place and E. Harmon, also from Minden, securing third place.

Following the youthful energy, the 10K race unfolded, witnessing Keith Pitman of Minden seizing the victory, trailed by Anna Lake Watts, also of Minden, in second place, and Kenichi Pass from New Boston, Texas, securing third.

The momentum continued with the commencement of the 5K race, where Nathan Vogel of Campti led the pack, followed by Graham Gordy of Shreveport in second place and John Hiltom Ferguson III, also hailing from Shreveport, in third.

Another big event for the weekend was the Minden St. Jude Chili Cook-off which raised a total of \$16,245 to go towards the



◀ CONTINUED ON PAGE 25



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◀ CONTINUED FROM PAGE 24

Auction.

In the main competition, the judges selected Big Jon's Big Eats with head cooks John and Nancy Rogers as the winners for the 2024 Chili Cook-Off. The People's Choice Winner and Best in Show awards both went to Wookie Chow, with head cooks Scott and Josh Spillers.

The Young Women's Service Club (YWSC) of Minden always loves the opportunities to be as involved in the community as much as possible and St. Jude Kids Day is no exception. This year the event was able to raise a total of \$1155 dollars for the auction despite being pushed indoors due to the weather.

"Each year, we offer an area filled with different activities for the kids to participate in. This allows us the opportunity to not only raise funds for the St Jude auction but also gives the kids something fun to do differently, creates a great experience for the kids along with their parents and also gives the parents some time to check out all of the various activities happening throughout the city that morning," said YWSC President Elizabeth Campbell.

Local students throughout the parish also made a huge impact in the fight against children's cancer. All 14 public schools in Webster Parish united in a successful fundraising drive for St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, collectively donating \$149,123.57 this year. This impressive figure marks an increase of \$23,774.13 compared to the previous

year's contributions.

Throughout the academic year, students and faculty engaged in diverse fundraising activities, demonstrating their unwavering commitment to the cause. The district extends its gratitude to administrators, teachers, staff, students, and the broader school communities whose relentless dedication made this achievement possible. Every donation, regardless of size, played a crucial role in supporting St. Jude's mission.

Another big part in the auction raising so much money was some of the great raffle items that were up for grabs. Some of the big ticket raffle winners include the Partners in Hope Raffle Winners, Michael Wise winning the \$5000 cash prize, Dustin Logan winning the trip for four to Disney World, and Bradley Jordan winning the big screen TV package. Grace Eskew was the winner of this year's custom space-themed playhouse. Last but not least, the winner of the grand prize, either \$50,000 or a 2024 GMC Yukon was Kyle and Jenea Towns.

It was another record-breaking year for the Minden St. Jude Auction. This achievement was only possible due to the countless hours and hard work donated by the auction's volunteers, as well as generous contributions in the form of raffles, pledges, donations, and of course bids from all who tuned in either live or in person and, as a result, Minden once again showcased what can be accomplished when people work together for the greater good.





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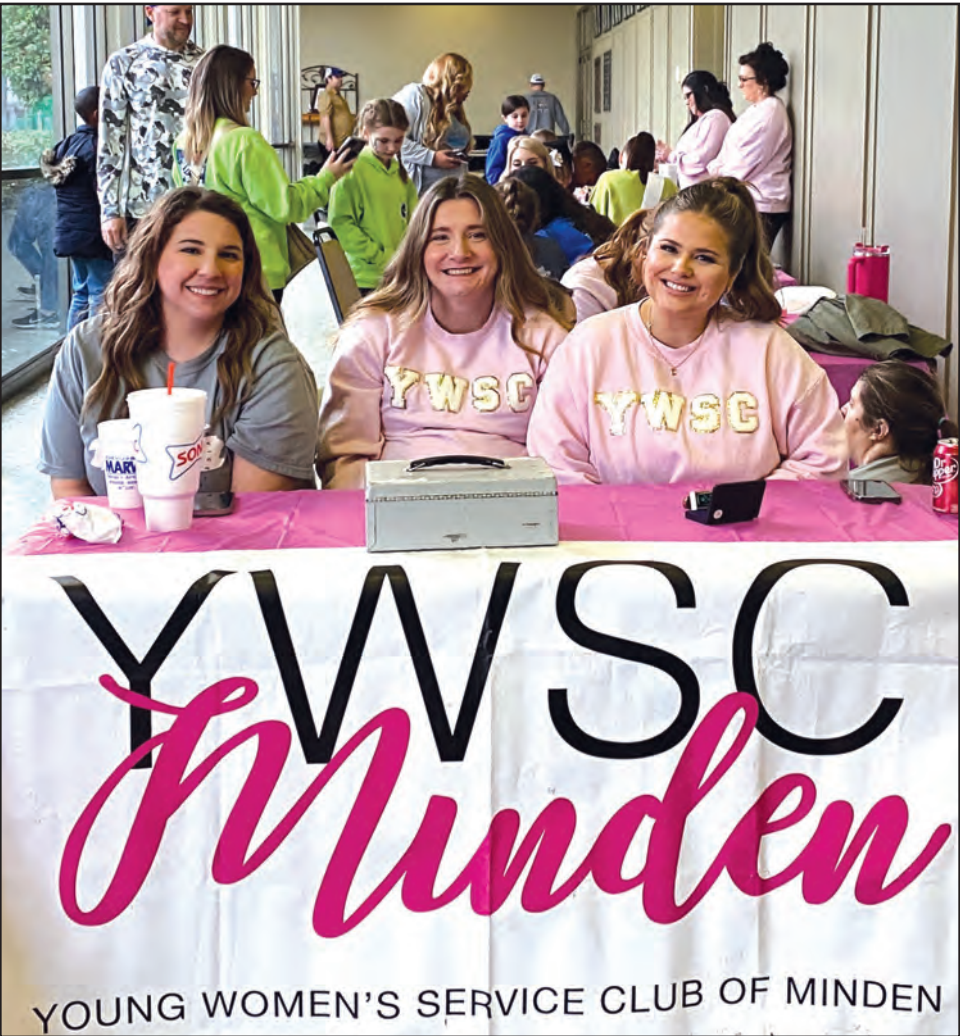
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Celebrating Success:

Dr. Jayda Spillers' first year as NLTCC Chancellor

BY: KELSEY MESHELL - NLTCC

Northwest Louisiana Technical Community College (NLTCC) looks back on a successful year led by Dr. Jayda Spillers, who celebrated her first anniversary as chancellor at the start of the year. Throughout 2023, NLTCC has experienced significant growth and success.

