

Mayor Nick Cox and the Minden City Council are preparing the city for long-term growth. Through strategic planning and community engagement, they are fostering economic development and enhancing the quality of life for all residents. Their collaborative efforts aim to preserve Minden's rich heritage while embracing opportunities for innovation and progress. Thanks to the dedication of the Minden Police Department, led by Chief Jared McIver, and the Minden Fire Department, led by Chief Brian Williams, the city's safety statistics are also strongly headed in the right direction! From our iconic red-brick Main Street to the historic homes in our neighborhoods, you'll find friendly folks with Christian values and a love for outdoor activities. Minden's characteristic charm endures as we continue to grow and evolve. It's a great time to be involved with Minden as we continue to Move Forward Together!



Mayor Nick Cox



Fire Chief Brian Williams



Police Chief Jared McIver



District ACarlton "Buddy"
Myles



District BLevon Charlie
Thomas



District C Latasha Mitchell



District D Michael Roy



District E Andy Pendergrass

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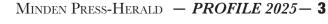
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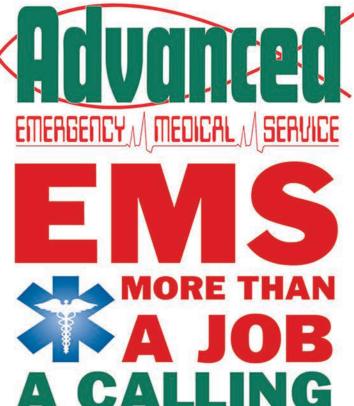
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ECONOMY Profile 2025

THE COLUMNS OF GERMANTOWN A Year of growth, challenges, and community impact

BY: AMBER MCDOWN - MINDEN PRESS-HERALD

hen Jeff Rhodes and his team stepped into their new roles at The Columns of Germantown at the end of 2023, they had little idea what the journey would entail. A year later, the facility has seen significant changes, challenges, and triumphs, with Rhodes leading a dedicated team that now cares for approximately 160 seniors across four locations.

Navigating an Evolving Vision

"Our original vision was to simply make life better for our residents," Rhodes said. 'We wanted to improve the food, activities, and overall experience for our residents in Minden and Bastrop."

However, Rhodes quickly realized that making those improvements required addressing multiple underlying issues. From food service and maintenance to staffing and facility enhancements, each change uncovered further areas requiring attention.

"Our team has provided timely solutions and worked tirelessly to implement the necessary changes," Rhodes added.

Overcoming Challenges

One of the biggest hurdles was improving the quality of meals. Initially, The Columns partnered with a local vendor recommended by area restaurateurs. While the raw ingredients were superior, they soon recognized the need for a supplier specializing in senior care. Ultimately, they partnered with Ben E. Keith, which helped develop a dietician-approved menu. Additional investments in kitchen storage, equipment, and staff training followed, with Rhodes' son, Aaron, playing a key role in streamlining operations.

Another challenge involved years of deferred maintenance, particularly with HVAC systems. The facility required substantial reinvestment, and by the end of 2024, Rhodes estimates the organization will have spent nearly \$1 million improving mechanical systems across its four communities. "Thankfully, we have great relationships with local vendors who have been invaluable in this process," Rhodes noted.

Enhancing Resident Care and Employee Engagement

In Bastrop, The Columns replaced its entire administrative team, while Minden saw staff realignments. Rhodes emphasized the importance of matching employees' strengths to the right roles to improve resident care.

He and his team also conducted oneon-one meetings with residents and families to gather feedback. As a result, new caregiver accountability protocols were introduced, ensuring residents receive consistent, quality care. These efforts have led to better activity programming, improved cleanliness, and enhanced overall morale among staff and residents alike.

"We continue to clean out clutter, implement robust cleaning procedures, and shift from a culture of scarcity to one of empowerment," Rhodes said.

Balancing Financial Sustainability and **Community Investment**

While The Columns initially planned a profit-sharing system for employees, higher-than-anticipated expenses have delayed those efforts. However, Rhodes remains optimistic about future profitability, which will allow for reinvestments into employees and charitable initiatives. Filling the facility's 37 vacant apartments across its four locations remains a priority to ensure financial stability.

Improvements in Cleanliness, Safety, and Dining

The Columns has taken a proactive approach to maintaining a clean and safe environment. New cleaning equipment, updated fire monitoring systems, fiber optic internet, and upgraded resident call systems are just a few of the improvements made in the past year. Additionally, a closed-circuit camera system is planned for common areas to enhance security.

"We've replaced much of the kitchen staff in Bastrop and Minden, improved training, and regularly update menus based on resident feedback," Rhodes said.

Looking Ahead: A Five-Year Vision

With an eye toward the future, The Columns aims to expand operations significantly. Rhodes anticipates a 4x to 5x growth trajectory over the next five years, including acquisitions in Louisiana and

A major goal for Minden is the establishment of a Memory Care Community to provide specialized care for residents with dementia-related conditions. Unlike The Columns' other locations, Minden currently lacks a dedicated memory care facility. Additionally, plans for more independent senior living options are under-

"We love our community and want to provide seniors with a way to age in place," Rhodes said. "Our growth and success will continue to be felt here as we invest in our hometown."

Despite the challenges, Rhodes remains committed to his mission. "It's a privilege, and it's scary as hell some days, but it is incredibly rewarding."

As The Columns of Germantown enters its second year under new leadership, the facility continues to evolve with a focus on resident care, employee engagement, and long-term sustainability. With an ambitious roadmap ahead, Rhodes and his team remain dedicated to their vision of excellence in senior living.

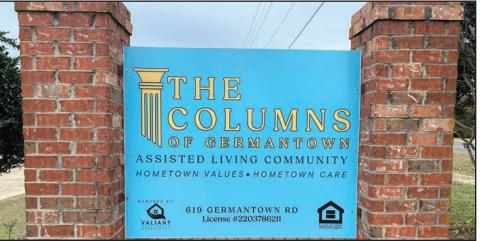
















A new business drives convenience and fun

CHAMPIONSHIP CARTS rolls into Minden

BY: AMBER MCDOWN - MINDEN PRESS-HERALD

new business has recently hit the streets of Minden, bringing convenience and style, located at 448 Hwy 531 in Minden. Championship Carts, the area's newest golf cart dealer, is open and bringing top-of-theline Evolution golf carts to local and neighboring communities. Championship Carts is proud to serve the community with high-quality carts designed for both leisure and utility.

Lance McGuire, owner of Championship Carts, saw an opportunity to bring this new venture to Minden – whether for golfers, businesses, or residents looking for a luxury cart built to fit their needs. "Minden is growing, and I saw the opportunity to bring this business into our community. Championship Carts is here to provide top-tier golf carts that fit every lifestyle, from the golf course to neighborhood streets." McGuire grew up around

dealerships and automotive work. His father, Squeaky McGuire, was the general service manager for Ken Burnham Chevrolet for over 30 years, also serving the Webster Parish community.

In addition to offering high-performance golf carts, Championship Carts has also acquired the Ferris dealership from Mike's Outdoors, moving its operation to their Hwy 531 location. This acquisition will allow Ferris to remain in our community and will continue to provide premium landscaping solutions for homeowners and businesses alike.

Championship Carts takes pride in their service and looks forward to serving you for all your golf cart and lawn care needs. For more information, visit the showroom, social media platforms, or visit their website: championship-carts.com.





Webster Parish Tourism seeking new executive director

BY: AMBER MCDOWN - MINDEN PRESS-HERALD

The Webster Parish Convention & Visitors Commission has announced a job opening for an executive director following the resignation of Serena Grey in

The executive director will be responsible for overseeing daily operations, developing marketing strategies, and fostering partnerships to promote tourism in Webster Parish. Key duties include managing the tourism budget, coordinating media campaigns, organizing events, and enhancing local attractions. A primary focus will be securing funding and overseeing the development of Miller Quarters Park in Minden.

The position requires a background in tourism, marketing, or economic development, with at least three to five years of experience. Applications will be accepted until the position is filled.









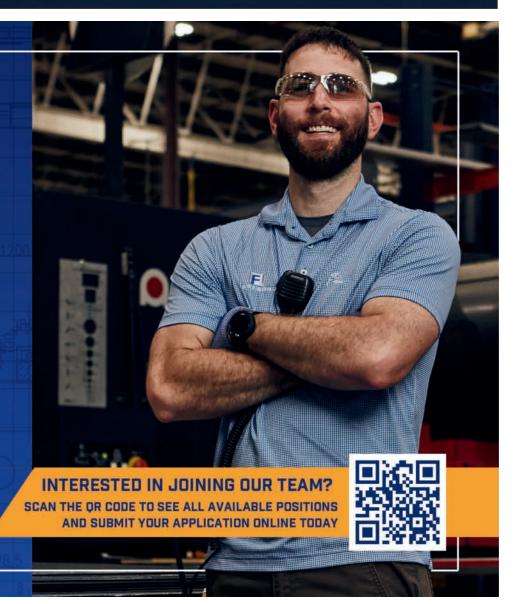


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Fibrebond's multimillion dollar expansion of M3 will be operational in July 2025, expanding production space under roof to 1,000,000 square feet. As demand for Fibrebond products increase and capacity expands, Fibrebond continues to recruit qualified talent to fill needed positions.

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2024 Top Young **Professional** Sarah Overall

BY: WILL PHILLIPS - MINDEN PRESS-HERALD

¬ach year the Greater Mind-┥ en Chamber recognizes fifteen young professionals in the local area who have gone above and beyond in their respective fields as well as for their local community. While all the individuals selected are more than worthy of the recognition, the Chamber is presented with the difficult challenge of choosing one amongst them as the Terry L. Gardner 2024 Top Young Professional of the Year. This year the title was awarded to none other than Sarah Overall.

While she is currently working in Healthcare Quality for Oschner LSU Health Shreveport, her career in healthcare extends far beyond that. She has been in the healthcare field for fourteen years with most of that time spent as a registered nurse working in different communities across the state of Louisiana. She was even recognized as an Outstanding Nurse by Oschner in 2022.

While her career is in healthcare, outside of that she spends her time as a philanthropist, planner, and holiday stylist. She volunteers as a board member for Minden Main Street. She also co-founded the non-profit organization Pearls of Purpose in 2023 to connect women surroundfrom ing communities, build comradery, and support charitable community

endeavors. Her leadership in this organization helped to create the local Witches Ride event, which last year raised \$8,000 for Webster Parish CASA for children's Christmas gifts and birthday parties, and \$4,500 to purchase a book for every 1st grader in the parish.

Shortly after receiving the 2024 Top Professional award, Overall had this to say. "I'm in a room full of wonderful leaders and go-getters in this town. Last year I didn't realize how hard it was going to be to get something going in

Minden, but I had an amazing team of ladies that helped, and with the Mayor's and Chief McIver's support, and everyone else that made that event come to fruition," said Overall.

