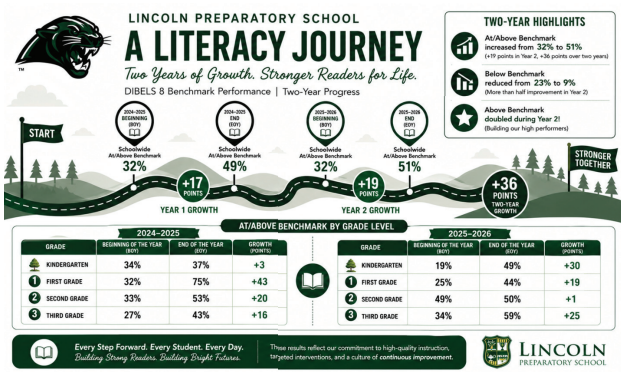




COMMUNITY

Lincoln Preparatory School Celebrates Two Years of Literacy Growth and Student Achievement

4



JUNETEENTH

Photo Gallery - Juneteenth & All School Reunion

8

THE GRAMBLING CONNECTION

Volume 2, No. 20 Friday, July 3, 2026 • "Keeping Our Citizens Informed on the Issues That Matter" • Grambling, LA www.GramblingConnection.com

Big Week, Big Fun In The Big "G"!

By: **Lena Wilson Claybon & Joice M. Dunn**

The Grambling Juneteenth Heritage Festival featured a large-scale, two-week celebration, which culminated in the highly anticipated Grambling High School / Lincoln Prep All-School Reunion, June 12-June 21, 2026.

Attendees came from far and near as over 1100 people poured into our little town to celebrate and reconnect! The festival kicked off at the City Hall on June 12. Narrating the event was Jeffery Sims, a Juneteenth committee member. "The Grambling Juneteenth Celebration is a community-wide event dedicated to commemorating the emancipa-

tion of enslaved African Americans while honoring the rich history, culture, and achievements of the African American community," Sims explained. The program opened with an invocation by Rev. Julius Sumler and continued with a welcome from Mayor Alvin Bradley.

See **Big Week** Page 2



PHOTO CREDIT: TONY VALENTINO



(LtoR) Little Miss Juneteenth Loyalty Green, Miss Juneteenth Micah Loud, and Junior Miss Juneteenth Jada Brown

Juneteenth Pageant: Crowned In Culture

By **Joice M. Dunn**

As Miss Juneteenth Pageant got underway Friday, June 12, the theme: "Crowned in Culture: The Magic Within" showed up in all 11 contestants. Each participant brought something unique as she made her appearance on the stage before a crowd of audience.

Adarian D. Williams served as the master of ceremony, keeping the audience engaged. Williams is a higher education leader, public affairs professional, strategic communicator, artist, and proud two-time alumnus of Grambling State University. A native of Simsboro, he serves as Deputy Chief of Staff & Director of Strategic Communications and Marketing at Grambling, where he supports executive leadership, presi-



Pageant Winners and Runner-Ups

dential communications, institutional messaging, strategic marketing, stakeholder engagement, and initiatives that advance the University's mission and visibility. Miss Juneteenth of 2025, Aubrey Champion, led the audience in "Lift Every Voice and Sing." Williams pulled the audience in by allowing them to express who they were supporting throughout the pageant. The 11 con-

testants displayed their skills as they modeled, showcased their talent and expressed themselves. Entertainment was provided by Cathy Holmes Giles with a melody of old Negro Spirituals. Dr. Nanthalia McJamerison stepped on stage with an uplifting poem. While the judges counted their ballots to give the audience three 2026 winners, Little Miss

Juneteenth, Miss Junior Juneteenth and Miss Juneteenth of 2025 took their final walk and gave a few encouraging words to their successors. Pageant Judges included Phaedra Burks-Blake, a proud native of Grambling, is a passionate educational leader, advocate, and servant leader who has dedicated more than two decades to empowering students, supporting educators, and strengthening school communities. She is currently pursuing a Doctorate in P-12 Education Administration. Kindrell Lamont Plains is a dedicated higher education professional, fraternity leader, mentor, and servant-leader whose life's work has centered on uplifting students, strengthening communities, and advancing leadership through service.

See **Juneteenth** Page 2

GSU and Southern University Law Center Sign Agreement to Establish Accelerated Law Program

BATON ROUGE, La. — June 25, 2026 — Following approval by the Louisiana Board of Regents, Grambling State University and Southern University Law Center signed a memorandum of understanding today establishing a 3+3 Accelerated Law Program designed to create a structured route for Grambling State students interested in pursuing legal education. The agreement formalizes a collaboration between the two historically Black institutions to expand access to law

school preparation, academic advising, pre-law programming, and professional opportunities for students pursuing careers in law, public service, policy, advocacy, and related fields. Through the 3+3 Accelerated Law Program, eligible Grambling State students will be able to complete undergraduate preparation while working toward a streamlined transition to Southern University Law Center. The program is designed to help students identify their interest in law earlier, receive coordinated



GSU President Dr. Martin Lemelle, Jr. and SU Law Center Chancellor Alvin Washington sign MOU.

advising, and move more graduate study into professional legal training. efficiently from under-

"Through this partnership, Grambling State University and the Southern University Law Center are creating new opportunities for students to accelerate their path to a law degree while preparing for careers of impact and service," said Grambling State University President Martin Lemelle, Jr. "Together, we are expanding access, strengthening the pipeline of future attorneys, and demonstrating the power of HBCU collaboration to develop the next generation of leaders." Under the agreement,

Southern University Law Center will provide academic advising and support to undergraduate students interested in the 3+3 pathway, collaborate on curriculum alignment, offer guest lectures, pre-law programming, and campus visits, and designate a point of contact for coordination and student support. Southern University Law Center will also guarantee admission to qualified students who meet the program's admissions criteria.

See **GSU** Page 2



BIG ANNOUNCEMENT FROM THE GRAMBLING CONNECTION

Effective September 1, 2026, The Grambling Connection is transitioning to a **PAID** model. This means the paper will no longer be free but will be available as a paid product through select outlets, and will continue to be available through print and online subscriptions. This change will allow us to bring you even more stories that matter most to our community—while expanding and strengthening our staff and coverage.

You will still be able to pick up free copies throughout the Summer. We will announce locations where it will be on sale over the next few months.

Also, we are offering **EARLY BIRD DISCOUNTS** to new subscribers until August 1, 2026. We ask that you support us through this change so we can keep the paper strong and moving forward.

www.gramblingconnection.com/early-bird



OPINION

Not Just a Southern Issue: SCOTUS Voting Rights Decision Has Already Started to Reshape Black Political Power

By Edward Henderson, California Black Media

U.S. Rep. Sydney Kamlager-Dove (D-CA-37), a member of the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) whose district spans parts of Los Angeles County, joined fellow CBC member U.S. Rep. Troy Carter (D-LA-2) for a May 21 briefing with Black media outlets in California.

The lawmakers highlighted what they describe as a mounting threat to Black political representation resulting from an April 29 U.S. Supreme Court ruling that weakened key protections under the federal Voting Rights Act.

This Day in History Kamlager-Dove and Carter warned that the decision, which narrowed the role of race in redistricting, is already reshaping con-

gressional districts across the South and undermining Black voters' ability to elect candidates of their choice.

"While we are a super blue state, we have far to go when it comes to Black representation; we tend to take that for granted," Kamlager-Dove said of California, noting that the Golden State has the fifth largest Black population in the country and only has three Black members of Congress.

"While I support building coalitions, we have to make sure that as a Black community we are not yielding our power," she added.

Calling the fight "not unique to the South," Carter urged Black communities nationwide to recognize the broader implications of the legal and political battles unfolding in Southern legislatures and courtrooms.

The Supreme Court rul-



ing centers on Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, the portion of the law that prohibits voting systems or district maps that dilute the voting strength of racial minorities. For decades, Section 2 allowed civil rights groups to challenge district maps that weakened Black political representation even when lawmakers did not openly state discriminatory intent.