One standout achievement this year was the successful launch of the New Lineman Certification Program in collaboration with AEP SWEPCO. This program has gained significant traction, offering students valuable skills and career opportunities. To support eligible students participating in the program, the Gulf Research Program has awarded NLTCC the Workforce Development for the Energy Transition grant.

In November of 2023, NLTCC also received a grant from the Lumina Foundation's "Tell Your Story" project, which will be used for the design and creation of a school mascot and rural campus signage, which will foster a stronger sense of community and identity.

NLTCC's commitment to community partnerships under Dr. Spillers' leadership is evident in new collaborations between the Automotive Technology program and the Shreveport Fire and Police departments. The partnership aims to increase the pool of qualified automotive technicians within the city departments. Students in the last six months of their training will have the opportunity to work in these city automotive shops that serve the Fire and Police Departments.

In addition to these accomplishments, NLTCC underwent various physical transformations in 2023, with renovations still ongoing at the Shreveport campus. The LPN program has expanded to now include an Asso-



Dr. Jayda Spillers

ciate Degree in Practical Nursing, and the Mansfield campus is one step closer to expanding its nursing wing.

In Fall 2023, NLTCC introduced the Industrial Maintenance Technology Program at both the Mansfield and Shreveport Campuses. This addition of new programs aligns with the college's commitment to providing diverse educational opportunities that meet industry needs.

Another significant milestone for NLTCC was the successful visit from the Council on Occupational Education (COE), paving the way for reaccreditation. NLTCC also achieved reaccreditation with ATMAE for the Industrial Instrumentation & Electrical Technology programs. ATMAE accreditation

plays an important role in ensuring the high quality and industry relevance of NLTCC's programs, which provide the college with recognized credentials that enhance students' career prospects.

To further support its journey, NLTCC has now established a 501(c)(3) charitable foundation to support students' workforce endeavors and other college initiatives. Those interested will be able to donate to the school's foundation online at Nltcc.edu.

In her reflections on these milestone accomplishments, Dr. Spillers has shared her excitement for the upcoming year, expressing her determination to achieve the college's 2030 goals. These goals include producing more student completers, expanding workforce opportunities, growing all programs, taking the next step toward SASCOC accreditation, and providing students with more credentials of value.

To learn more about the college and its programs, visit nltcc.edu or [facebook.com/goNLTCC/](https://www.facebook.com/goNLTCC/).

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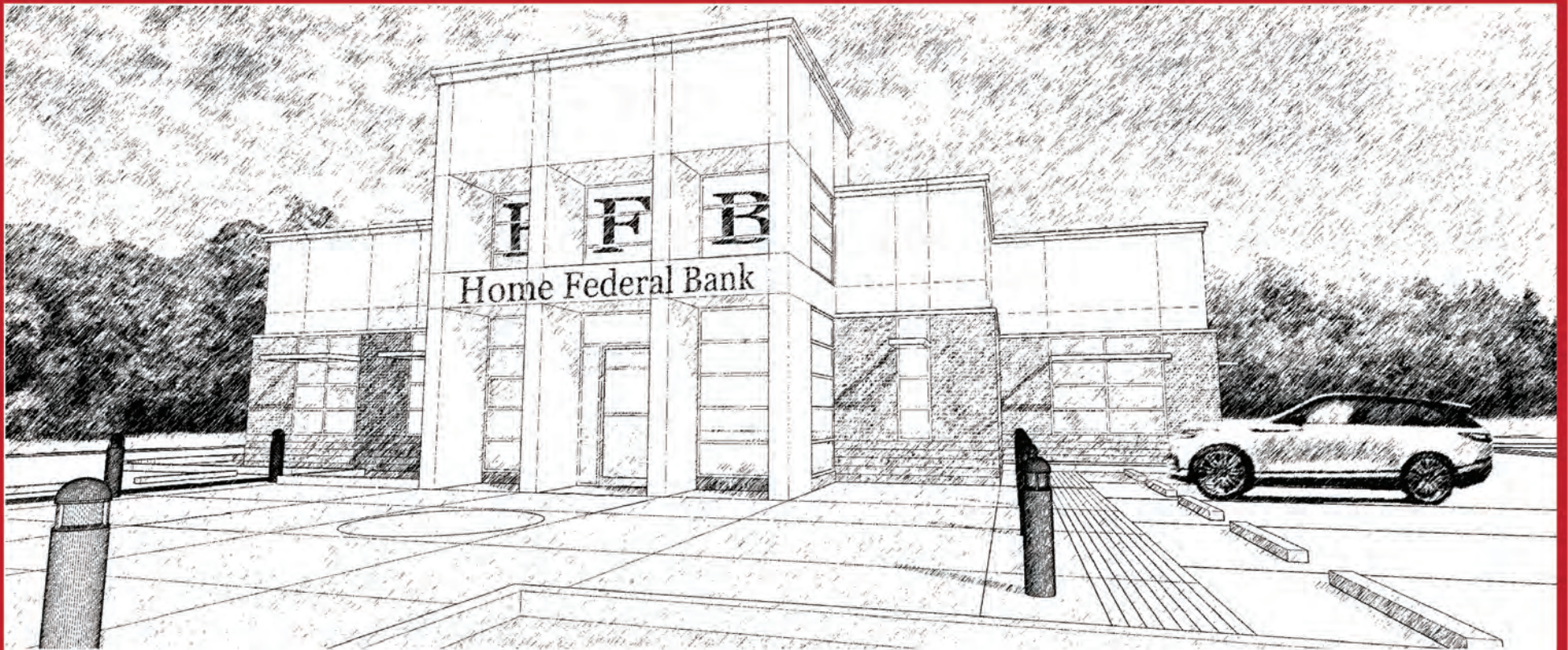
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Home Federal Bank has a strong track record of actively engaging with the local community. This new Minden branch will allow HFB the opportunity to further become an integral part of the community, supporting local schools, events, and initiatives. It is our hope that our involvement will continue to foster a sense of trust and loyalty among the residents of Minden, further solidifying HFB's reputation as a community-oriented bank.