'I'm honored to be up here, I'm honored to be able to live in this community. I can't wait to see what the future holds for everybody in this room."





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this list to assist in finding a physician.

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MINDEN PRESS-HERALD - PROFILE 2025- 9

MINDEN MEDICAL CENTER UNVEILS **CARDIAC CATHETERIZATION LABORATORY IN** THE HEART & VASCULAR CENTER

"Modernization Enhances Diagnostic Speed, Treatment Precision, and Patient Outcomes"

Date: February 13, 2025 Location: Minden, Louisiana

inden Medical Center proudly announces the completion Lof a comprehensive renovation of its Cardiac Catheterization Laboratory (Cath Lab), marking a significant milestone in advanced cardiovascular care for the community. This modernization represents a major investment in cutting-edge technologies designed to improve patient outcomes, enhance diagnostic accuracy, and streamline procedural efficiency.

"This past year has highlighted the

need for a cath lab investment, and Minden Medical Center has proven its expertise and dedication to meet this need," said Rock Bordelon, CEO of Allegiance Health Management. "By upgrading the cath lab, investing in nuclear medicine equipment, and acquiring advanced ultrasound technology, we are enhancing healthcare delivery for the community. Minden is leading the way of providing Quality Care, Close To Home.

The newly upgraded Cath Lab features the Allura FD20 by Philips, an advanced imaging system that provides high-resolution visuals. This system enables cardiologists to perform precise assessments and interventions with greater accuracy. Additionally, the integration of advanced diagnostic tools facilitates detailed evaluations of coronary physiology and vessel structures, supporting tailored treatment strategies for each patient.

"With the modernization of our cath lab, we're raising the bar for cardiac care in our community," said Keith Cox, CEO of Minden Medical Center. "The new technology allows us to deliver faster diagnoses and more precise treatments, improving outcomes and saving lives."

Our team was excited to begin using the new cath lab on February 10, and our physicians were particularly impressed with the advanced technology," added Cox. "We're committed to continually advancing care to meet the needs of our providers and patients."

Minden Medical Center emphasizes the importance of seeking immediate care during cardiac emergencies. "As always, it's recommended to call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room if you or someone you know experiences a cardiac emergency," Cox advised.

The upgraded facility is now fully op-

erational, ensuring that the cardiology team at MMC Heart & Vascular Center can provide exceptional care close to home. The center offers lifesaving cardiac interventions, such as angioplasty and stent placement, pacemakers and defibrillators, as well as advanced diagnostics and a range of other services.

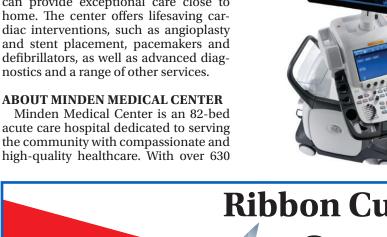
Minden Medical Center is an 82-bed acute care hospital dedicated to serving the community with compassionate and high-quality healthcare. With over 630

healthcare professionals, physicians, and staff, the hospital provides a comprehensive range of services, including cardiac care, a 12-bed intensive care unit, integrated behavioral health services, and 24/7 emergency care.

Minden Medical Center remains

committed to delivering cutting-edge technology and compassionate care to the community. For more information about cardiac services, visit www.mindenmedicalcenter.com.









Minden Medical Center upgrades the Radiology Department with new camera

inden, Louisiana - Minden Medical Center has enhanced its Radiology Department by upgrading to a Discovery NM630 Nuclear Medicine camera.

The primary mission of our department is to provide essential equipment and services that assist in the diagnosis and treatment of numerous patients who depend on local healthcare providers. By selecting the Discovery NM630, we aimed to equip our providers with advanced testing capabilities that facilitate more accurate diagnoses while ensuring patient comfort and peace of mind.

Why might a provider opt for a nuclear medicine image instead of an X-ray? The fundamental distinction lies in the information each provides: an X-ray offers a static image of an organ's structure, while a nuclear medicine test evaluates the organ's functionality. This type of imaging allows for a dynamic assessment of organ performance rather than merely a visual snapshot.

As technology has advanced, so too

The Discovery NM630 is engineered to accommodate a diverse range of patients, with adjustments made to the newly designed table.

has the quality of imaging equipment, resulting in enhanced image resolution while reducing the required dose of radioactive material.

Our new machine can decrease the dose to as low as half of the standard nuclear medicine scanning protocols, all while reducing the time patients spend on the table and producing superior images. The Discovery NM630 provides exceptional levels of care through several key features:

Outstanding Image Quality: The ultra-thin design and auto-body contouring minimize the distance between the patient and the detectors, ensuring outstanding resolution. This design allows for a remarkably high

count rate and precise event detection.

Advanced Applications: This state-of-the-art technology integrates both new and existing nuclear medicine equipment, delivering consistent results and enhancing workflow. It keeps healthcare providers connected to images and applications within our institution.

The Discovery NM630 is engineered to accommodate a diverse range of patients, with adjustments made to the newly designed table. Enhanced image quality is achieved through high positioning accuracy, resulting in precise orbits and reproducible scans.

Setup is expedited with a handheld remote control for commonly used

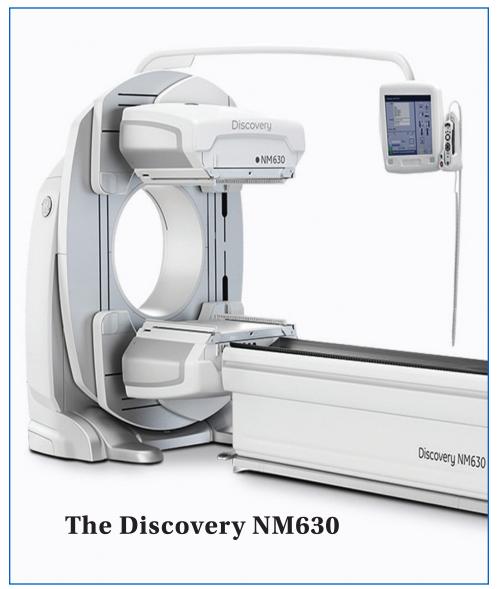
settings, minimizing disruption for the patient.

Accurate information is paramount for healthcare providers, as it directly influences the effectiveness of treatments. The Discovery NM630 incorporates advanced Elite NXT detectors, which deliver exceptional SPECT resolution and contrast for superior image quality, facilitating earlier and more accurate diagnoses. Spot view resolution benefits from ultra-thin, pressure-sensitive detector covers that reduce the distance between the patient and the collimator.

"At Minden Medical Center, we prioritize delivering precise, high-quality information to our providers for accurate identification and diagnosis," states CEO Keith Cox, RN, MBA.

"We remain committed to assessing our equipment needs and making necessary upgrades to support our providers effectively."

Given the increasing demand for this type of testing, we are proactively addressing this need with our new technology.





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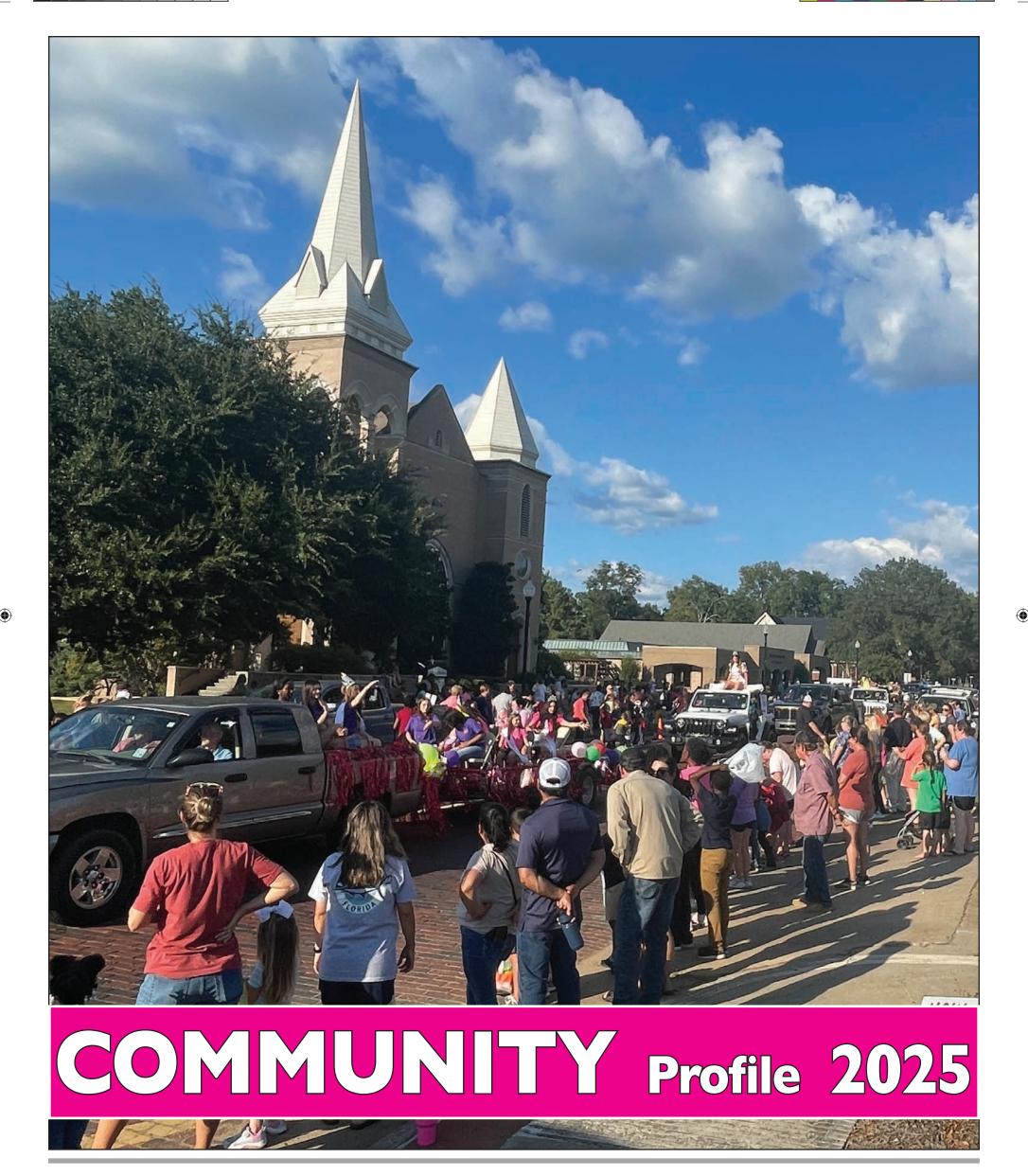
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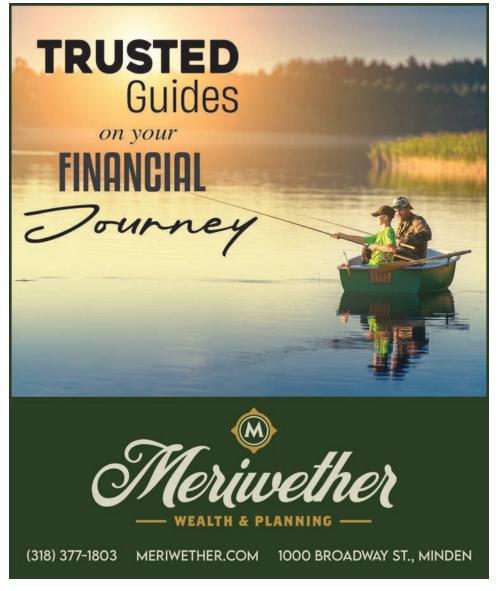
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CHARITY CONCERT BRINGS MUSIC AND HOPE TO MINDEN

BY: WILL PHILLIPS - MINDEN PRESS-HERALD

unday evening, the fundraising event "Stories and Songs from the Road" took place at Corbeau Creek, featuring the legendary Little River Band and vocalist Stephanie Calvert. Much like the name implies, the event combined storytelling and music, as band members shared their experiences of making music together while performing their well-loved songs.