Now, advocates fear that

standard has fundamentally changed.

"You have to have smoking gun evidence," said Mitchell Brown, senior voting rights counsel at the Southern Coalition for Social Justice, during a recent media briefing hosted by American Community Media on May 15. "Legislators are not going to say the quiet part out loud."

The implications could stretch far beyond congres-

sional elections, Brown said.

Section 2 protections have historically applied not only to U.S. House districts, but also to state legislatures, school boards, county commissions, judgeships, and local governing bodies. Voting rights advocates warn that weakening those protections could reshape political representation throughout the South, particularly in states with large Black populations.

"This is not just a Southern issue," said Amir Badat, manager of Black Voters on the Rise and voting special counsel at the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund.

Badat described the current moment as part of a much longer historical pattern.

Following the Civil War and Reconstruction, constitutional amendments expanded Black citizenship and voting rights across the

South, leading to dramatic increases in Black political representation. But those gains were quickly met with violent backlash and the rise of Jim Crow laws designed to suppress Black voting through poll taxes, literacy tests, and other "race-neutral" restrictions.

"This is the same move," Badat said.

Advocates also emphasized that the consequences of weakened voting protections extend into everyday life.

Local elected offices such as school boards, city councils, county commissions, and judgeships often determine funding priorities, public safety policy, education standards, and infrastructure investments.

"These are not abstract numbers," Badat said. "These have real political consequences and policy consequences on people's day-to-day lives."

POTTER MOTIVATION

Be a Lighthouse, Not a Spotlight

By Rusty Potter

Every day, we are faced with a choice: Do we want to be a spotlight or a lighthouse?

A spotlight shines on itself. It seeks attention. It wants everyone to notice its accomplishments, popularity, and success. The spotlight says, "Look at me." In today's world, many people are chasing attention, likes, followers, and recognition. Unfortunately, some young people are making dangerous choices because they want to be noticed, respected, or feared.

But the lighthouse serves a much greater purpose.

A lighthouse does not shine its light to draw attention to itself. Instead, it shines to help others find their way. During storms, darkness, and uncertainty, the lighthouse stands strong, guiding ships away from danger and toward safety.

Our communities need more lighthouses.

We need young men and women who are willing to stand up for what is right, even when others make poor choices. We need students who encourage their friends instead of pressuring them to do wrong. We need leaders who build others up instead of tearing them down.

Too many families in our



Rusty Potter

community have been affected by violence. Too many mothers have cried tears over children who made one bad decision that changed their lives forever.

Too many young people are risking their future because they are seeking attention in all the wrong places.

Real strength is not found in being feared. Real strength is found in being a positive influence.

You can be the person who stops a fight instead of starting one. You can be the friend who encourages instead of criticizing. You can be the example that shows others there is a better path forward.

The truth is that every person can be a lighthouse.

Your words matter. Someone is watching you. learning from you, and being influenced

by you, whether you realize it or not.

When storms come into your life, and they will, don't allow them to make you bitter. Let them make you stronger. Use your experience to help someone else navigate their own challenges.

The spotlight seeks applause. The lighthouse saves lives.

As we go through this week, ask yourself one simple question: Am I drawing attention to myself, or am I helping others find their way?

Our community does not need more spotlight.

It needs more lighthouses. Keep growing. Keep shining.

Danielle Williams seeks Reelection for Lincoln Parish School Board

Dr. Danielle Williams has announced her candidacy for reelection to the Lincoln Parish School Board, District 1, stating that her campaign will focus on educational equity, high academic standards, and continued improvement across all schools in the parish. The election is Nov. 3.

Dr. Williams emphasized that every student, regardless of ethnicity or socioeconomic status, should remain at the center of educational decision-making. She noted that access to a high-quality education is a critical factor in changing the long-term socioeconomic trajectory of children and families. "I am honored to serve the same community that educated me from early childhood through the completion of my bachelor's degree," Dr. Williams said. "Serving the constituents of District 1 and the entire parish has been a privilege, and I remain committed to ensuring that every student in Lincoln Parish receives a high-quality education."

Dr. Williams identified three primary priorities for her candidacy: ensuring that all students have access to rigorous, high-quality instruc-

tion; supporting all employees with competitive salaries; and working to make Lincoln Parish School Board the top-performing school system in the state of Louisiana. "Our goal is clear," she said. "We will continue to focus on student achievement, support our employees, and make decisions that strengthen both our schools and our community."

This election cycle will bring significant transition to the Lincoln Parish School Board, with seven members reaching term limits and unable to seek reelection. The following members will term out for the November 3, election: District 2: David Ferguson; District 5: Danny Hancock; District 6: Joe Mitcham; District 9: Patricia Mims-Brooks (formerly held by Mrs. Lynda Henderson); District 10: Otha Anders; District 11: George Mack Jr. and District 12: Debbie Abrahm.

Positions have opened for seven candidates to throw their hats in the campaign ring. The qualifying period for candidates ends Friday, August 7. The campaign encourages voters in District 1 to support Dr. Williams as she seeks to continue her service on the Lincoln Parish School Board.



Danielle Williams

GSU From Page 1

Grambling State University will identify and advise students interested in the 3+3 pathway, align undergraduate curriculum to fulfill Southern University Law Center's admissions prerequisites within three years,

Big Week From Page 1

Giving a brief history of the holiday, Bradley said, "On June 19, 1865, Union soldiers arrived in Galveston, Texas, and announced the emancipation of all enslaved people - more than two and a half years after President Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation - marking the effective end of slavery in the United States."

Sims reminded the crowd that the event was hosted

designate a faculty advisor to oversee student progress, promote the program through advising, outreach, and marketing, and share relevant academic data in accordance with applicable laws.

"This partnership reflects the power of HBCUs

by the Grambling Juneteenth Committee in partnership with the City of Grambling. This annual celebration brings together residents, alumni, students, families, and visitors for a week of educational, cultural, spiritual, and recreational activities.

A proclamation was jointly read by Councilman Jerry Lewis and those present. Cathy Holmes-Giles, councilwoman and Juneteenth committee chair, gave the audience a sample of a hid-

den singing talent. Aubrey Champion, Miss Juneteenth of 2025, welcomed the group to the opening and all the scheduled events. She said, "Serving has your queen has been taught me to use my voice. Thank you for the privilege."

Committee members Giles and Sims encouraged the group to attend and enjoy all the events. The celebration featured a variety of activities, including a pageant, fishing tourna-

vocates and public servants who will make a lasting impact in their communities and beyond."

The memorandum of understanding became effective upon signing and will remain in effect for up to three years, with annual review by both institutions.

Juneteenth From Page 1

Originally from Ferriday, Plains has built a reputation for professionalism, integrity, and unwavering commitment to student development throughout the state of Louisiana and beyond. A proud graduate of Grambling State University, Plains earned his bachelor's degree in Political Science and Political Science Pre-Law before later completing a master's degree in Developmental Education in 2014.

Dr. Sharonda Cage Hatter is a dedicated educator, servant leader, and wom-

an of faith. She is married to James Hatter and is the proud mother of three daughters - Brenaja, ShaBrea, and Justice - and a loving grandmother of five. Dr. Hatter serves as an Associate Professor at Grambling State University, where she is committed to empowering and inspiring students through higher education. She is a proud graduate of both Grambling State University and Walden University. Grounded in her Christian faith, Dr. Hatter is a faithful member of Miracle Temple Church of God in Christ, where she continues to serve

with compassion, excellence, and integrity Amanda Marcel is originally from Homer and has proudly called the Ruston/Grambling area home for the past 19 years.

Dr. Fredrick L. Pinkney, a certified career educator with experience as a classroom teacher, building level and central administrator. Dr. Pinkney earned a doctorate in Developmental education in 2001, a master's degree in Guidance Counseling in 1997, and a bachelor's degree in Business Education in 1994 all from GSU. Dr. Pinkney is a member of Phi Delta Kappa, Kappa Alpha Psi Fra-

ternity, Inc., Grambling University Alumni Association.