As Home Federal Bank celebrates its 100th year, the opening of the Homer Road branch represents a significant milestone for us. HFB has stood the test of time surviving the Great Depression, WWII, the savings and loan crisis of the 1980's, and the Great Recession of 2008. HFB is the only publicly traded company headquartered in Northwest Louisiana and listed on a major stock exchange. HFB is committed to Northwest Louisiana, Minden and Webster Parish. We enjoy being a part of Minden and cannot wait to be a part of helping build Minden's future.



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GOVERNMENT PROFILE 2024

MAYOR NICK COX TALKS ABOUT PLANS FOR MINDEN MOVING INTO 2024

BY: WILL PHILLIPS - MINDEN PRESS-HERALD

The coming of a new year offers a time to reflect on the year to come and what one wants to see happen during that time. Mayor Nick Cox has been in office for a year now, and given his position has a vision and plan for how he would like to see Minden move forward. He took some time to share his thoughts on projects that he and the city as a whole can look forward to as we get further along in 2024.

One of his main focuses has been that of the consolidation of departments throughout the city into a new public works building.

"Something I'm looking forward to is building the public works building. I'm a builder at heart anyways, and I also apply that love of building to building a community. Building up people, building up teams, and building up structures," said Mayor Cox.

I'm excited because with that building

will be the consolidation of employees. Right now we have the departments spread throughout the city, and this will help us move toward bringing everybody together. It'll also help us by getting our employees out of older buildings that are energy inefficient."

The council voted on this last year, and the city will officially have the project out for bid in a few weeks. He stated that an architect has already designed the facility so, once the council approves a bid, it'll be good to go for construction.

Another project that started last year and is carrying over to this year is that of improving Minden's local animal shelter. The city has attained some funds in order to help with improvements, but are working to create more ways to raise even more money to see the project fully realized. A fundraiser is in the works for later this spring where people can donate to the cause while also taking part

in a fun activity, a Minden pet election.

"What we've got in mind is a pet election. If you love your little doggie, and you want them to be mayor, you can pay a sum of money to get them up on the ballot, with the proceeds going toward the animal shelter," said Mayor Cox.

Essentially, along with a donation, citizens will be able to put their furry friends up for election for various seats in Minden's government such as mayor, chief of police, city council, etc. Others can donate and vote on their favorite pets to win these seats.

As the mayor of Minden, Cox has to be forward thinking when it comes to Minden's opportunities to grow and bring in new people. While it may be something many take for granted, clean running water is a necessary part of being able to build new places for more people to live.

"We've got money in capital outlay from the state to build a water tank and

expand our water capacity by two million gallons," said Mayor Cox. "We've been applying to the state for years, and we just got it passed to a higher priority."

Essentially, the part of Minden that has seen the most growth in recent years is furthest from the area that pumps the highest quality water. This project will allow the city to take one of its best resources and increase how far out it can travel.

These are just a handful of the projects that the city has planned for the upcoming year that have enough groundwork already completed to report on them. There are other projects in the works that will take some more time to develop before they can be officially announced to the public. Regardless, the City of Minden's administration along with its employees are working hand-in-hand doing what they can to make Minden the best it can be for its citizens.



Mayor Nick Cox

LETTER FROM THE MAYOR

I believe it would be quite challenging to find a more wonderful place to call home than Minden, Louisiana. Having been a lifelong resident here, my affection for Minden continues to grow with each passing year. When discussing what makes Minden special, one could easily point to our vibrant calendar of local events and festivals held throughout the year. From the lively Mardi Gras parade in late winter to the festive Tartan Festival in the Spring, the sizzling Grilling on Main event in the summer, and the awesome Christmas in Minden, there are ample opportunities for our citizens and visitors to come together, connect, and relish in the beauty of our city.

Beyond our delightful events, Minden boasts wonderful churches, local eateries, and thriving businesses. However, what truly sets Minden apart is its people—the individuals who have chosen to make this place their home.

In our city, there is a remarkable spirit of generosity and community involvement. Many individuals go above and beyond to initiate fundraisers and charitable initiatives, with countless others readily supporting these noble causes. Minden is renowned for its St. Jude Auction, and this year, we achieved a new record by raising over 2.5 million dollars. We are truly blessed to have so many compassionate individuals willing to lend a helping hand whenever needed.

Under our new city leadership, things are progressing exceptionally well. The relationship between the mayor and council is one of collaboration and compromise, aimed at benefiting the entire city. Additionally, both the police chief and the fire chief have seamlessly integrated into their roles, implementing much-needed updates to their respective departments.

I am pleased to express my optimism about the future of our city. Everywhere I look, I see boundless opportunities for growth and development, and I am confident in the abilities of our community to turn these opportunities into reality.

These are just a few of the reasons, among many others, why I, Nick Cox, Mayor of the City of Minden, proudly call this place my home.

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BY: AMBER MCDOWN - MINDEN PRESS-HERALD

SRT, similar to SWAT, handles all the high-risk warrants and major crimes in the city. Lt. Cheatham, commander of the SRT, already has a list of equipment



"Anytime we've had a major incident here in the city, we've had to call outside the parish to get somebody from either Bossier or DeSoto to come all the way over

"I'm proud of this; I'm proud of the support," said event organizer Keith Jellum. "People do want to help. The community involvement shows that they trust the police officers. And the officers see they can trust that the community wants to see them do well. The better y'all do, the better we do as a community."



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MKT-5894M-A-A1 AECSPAD 21155504

Minden High School welcomes dedicated school resource officers

Ensuring safety and trust in education

BY: AMBER MCDOWN - MINDEN PRESS-HERALD

Minden High School is now benefiting from the presence of two seasoned School Resource Officers (SROs): Officers LaDarrius Joseph and Jemela Freeman. Both officers bring years of law enforcement experience to their roles, fostering a secure and supportive environment for the students.

Officer Joseph's journey began with the Webster Parish Sheriff's Office, followed by his transition to the Minden Police Department. Now in his fourth year as an SRO, Joseph's commitment to safeguarding the school community remains unwavering. Officer Freeman, with prior law enforcement experience in Shreveport and as a former SRO at ALC, brings a wealth of insight to her position.