The concert was held to raise funds for Phillip's Cottage, a new nonprofit transitional home for women and their children graduating from the Louisiana Teen Challenge program. The initiative aims to provide a stable and supportive environment for families as they take their next steps toward independence.

"Having Little River Band and Stephanie Calvert in Minden is truly a dream come true. Our town is ripe for amazing music events, and this fundraiser for Phillip's Cottage is just the beginning," said event organizer Sara McDaniel.

The idea for the event was born when Little River Band's lead vocalist, Wayne Nelson, learned about Phillip's Cottage and its mission. Inspired by its purpose, he and his wife, Stephanie Calvert, reached out to McDaniel with the idea of holding a benefit concert.

"We don't get this kind of talent through Minden, Louisiana. Little River Band is legendary, and I am honored they are sharing their talents with our community," said McDaniel.

All proceeds from the concert will go toward Phillip's Cottage to support its mission of assisting women and children who have graduated from the Louisiana Teen Challenge Program. McDaniel expressed her gratitude and excitement about the project's future impact.

"Phillip's Cottage exists to honor the legacy my dad, Philip Carroll, leaves behind. We can't wait to welcome our first mothers and their children later this summer. We are going to break generational curses with this home," she said.

The success of "Stories and Songs from the Road" not only raised crucial funds for Phillip's Cottage but also highlighted Minden's potential to host more high-profile music events in the future.

With an enthusiastic response from the community, this could be the first of many concerts that bring music and positive change to the town.



The Little River Band and singer Stephanie Calvert performed at Corbeau Creek during the "Stories and Songs from the Road" fundraiser on Sunday evening. The event's goal was to raise funds for Phillip's Cottage, a new transitional home for women and children graduating from the Louisiana Teen Challenge program.



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Miss Minden 2025 Milah Pollard inspires community with Share a S.M.I.L.E.

BY: AMBER MCDOWN - MINDEN PRESS-HERALD

initiative

ilah Lear Pollard, a junior social work major at Northwestern State University, was crowned Miss Minden 2025 on January 18. Originally from Jackson, Mississip-pi, Pollard has spent most of her life in Shreveport and now resides in Benton, Louisiana. With aspirations beyond pageantry, she plans to graduate next year, pursue a master's degree at Jackson State University, and begin a career as a high school social work counselor.

Pollard's journey to the Miss Minden crown began with a phone call from her former director, Mr. Baker, who encouraged her to compete. After witnessing the work of her predecessor, she was inspired to represent Minden, a city known for its rich history and vibrant culture.

"I'm grateful for that call because it gave me the opportunity to connect with this wonderful community and strive to leave a meaningful impact," Pollard said.

Pollard credits her aunt, Monica, as her greatest inspiration. A former pageant queen herself, holding titles such as Miss Hospitality and Miss Jackson State University in 2003, Monica has instilled in Pollard the importance of dedication, positivity, and community

"She has taught me to give 110% to whatever I do, maintain a positive attitude, and use my God-given gifts to serve my community," Pollard shared.

One of Pollard's most memorable moments as Miss Minden so far was seeing her grandmother's excitement about her feature in the Minden Press-Herald.

"She eagerly awaited the newspaper's arrival and even considered driving to Minden to get a copy when it was delayed. Hearing her excitement reminded me how much this opportunity means



to my family and the strong support they provide," she said.

Pollard's community initiative, Share A S.M.I.L.E., is an acronym for Sacrifice, Mission, Inclusion, Love, and Encouragement. idea was born out of prayer and a desire to bring positivity to those in need.

"Recognizing the struggles many people face, I wanted to use my gifts to make a positive impact," Pollard said. "Through this reflection, I developed Share A S.M.I.L.E., which al-

lows me to bring positive change to my community and beyond."

To promote her initiative, Pollard has launched "Encouragement of the Week' messages on Instagram Reels, where she shares uplifting content and challenges viewers to spread kindness.

The positive feedback has been overwhelming, with many people reposting the videos to spread the message. I'm excited to continue growing this platform and inspiring others!" she said.

Pollard believes that every person has

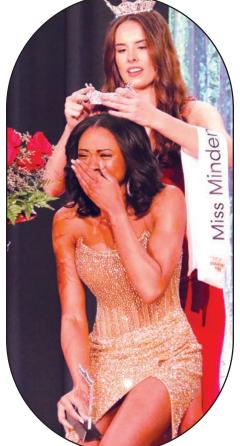
unique gifts that can be used to serve the community.

"I want to encourage individuals to serve with the gifts they have been given. Every person is passionate about something, and that passion can be used to uplift the broken and build the community. In every act of kindness, I encourage people to smile, knowing it may inspire others to do the same," she explained.

Pollard has experienced firsthand how a simple smile can transform a situation. During her first Miss Louisiana competition, she felt nervous about the different phases of the event. However, moments of laughter shared with fellow contestants helped ease her anxiety.

"Our photographer, Steven Palowsky, played a key role by creating joyful







moments-every time he took out his camera, smiles naturally followed," she recalled. "Those moments helped me relax and contributed to a wonderful experience."

For those looking to support her mission, Pollard encourages individuals to start with what they are passionate

"Find what you are passionate about and start there with serving the community. Not every person you come in contact with will share their struggles with you, but if you choose to treat everyone with kindness and serve with a smile, you can be sure that someone will reap the benefit and be encouraged to share their smile, too," she said.

As Pollard prepares for the Miss Louisiana competition, she remains committed to making a difference in Minden and beyond, one smile at a time.









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PROJECT RECLAIM EXPANDS SERVICES, REPORTS STRONG IMPACT

roject Reclaim, a local nonprofit, continues to make a significant impact in the community, Executive Director Ron Anderson has reported. The organization provides math, reading, and creative activities for youth and their parents or guardians, equipping them with tools for success.

Project Reclaim offers various programs, including a youth leadership program, life skills classes, court life skills, and parenting classes. Over the past



year, the organization has served 487 youth and adults across seven parishes with just one full-time and one part-time employee.

We do homework assistance, tutoring, Project Reclaim TV, leadership training, we go on field trips, and it doesn't cost a dime; we raise money and write grants to do all of that," Anderson said.

Anderson emphasized the organization's mission-driven approach. "When you're doing this for the right reasons when it's really about service to others - that's how you can make that kind of impact with just one full-time employee, one part-time employee, and a handful of contractors," he said.

For the 2023-2024 period, 100% of youth in the afterschool program remained free from pregnancy, 100% stayed in school, 100% advanced to the next grade, and 100% avoided juvenile court involvement.

Project Reclaim has expanded its parenting class, "Raising Winners," to Ouachita, Red River, Bossier, and Natchitoches parishes using a grant from the Louisiana Children's Trust Fund. The organization served 207 parents last year.

"Let's reach those parents early in their parenting experience and teach them about the importance of rules, boundaries, and structure," Anderson said. "Just because you correct them doesn't mean that you don't love them. It means that you do love them, and you want them to do better and be better."

He emphasized the need for these classes in prenatal clinics. "We really need to have these classes in prenatal clinics, before the kids even get here," he

Project Reclaim also received a grant from the Louisiana Youth for Excellence (LYFE) program, which promotes positive youth development and raises awareness of consequences for atrisk behaviors. As part of this initiative, the Sexual Risk Avoidance Education program teaches youth about setting healthy boundaries, goal setting, selfworth, and decision-making skills. The program serves two age groups: 5th-8th grade and 8th-12th grade, offering incentives for participation.

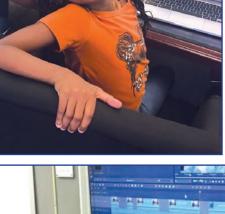
Zaria Stephens, the program coordinator, highlighted the importance of early education. "They're learning about peer pressure and refusal skills," she said, adding that the program should begin at even younger ages.

LYFE Executive Director Amanda Shackelford recently visited Project Reclaim and praised its efforts. "This exceeds my expectations," she said. "This













New mural installed for Miller Quarters Park

BY: AMBER MCDOWN - MINDEN PRESS-HERALD

vibrant mural now adorns a wall on Lee Street between Sheppard Street and Broadway, adjacent to Miller Quarters Park, as part of a collaborative project between the Webster Parish Convention and Visitors Commission (CVC) and Louisiana Tech University's School of Design.

The mural, completed last weekend, was designed by Louisiana Tech seniors Ellie Puljak and Paige Thomas. Both students were enrolled in the university's Fall 2024 Identity Systems Design class,

which offered them the opportunity to create a visual identity for Miller Quarters Park. Their branding concepts were selected for implementation by the CVC.