The winners for 2026 were:

- Little Miss Juneteenth Loyalty Green
- 1st runner up Skylar Patterson
- 2nd runner up Gracie Murdock
- Junior Miss Juneteenth Jada Brown
- 1st runner up Kendall Livingston
- Miss Juneteenth Micah Loud.
- 1st runner up Aeva Citi-zen
- 2nd runner up Kayden Walker

Grambling Connection Staff

Lena W. Claybon
Publisher / Editor-in-Chief

Joice M. Dunn
Senior Writer

Contributing Writers

Rusty Potter
Charming Davis
Jeanetta Stephens-Jones
Designed By Get Current Studios

THE GRAMBLING CONNECTION

- Subscription Information:
(Until August 1, 2026)
- Print Subscription - \$9.99/mo.
- Online Subscription - \$5/mo.

For Subscriptions, go to:

www.gramblingconnection.com/early-bird

To contact us by phone: Call 318-224-2676

Or by email: gramblingconnection@gmail.com

Published bi-weekly on Fridays except on Holidays by The Grambling Connection Media Group, LLC, Grambling, LA

SUBMISSIONS

Send a Letter To The Editor

We accept letters by email only. Submit to gramblingconnection@gmail.com

How to submit a press release

To submit press releases, announcements or opinions, please email us at gramblingconnection@gmail.com with details of your submission. The Grambling Connection reserves the right to refuse to print any submission and is not responsible for the content of submissions. Contact publication for submission deadlines.

Copyright © 2024. The Content of this publication cannot be reproduced or republished without the consent of The Grambling Connection.



COMMUNITY

BIG FUN, BIG WEEK IN THE BIG “G” CONTINUES!

The All Class All School Reunion was “all that” and more!

By Lena Claybon

“It was magical,” said one attendee when asked to summarize his experience during Grambling’s All School Reunion Weekend. “The comradere, the reconnections, seeing old friends I hadn’t seen in many, many years... it was incredible! It was ‘the Grambling experience’ and It made me realize how lucky we were to have grown up in a place like this!” said Bernard Lee, Grambling High Class of 1976.

That was the sentiment throughout the 4-day weekend as Grambling High, Alma J. Bown and Lincoln Prep graduates poured in from all over the country to join in on this historic school celebration!

The committee chairman, Mr. Dwight Moore, said it was the committee’s goal to bring the community together as one and to support the school we have today. “The City of Grambling already had the Juneteenth Festival planned so we wanted to partner to bridge the gap between Grambling High School, Alma J. Brown, Lincoln Prep and the City. And I feel we accomplished that.”

Activities specifically planned by the committee for the event were the Meet and Greet held on Thursday, June 18th where attendees picked up their packets and met up for the first time, followed by the parade, fish fry and fire-



Meet and Greet



Attendees on dance floor at Gala

works co-hosted with the City on Friday. Tailgating was also a part of Friday’s festivities with each class hosting its own tailgating party and tent.

On Saturday, the committee hosted a business brunch which featured the Mayor, Alvin Bradley, who outlined Grambling’s 10-year ‘Master Plan’ and Rep Rashid Young, the new Executive Director of Lincoln Prep who discussed his vision for the future of Lincoln Prep. The committee chairman,

Mr. Moore, pointed out the oldest class in attendance was 1956 and the proud members stood to a round of applause.

Rounding out the weekend was another collaboration between the committee and the City, the Juneteenth Gala which was well attended by citizens and Reunion attendees. Sheila Moore Ramsey, Class of 1978 said. “The Gala was phenomenal. The love we showed for each other was the absolute BEST. I am so grateful for the opportu-



GHS Alum entertains at Business Brunch

nity to be a part of such an awesome unity.” She also said, “The Grambling High School All Class Reunion was EPIC. My experience attending the tailgate to visit all of the classes tents and seeing friends that I had not seen since high school was overwhelmingly exciting. The music at the tailgate and hanging out brought unity to all the classes that were in attendance.”

It was an experience echoed by many.

Winzer Turner, Sr., Class of 1967, summed up the experience like this, “The one word that I heard over and over during the All Class Reunion was the word “Wow”. And it was just that type of an experience reuniting with old classmates and friends. The committee deserves a Gold Medal. Looking forward to next year!”

One thing is for sure. The whole event brought smiles and joy to all in attendance and a fun time was had by all!

Epsilon Psi Omega Chapter Hosts Successful Juneteenth Health Fair



AKA's hosts Health Fair

The members of **Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated®** Epsilon Psi Omega Chapter proudly hosted a highly successful **Juneteenth Health Fair** on **June 18, 2026, at Grambling City Hall**, bringing together community members, health professionals, and local organizations for a day dedicated to wellness, education, and empowerment.

The event welcomed **more than 65 community participants** and featured **18 vendors** offering a wide range of health and wellness resources. Attendees had access to health screenings, medical information, nutrition

education, community resource providers, and valuable wellness tools designed to promote healthier lifestyles.

Families enjoyed an engaging atmosphere filled with opportunities to learn, connect, and take proactive steps toward improving their health. The fair served as a meaningful way to commemorate Juneteenth by addressing health disparities, increasing awareness of available resources, and encouraging preventive care within the community.

“This event was truly one for the history books,” said chapter representatives. “We are grateful to our vendors, volunteers, commu-

nity partners, and attendees who helped make this event a tremendous success.”

The Juneteenth Health Fair reflects Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated®’s ongoing commitment to **Service to All Mankind** through initiatives that promote health equity, community engagement, and overall well-being.

The Epsilon Psi Omega Chapter extends its sincere appreciation to everyone who participated and supported this impactful event and looks forward to continuing efforts that uplift and strengthen the Grambling community.

Grambling NAACP Youth Hold Workshop and Raffle

During a recent meeting of the Youth Council of the Grambling Branch of the NAACP (6094 B), Dr. Nanthalia McJamerson held a Book Signing workshop which gave the youth an opportunity to meet with an African American woman author, at no cost to them, and get personal copies of her book, “When Surrounded by Tox-

icity, PICK UP A PEN”, signed. The complete name of the book is “When Surrounded by Toxicity, Pick up a pen: Using Poetry to Stay Alive, Sane, Joyful And Strong,” became available as a paperback on Feb. 2.

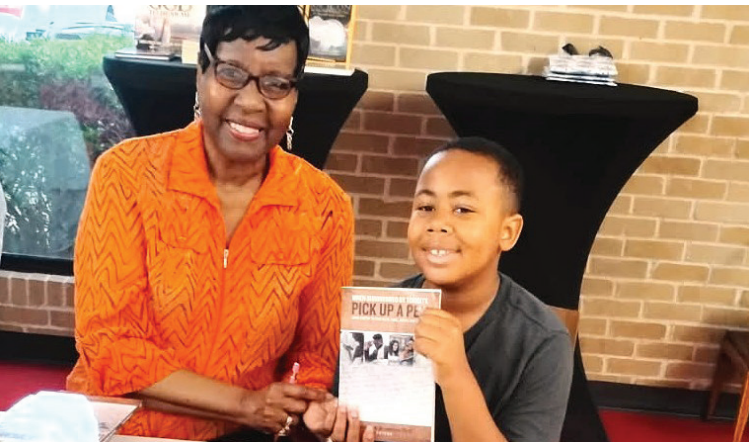
In addition to this, The Youth Council has been busy with a number of summer projects.

The Youth Council held a draw-

ing for a \$100 gas card raffle to fund the next Cultural and Civil Rights experience. The drawing took place on June 19 and was won by Marilyn Thomas of West Monroe.

The next raffle drawing for a \$100.00 gas card will be held on July 31.

For any questions, concerns or further information, contact Grace Tatem, 318-680-7679.



Student poses with author, Dr. Nanthalia McJamerson.

True Care Dental LLC.