"I love doing this. I didn't anticipate doing this but, now that I'm in it, I wouldn't do anything else," shared Officer Joseph. "This is where I'm supposed to be; this is where I belong."

Officer Freeman echoes the sentiment: "I feel like the kids can talk to us about anything. We gain their trust, and they can look at us without being like, 'oh, there's the po-po.' Some people have bad judgment about law enforcement and just see us as bad, but being here with us every day lets them learn more about us and we learn about them. They learn to trust us; we build trust."

The officers' day begins with the closure of a section of College Street, redirecting traffic to accommodate the school buses. A brief meeting facilitates situational awareness, paving the way for their patrols. Notably, Minden High School boasts a sprawling campus, necessitating vigilant monitoring.

"We try not to walk together. Now that there's two of us it's better because, God forbid, if anything happens, at least some type of law enforcement presence is closer," emphasized Joseph. "At a certain point, we'll run into each other, and we'll talk for a little bit before continuing walking around the school."

Through both lunch shifts, the officers oversee students in the cafeteria and commons areas. Between shifts, they seize the opportunity to complete daily reports—a vital task that informs the school board monthly.

As the day winds down, the officers deploy a road block on College Street once again to facilitate orderly bus pickups. The year's commencement has been auspicious, with students exhibiting commendable behavior. Officer Joseph remains optimistic about the

future, expressing, "I don't believe that any of these kids are bad. They just need something to do. They need something to occupy their time. If they had that, they'd have less time to do things they shouldn't be doing."

Working in tandem, Officer Joseph and Officer Freeman exemplify a harmonious partnership. "Working with Officer Freeman has been amazing," praised Jo-

seph. "I couldn't ask for a better partner."

The sentiment is reciprocated by Freeman: "He's great. Having a great partner makes the job easier. Having him there is great support to lean on; you become a family. And I've learned a lot from him. He's a wise guy."

The officers share an unwavering commitment to the students, striving to provide protection and guidance. "We

love the kids. We love them like they're our own, so we're going to do the best we can to protect them and guide them," affirmed Freeman.

Minden High School stands fortified by the presence of Officers LaDarrius Joseph and Jemela Freeman, dedicated SROs who exemplify their commitment to the well-being of their students and community.



Officers LaDarrius Joseph and Jemela Freeman



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MINDEN POLICE DEPARTMENT REFLECTS

BY: AMBER MCDOWN - MINDEN PRESS-HERALD

As 2024 commences, Minden Police Chief Jared McIver takes stock of the substantial changes and enhancements implemented within the Minden Police Department during his tenure. After assuming office in early 2023, Chief McIver prioritized a multifaceted approach to elevate the department's professionalism and efficiency.

Among the noteworthy initiatives was the establishment of the deputy chief position to ensure continuous command-level decision-making. Currently, the department boasts two deputy chiefs, Tokia Harrison and Chris Cheatham.

Training emerged as a focal point throughout the year, with officers attending diverse sessions, including the use of less-lethal force. Furthermore, officers transitioned into instructional roles, facilitating knowledge dissemination within the department. A dedicated training room was also added to support officers in staying abreast of evolving practices.

Achieving full staffing levels marked a significant milestone for the department, resulting in the formation of specialized teams to address specific issues. Notable additions include a Special Response Team, Drug Apprehension Response Team,



Minden Police Chief
Jared McIver

two full-time narcotics officers, three detectives (including a juvenile detective), and two School Resource Officers. This expansion led to a restructuring of ranks.

In terms of equipment, substantial upgrades were made, encompassing a new computer system, two drones, updated uniforms and badges, body cameras, firearms, laptop computers for each officer, and additional patrol vehicles.

A standout accomplishment for the year was the successful removal of the TTS and CHS gangs from Minden, significantly enhancing the safety of residents.

Reflecting on the transfor-

mative year, Chief McIver attributed the success to divine guidance and a dedicated team sharing common ambitions. Chief McIver stated, "In 12 months time, the Minden Police Department has advanced beyond my expectations. All credit goes to God. Second, we have a great team that shares the same ambitions and goals and wants to see our department continuously grow. We strive to create a positive work environment that promotes men and women enjoying their job."

With optimism, the Minden Police Department looks forward to sustaining this growth in the upcoming year.

NEW DEPUTY CHIEF LOOKS BACK ON PAST AS SHE PREPARES FOR THE FUTURE

BY: AMBER MCDOWN - MINDEN PRESS-HERALD

After over 13 years of working as the school resource officer (SRO) at Minden High School, Tokia Harrison was recently appointed the position of deputy chief for the Minden Police Department. This is the first time that the Minden Police Department has had a deputy chief, but it was a position that Chief Jared McIver wanted Harrison to fill as soon as he was elected. "She's going to be my right arm," said Chief McIver as soon as the election results were in last November. The position is interim until she passes her final test, but Harrison feels confident that she is prepared to do so.

Working with high school students for so many years has definitely prepared Deputy Chief Harrison for whatever surprises and changes may come.

"I loved going to work every day, even when bad things were going on," said Deputy Chief Harrison. "That's how I know it was my purpose, because I enjoyed it. I built a lot of relationships. It was bittersweet leaving."

"But it definitely prepares you. You learn all the different personalities and different

types of people and circumstances that you'll have to tackle. It also taught me to be even more of a leader. It brought out things in me that I didn't know I had. People will tell me I'm doing great things, but I feel like God is just doing His thing, and I'm just trying to please Him.

"When I get kids who become officers or who in-box me out of the blue and tell me that I really made a change in their lives, it makes what you do go through worth it. And I like to focus on the positive; if you dwell on the positive and you keep your mind set there, you make what your day's going to be. You make how your life's going to go with how you think.

"Another way that being an SRO prepared me is by helping me build relationships with students and their parents. Knowing people helps because they trust you."

Harrison takes her new role very seriously. She wants to learn everything she can to help the department become more professional and to strengthen the trust of the com-



Tokia Harrison

munity. She looks forward to being Chief McIver's right hand and supporting his initiatives for the department. Harrison

wants to find more ways for the community and individuals to interact with the police department in positive ways. She's very open to people giving suggestions or pointing out problems.