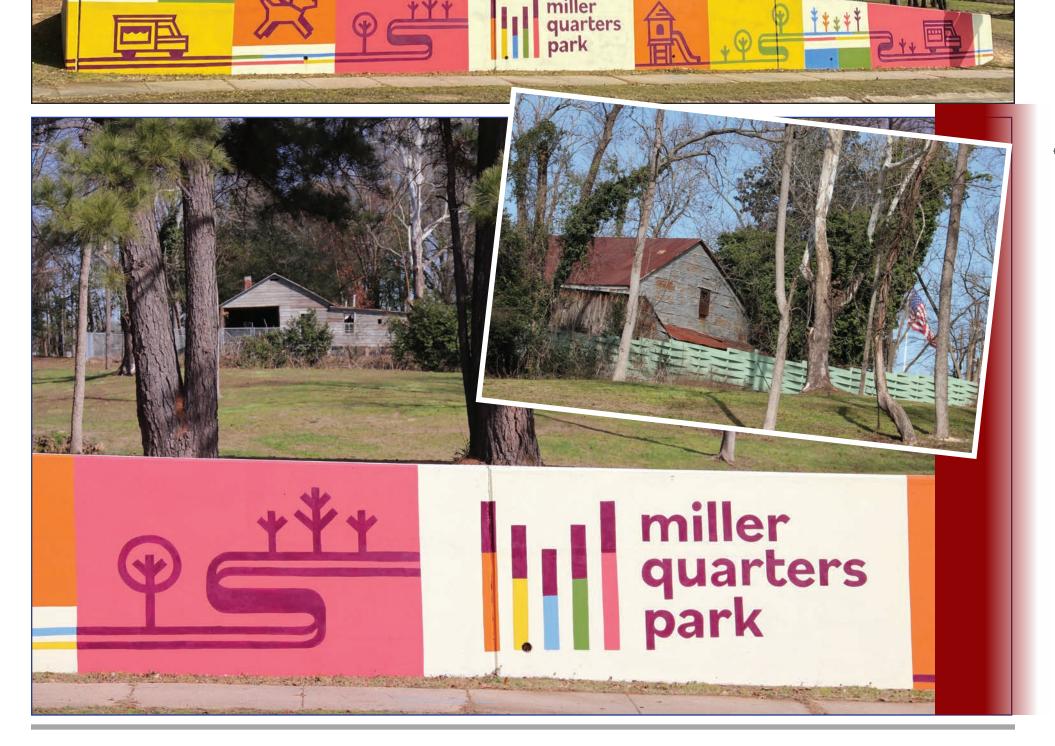
The mural serves as a key component of the park's branding, fulfilling a request from local tourism officials. Puljak and Thomas developed the mural design based on the branding they originally created for the park.

Students from Louisiana Tech's School of Design previously played a role in the park's development,

creating preliminary plans that professional architects later adapted. The finalized plans were shared with the public during the summer of 2023.

The mural's installation was a team effort, involving Puljak, Thomas, and several contributors, including Jennifer Heard, Kayla Martin, Rachel Miller, Patrick Miller, Lela Margaret Miller, and Treat Miller.

The addition of the mural reflects ongoing efforts to enhance the visual appeal of Miller Quarters Park and its surrounding area, further solidifying the park as a community focal point.













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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.

Reflecting on 50 years of the Minden St. Jude Auction

BY: WILL PHILLIPS - MINDEN PRESS-HERALD

he Minden St. Jude Auction has been a cornerstone of generosity and community spirit for half a century. Beginning as a humble one-day radiothon in 1976, the event has grown into a multi-day spectacle broadcast on radio, television, and the internet. What started with modest ambitions has evolved into a powerhouse of fundraising, raising millions of dollars for St. Jude Children's Research Hospital. As the auction celebrates its 50th anniversary, it's worth revisiting the incredible journey that has made it a cherished tradition.

The origins of the auction trace back to 1976, when Pete and Pam Treat, along with KASO Radio, Digger O'Dell Bo Cook, and a group of friends and family, organized the first event. "Anne Treat, the daughter of Peter and Pam Treat was diagnosed with leukemia and was treated at St. Jude's in Memphis. Sadly she passed away in 1977. Howev-

er, her father, because he felt he owed so much back to the hospital, began the Minden Auction in 1976," said Melissa Brown, one of the event's organizers. Their heartfelt efforts raised \$10,000 in the first year, a sum that exceeded their expectations.

Throughout the 1970s, the auction maintained its format as a radio-driven event. The 1980s, however, marked a pivotal shift with the advent of television broadcasting. "The 80s brought us into the world of cable and multi-channels on our television sets," said Brown. "We began to broadcast over the local cable channel, expanded to multiple days, and incorporated raffles. Everything was still done on paper at this point."

The 1990s ushered in the computer age, revolutionizing how the auction operated. Thanks to Kenneth Greer's

■ CONTINUED ON PAGE 25







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■ CONTINUED FROM PAGE 24

programming expertise, a database and software system were developed to streamline operations. The event also grew to three days, incorporating chili cook offs and other activities to engage the community further.

The turn of the century brought even more advancements. Live audio and video streaming allowed the auction to reach a global audience, while the introduction of a dedicated website and computerized phone systems transformed its logistical backbone. "We had gone from mountains of paper to a minuscule amount," Brown explained. Sponsorships and t-shirt sales added new revenue streams, with t-shirt sales alone bringing in \$40,000 to \$50,000 annually.

The auction's impact has been staggering. In 2024, it raised a record \$2,538,444, cementing Minden's status as the largest per capita donor to St. Jude. Over 50 years, the auction has contributed more than \$30 million to the hospital. Schools in the parish have played a significant role, collectively raising over \$200,000 in recent years. Laura Hollingsworth, another of the event's key organizers, noted the enthusiasm of younger generations: "We have some 3rd generation volunteers bringing in their dollars to support the auction. Our area takes great pride in

the continued success of MSJ."

The ultimate goal of the Minden St. Jude Auction, however, is to render it-

self unnecessary. As Hollingsworth eloquently put it, "We work toward the day that childhood cancer can be cured

and St. Jude can close its doors forever." Until then, the Minden community remains steadfast in its commitment





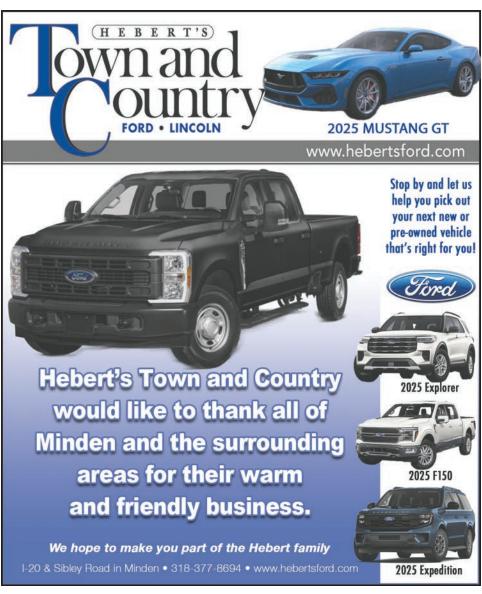


ST. JUDE CHILI COOK-OFF









ST. JUDE CHILI COOK-OFF ▼



















Minden Press-Herald - *Profile 2025*-**27**

ST. JUDE TELETHON \(\neq\)

he Minden St. Jude Auction has been a cornerstone of generosity and community spirit for half a century. Beginning as a humble one-day radiothon in 1976, the event has grown into a multiday spectacle broadcast on radio, television, and the internet. What started with modest ambitions has evolved into a powerhouse of fundraising, raising millions of dollars for St. Jude Children's Research Hospital. As the auction celebrates its 50th anniversary, it's worth revisiting the incredible journey that has made it a cherished tradition.

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BY: WILL PHILLIPS - MINDEN PRESS-HERALD

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The ultimate goal of the Minden St. Jude Auction, however, is to render itself unnecessary. As Hollingsworth eloquently put it, "We work toward the day that childhood cancer can be cured and St. Jude can close its doors forever." Until then, the Minden community remains steadfast in its commitment to Danny Thomas' dream: ensuring no family ever receives a bill for treatment, travel, housing, or food. Here's to another 50 years of hope, generosity, and making a difference.



ST. JUDE RUN ▼







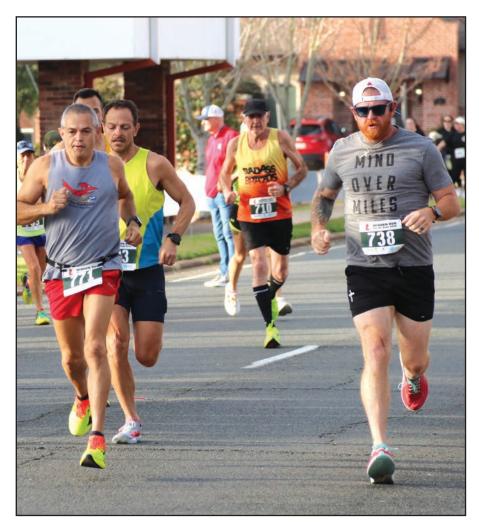






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ST. JUDE RUN 🔻











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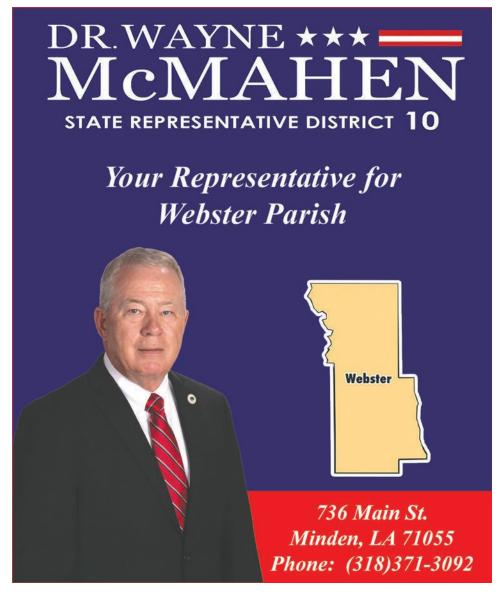


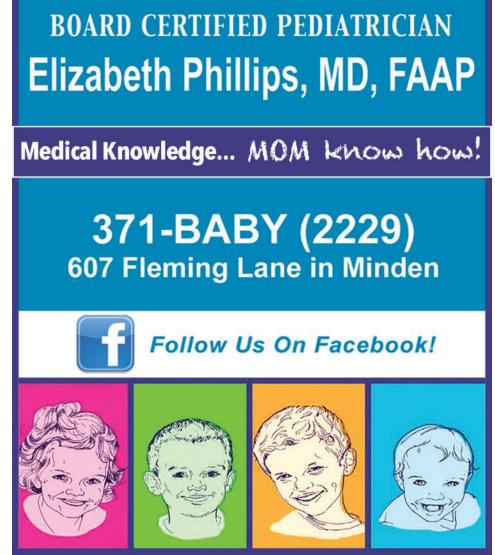
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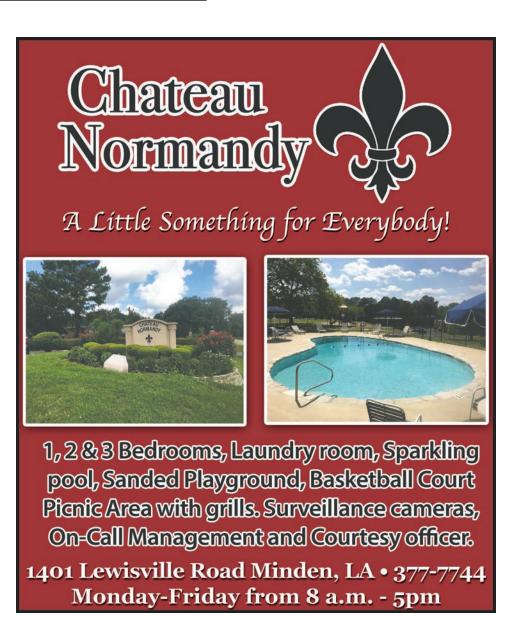
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BY: WILL PHILLIPS - MINDEN PRESS-HERALD

he City of Minden has officially named Molly Fowler, the former interim airport manager, as its official airport manager, marking a new chapter for the city and the Minden Airport. With a five-year career in aviation and a re-

cent degree in Aviation Management earned in the fall of 2024, Fowler brings a wealth of experience and a clear vision for the airport's future.