Dr. Rhonda Pruitt

7412 HWY.80 RUSTON, LA 71270

318.247.1111



COMMUNITY

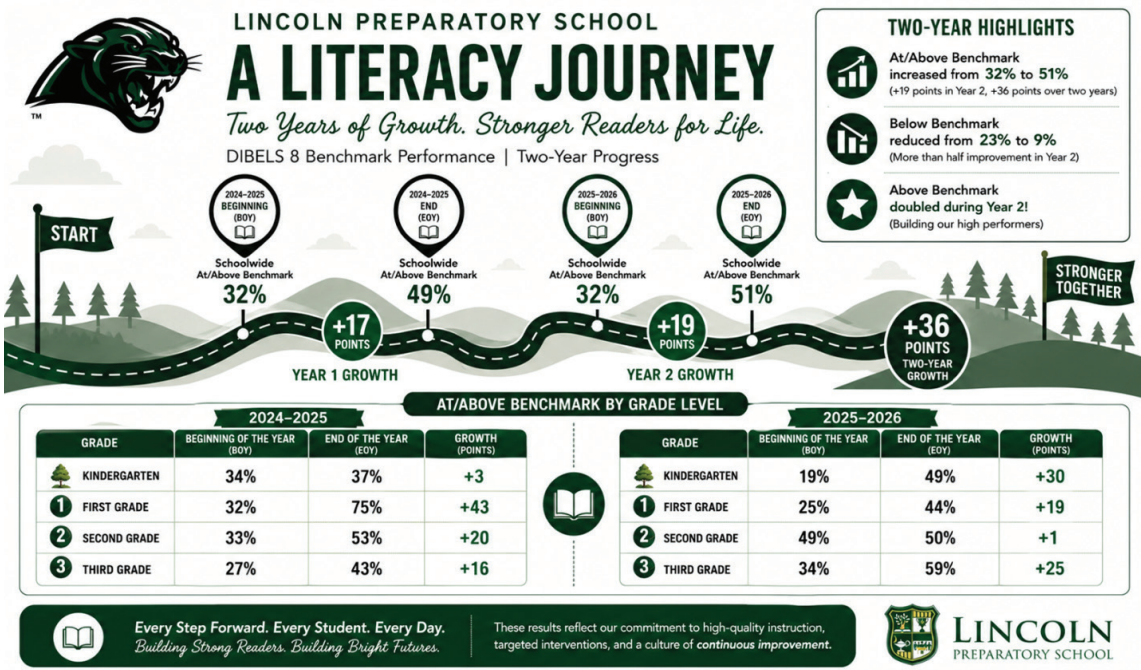
Lincoln Preparatory School Celebrates Two Years of Literacy Growth and Student Achievement

GRAMBLING, La. — Lincoln Preparatory School is proud to announce significant literacy gains across grades Kindergarten through Third Grade, demonstrating the impact of sustained instructional improvement, targeted interventions, and an unwavering commitment to student success.

Over the past two school years, Lincoln Prep students have shown measurable growth in reading proficiency as measured by DIBELS 8 Benchmark assessments. The results reflect the school's continued focus on building strong foundational literacy skills and ensuring that every student develops the ability to read, comprehend, and succeed academically.

During the 2024–2025 school year, Lincoln Prep's K–3 students increased the percentage of students reading on or above grade level from 32% at the beginning of the year to 51% by the end of the year, representing a 19-percentage-point increase and surpassing the statewide average growth of 17 percentage points.

The momentum continued during the 2025–2026 school year. Schoolwide, the percentage of students performing at or above benchmark increased



from 32% to 51%, while the percentage of students below benchmark was reduced by more than half. More than half of all students finished the year reading at or above benchmark expectations.

Grade-level growth highlights include:

- Kindergarten increased from 19% to 49% reading at or above benchmark during 2025–2026, a gain of 30 percentage points.

- First Grade increased from 32% to 75% during 2024–2025, a gain of 43 percentage points.
- Second Grade increased from 33% to 53% during 2024–2025, a gain of 20 percentage points.
- Third Grade increased from 34% to 59% during 2025–2026, representing the strongest growth among all grade levels and a gain of 25 percentage points.

Executive Director Rashid Young commended students, parents, and the faculty for their hard work, “The students, parents, and faculty deserve this recognition for all of their hard work and dedication. Lincoln Prep continues to outpace the state average for literacy growth. This year alone, we surpassed the state average by 2.5 percentage points. That’s the Prep Way!”

The school attributes its success to high-quality instruc-

tional materials, dedicated intervention periods, data-driven decision-making, instructional coaching, and a relentless focus on foundational literacy skills. Through strategic investments in reading instruction and targeted support systems, Lincoln Prep has created conditions that allow students to accelerate their growth and close achievement gaps.

While celebrating these accomplishments, school leaders remain focused on continuous improvement. Priorities for the upcoming school year include strengthening Tier I literacy instruction, expanding intervention supports, increasing instructional rigor, and enhancing progress-monitoring systems to ensure every student continues moving toward proficiency.

About Lincoln Preparatory School

Lincoln Preparatory School is a public charter school serving students in grades Pre-K through 12 in Grambling, Louisiana. The school is dedicated to preparing students for success in college, career, and life through academic excellence, leadership development, and meaningful community partnerships. Rashid Young serves as Executive Director.

The HBCU Boosters take time for Fun-Fellowship

By Joice M. Dunn

The HBCU Boosters recently hosted a Fun-Fellowship-Fishing outing at Lake Foursome, located in Arcadia.

“The Boosters have always come together to assist and support any youth group or organization that stand in the need of help, but this event allowed us the opportunity to relax and enjoy,” explained James “Bear” Maryland, president of the HBCU Boosters.

Amongst the attendees were members of various organizations, city councils, political candidates, religious organizations/leaders, sports figures, fishing experts, mothers, fathers, guardians, and athletes from Lincoln Preparatory High School, Ruston High and Ruston Jr. High.

There were many United States Military Veterans in attendance, representatives from

the Lincoln Parish School Board, the Grambling City Council (John Brown-Fishing expert), Troy Brooks from the LUCC Organization and Brooks Insurance Agency and 22 Hands Up.

Many came together to donate all kinds of food and donations to make the day run smoothly, Casandra Smith of the former Grambling’s Smith Insurance Agency made a donation to the success of the program. Sandra Gail and Yolanda Rushing, Roosevelt “Gabby” Strong of the Old Strong Barbecue Restaurant, Ida Mangham donated a delicious cake and Andrew Battle of the Lake Foursome ownership family, dropped in with positive greetings.

Charlotte Woods caught the largest fish at the outing, Maryland said. He offered a thank you to the fishing coordinators: Carl McCarter, Rickey Burton; picnic coordinators: Hen-



Boosters and Youth prepare for trip

ry Kelly and a special thanks to Roe Maryland and “Niece” Spencer. Also, a special thanks

bringing 40 Athletes to the outing.

The organization plans a second gathering at Grambling’s City Park on Saturday, August 8, from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. to celebrate “Back To School” Fun, Fellowship, and Fishing Outing.

This event is primarily for our school youth; however, we are inviting some senior citizens and former military veterans to attend,” said Maryland.

A menu of hot dogs’ hamburgers, chips, baked beans, soda and water will be provided. However, Some Supporters Are Bringing Their Grills For Barbeque, Chicken Wings, Chicken Leg Quarters, Ribs, and Sausage.

Please join The HBCU Boosters, 22 Hands and other organizations by donating to the success of the outing. For further information contact Maryland or a Booster member.

Announcements

NAACP will hold monthly meetings on third Thursday

The Grambling Branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) #6094B will host its Executive Committee meeting at 5:30 p.m. and regular monthly meetings at 6 p.m. by teleconference on the 3rd Thursdays of the month. The next meeting is scheduled for July 16.