"Come in and give your suggestions because it might be something that helps our department," said Harrison. "It might be something we don't know is going on. I want to be someone who listens and who lets people know that they're being heard."

If you want to make a complaint, Harrison will be there to listen to you. "I'm going to get both sides, and I'm going to investigate it. You're going to get a thorough investigation of your complaints, no matter how minor it is. Whatever actions need to be taken will be taken. What can be known will be known, but we have HIPAA." This means that they are not permitted, under federal law, to disclose certain things such as details pertaining to the disciplinary actions taken. "If I can't tell you, I can't tell you. But just trust that it's being handled."

As deputy chief, Harrison

will be available to make decisions when Chief McIver is not, which can speed up how quickly some situations are addressed. She also takes the wellbeing of her fellow officers very seriously, and wants to look out not only for their physical safety but their mental and emotional health as well.

"One of my roles is to make sure that officers are okay, so they can make good decisions in that split second," said Harrison. "You've got a normal level of adrenaline. We're always above that. It takes about 24 hours to reset your body [from an adrenal crash], but we've got to be back to work before that." For this reason, she's always on the lookout for officers who seem to be under additional stress.

When asked what she wants out of this position, Harrison said, "I just want to make my family, especially my daughter and my husband, and my babies [former students] all proud, and give them something to look up to. I want the community to know that I'm going to do the best I can to the best of my ability. I'm here for them. Community is number one. Anytime you need me, you can always reach me."



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EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

Louisiana State Representative McMahan outlines legislative priorities for upcoming sessions

BY: AMBER MCDOWN - MINDEN PRESS-HERALD

In an exclusive interview with the Minden Press-Herald, State Representative Dr. Wayne McMahan shed light on the imminent legislative agenda set to unfold in Baton Rouge. Anticipating a three-week special session closely followed by the regular session, McMahan delineated key topics earmarked for deliberation.

Crime, touted as a paramount concern, tops the legislative docket. "We have a high crime rate across our state and, if you don't have a safe state, it's hard to keep your kids here when they graduate from college," stated McMahan. Governor Landry's past tenure as attorney general augurs well for having a deep understanding of the problems of crime in Louisiana. "I think he understands the issues that we're dealing with in this state."

McMahan anticipates that

lowering the age of criminal responsibility back to 17 years will be one of the topics discussed. In 2016, the law was changed and, at that point, 17-year-olds started being treated as juveniles in the criminal court system. Within the juvenile system, more crimes — especially violent crimes — are committed by 17-year olds than any other age. This legal change has caused the juvenile system to be overwhelmed, without enough spaces to hold these young people. It has also become an additional problem that this age group causes the most problems within the system as well. "Down at Ware [Youth Center], one of the big issues that they've had is that the 17-year-olds are disrupting the facilities and making it hard for them to take care of the 13- to 16-year-olds," said McMahan.

Among the many topics like-



State Representative Dr. Wayne McMahan

ly to be part of these sessions, Representative McMahan hopes to include the management of Louisiana's natural re-

"We have a high crime rate across our state and, if you don't have a safe state, it's hard to keep your kids here when they graduate from college," stated McMahan.

sources, addressing the problem of students reading below grade level, ways to increase availability of healthcare in rural communities, and funding infrastructure repairs and enhancements, especially bridges in rural areas.

Representative McMahan hopes that, as the Louisiana Legislature addresses the many issues they will be handed, they will take a long-term proactive approach rather than just reacting to individual problems. "I look back over the last 40 to

50 years, and I think our state has been reactionary. We react to the issues as they come up, and we very seldom have a long-range goal of how to get our state in a better position."

As the legislative landscape beckons, Representative McMahan exudes optimism, viewing the upcoming term as an opportunity for transformative change. "I'm excited about the next four years. The more I think about it, the more opportunities we have to make our state better."

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An interview with Sheriff Parker

BY: WILL PHILLIPS - MINDEN PRESS-HERALD



In the most recent election, Webster Parish Sheriff Jason Parker was the only Sheriff in the region to run unopposed. In an interview with Parker, the dedication to serving the community shines through his every word, showing why the community is happy to have him continue in his role. "It's important for me to be open to the public," Sheriff Parker emphasizes. "My office and I, we work for the citizens of the parish. They elected me to be here, and being transparent with them, letting them know what's going on in the department, it's important to me."

One of the recent strides towards transparency and effective communication with the community is the appointment of Pat Culverhouse, a seasoned Public Information Officer with extensive experience. "Pat has got a ton of experience. He was the Public Information Officer for Caddo PA's Office for many years as well as the Bossier Parish Police Jury," Sheriff Parker stated.

"I could see that there was a need for us to improve on our social media and outreach to the community. My door is always open anytime people have questions or concerns or having issues out in the parish. We're here for the citizens."

Reflecting on the responsibilities of his role, Sheriff Parker likens it to running a business, emphasizing fiscal responsibility and public safety. "It's like running a business being sheriff," he notes. "You're dealing with a 30 million dollar budget where you're dealing with the taxpayer's money. That's a big responsibility on my part, to be able to utilize that in a way to not only help my office to function, but also keep the citizens safe, as well as my deputies."

Sheriff Parker's commitment to improvement extends beyond community engagement to infrastructural upgrades. "We've been working in conjunction with the police jury, and we've broken ground on the women's facility this past year," he shares. "Hopefully by the middle of this year, we'll be in the construction phase of the building going up.

We're excited to be able to do something like this."

This new facility wouldn't only help local law enforcement, but also agencies

from the surrounding area. "Normally we average around 60 to 65 females. Only about 15 of those are Webster Parish females. We house females for other

local agencies around like Bienville Parish, Claiborne Parish, Red River Parish. A majority of those females are from other agencies that have no way to house them."

The Sheriff also spoke of a new firing range that his office has invested in. This won't only be a benefit to his office and deputies, but to other local law enforcement agencies and citizens as well. The facility, along with getting one of his deputies a training to be a POST certified range instructor, will allow the Sheriff's Office to train officers and citizens alike.

"We are very proud to be able to offer something, not only to the deputies within the department, but also to the citizens," he emphasizes.