"The airport's top priorities for 2025 are continuing growth and development, increasing traffic, and supporting tourism to Minden," said Fowler. Her plans align with the city's broader goals of bolstering economic activity and solidifying Minden Airport's

role as a vital community hub.

One of Fowler's first major initiatives is the construction of two new box hangars at the airport. "These hangars will be a great addition to our growing airport and allow us to house more aircraft," she said. The

project aims to increase the amount of available space for the airport to house aircrafts, further bolstering the economic impact the airport will have.

Beyond infrastructure, the airport is also looking to continue to

engage with the local community. "We plan to host our annual Fly-In and Car Show this fall. This is one of my favorite airport events. It is a great way to get our community together and learn about our airport," she shared. The event is expected to

draw aviation enthusiasts and local residents alike, fostering a deeper connection between the airport and the community it serves.

Fowler's appointment comes at a time of growth and opportunity for the Minden Airport. Her leadership promises to enhance its development while strengthening its role as a gateway for tourism and business in the region.

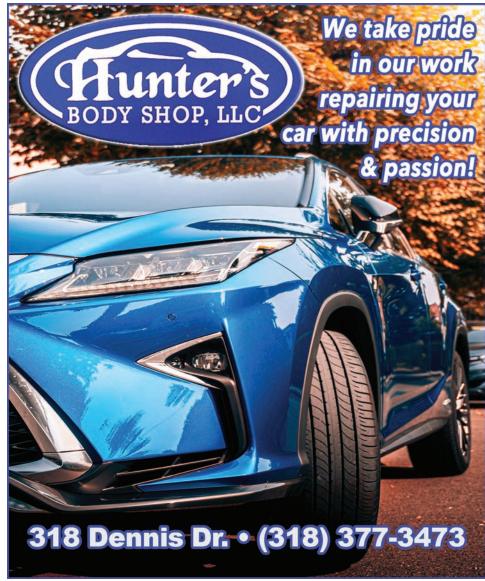
Minden Airport













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Senator Adam Bass highlights legislative progress at Lions Club meeting

BY: AMBER MCDOWN - MINDEN PRESS-HERALD

enator Adam Bass of District 36 addressed the Lions Club on Thursday, January 16, sharing updates on his first year as a Louisiana state senator. Bass discussed legislative sessions held in 2024, which included one regular session, one organizational session, and three special sessions.

"We've spent more time in Baton Rouge in session — between the regular sessions and the special sessions — during the last year than any other year in history," Bass said.

REDISTRICTING EFFORTS

The year began with a January 2024 session on redistricting, prompted by judicial orders to revise congressional and state supreme court districts. A new minority-majority district was created, stretching from Shreveport to Baton Rouge, though it remains under judicial review. Bass expressed concerns about redistricting for the

state supreme court, stating, "I would like to keep north Louisiana where we have a voice on the supreme court."

ADDRESSING CRIME

The first special session focused on crime, with measures targeting Louisiana's high violent crime rates in cities like Baton Rouge, Shreveport, and New Orleans. Legislators created Troop NOLA for the state police and passed laws allowing 17-year-olds to be tried as adults. Additionally, constitutional carry legislation and a "truth in sentencing" law were enacted.

INSURANCE AND TAX REFORMS

The regular session emphasized insurance reform. Reforms aimed at attracting re-insurers have already garnered interest, according to Bass. However, auto insurance reform remains a challenge. A bill promoting lawsuit transparency was vetoed by



Senator Adam Bass



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Governor Jeff Landry.

Tax reform was a focal point of the fourth session. Legislators approved a flat 3% personal income tax and reduced corporate income tax to 5.5%. Parishes were granted the option to eliminate the inventory tax and pass permanent teacher pay raises. Constitutional amendments on these measures will be on the March ballot.

ADDITIONAL LEGISLATION

Bass highlighted his first bill, the Baby Box Bill, which provides safe, anonymous locations for mothers to surrender newborns. Other notable efforts include legislation for posting the Ten Commandments in classrooms, which is tied up in court, and a bill for educational savings accounts still in progress.

Lithium deposits in Webster Parish also garnered attention. Bass noted a unique revenue split, with 50% of proceeds directed to local entities.

Questions or concerns regarding District 36 can be addressed via email to Senator Bass at sen36@legis.la.gov.

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WPSB RECOGNIZES FIRST GRADUATE OF REACH UNIVERSITY PROGRAM

BY: AMBER MCDOWN - MINDEN PRESS-HERALD

The Webster Parish School Board (WPSB) recognized Nina Willis as the first graduate from the district to complete a degree through Reach University during its regular meeting on February 3.

"Webster Parish has partnered with Reach University to help paras become teachers," said Dr. Wilson, WPSB personnel director. "This is a grow-yourown program here in Webster Parish. We have 14 paras who are working on their bachelor's degrees through Reach University."

Webster Parish funds the monthly tuition for participants, who earn credit for their classroom work while completing coursework and observations.

"We are using this as a major recruitment tool, and I'm so proud of what's happening," Wilson said. "We're going to be doing a bigger push to help our bus drivers, substitutes, and secretaries who are interested in getting their bachelor's

degrees. Because they work for Webster Parish, we can help them."

Willis, a longtime paraprofessional with WPSB, most recently worked at Phillips Elementary before earning her bachelor's degree in liberal arts last May.

"Immediately, Mr. Lee, the principal of Central Elementary, said, 'I want her. I know what she can do," Wilson said.

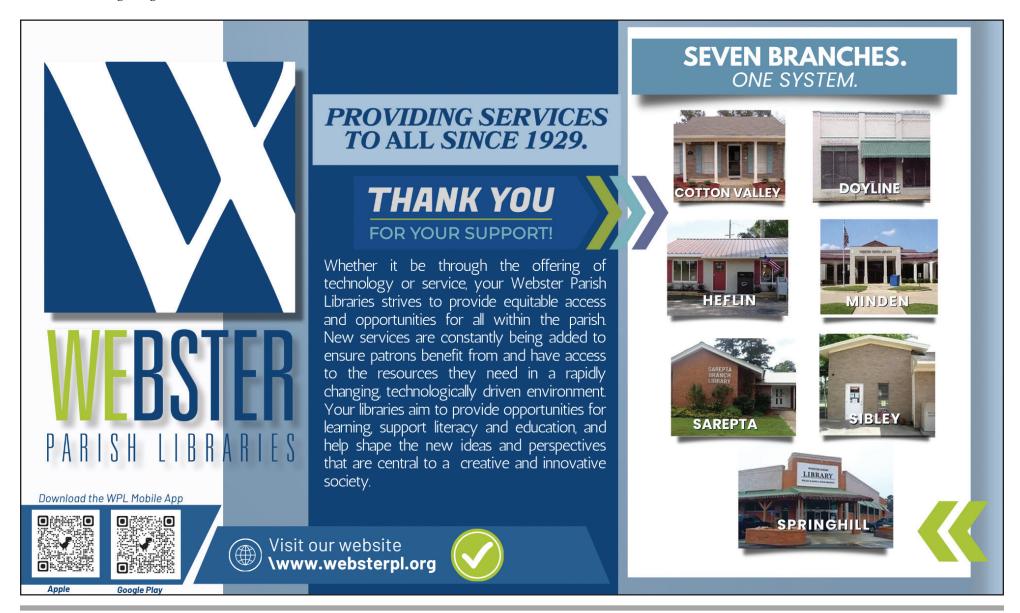
Central Elementary Principal Lee praised Willis' experience and dedication.

"Paras are often the unsung heroes, especially when it comes to special education. Even though they don't have the degree, they're doing the work," Lee said. "I knew Ms. Willis by reputation. I knew she had a lot of experience. We've been very pleased with her at Central. She's been an outstanding teacher, and she has a great future ahead of her."

For more information on the program, contact Dr. Wilson at the school board offices.



Nina Willis





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Kimberly Reagan, MD **Pediatrics**

Danielle Thomas, MD

Family Medicine

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Minden Mayor Nick Cox advocates for city projects during Washington, D.C. visit

BY: WILL PHILLIPS - MINDEN PRESS-HERALD

inden Mayor Nick Cox along with Councilmen Buddy Myles, Michael Roy, and Andy Pendergrass recently traveled to Washington D.C. with a clear mission: to raise awareness about the City of Minden's key projects and to garner federal support for them. During their visit, they engaged with many federal agencies, including the Department of Transportation, Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, Economic Development Administration, Delta Regional Authority, and Department of Housing and Urban Development to pitch their projects for Minden. They also met with representatives from the offices of Speaker Mike Johnson, Senator John Kennedy, and Senator Bill Cassidy.

The primary goal of the trip was to advocate for funding and support for several vital infrastructure projects:

MILLER QUARTER'S WATER TRUNK REPLACEMENT PROJECT – Seeking nearly \$2.5 million to replace a century-old water main that connects downtown Minden's elevated water tank to the city's water treatment plant. The project will enhance the city's water distribution network, supporting over 11,000 residents and nearly 400 businesses.

MAIN STREET WATER TRUNK RE-

MAIN STREET WATER TRUNK RE-PLACEMENT PROJECt - Requesting more than \$1.96 million to upgrade a critical water main, improving resiliency in the water distribution system.

LEWISVILLE ROAD TO METHOD-IST CAMP CONNECTOR PROJECT - A \$6.4 million investment to construct a new road, enhancing airport accessibility and reducing traffic congestion near Glenbrook School.

SHEPPARD STREET MULTIMODAL TRANSPORTATION PROJECT - Seeking approximately \$343,000 for a new sidewalk to improve pedestrian safety and connectivity in a low-income residential area.

ROBERTSON LIFT STATION RE-PLACEMENT PROJECT - A \$1.15 million initiative to replace an aging lift station, ensuring reliable wastewater management.

WATER QUALITY CLEANUP AND RESILIENCE PROJECT - Louisiana Tech University and Sparta Foundation Inc. are leading a \$16.6 million project to combat environmental contamination affecting the Sparta Aquifer, a crucial water source for Northern Louisiana.