Line Dance class open to the Grambling area

A Line Dance Class with Yatta at Board & Bottle is now available for the Grambling area each Monday at 130 W. Park Ave. in Ruston and doors open at 5:30 p.m. The free class is being instructed by Kenyatta Collins.

The next session is set for Monday, July 6. For more information, please contact Collins at 832-891-7488 or WWW.REALLYGREAT-SITE.COM.

Master Gardeners to offer 11-week course

The North Central Louisiana Master Gardeners now hold an 11-week summer course. The course began on June 30 and runs through September.

The second 11-week course will offer participants a certificate during a September graduation ceremony. Those graduating from the course will join the local Master Gardeners for future community involvement.

For additional information contact K. Bass at 318- 251- 5134 or email her at kyleigh-bass@agcenter.lsu.edu.

Sign Up Now for free CivicReady

The Civic Ready Messaging System is a mass notification system built for government communications. This is a free service for our citizens. Please sign up so you can be notified of city-wide alerts and emergency notifications. Sign up by going to City of Grambling website (www.cityof-grambling.org) and clicking on CivicReady.

City of Grambling Water Department Warns of ‘Wrong’ Pay sites

The Water Department of Grambling wants Citizens to beware of paying their bills on the wrong sites online. Citizens should pay their water bills, property taxes and tickets at cityofgrambling.org ONLY. Once at the site, you will be directed to the payment page (ncount.com) where you can pay your bills.

Several of these ‘wrong’ sites have cropped up lately according to the Water Department. One such site is doxo.com. DO NOT pay your bills on this site. Once your money is gone, the City has no way to retrieve it so BEWARE!

Councilwoman has started ‘Listening Post’ for Grambling citizens

Grambling City Councilwoman Delores Smith/Mayor Pro tem is available on the first Monday of each month, noon at Grambling’s City Hall for what she calls a “Listening Post.” Smith is available to listen to, or answer city-related issues citizens may have. The listening post is a designated place and time to visit with Smith to get questions or concerns heard.

Free food distribution set for Saturdays

The Lincoln United Community Coalition will be distributing free food for those who qualify each Saturday from 10 a.m. until noon. Food is distributed on first, third and fourth Saturdays from the Walmart retail store; second Saturday from the Northeast Louisiana Food Bank out of Monroe. Persons can come to the office at 407 N. Hazel in

Ruston on distribution day at 9:30 to qualify. Plates are also sold for \$10 to help support the organization.

For more information, please contact Patricia Mims Brooks 318-265-2011 (office) or 214-662-5407.

Grambling Community Garden seek volunteers

Volunteers are needed for the Grambling Community Garden. If you are interested in lending a hand, contact DeVaria Ponton, master gardener. The garden is managed by Grow Grambling, a 501(c) (3) non-profit organization. Ponton can grant volunteers hours and service-learning hours. Volunteers may contact Ponton at 318-278-9892.

‘No Limit’ accepting registration for Summer 2026

The No Limit Soldiers Program is accepting registration and sign-ups. All area youth are encouraged to come out and take part. For more information, please contact Howard Kirkpatrick, 318-497-2978, Montez Moss, 318-243-7451 or Kelli Granger at 318-664-5435.

The North Louisiana Autism organization offers support

The Autism Society of North Louisiana is a nonprofit organization that provides support, resources, advocacy, and community programs for autistic individuals and their families while promoting autism acceptance and inclusion throughout North Louisiana.

For more information or to connect with the organization, please contact us at autism-northla@gmail.com

Parish public transportation available to Grambling

The Lincoln Parish Public Transportation System (LPPTS) is available to the public, including the Grambling area. The system currently provides demand-response, curb to curb, non-emergency service and operates on a first call/come first serve reservation schedule. The service is handicap accessible.

Reservations are required 24 hours in advance unless prepaid and cancellations must be made two hours prior to pick-up time. For additional information please contact Samantha Dimmer, transportation coordinator 318-251-5138.



CHURCH NEWS

The Black Church Leader Who Was Responsible for Juneteenth Becoming A Holiday

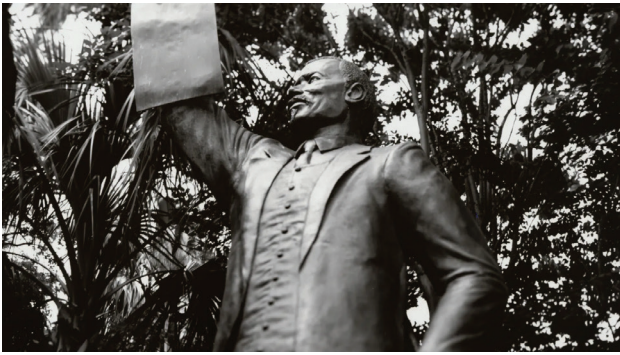
Jessica Janvier

In the summer of 1865, the good news of freedom finally came to more than 250,000 slaves in Texas. Union troops gathered in the city of Galveston and read a general’s order to the public: “The people of Texas are informed that, in accordance with a proclamation from the Executive of the United States, all slaves are free.”

The order, issued on June 19, was a watershed moment for Black Texans. They should have been freed two years earlier, under the Emancipation Proclamation. But Texas, a Confederate stronghold, refused to recognize that decree until the tail

end of the Civil War, when Union troops arrived carrying the handwritten order. Those enslaved celebrated their Freedom Day as “Juneteenth,” and the unofficial holiday was passed down from generation to generation.

More than a century later, Albert Ely Edwards, a Baptist minister and a Texas state legislator who was a veteran of the Civil Rights Movement, pushed for Texas to recognize the importance of that June day. While serving in the Texas House of Representatives in 1979, Edwards, just a year into his new political career, advocated for a bill that sought to make Juneteenth a state holiday. The effort succeeded,



A nine-foot statue of Al Edwards, who proposed the 1979 legislation to make Juneteenth a Texas State holiday, on the grounds of Ashton Villa.

ed, setting the precedent for the federal holiday we now celebrate. But it required much endurance, and there’s something we can learn from that history today.

Edwards, who died in 2020, saw the Juneteenth bill test his perseverance, political savviness, will-

ingness to compromise, and ability to bring together a coalition (in a predominantly white legislative body) that favored creating the holiday.

The initial outreach was hard. In an interview with the nonprofit organization the HistoryMakers, Edwards bemoaned,

“When I would go to white legislators with my flow chart to check off who I had and who I didn’t have, my first time around, they all said no.”

Some legislators told him they would lose their seats if they voted for a Black holiday or said it would cause division. Others had more practical reasons: It was going to cost the state money, and state employees already had too many holidays. But after some back-room negotiations, compromises, and seven rewrites, the bill passed and Juneteenth was officially recognized as a state holiday in 1980.

That said, he accomplished something great in bringing Juneteenth’s

recognition out of the silos of Black acknowledgment alone and doing so decades ago in the Deep South. What is even more amazing is the faith we see in his story. It is a testimony of what happens when [people] refuse to draw back in despondency during dark periods, and how a faith that endures eventually produces fruit that will bless the world around us.

Jessica Janvier is an academic whose focus crosses the intersections of African American religious history and church history. She teaches at Meachum School of Haymanot and works in the Intercultural Studies Department at Columbia International University.

Church Announcements

Harmony Baptist Church to hold reunion, revival

The Harmony Baptist Church of Arcadia, Louisiana, will hold a family reunion Sunday, July 12 during the morning service. The church will also start revival July 20 through Wednesday, July 22.

The guest preacher and church family for the reunion service will be Rev. Elliott Abney and the Love Chapel B.C. family. The church family will also serve on Tuesday, July 21.

Men’s Fellowship group to celebrate Jesus

The area Men’s Fellowship group will meet every second Monday of each month at the Memorial Funeral Home Chapel in Arcadia, Louisiana, located on 128680 LA-9 71001 from 6 p.m. to 7 p.m. The men only group gathers for strength, courage and knowledge.

The next meeting will be held on

Monday, July 13. The meeting is spearheaded by Patrick Jefferson, former state representative, along with invited speakers. Every man is invited to come and worship.