"It keeps things in house, it keeps us from having to ask to borrow another range facility from another parish, another agency. We will also be able to assist other agencies inside the parish if they need some assistance in training and re-certifying.

Additionally, the sheriff's office has acquired drones through a state grant, enabling efficient responses to emergencies and enhancing search and rescue capabilities. "If we have a hazmat incident on I-20 or 371 in the parish, instead of sending deputies into harm's way, we can launch that drone to get a survey of the site," said Sheriff Parker. "All done through a grant from the state, so it didn't cost the citizens."

Despite the challenges, Sheriff Parker expresses his dedication to serving the community for years to come. "If the Lord blesses me, I'd love to stay another 12 years," he shares. His active involvement in community activities and his commitment to accessibility distinguish him as a sheriff deeply rooted in his community. "I haven't really slowed down," he says. "I'm actively staying involved with community activities and functions. I can leave this office at lunch every day and go out visiting with folks, letting them know that I care about them, and I think that's what's gonna keep me here."



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Denise Edwards and her staff continue to provide exceptional service to the citizens

BY: WILL PHILLIPS - MINDEN PRESS-HERALD

Denise Edwards, Webster Parish Assessor and her staff of Deputies continue to provide exceptional service to the citizens of Webster Parish. In 2023, Denise again lowered the millage rate of the Assessment District saving the taxpayers another ½ million dollars and bringing the total since she became Assessor to 1.5 million dollars. “We plan to continue to be fiscally responsible and good stewards of taxpayer money and strive to keep the millage rate for our office as low as possible. Our office completed the digitization of old records for attachment to our assessment program for easy reference. We also finished a complete update of our online GIS parcel data throughout the whole parish and purchased a new map printer to begin updating our in-office hanging maps.

We completed an audit of Cell Towers and equipment which resulted in a huge increase in our taxbase of over \$14 million in assessed value. These additional funds will help our law enforcement, schools, fire districts and other taxing bodies. We are continuing to audit Homestead Exemptions to identify parcels which do not qualify but also those that do and have not currently signed up for homestead.

We also plan to continue to our Annual Report to keep our citizens informed and up to date. 2024 is a mandated Reassessment Year which means all property in the



Swearing-in Denise Edwards.

parish must be revalued to its current Fair Market Value. Reassessment will be the main focus of 2024.

Real Estate prices have escalated greatly over the past four years which will increase the Fair Market Value substantially, but I can assure our taxpayers that we are working hard to keep their assessments fair and equitable in accordance with state law,” says Edwards.

The only exemption to this is properties that have a Special Assessment freeze on them. They will remain the same assessed value. If you are at least 65 years old, permanently and totally disabled or a disabled veteran AND have an adjusted gross income of less than \$100,000, you qualify for a Special Assessment Freeze. If you are a disabled veteran, 50% or more, there are additional homestead exemptions that you may qualify for. We want to make sure our taxpayers are aware of any assistance that might be available. Please come by or call our office and we will be happy to help you with this.

“For the last four years under my administration, we have been proud and grateful to provide outstanding resources and services to the citizens of Webster Parish. I assure you that for the next four years we are dedicated to continue on this same path of excellence. Our door is always open! We look forward to serving your assessing needs,” says Edwards.





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SPORTS PROFILE 2024

NEW GLENBROOK REACHES SECOND ROUND OF PLAYOFFS

BY: RUSSELL HEDGES - MINDEN PRESS-HERALD

After a bit of a sluggish start, the Glenbrook Apaches rolled into the second round of the select Division IV playoffs with a 49-12 victory over the Sacred Heart Trojans Friday night at Apache Stadium.

Glenbrook improved to 8-2 Friday's game was Glenbrook's first since the Apaches fell to Homer 38-28 in a hard-fought battle on Oct. 27. Glenbrook lost fumbles on its first two series. But Cade Herron gave the Apaches a spark, scooping up a fumble and sprinting 60 yards for a touchdown.

Easton Sanders passed to Landry Powell for the two-point conversion.

Leading 8-0 at the end of the first quarter, Glenbrook put the game away in the second, outscoring the Trojans 28-6 for a 36-6 halftime lead.

"I thought it was a tremendous team win," Glenbrook Head Coach Reagan Smith said. "After we overcame the initial adversity we kind of got into our groove and put it together as a team and played some really good football."

Powell scored three touchdowns and two two-point conversions. He also recovered a fumble inside the Sacred Heart 10 to set up his final TD, a 5-yard run.

His other touchdowns came on runs of 2 and 52 yards in the second quarter.

"He had a tremendous game," Smith said. "(Chase) Sentell was kind of nursing an ankle (injury) so we used him very sparingly. Landry was able to fill in the gap."

Sentell did make his presence felt. With 15 seconds



Photo by Robert Summerlin
Senior running back Chase Sentell helped Glenbrook defeat Sacred Heart 49-12 in the first round of the 2023 select Division IV playoffs.

left in the first half, he caught a 37-yard pass from Sanders in the back of the end zone. He also set up another score with a long punt return and kept a TD drive alive with a fourth-down catch.

Sanders also had a very good game. After completing passes of 14 yards to Sentell and 12 yards to Powell, he scored on a 1-yard run and then hit Sentell for the two-point conversion, putting the Apaches up 30-6.

Smith also praised tight end Garrett Brown, who had a 54-yard catch on Glenbrook's first touchdown drive.

"Garrett Brown had a helluva game catching the football," Smith said. "He had two or three catches and they were big."

Glenbrook's final TD came on an 11-yard pass from Sanders to Preston Frye.

The defense gave up an 80-yard catch-and-run touchdown in the second quarter. But other than that, the Apaches dominated, getting sacks and other stops behind the line that put the Trojans in some tough situations.

If there was any negative, it was the early fumbles. That's something that has bitten the Apaches this season. It didn't matter Friday, but it could as the competition gets tougher.

"We've talked about how important it is in the grand scheme and outcome of games," Smith said. "I'll look at it this weekend and see if there's some other way I can address and remedy that situation."

"Ultimately it did not impact the outcome of the game. We were able to settle in and play our football and do a really good job and win the game."