The team traveled to D.C. as part of Louisiana takeover week. "Because it was Louisiana takeover week, there were little breakout groups all over the Hilton Hotel, where suites would be rented and people from different Louisiana cities



Mayor Nick Cox

and regions," said Cox. He stressed the importance of these networking opportunities, stating, "We met with a lot of people. I'm just telling you that a lot of people maybe wouldn't get the

value of it, but there's no price tag you can put on networking. That's how the cookie crumbles. That's how the eggs are scrambled."

Something else
Cox emphasized
was the significance of Speaker
Mike Johnson's
familiarity with
Minden. "When in
our history as a city
has the Speaker of the
House known the mayor's name?" Cox remarked

"The number three in the free world knows the City of Minden and knows a good bit of the people too. What an opportunity. If there's ever been a time that Minden needs to find its way in DC, it's now."

Mayor Cox's trip to Washington D.C. was not just about meetings and presentations; it was also about making meaningful connections. During a meeting with the Economic Development

Administration, Cox was surprised to discover a unique link to Minden.

"My name is Angela
Ewell Madison, and
my grandfather was
John Ewell. Ewell
Park was named after my grandfather.
I spent every summer growing up at
my grandparent's
house in Minden,"
Cox recalled her saying. "That was a pretty
neat experience."

Reflecting on the value of the connections made, Cox shared, "I was in the airplane flying over all these cities and towns on the way home and it got me thinking. All these towns and cities and these federal agencies took time for Minden and made us

feel like we were important, cared about our needs, and helped us make connections. It's humbling."

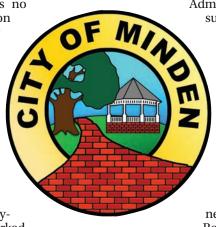
Mayor Cox also learned valuable insights about navigating the complex federal funding landscape. "So the way it works up there is like you may meet with 12 federal departments. All 12 of them have funding, and all 12 of them might want to fund your project or they might not," Cox explained. He emphasized the importance of persistence and strategic planning, saying, "You can pitch the same projects to 12 different agencies and there are layers under those agencies. There are like 490 federal departments right now. There's a ton of them. So you identify what projects you have and try to find a federal agency that could help you."

One key takeaway was the concept of the "capital stack," which involves securing partial funding from one agency before approaching others to complete the financial package. "Probably the best thing that I learned, the whole trip as far as from a very practical standpoint, was a term that I had never really thought about. They really like it when you get like half of your project funded by one agency, and then you go to the other agency and layer your project. They call it the capital stack," said Cox.

Mayor Cox understands that success in Washington D.C. is not instant but rather the result of patience and persistence. "In this situation, you plant seeds, you let them sit there and germinate, then you get some sprouts, then you might get a plant. Then if it's good and it really grows, you might get a fruit. That's kind of how this is. It's not like we went down there and brought back pocketfuls of cash. It takes a long time for these things to materialize, but we planted the seeds and we're going to try and get these trees to grow," said Cox.

Reflecting on the overall impact of the visit, Cox concluded, "I can tell you, from Baton Rouge to Washington, DC, people are more and more knowing that Minden, Louisiana, exists. That's half the battle. I can guarantee you who doesn't get anything, the ones that never show up."

Mayor Cox's proactive approach and strategic networking efforts have laid a solid foundation for Minden's growth and development. His visit to Washington D.C. has not only put Minden on the map but also opened doors to potential funding opportunities and strengthened the city's connections with key federal agencies and lawmakers. As the city moves forward with its ambitious infrastructure projects, Mayor Cox remains optimistic about Minden's future and its place on the national stage.















Minden Police Chief Jared McIver focuses on training and community engagement

BY: AMBER MCDOWN - MINDEN PRESS-HERALD

inden Police Chief Jared McIver is spearheading initiatives to enhance officer training and community preparedness, aiming to improve both law enforcement capabilities and public safety.

One of McIver's key community initiatives is crisis response training for businesses and churches in Minden. The police department is working with organizations to develop crisis management plans and train personnel to respond effectively in emergencies until law enforcement arrives.

On April 3, the department will launch a church security and crisis development team event at the Minden Civic Center. Hosted by the Minden Police Department and Mayor Nick Cox, the free event will feature vendors offering firearms, security cameras, and medical supplies. Training sessions will be available, and each church will receive a checklist outlining recommended security measures.

"I think there's a lot of churches that don't know where to start," McIver said. "I think this is going to be a big help for a lot of churches.

Invitations will be sent to all Minden churches in the coming weeks, with the event serving as the first phase in a larger initiative. Future phases will include additional training opportunities and individual church security evaluations.

ENHANCED TRAINING FOR OFFICERS

Within the department, officers are undergoing extensive training to enhance their skills. McIver's goal since taking office has been to ensure the department has certified instructors in all necessary areas, and he has been sending officers to obtain instructor certifications.

"Our officers are constantly going

through training," said McIver
Two officers will soon attend a specialized course on the latest criminal methods related to drug and gun trafficking. Additionally, the department will soon begin an Emergency Vehicle Operations Course, with a newly certified instructor returning from Maryland. Officers will receive high-speed and pursuit driving training as part of this initiative.

Defensive tactics instructors have recently re-certified all personnel, and first aid and CPR training will now occur twice per year. Firearms training has increased to quarterly sessions, and officers are also receiving instruction on less-lethal options, including tasers and bean bag shotguns.

Training sessions are conducted



Minden Police Chief **Jared McIver**

Despite advancements in technology, McIver assured residents that citations will not be issued through automated enforcement. "As long as I'm chief of police, you'll never get a ticket in the mail," he said.

during off-hours, requiring overtime pay. McIver praised city leadership for their support.

"My hat goes off to the council because they realize how imperative the training is," he said. "The council we have is always thinking down the road, and we're very blessed to have that."

NEW EQUIPMENT AND **TECHNOLOGY**

The department is also looking forward to acquiring new equipment. Each officer will soon be equipped with a taser and a patrol rifle in addition to their standard-issue sidearm. Plans are also in place to equip every patrol unit with radar and a less-lethal shotgun.

"There's so much expense with every bit of that," McIver said.
Additionally, MPD is considering in-

creasing the number of surveillance cameras and installing license plate readers (LPRs) throughout the city. These tools can aid in crime-solving and help reduce speeding by alerting drivers to their speed.

"LPRs will pay big when there's a crime and that vehicle passes in front of that reader and we can get the license," McIver said.

Despite advancements in technology, McIver assured residents that citations will not be issued through automated

"As long as I'm chief of police, you'll never get a ticket in the mail," he said.

Funding for new equipment comes from the department's budget and grants. Two officers have attended grant writing school and are actively seeking funding opportunities to equip officers with necessary tools.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND DEPARTMENT GROWTH

Officers will also attend specialized conferences, including School Resource Officer (SRO) and Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) training events. Deputy Chief Harrison will represent the department at the Women in Command conference in Lafayette on February 24-25, where topics will include leadership strategies, navigating male-dominated professions, and mentorship.

In addition to these efforts, construction has begun on a new animal shelter, marking another step forward for the department and the community.

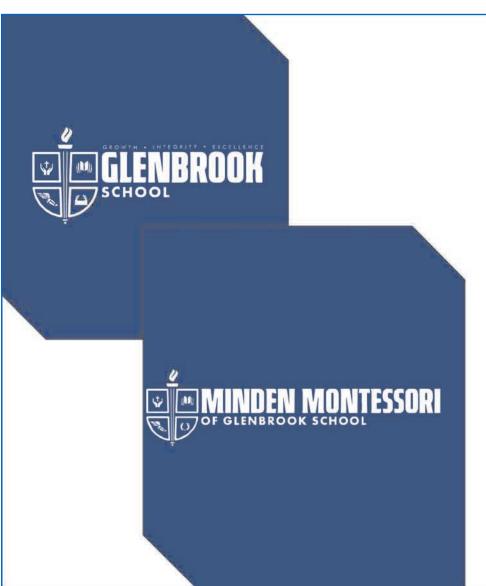
With a focus on training, technology, and public safety initiatives, McIver is committed to building a stronger police force and fostering a safer Minden.











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SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICERS BUILD TRUST, SAFETY AT MINDEN HIGH

BY: AMBER MCDOWN - MINDEN PRESS-HERALD

t Minden High School, School Resource Officers (SROs) LaDarrius Joseph and Marlin Choyce are more than just law enforcement; they are mentors, role models, and protectors.

Joseph, in his fifth year as an SRO, began his career with the Webster Parish Sheriff's Office before transitioning to the Minden Police Department. Choyce, originally from Shreveport, has served with the Minden Police Department for three years and has been an SRO for a year and a half.

Their day begins with closing a section of College Street to manage morning traffic, ensuring safe bus drop-offs. A morning briefing follows to discuss any developing concerns before they begin patrolling the sprawling campus. "We try to keep the protection level high," Choyce said.

Throughout the day, the officers monitor the cafeteria and commons areas during lunch shifts. In between, they complete daily reports, which provide the school board with a monthly overview of school safety. Their day ends with another traffic control operation to facilitate afternoon bus pickups.

Joseph believes that the role of an SRO is often misunderstood. "We're a liaison between the school board and police department.

If the school needs the police, we're already here," he said.

The most rewarding part of the job, Joseph said, is being there for the students. "They can always come to me or Officer Choyce and talk to us. We will be there for them in whatever capacity."



Choyce echoed that sentiment, emphasizing their unique role in students' lives. As the father of three teenagers, he understands the challenges they face. "It's being able to be there for them," Choyce said. "We're a key part. I don't think anyone understands how important we are up here."

Joseph and Choyce balance each other well. "He's more of the father figure, and I'm more of the uncle or big brother type. I'm that cool one," Joseph said with a laugh.

While both officers enjoy their work, Choyce wishes more adults understood their role as liaisons rather than enforcers. Some think they are there to intimidate or punish students, but they're really there to support them.

Joseph added, "They know that we're fun, funny, and firm. They know when it's time to play and when it's time to be serious. We will do what we got to do, but at the same time, we show love. These kids know that we love them, and showing love might mean that I have to discipline them."

Choyce emphasized that every student is unique and should be treated as such. "Each one reacts differently, so it's important to understand who they are," he said.

Their approach has shown results. In the first four months of the

school year, there were only three fights, and none have occurred since Christmas break. "Because of our relationship with them, we find out before anything can pop off," Choyce said. "We shut it down before it can even start."

"We're turning Minden High around."