White Oak holds pastoral anniversary

The White Oak Baptist Church will hold its pastor’s appreciation Sunday, July 19, at 2 p.m. The church is in Homer.

The guest pastor and church family will be Rev. Elliott Abney and the Love Chapel Baptist Church of Ruston.

All area churches are invited to join in the service.

Lewis Temple CME Church Food Distribution

Lewis Temple CME Church on 301 Main Street in Grambling distributes free bags of food every third Monday of the month from 1-3 p.m. To qualify

you need identification and a utility bill. You must live in the Grambling or Simsboro area.

For more information, please call Liz White at 318-299-7509.

China Grove Church opens ‘China Closet’

The China Grove Baptist Church will open the ‘China Closet’ to the public each Friday from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the church on 407 Vernon St., Ruston.

The Closet will be open to anyone in need of clothing or assistance. It is under the supervision of the matrons/mission department of the church.

For additional information contact Evangelist Annie Wilson at 318-570-9134 or call Tonika Blake at 318-243-3295. The church is pastored by Rev. Damian E. Wilson, Sr.

Church of Christ in Grambling Extends invitation

The Church of Christ in Grambling invites all to worship. Bible Study is held Sunday at 10 a.m. and morning worship at 11 a.m. Listeners may join online services by tuning into the YouTube channel, 146 King St. Church of Christ. Wednesday night Bible study begins at 7 p.m. The Zoom ID is 9744743562 and the church may be contact at ChurchofChristatGrambling@gmail.com or 318- 596-1038. The Church is located at 146 King St.

New Hope Church to hold community-wide Bible Study

The New Hope Baptist Church of Ruston will hold a noon community-wide Bible Study each Wednesday. The church is located at 301 W. Vaughn Ave., Ruston.

Editor’s Note: If you have a church announcement, please email the information to the gramblingconnection@gmail.com.

Area Church Directory

ASSEMBLY OF GOD

Cathedral of Praise Worship Center - 2877 Highway 33, Ruston
First Assembly of God - 1400 Woodward Ave., Ruston

BAPTIST

Alabama, 16061 Hwy. 151, Arcadia
Barnett Springs, 1601 S. Barnett Springs Rd., Ruston
China Grove Missionary, 406 Vernon St., Ruston
Christ Temple, 7349 Hwy 80, Ruston
Church of Restoration, 285 Main St., Grambling
Cook, 2000 Cooktown Rd, Ruston
Corinth, 4327 Hw 545, Dubach
Countyline, 7426 Hwy. 146, Ruston
Dayspring Baptist Ministries, 3191 South Vienna St, Ruston
Emmanuel, 1200 Farmerville Hwy., Ruston
Fellowship, 6476 Hwy 151, Dubach
Fellowship, 1572 Highway 507 South, Simsboro
First, 117 Oak St., - One block south of Hwy. 80 in Choudrant
First, Hico St., Dubach
First, 200 S. Trenton St., Ruston
First, Simsboro
Friendship, 143 West Sixth Street, Bernice
Grace, 2808 Trenton Ave. , Ruston
Grace Bible, 216 Rough Edge Rd., Ruston
Greater Pleasant Grove, 1270 Golf Course Rd., Unionville
Greater St. Luke, 163 St. Luke Church Rd, Arcadia
Gumspring, 3117 Hwy 151, Farmerville
Hebron, Love Chapel, 1525 Sikes St, Ruston
Hico, 653 Hwy. 152, Dubach
Hopewell, 7657 Fellowship Rd., Hwy 151, Dubach
Lane Chapel, 1016 McAllister, Ruston
Lanes Chapel, Hwy. 151 Downsville
Liberty Hill, Simsboro
Longstraw, 1799 Styles, Ranch Rd.,
Love Chapel, 1525 Sikes St, Ruston
Macedonia, No.1, Rt. 2,

Dubach
Macedonia, No. 2, 489 E. Sibley Rd., Choudrant
Mineral Springs, 4599 Hwy 822, Dubach
Mount Harmony, 210 Mt. Harmony Church Rd, Ruston
Mount Calm, 566 Mount Calm Rd., Simsboro
Mount Olive, 571 Mt. Olive Rd. Grambling, Louisiana.
Mount Olive Outreach, 2817 S. Service Road W., Ruston
Mount Pisgah, Hwy. 3061, Ruston
Mount Sinai, 2269 Hwy. 145, Choudrant
Mount Vernon, 1356 Hwy. 167 N., Dubach
Mount Zion, 2586 Hwy 150., Grambling
Mount Zion No. 2, 113 California Plant Road, Dubach
New Hope, Choudrant
New Hope, 302 W. Vaughn, Ruston
New Liberty Hill, Hwy. 544, Simsboro
New Living Word Ministries, 1900 W. Barnett Springs, Ruston
New Pilgrim Rest, Inc., 2697 Elm St., Arcadia
New Prospect, 3438 Hwy. 167 N., Dubach
New Prosperity, 1378 Prosperity Church, Clay
New Rocky Valley, 2155 Martin Luther King Ave., Grambling
Northview Missionary, Highway 33, Ruston
Olive Grove, 3138 Olive Grove Rd, Choudrant
Pilgrim Rest, 622 W. Line Ave., Ruston
Pine Grove, 470 Chandler Rd., Ruston
Pleasant Grove, 1366 Pleasant Grove Road, Choudrant
Pleasant Grove, “The Oasis in the Woods”, 446 Bowden Rd., Ruston
Pleasant Hill, 1127 Mondy Rd, Simsboro
Rock Corner & Garden of Prayer, 824 Rock Corner Rd, Dubach, off Hwy.33, 14 miles north of Ruston
Rocky Valley, Simsboro
Solid Rock, 1511 West California Hwy 80, Ruston
Southside, 3191 South Vienna St., Ruston
Springhill, 727 Dicks Store

Rd., Ruston
St. David, Vienna.
St. John, Old Grambling Rd., Ruston.
St. Mary, 1114 Larson St., Ruston.
St. Peter, 404 Longstraw Rd., Ruston
St. Rest, 09 Walker Rd., Choudrant
St. Rest, Hwy. 146 West, Dubach
Temple, 1515 S. Service Rd. W. Ruston
True Believers, 184 CCC Road, Ruston
The Springs, (A ministry of Temple Baptist Church) 1601 S. Barnett Springs Ave., Ruston
The Springs.life The Word, 504 S. Main St., Grambling University - 2856 W. California, Ruston
Vernon, 190 Vernon-Eros Road, Ruston
Woods Chapel, 326 Hwy 454, Ruston
Zion Hill, 505 Lee St., Ruston
Zion Traveler, 1201 Martin Luther King Dr, Ruston

CATHOLIC

St. Benedict, 471 Main St., Grambling
St. Thomas Aquinas, 810 Carey Avenue, Ruston

CHURCH OF CHRIST

Church of Christ, 2902 Hwy. 80 West, Ruston
Church of Christ, 146 King St., Grambling
Northside, 1804 N. Trenton St., Ruston
Orleans Cir. Church of Christ, 2103 Orleans Cir., Ruston
Ruston, 2300 W. Woodward Ave., Ruston, www. ruston-churchofchrist.org

EPISCOPAL

Church of the Redeemer, 504 Tech Dr., Ruston
St. Luke’s, 538 Main St., Grambling

METHODIST

Ansley Union, 328 Ansley Rd, Ruston, located 10 miles south of Ruston off Hwy 167
Antioch UMC, Simsboro

Arcadia First UMC, Arcadia
Choudrant UMC, 125 Pecan St., Choudrant
Dubach UMC, Dubach
First UMC, Arcadia
Grace, 3401 N. Trenton St., Ruston
Lewis Temple, Main St., Grambling
Mays Chapel CME, 615 W. Line Ave., Ruston
Memorial UMC, 9325 Hwy 80, Simsboro.
Mt. Mariah UMC - Salem UMC - 11793 Hwy. 151, Dubach
St. Peter AME, 1104 Arlington St., Ruston.
Trinity Methodist, 1000 Woodward Ave., Ruston
Wesley Chapel, 4330 Hwy. 818, Ruston