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NEW GLENBROOK HEAD COACH SMITH HITS THE GROUND RUNNING

BY: RUSSELL HEDGES - MINDEN PRESS-HERALD

New Glenbrook Head Coach Reagan Smith has been guiding his team through summer workouts for about four weeks now. He said things have gone smoothly so far.

"It's just a really good fit," he said late last week. "The kids are very coachable. They're used to winning. They're learning my way of working out. And it just seems to be going really positively."

Smith was officially named head coach on May 11. The Apaches started summer workouts on June 1.

This is Smith's first head coaching job after a highly successful career as an assistant with stints at North Caddo, Parkway, Logansport, Evangel Christian and West Monroe.

He spent the last four seasons helping North Caddo enjoy unprecedented success.

"I felt like I needed a new challenge," he said. "When I stepped back and analyzed what all had occurred in my career I felt like I needed to try it.

I needed to kind of expand on what I had already done. And I didn't know what that would look like. So far I feel really good about it."

Glenbrook hasn't played 7-on-7 games against outside competition. But the Apaches have competed against each other.

"We probably won't participate in any tournaments," Smith said. "But we have done a little bit with each other and it has been really positive. It's good or better than I expected."

Besides regular workouts, weight training has been at the forefront.


A former offensive line coach, weight training is something that's especially important to Smith, who is an expert in the area.

"That's my thing," he said. "I'm a big weight room guy. But not in a traditional sense. I try to track like what is the latest and greatest in basically strength technology. And so we try to implement things that give us an edge in that respect."





Courtesy Photo
Glenbrook hired Reagan Smith as its new head football coach in May. He led the Apaches to an 8-3 record. (Pictured with AD James Thurman).

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Jacob Brown takes reins of Minden boys basketball

BY: RUSSELL HEDGES - MINDEN PRESS-HERALD

Minden didn't need to look far to find its new head boys basketball coach.

After 14 seasons as the girls head coach, Jacob Brown is taking over the boys program.

He replaces Rennie Bailey, who resigned after seven seasons to become an assistant at Southern University.

Brown is a 1999 graduate of Minden where he was a multi-sport athlete.

In 14 seasons, he posted a record of 242-173. From 2015-19, Minden went 107-27 in four seasons. The Lady Tiders reached the Class 4A quarterfinals in 2018 and the semifinals in 2019. Minden also won the District 1-4A title in the 2018-19 season.

The Lady Tiders have made the playoffs seven of the last eight seasons.

Brown's roots in Minden run deep. His grandfather, the late Clyde "Buster" Carlisle, had a very successful run as the Crimson Tide head coach from 1970-80. He won more than 1,000 games in a legendary 41-year career in Louisiana and Texas.

His mother Debbie and father Teddy are both Minden graduates. His uncle, Randy, Buster's son, was a star basketball player at Minden and a very successful high school coach with seven state championships and almost 1,000 wins to his credit.

Brown coached boys at Webster. While he's enjoyed and had a lot of success coaching girls basketball, he said it's been a goal of his to coach boys at the high school level like his grandfather.

"It's always hard to leave any position you're in, at least the ones I've been in anyway, just because of the investment in the kids that you interact with on a daily basis," he said.

"It was a career goal of mine, not one that I've really tried to rush. But it was a career goal of mine to get back to the boys coach. And yes, my grandfather was the boys coach here at Minden from 1970 to 1980.

"He experienced a lot of success here before he went over to the state of Texas. So for me to have this opportunity is very special for me and my family."

Brown said following in his grandfather's footsteps might seem like a lot of pressure to some. But he sees it as an opportunity and a blessing.

"And being able to sit and talk basketball throughout the years I no doubt feel that he would be thrilled and excited," Brown said.

Brown said he appreciated the faith Robin Tucker, Minden's principal at the time, showed in bringing him to Minden from Webster 14 years ago. And he appreciates the support and trust Becky Wilson, Minden's current principal, has given him.

"You never know what's going to happen when you get in the profession of coaching," he said. "To be honest with you Minden has been really good to me. It's a special place. You never really kind of expect to go back home."

"But it happened early and it happened early for me when I began coaching at Webster Junior High School. And all I kind think of it is opportunity and being blessed. After four years of being at Webster it was an opportunity to go to the high school as a head girls coach. I was blessed. My principal at that time was very proud of me and still is but she always told me it was great to be able to see people grow in that aspect."

Brown doesn't see any big issue transitioning from coaching girls to boys.

"What allows you to win basketball games, first it's about winning young people, winning in the game of life," he said "But yes, we obviously know in the sports aspect of it we're trying to win games."

Brown said it all goes back to fundamentals.

"That's your foundation," he said. "You have to be good at those things. I'm sure when I get back into it — you know, it's been 14 years — I'm sure there are go-



Photo by Robert Summerlin

Jacob Brown became the Minden boys basketball head coach in June after 14 seasons as the girls head coach.

ing to be some details that are different. Ain't no doubt, it's going to be faster.

"But as far as the things that'll allow you to be successful I just think it happens on both sides, boys and girls."

Minden hasn't had a lot of success in boys basketball recently. The Tide play in one of the state's strongest districts. Over the years, District 1-4A has included teams like Bossier, Huntington and Woodlawn which have been state champion contenders year in and year out.

Of course Brown wants Minden to reach that level but he said it's a process.

"Obviously, the ultimate goal is, yeah, the state championship," he said. "I think there is a process and steps you have to take. You have to get in the playoffs to win that state championship. But we're going to take it step by step."

"What really makes that intriguing is that is for years it's been the same way on the girls side. Huntington, Minden, Woodlawn, Benton at times ... You were prepared for that playoff run in

your district.

"Every night you had to be prepared to play. You couldn't let up. And so that'll transition over to the boys."

Brown is excited about the new challenge.

"I've already squeezed in some meetings with the guys and tried to really begin to emphasize what we want to accomplish and try to set a vision and provide expectations as to really what the program expects," he said. "I'm just excited about being able to create a vision for these players and for their vision to align with mine."

For Brown and his family, including wife Rachel Hollingsworth Brown and children Hudson, 15, William, 13, and Anna Beth, 9, Minden has always been a special place, both the town and high school.

"I mean it's just this is all I know," he's said. "Crimson red, columbia blue and white. And I'm just thrilled to be able to lead these young men."