MINDEN WATER TOWER **A**



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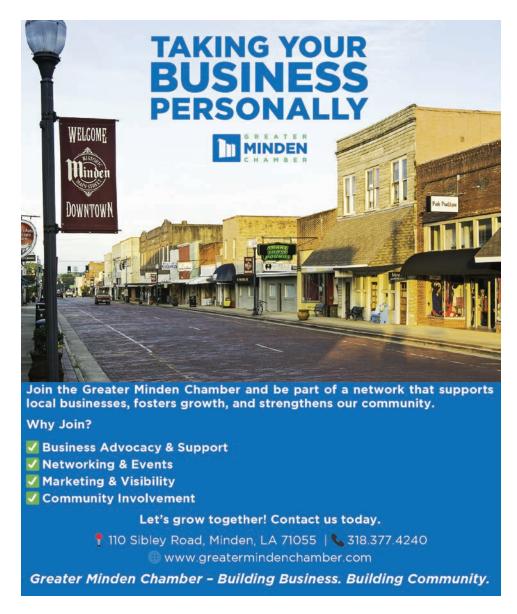


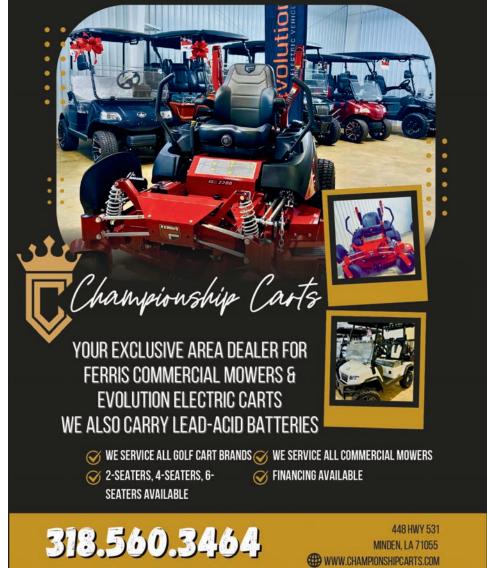
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Webster Parish Sheriff Jason Parker focuses on training, technology, and community safety

BY: WILL PHILLIPS - MINDEN PRESS-HERALD

heriff Jason Parker of Webster Parish is committed to enhancing the safety and security of the community through advanced training, upgraded technology, and expanded community outreach programs. As the new year approaches, Parker outlines several initiatives aimed at better serving the citizens of Webster Parish. With a forward-thinking approach, the Sheriff's Office is setting the stage for improved law enforcement and stronger community ties.

One of Parker's top priorities is investing in comprehensive training programs to ensure his deputies are prepared for any situation they may encounter. "This next year we're really looking to expand the training for our deputies. Anything we think will, not only make them a better deputy and keep them safe but also better serve the citizens of the parish," said Parker.

The Sheriff's Office currently has two

The Sheriff's Office currently has two POST-certified training officers who conduct in-house training sessions. This approach allows deputies to receive high-quality training without the need to travel to other locations, saving both time and resources. "We have two POST-certified training officers here in the office, which allows us to keep a lot of our training in-house," Parker explained.

Under Parker's leadership, the Sheriff's Office has significantly advanced its technological capabilities. "Over the last several years we've really come a long way in expanding that technology. It's really paid off on the investigative side of our work. When it comes time to solving crimes, we utilize every resource available to find those who are committing crimes," said Parker.

The Sheriff's Office also utilizes advanced software programs to locate suspects, track suspect vehicles, and recover stolen property. "We recently subscribed to a program that will help connect suspects that commit crimes in numerous jurisdictions. We have also enhanced our drone program capabilities. We recently updated our CAD system and plan to expand its functions to include patrol vehicle tracking this year," Parker stated.

One advancement that they are hoping to implement soon is the implementation of body cameras with tracking capabilities. Rather than having to ask the officers where's their location first, the office could instead see in real-time where the officers are located and have the ones closest respond to an emergency. "A few seconds may be the difference between solving a crime or getting to somebody in need," Parker

One of the significant projects under-



Sheriff Jason Parker

"We currently attend community events and provide training or programs when requested. With the addition of a training division Deputy, we will expand these programs and training for civic groups, schools, churches, and any other group or organization," said Parker.

way is the construction of a new facility that will house up to 66 female offenders. This expansion addresses a pressing need for female inmate housing in the region. "A lot of other Sheriff's offices in the surrounding area depend on us to house their females because they don't have any place. We house offenders for Red River, Claiborne, Bienville, Union Parish, and several others. On a normal scale, Webster Parish only has around 14 to 15 average pre-trial females. The rest of them are from other locations," Parker said.

By accommodating female offenders from neighboring parishes, the new facility supports surrounding agencies as well as local needs. The new facility is designed with long-term sustainability in mind, ensuring it will serve the community for years to come. "When it's finished it's going to be something that we can be proud of long after I'm gone," Parker reflected.

The office also understands its role in the wider community that it's a part of. Whether it's participating themselves, offering security, or offering training, the Sheriff's Office takes any opportunity it can to engage with local organizations or events.

"We currently attend community events and provide training or programs when requested. With the addition of a training division Deputy, we will expand these programs and training for civic groups, schools, churches, and any other group or organization," said Parker.

By actively engaging with community groups, the Sheriff's Office is building trust and fostering a safer environment for all residents. This proactive approach not only enhances public safety but also strengthens the relationship between law enforcement and the community

Parker's proactive stance on law enforcement is backed by a strong commitment to other local law enforcement agencies. "We have a great working relationship with our fellow Parish law enforcement agencies and we will continue to provide support and assistance to our Municipal Police Departments during parades, festivals, and special events," Parker stated. "We're all on the same team. We want to work together and provide safety for our citizens," Parker remarked."

The Webster Parish Sheriff's Office is determined to enhance safety, build stronger community relations, and continue its commitment to excellence through innovative solutions and proactive policing strategies. With Parker's leadership, the department is poised to make a lasting impact on public safety and community trust.







SPORTS Profile 2024

CHRISTOPHER WILSON TAKES REINS AT NORTH WEBSTER

BY: RUSSELL HEDGES - MINDEN PRESS-HERALD

hristopher Wilson has been named head football coach at North DeSoto.

Wilson has helped North DeSoto achieve a lot of success the last two seasons as an assistant coach in charge of running backs and the offensive line.

The Griffins reached the non-select Division II state championship game in 2022 and the semifinals this past season.

Before that, he spent two years as head coach at Plain Dealing.

Wilson replaced John Ware, who resigned after 12 seasons. He is now the head coach at Lakeside.

"I knew it was an opportunity where I could be successful in a place I felt was a match made in heaven," Wilson said of the North Webster job. "I wanted to be at a place where I could effect some change and I think they were looking for somebody like me with the transition.

"So I felt it was an opportunity for me to come in and again continue to grow and be the best version of myself and to serve the community and serve those kids."

North DeSoto went 12-2 in 2022. The Griffins fell to Lutcher 28-25 in the non-select championship game. Last season, North DeSoto went 11-2 and lost to eventual champion Opelousas 28-20 in the semifinals.

Wilson said he gained valuable experience working under Head Coach Dennis Dunn, who led Evangel Christian to multiple state titles before becoming the head coach at Louisiana College (now Louisiana Christian).

""Really just organization and really getting a gauge on loving people and communicating," Wilson said. "Coach Dunn was masterful how he dealt with people and how he led the boys and led his staff.

"So I was really blessed to have the opportunity to



kind of sit back and to watch and see how somebody has the prestige of Coach Dunn leads a program. I gained so much valuable experience just being able to watch. Having the success we've had in the past two years I know that what we were doing works."

At Plain Dealing, Wilson's record was 5-14. But he faxed the challenge of playing in one of the state's toughest districts while usually having less than 20 players available

He helped rally the community around the team.

He said that experience has been invaluable in his journey to where he is now.

"I think what I learned at North DeSoto validated my experience at Plain Dealing," he said. "I knew we were on the right track. We were doing things the right way. The community was engaged.

"The kids, albeit just a handful, they were engaged

and they loved the program and loved what we were doing and what we were building. And so being at North DeSoto validated that experience. I knew I was on the right track as a leader. These two years have me that expienxe as an assistant. I think it's setting me up to be really, really good for the Springhill and North Webster community.

Before going to Plain Dealing, Wilson was the offensive line coach and baseball coach at Mansfield for two seasons. He also was an assistant coach at Booker T. Washington and Fair Park.

Wilson will be taking over a North Webster team coming off a turnaround season. The Purple Knights went 7-5 and reached the second round of the non-select Division III playoffs after going 2-8 in 2022.

Wilson said will remain at North DeSoto through the end of the school year. But he plans to take the Knights

through 10 days of spring training.

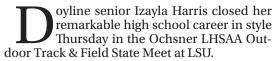
Wilson said he appreciated North Webster Principal
Gabe Lyons for giving him "the keys to the castle."

"I'm just excited for the opportunity," he said.

Wilson is a graduate of Byrd and Southern University. He and his wife, Lauren, have five children — 9-yearold Camryn, 7-year-old Hollis, 5-year-old Lennox and 1-year-olds Cayson and Cadence.

DOYLINE'S HARRIS COMPLETES REMARKABLE TRACK AND FIELD CAREER

BY: RUSSELL HEDGES - MINDEN PRESS-HERALD



Harris won the 100, 200 and 400 meters in the Class B meet for the second year in a row. She also won the triple jump for the first time. She was named an MVP for the third straight year.

Harris, an Alcorn State signee, finished with 11 outdoor titles competing in five meets starting as an eighth-grader.

Doyline tied for sixth in the team competition with Harris' 40 points. Midland won with

Harris broke her own class record in 100 with a time of 11.83 seconds. She set the previous record of 12.13 last year.

She won by .92 seconds over runner-up Corinne Knatt of Episcopal of Acadiana.

Harris ran a 25.09 in the 200, almost 2 seconds faster than runner-up Shunna Williams of Mt. Hermon (27.04).

Harris ran a 59.27 in the 400, Eighth-grader Madi Stanley of Anacoco was second in 1:01.01.

She took the triple jump with a leap of 35 feet, 11 1/2 inches. She went that distance on her second attempt. Harris made one more jump then passed on her final three. Her first and third attempts would have been good enough to win.



Christ Episcopal School's Ella Laborde was second with a 34-4.5.

Doyline junior Jonas Florence took fifth in the boys discus with a 113-10. Episcopal of Acadiana's Javion George won with a 131-2.

Doyline senior Nadia Lara finished seventh in the girls 300 hurdles in

54.85. Midland's Camri Primeaux won in

Doyline sophomore Zach Moreno finished seventh in the boys 3,200 in 12:29.65. Episcopal of Acadiana's Anderson Frank won in

Glenbrook sophomore Mattison Fowler was eighth in the Class 1A girls 800 in 2:44.28. Slaughter Community Charter's Madison Easley won in 2:21.54.

North Webster's Avante Curry finished sixth in the Class 3A boys 300 hurdles in 41.95. Iota's Dylan Callahan won in 41.95.

The North Webster foursome of Tatyana Lawson, De'Maiyh Moore, Rylee Sanders and Xhailor McGlothan finished sixth in the Class 3A girls 4X200.

North Webster's Xaeliin Gladney was seventh in the 3A boys 400.

North Webster's Natalyee Maness won the

wheelchair/para-ambulatory shot put with a throw of 10-6.