PENTECOSTAL

Anchor Tabernacle, Exit 93 from I-20 then South 1/2 mile, Choudrant
First Pentecostal, Corner of Kentucky and Goodwin Ruston
King’s Court UPC, 2401 S. Service Rd. West, Ruston
LifePoint Church, 1018 S. Vienna St., Ruston. lifepoint-truston.com
The Pentecostals, 2851 Hwy 33 North, Ruston
Powerhouse Temple of Christ Apostolic, 101 Main St., Grambling
United Pentecostal, Dubach
Zion Temple Apostolic Faith Deliverance - Eastern Hills, off Beacon Light Rd., Ruston
Voice of Revival Ministry - 304 W. California St., Ruston
PRESBYTERIAN Alabama (USA), 2091 Hwy 145, Choudrant
Covenant Reformed, 2106 Cooktown Rd., Ruston
Greenwood, Lincoln Parish Rd. 181, between Mitcham’s & Hwy. 146, Ruston
Ruston (USA), 212 N. Bonner St.

OTHERS

Abundant Grace Tabernacle, 3092 Hwy 556, Choudrant
Campus Community Worship Center, 1000 Saratoga St., Ruston
Christian L.I.F.E. Church,

107 Love Ave., Ruston
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, 205 Woodhaven Rd., Ruston
Church of the Living God, 1438 Hwy. 167 W., Dubach
Church of the Nazarene, 1101 Center St., Ruston
Douglas Church, 1642 Hwy 821, Ruston
Church of God in Christ, 256 Voss Street, Dubach
Faith Church, 1507 Goodwin Road, Ruston
Focus Christian Ministries, Martin Luther King Community Center, 901 Martin Luther King Dr., Ruston
Fountain of Praise United Worship Center, 1394 Hazel St., Arcadia
The Gospel, 108 Sanctuary Rd, Ruston
Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church, 2508 Kavanaugh Road, Ruston
Impact Worship Center, Greenwood Recreation Center, 1306 Cornell Ave, Ruston
Ruston Housing Authority Building 901 Martin Luther King Dr. Ruston.
Lifechurch.LA, 3000 S. Vienna St., Ruston
LifePoint Church of Ruston, 1018 S. Vienna St., Ruston
Living Water Full Gospel Church, 149 Fairgrounds Rd., Ruston
Miracle Temple COGIC, 1405 S. Farmerville, Ruston
New Living Word Ministry, 1900 Barnett Springs Rd. Ruston
New Testament Church at Grambling Inc., 508 Main St., Grambling
Praise Temple, Ramada Inn, 107 Love Ave., Ruston
St. Paul Lutheran, 504 Tech Drive, Ruston
The Bridge Community Church, North Campus, 2301 N. Trenton, Ruston
Triumph The Church and Kingdom of God in Christ, Hwy. 3061 E. Tenn. Rd., Ruston
United Faith Tabernacle Ministries & Prayer Center, 303 Cherry St., Bernice,
Upon the Rock Outreach Center, 513 E. Texas Ave., Ruston



ARTS & CULTURE

Black Voters Matter Launches Multi-Media “Declaration Of A New Nation” Series

(Black PR Wire) GEORGIA – As the U.S. marks its 250th year of independence on July 4, the country continues to grapple with the promises offered by the 14th Amendment: equal rights and due process for all its citizens. For more than two centuries, Black and Latino people, indigenous communities, women, Gay and Trans people, immigrants, and poor people have fought for full citizenship in a system that was never built with them in mind.

On June 11, as a part of its We Got Us campaign, Black Voters Matter (BVM) launched its new series called Declaration of a New Nation, to expose the lie of equality and due process in U.S. jurisprudence and life, while also offering an alternative U.S. Constitution and society that will truly build and reflect a multi-cultural democratic nation where all citizens will truly share power, prosperity, liberty, and resources.

The Declaration of a New Nation takes a multifaceted approach to exploring what true democracy looks like through the eyes of

those who have historically been excluded. The series will share thought-provoking, historically accurate information across social media and other digital platforms through compelling infographics, video vignettes, and a documentary short series that explores not only the current problems with the existing constitution and governing structures, but also the pathways to create something new through discussions with special guests, scholars, and activists. In addition, BVM will host four in-person town hall style conversations to help unpack these complex topics and collectively re-imagine what we need and want this country to be. The first town hall will take place on June 19th in Galveston, TX, the birthplace of Black Freedom, ahead of the annual Juneteenth celebration.

BVM launched this series to counter the aggressive rollback of voting rights and civil rights protections of Black and marginalized people happening in Southern, former confederate states, all while the Supreme Court is work-



ing to enshrine white supremacist/patriarchal power not seen since the Dred Scott and Jim Crow era. The Declaration of a New Nation series aims to encourage everyday folks across the country to see themselves as “Architects of a New Nation” and imagine a new America, in the same way that formerly enslaved people reimagined the United States and launched the Negro Convention in the 1830s, which led to the 14th Amendment, and women reimagined the country at Seneca Falls in 1848 that birthed the 19th amendment. And

again, in the 1960s, when Black people and allies reimagined our democracy and created both the Voting Rights Act and the Civil Rights Act.

“We have seen what the U.S. looks like without strong and definitive protections to protect the political rights of those in the margins. It looked like 100 years of lynching, state-sanctioned murder, denial of voting, separate and unequal institutions and funding, and the inability to do anything about it AFTER the ratification of the 13th, 14th, and 15th amendments. But no more. The 13th, 14th, and 15th amendments were only the floor. We are going to embrace the promise announced in the Declaration of Independence and stop what is wrong and create something new, just as our collective ancestors did,” said April England Albright, National Legal Director of Black Voters Matter.

“The power of the people is our best defense against autocracy. We’ve got to engage people where they are and inspire them to think beyond the limitations of the

Constitution and the racist systems that counted our ancestors as three-fifths of a person. Now is the time for us to think long and hard about the kind of country we want because we have the power to change it,” said Cliff Albright, Co-Founder of Black Voters Matter.

“America is broken; it was flawed from the moment the framers conceived the Constitution within the framework of white patriarchy,” said LaTosha Brown, Co-Founder of Black Voters Matter. “For those of us who love democracy and freedom, we cannot see ourselves merely as citizens of this nation. We must see ourselves as founders of the America still to come. We are the architects with the vision and the responsibility to tear down a broken system and build in its place the America we desire, and we deserve.”

For more information on this and other news from Black Voters Matter, visit the website. Questions and Interview requests should be sent to media@blackvotersmatterfund.org.

GRAMBLING STATE AMONG SCHOOLS TO PARTICIPATE IN INAUGURAL SEASON OF HISTORIC LEAGUE: “POWER4+ HBCU ESPORTS LEAGUE”

(Black PR Wire) LOS ANGELES, CA — PlayVS and Urban One recently revealed the official name and logo of their national HBCU collegiate esports competition: Power4+ HBCU Esports League. Building on their landmark February partnership announcement, the companies also shared that 25 premier institutions have already signed on to compete in the inaugural season kicking off February 2027, including Bowie State University, Clark Atlanta University, Grambling State University, and Howard University. The full list of participating schools is available here.

The three-year partnership es-

tablishes a dedicated, fee-free competitive gaming ecosystem within the PlayVS College League, designed to expand access, visibility, and career pathways for HBCU students nationwide.

Key Milestones & Timeline:

Summer 2026: An advisory committee of esports leaders from participating HBCUs will convene to finalize the league’s structure and select eligible game titles.

Fall 2026: A series of HBCU-focused invitational competitions will begin, offering early integration opportunities for founding brand partners.

February 2027: The Power4+ HBCU Esports League inaugural



season kicks off, culminating in an in-person national championship event.