A Great Big

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FORMER MINDEN HIGH AND LOUISIANA TECH STAR L'JARIUS SNEED IS A TWO-TIME SUPER BOWL CHAMPION

Sneed's Kansas City Chiefs defeated the San Francisco 49ers 25-22 in overtime in Super Bowl XLIII Sunday night at Allegiant Stadium.

In four seasons in the NFL, Sneed has played in three Super Bowls. The Chiefs are the first team to win back-to-back titles since the New England Patriots in 2003 and 2004.

Sneed, a cornerback, was credited with two solo and three total tackles along with one pass defended.

The Chiefs sent the game into overtime tied at 19 on a 29-yard field goal by Harrison Butker with 3 seconds left in regulation.

The 49ers took the lead on their first possession on a 27-yard field goal by Jake Moody with 7:22 left in overtime.

Kansas City drove 75 yards in 13 plays for the winning touchdown. Patrick Mahomes completed a 3-yard pass to Mecole Hardman for a walk-off touchdown with 3 seconds left.

Mahomes, who completed 34-of-46

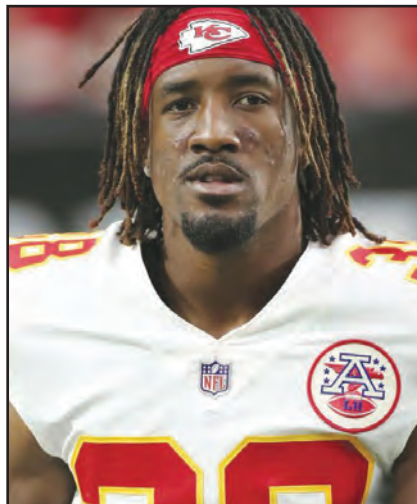
passes for 333 yards and two TDs, was named the Super Bowl MVP.

Sneed finished the full season with 72 solo and 92 total tackles. He had 12 solo and 14 total tackles in the postseason.

If not for Sneed, the Chiefs may not have even made it to the Super Bowl.

He made one of the biggest plays in the Chiefs' 17-10 victory over Baltimore in the AFC Championship Game.

On the first play of the fourth quarter and Baltimore facing a second-and-8 at the Kansas City 9, Lamar Jackson completed a pass to Zay Flowers.



L'Jarius Sneed

Just before Flowers crossed the goalline Sneed slapped the ball out of Flowers' hands. Sneed's teammate Trent McDuffie recovered the ball in the end zone for a touchback.

"He had a step on me," Sneed said in his post game press conference. "All that was in my mind was step up, make the tackle. That's what I did and I see him stretch the ball out and I punched the ball and it came out."

Not only did Sneed, a cornerback, make the big play, he was second on the team in total tackles with 10.

His big play came three plays after

Flowers caught a 54-yard pass against Sneed. He stood over Sneed after the catch and was penalized for taunting.

"I didn't know that he did that," Sneed said. "If I did I would've said something. The guys were telling me he stepped over me."

Sneed said the fact Flowers got behind him motivated him.

"I was kind of mad at myself," he said. "I didn't see him get behind me when I went to safety. I was like next play, mentality."

Sneed said the march to this year's Super Bowl was different than in year's past.

"We had a lot of doubters from the beginning of the season," he said. "They didn't believe in us. The champs at that, they didn't believe in us. We stayed at it. We had a lot of adversity, kept going. Look where we're at now."

Sneed will be a free agent in March. He recently told ESPN he wants to stay with the Chiefs.

Doyline star Harris dominates Class B girls State Track and Field Meet

BY: RUSSELL HEDGES - MINDEN PRESS-HERALD

Doyline junior Izayla Harris won three Class B girls events and finished second in another in the Ochsner LHSAA Outdoor Track & Field State Meet last Thursday at LSU's Bernie Moore Stadium.

Harris successfully defended her titles in the 100-, 200- and 400-meter dashes, setting class records in all three events. She also finished second in the triple jump.

Harris wasn't Doyline's only winner, though. Sophomore Caysten Mingo won the boys javelin.

Harris ran a 12.13 in the 100. The previous record of 12.22 was set by Lauren Myers of Midland in 2002. Harris finished .68 ahead of runner-up Lehr Turner of Florien.

She broke her own record in the 400 with a time of 56.69 seconds. Her previous record was 57.77 set last year. Runner-up Mary Johnson of Lacassine ran a 57.00.

Harris ran a 24.93 in the 200. The previous record of 25.25 was set by Tierra Randle of Simsboro in 2007. She defeated runner-up Krystina Green of Oak Hill by a whopping 1.58 seconds.

Harris was named Outstanding Track Athlete for the second year in a row.

In the triple jump, she went from third to second with a leap of 34 feet, 4 inches on her final attempt.

Episcopal of Acadiana's Irene Kai-



Doyline's Izayla Harris set three Class B records in the 2023 LHSAA Outdoor Track and Field State Meet.

ser, the defending champion, won with a 35-1 on her first attempt. Simsboro's Lauryn Vernon was third with a 34-1.5.

Harris has won seven state titles since winning her first as a seventh-grader in 2019.

Mingo took the javelin with a throw of 159-0. Going into the meet, he had the lowest qualifying distance of 115-3.

Mingo threw 128-10 on his first attempt. He fouled on his next three. On his fifth, he moved into third place with a 136-7.

He then won it on his final throw, which went 22 feet, 5 inches farther than his fifth and more than 30 than his first.

Grace Christian's Tucker McCoy was second with a 152-6.

Doyline freshman Takerria Washington took fourth in the girls 800 in 2:46.89. Anacoco freshman Sophia Swinney won in 2:24.68.

Doyline sophomore Landon Spears was fourth in the boys high jump with a leap of 5-7.75. Holder's Marcus Penalber won with a 5-11.5.

Doyline finished fifth in the team competition, one point behind Midland. Christ Episcopal won with 62.

The Panthers finished tied for 14th with 14 points. Episcopal of Acadiana won with 91, 30 more than runner-up Castor.

Glenbrook sophomore Vivian Still finished fifth in the Class 1A girls 800 in 2:31.65. Louise S. McGehee's Kali Magana won in 12:20.63.

Still only began competing in track in the district meet. She was named the co-MVP on the All-District 1-1A softball team.

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