Lakeside's Lexi Bradley was seventh in the Clasd 2A girls 1,600.



Minden, Lakeside enjoy turnaround football seasons

BY: RUSSELL HEDGES - MINDEN PRESS-HERALD

The curtain came down on the 2023 season in Webster Parish last week.

The No. 14 seed North Webster Knights fell to No. 3 St. James 42-12 in a non-select Division III game in Vacherie.

The No. 11 seed Glenbrook Apaches lost to No. 6 St. Mary's 30-27 in a select Division IV second-round game in Natchitoches.

Both North Webster's and Glenbrook's seasons can only be described as successful



North Webster went from 2-8 in 2022 to 7-5.

Glenbrook lost several of the top players and Head Coach David Feaster on the 2022 team that went 11-1.

First-year Head Coach Reagan Smith, along with a core group of talented seniors, proved up to the challenge of keeping the program heading in the right direction.

"I'm proud of what we accomplished," Smith said. "It's set our trajectory moving forward. I think it was an extraordinari-

ly successful season. And it sets the groundwork for us moving ahead."

Future Glenbrook teams owe a debt of gratitude to seniors like Chase Sentell, Landry Powell and Garrett Brown who made the school's transition from MAIS to the LHSAA a highly successful win.

In the two seasons Glenbrook has been eligible for the playoffs, the Apaches have gone 19-4.

For a while last Friday, it looked like Glenbrook was headed for its second straight quarter-final appearance.

The Apaches scored on their first two possessions and led 12-0. After St. Mary's rallied to withi 12-10, Glenbrook scored with 16 seconds in the half on a 7-yard pass from junior Easton Sanders to Sentell.

But the 19-10 lead didn't stand up

largely thanks to St. Mary's quarterback Mixon Bankston who led the Tigers to three straight touchdowns and a 30-19 lead.

North Webster can rightly be proud of its turnaround.

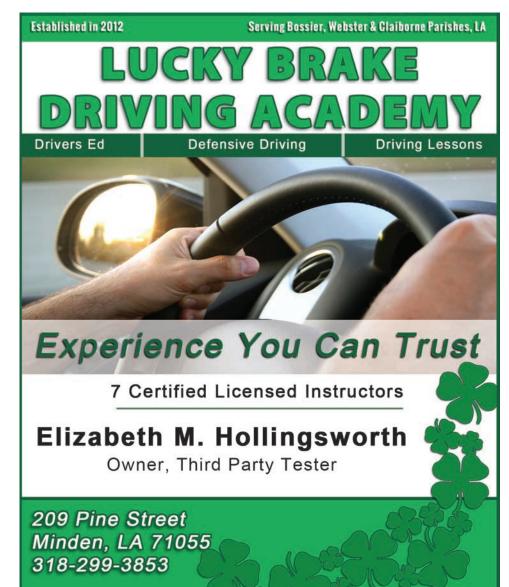
The Knights had one of North Louisiana's best players in Xavier "Tutt" McGlothan.

North Webster simply ran into a St. James team with a little more talent. The Knights also had to play in a tough environment against a traditional power after traveling almost 350 miles.

With underclasmen like quarterback Christian Wicklund and backs J'Kobe Lawson and Braedon Robertson, the future looks bright for the Knights.







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SUPER BOWL CHAMP SNEED TALKS ABOUT JOINING TENNESSEE TITANS

BY: RUSSELL HEDGES - MINDEN PRESS-HERALD

Tormer Minden star L'Jarius Sneed met with the media at an introductory press conference in Nashville last week after being traded from the Kansas City Chiefs to the Tennessee Titans.

According to media reports, Sneed signed a four-year contract worth \$76 million with \$55 million guaranteed.

But the cornerback said money wasn't the most important thing.

"The money don't change anything," said Sneed, a former Louisiana Tech standout. "I love this game for the game. The money, you know, for my family, to get them right, take a little pressure off my shoulders. Now I can do what I love and play ball."

Sneed spent four years in Kansas City. He played in three Super Bowls and his play was a big factor in the Chiefs winning the last two.

He said he prayed about the trade and signing with Tennessee.

"Oh man just say God honestly," he said. "I left everything in God's hands you know during the whole entire little situation. Whatever was going on I just stayed prayed up and just let God do his work.

"It was kind of nerve-wracking I can say because me and my agent, it was a lot of back and forth. My agent was telling me to be calm and let everything come out. Last Monday (March 25) is where I realized I'm going to get the trade.

Sneed is coming to a team that went 6-11 last season. He was asked what he was bringing from the winning culture in Kansas City,

"Just bring my swagger you know," he said. "Just bring what I learned, what the coaches over there installed in me and bring it here. And I think we're going to be OK."

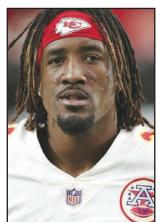
The Titans are expected to have a young secondary and Sneed wants to help his new teammates by imparting what he learned in Kansas City.

"I can say I know what it took," he said.
"It's not only in the building. We took
time out of the building coming together
as in praying or coming together as one,
as a whole, and that's what I'm going to
try to bring here, just try to pull us together. And I think when we're together as a

whole we can play good coverage."

Sneed said he wants to continue to be a leader.

"I wouldn't say that I'm very very vocal,"



L'Jarius Sneed

he said. "I'm not the ra ra guy. I'm not going to be all down your neck. I might pull you to the side, say work on this, work on that, or even work with you to get better."

Sneed was a fourthround draft pick. He said he has continued to grow and learn over the years and that gaining confidence in his abilities was a process.

"Each year I go back and watch my film," he said. "Whatever I can get better at that's what I try to do each year and this year I'm going to do the same.

"The confidence built over the years and it got better and better over the years. Coming as a low draft from a small school, know everybody didn't believe in me. But I stayed down and kept working."

Sneed said confidence, resiliency and relentlessness are his hallmarks now.

"I'm a hell of a player. I love my game. I don't fear anything. I'm not afraid to lose but I'm going to win most of my reps."

That attitude has helped him shut down some of the NFL's top receivers. It's

something he takes pride in.

"I wanted to follow the number one guys and the best guys on the field," he said. "That what I want to do. You know each year I try to make new challenges, challenge myself."

"If I can eliminate one guy, the best player on the field, it helps everybody else around us," he said later in the conference.

Titans General Manager Ran Carthon sat beside Sneed and also spoke at the press conference.

Sneed toured the team's practice facility at Ascension St. Thomas Sports Park with his mother, Jane, and his 6-year-old son, according to a report on tennesseetitans.com, the team's official website.

"It's great," he said. "I feel a connection

"It's great," he said. "I feel a connection already. I feel like family. He's making me feel comfortable already in this facility and it's my first time to meet him and the whole organization."

Sneed was known for giving back to the community in Kansas City. He said he plans to continue that in Tennessee.

"God used me in Kansas City," he said.
"I'm going to make sure he uses me here in Tennessee. Giving back to the community, whatever I can do, whatever God has planned for me in my life, in Tennessee. That's what I'm bringing here."













The Glenbrook baseball program has been on quite a roll

BY: RUSSELL HEDGES - MINDEN PRESS-HERALD

n 2021, the Apaches won the MAIS Class 1A championship in their last season in the organization. In 2022, Glenbrook successfully made the transition to the LHSAA but weren't eligible championship honors.

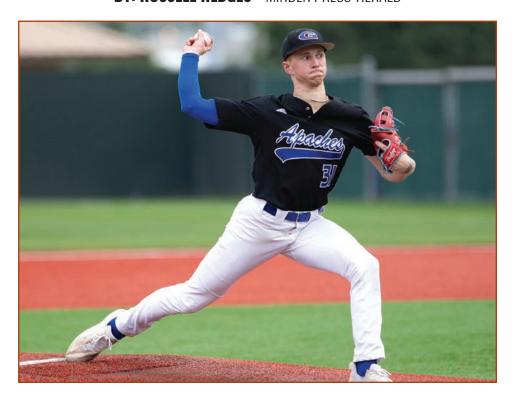
Last year, the Apaches made it to the Ochsner LHSAA State Tournament on the first try, falling to No. 2 Ascension Catholic 4-1 in the semifinals,

And now Glenbrook has made it to the championship game. The No. 11 seed Apaches (16-10) will face No. 1 Opelousas Catholic (29-6) for the select Division IV state title Friday at 2 p.m. at McMurry Park in Sulphur.

Last season it was no surprise that Glenbrook reached the state tournament as the No. 3 seed with a wealth of talent including two Division I signees.

While expectations might not have been quite as high as last season, there was still plenty of reason for optimism entering the 2024 season.

Three starters returned — pitcher/infielder Easton Sanders, infielder Jackson



Waller and catcher/pitcher Landry Powell

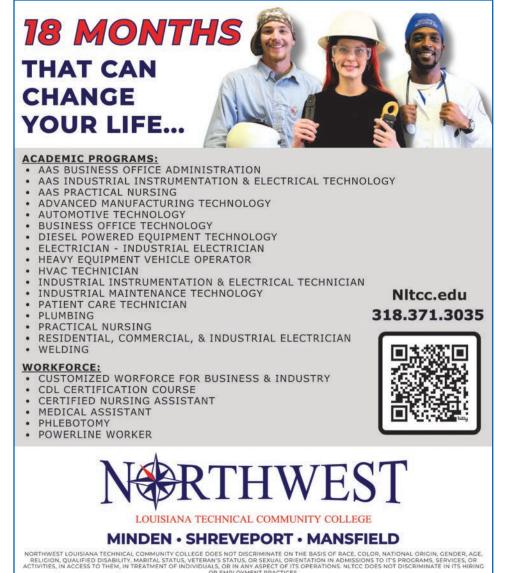
Playing a tough schedule including three-game series against 5A teams Benton and Haughton, the Apaches 3-8 start. But they have gone 13-2 since then including playoff victories over No. 6 St. John 8-5, No. 3 Ouachita Christian 4-2 and No. 2 Covenant Christian 3-2.

While the three returning starters have done their jobs, the Apaches wouldn't have made it this far without the contributions of outfielder Seth Mangrum, first baseman Dawson Day, leftfielder Preston Frye, second basemen Ryan Reagan, third baseman/pitcher Sam Ricord and rightfielder Hudson Glasscock.

Opelousas Catholic has defeated No. 17 Cedar Creek 11-3, No. 8 St. Frederick 9-5 and No. 5 Central Catholic 3-0 in the playoffs.

The Vikings have won 21 of their last 23 with the losses coming against non-select Division II semifinalist Iowa and select Division III semifinalist Parkview Baptist.











Dear Residents, Visitors, and Friends,

In 2025, immerse yourself in the warmth and hospitality of our community, where there's something for everyone! Join us in celebrating the exciting events coming up in Webster Parish.

Johnnye Kennon
Director of Community Affairs



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