“This first wave of participating schools is just the beginning,” said Charles O’Donnell, Director of Col-

legiate at PlayVS. “By partnering with Urban One, we are combining best-in-class competition with powerful storytelling and national reach. We’re building a long-term pipeline that supports students from competition to careers in gaming, technology, and beyond.”

“The rapid adoption we’re seeing from HBCUs across the country affirms both the cultural relevance and the economic potential of esports within our community,” said Alvord Reese, AVP of Sales at Urban One. “Black consumers continuously drive cultural and commercial trends, and gaming is no exception. By combining Urban One’s media reach with Play-

VS’ infrastructure, we are creating an unprecedented, high-impact platform for partners and brands looking to authentically engage with this highly influential, tech-forward audience.”

Power4+ HBCU Esports League aims to bridge the opportunity gap and foster the next generation of Black gamers, creators, and tech professionals. The league provides a rare, turnkey ecosystem for forward-thinking brands to support diversity in tech while tapping into the immense economic power and loyalty of the Black gaming community.

For more information about the Power4+ HBCU Esports League, visit: <http://pcl.gg/power4>.

THE GRAMBLING ★ CONNECTION

The Grambling Connection Goes On Sale in Stores September 1, 2026

Offering Early Bird Discount (Until August 1)

Keep up with what's going on in your hometown for less than the cost of a Starbucks coffee per month. We cover community news, national news, church news, sports, entertainment and “food for the soul” Don't wait!. Get your subscription now!

Digital
\$5 per month /
\$55 per year

Print
\$9.99 per month /
\$115 per year

Combo
\$11.99 per month /
\$135 per year



www.gramblingconnection.com/early-bird





HEALTH & WELLNESS

CHARMING'S CORNER

The Power of Silence, Surrender, and Letting God Lead

By Charming Davis

In a world that constantly demands noise, movement, and reaction, silence has become one of the most sacred acts of resistance. Silence is often misunderstood. Many see it as weakness, avoidance, or absence. But true silence is power. It is the pause between the storm and the rainbow. It is the place where truth settles after emotion has shaken the ground beneath us. There comes a point in life where fighting every battle, explaining every wound, and carrying every burden becomes too heavy for the soul. That is where surrender begins. Surrender is not giving up. It is giving over. Giving over the need to control every outcome. Giving over the need to force understanding. Giving over the need to chase what God has already assigned to find you. Sometimes God will quiet every-



Charming Davis

thing around you so you can finally hear Him clearly. No distractions. No opinions. No chaos. Just His voice,

whispering direction into the deep chambers of your spirit. In my own journey, I've learned that silence is where healing begins. In silence, I met the parts of myself that were screaming beneath the smile. In silence, I found the roots of my pain, my patterns, and my purpose. And in surrender, I found peace. Not because life became easier, but because I stopped wrestling with what was never mine to carry. We live in a generation that glorifies hustle, urgency, and proving ourselves. But God often works in stillness. Seeds do not grow because we scream at them. They grow in darkness, buried in surrender, watered by faith. The same is true for us. There is beauty in trusting divine timing. There is strength in resting. There is wisdom in knowing when to be still and allow God to move mountains you were never built to climb alone.

If you are in a season of uncertainty, transition, or emotional weight, consider this your reminder: silence can be your sanctuary. Surrender can be your strategy. And God can be your anchor. As I step into a new chapter, I am filled with deep gratitude for every soul who has supported, visited, and poured into Naturally Charming Universe here in Grambling. This community has been part of my growth, and I carry that love with me. Naturally Charming Universe will be relocating to Houston, Texas. Though the physical space is shifting, the work continues. Distant energy balancing services remain available, along with online shopping for wellness tools and offerings. Growth requires movement. Healing requires trust. And sometimes the bravest thing you can do is be still enough to let God lead. "Be still in the presence of the Lord, and wait patiently for him to act." Psalm 37:7 (NLT)

23-Year-Old Becomes First in Louisiana to be Cured of Sickle Cell Disease Through Gene Therapy

Nationwide — Daniel Cressy, a 23-year-old African American man from New Orleans, Louisiana, has become the first person in his state to be functionally cured of sickle cell disease through gene therapy. After a challenging two-year treatment journey, doctors say the disease is no longer active in his body. Cressy received the groundbreaking treatment at Manning Family Children's Hospital. The procedure used his own stem cells, which doctors

edited in a laboratory to stop producing the defective cells responsible for sickle cell disease, according to WLBT. The road to recovery was not easy. Speaking during a press conference, Cressy described the experience as the most difficult challenge of his life. He said the treatment process lasted two years and tested him physically and emotionally. Before the procedure, sickle cell disease threatened his dream of becoming a pi-



Daniel Cressy

lot. Now, with the disease no longer active, Cressy hopes to help others facing similar struggles. He plans to support patients through a nonprofit organization focused on people undergoing treatment. "I don't want anybody else to have to experience the loneliness and the uncertainty and the hopelessness that I felt a couple of years ago," Cressy said. Doctors say the gene therapy offers new hope for people living with sickle cell disease.

Louisiana is home to about 3,000 residents with the condition, many of whom continue to face challenges accessing advanced treatment options. Cressy also called for broader access to care. "Someone's ability to access treatment and potentially cure should not be defined by their zip code," he said. "People in Louisiana deserve the same opportunity as people anywhere else in this country."

Do You Know Your Numbers?

As we get older, taking care of our health becomes one of the most important investments we can make. Many serious conditions—including high blood pressure, diabetes, high cholesterol, and kidney disease—often develop quietly, without noticeable symptoms. That's why knowing your numbers can make all the difference. Do you know your blood pressure? Your blood sugar? Your cholesterol? Your weight? These simple measurements provide valuable clues about what's happening inside your body long before you may feel sick. Catching a problem early often means it can be treated

KNOW YOUR NUMBERS

BE INFORMED. BE EMPOWERED. STAY HEALTHY.

BLOOD PRESSURE
Keep your pressure in check.

BLOOD SUGAR
Balance today for a healthier tomorrow.

CHOLESTEROL
Keep your levels in a healthy range.

WEIGHT
A healthy weight supports a healthy life.

KIDNEY HEALTH
Healthy kidneys help you live well.

A few minutes today could add years to your tomorrow.

or managed before it leads to a heart attack, stroke, vision loss, or other serious complications. The good news is that checking your numbers doesn't have to be difficult. Most doctor's offices, pharmacies, and

community health fairs offer screenings, and many people can monitor their blood pressure or blood sugar at home. Make it a goal to schedule regular checkups, take your medications as prescribed, stay active, and eat a balanced diet. If your numbers aren't where they should be, don't be discouraged. Work with your healthcare provider to develop a plan and take one step at a time. Your health is one of your greatest treasures. Knowing your numbers today can help you enjoy more healthy tomorrows with the people who matter most.

THE GRAMBLING CONNECTION

CELEBRATE MILESTONES

You can now celebrate birthdays, weddings & anniversaries, achievements, and more in The Grambling Connection for just \$25!

For Requests, call 318-224-2676 or email gramblingconnection@gmail.com

Monica Jones
REALTOR®
DIRECT: 318.791.9318
OFFICE: 318.362.0007
MONICAJONESHOMES@GMAIL.COM

2120 Cypress Street
West Monroe, LA 71291

Licensed in Louisiana
Each Office is Independently Owned and Operated

Hometown Service,
★ **FAMILY RUN AGENCY** ★
with **OVER 70** COMBINED YEARS OF INSURANCE EXPERIENCE!

State Farm

Give our family a try!

- Personal & Commercial Insurance
- Auto • Home • Life • Business
- Trusted • Local • Family Focused
- Here for You – Today & Tomorrow!

MENTION THIS AD and receive a FREE GIFT!

105 E. REYNOLDS DRIVE | RUSTON | 255-5050

PHOTO GALLERY - JUNETEENTH & ALL SCHOOL REUNION

Photo Credit: Tony Valentino

