

Lighting The Road To The Future

New Orleans

Data

News Weekly

"The People's Paper"

**New
Orleans
Own
Jon Batiste
Wins Oscar**



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A Data News Weekly Exclusive

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Mayor LaToya Cantrell

Into the Future...COVID-19 One Year Later



New Orleans Mayor LaToya Cantrell, continues to lead the City through the COVID-19 pandemic.

On the Cover: New Orleans Mayor Latoya Cantrell, photographed by Jonathan Ferrara

Edwin Buggage
Editor-in-Chief

COVID-19 Changing Our Lives Forever

It's been over one year since the COVID-19 Pandemic has ravaged the world, ensnaring it in a web of tragedy, death, and uncertainty. It's created new norms as mask wearing, social distancing, zoom meetings, endless facetimeing, mental health challenges, longing for and missing the intimacy of friends and loved ones.

But today, we are seeing the potential of brighter days ahead, as vaccines are available, and the CDC recently amended its guidelines in regard to vaccinated individuals in small groups being able to gather indoors mask-less or larger groups being able to gather outdoors.

This is welcome news, for many have not seen family, friends, or relatives in over a year. It is the embrace of grandparents seeing children and grandchildren or friends reuniting, that is so desired in a City where intimate connections are so much a part of everyday life. It is the lifeblood that runs through the veins of the people of New Orleans.

Data News Weekly recently spoke with New Orleans Mayor LaToya Cantrell about the state of the City during COVID-19 and our path forward.

Leadership...Vaccines and Re-Opening

"We continue to be a leader at the state and national level and now our challenge is the race to get our people vaccinated," remarks Mayor Cantrell, who has led the City's effort during COVID-19. Following the science and sometimes pushing back against pressure from some segments of the City and state to re-open.

A move that many have lauded Cantrell for her courage to push back, that over a year later one could reasonably argue have saved lives. This fact, given early in the Pandemic New Orleans was considered the epicenter of the virus.

As vaccines are available in New Orleans includ-

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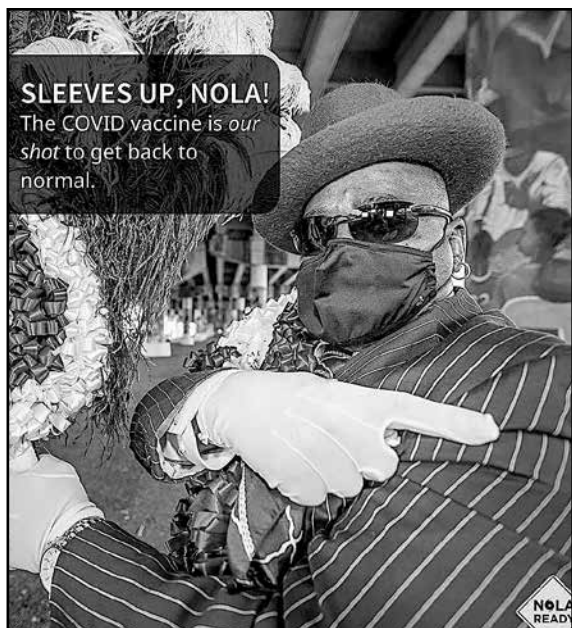
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Cover Story, Continued from page 2.



In regard to COVID-19 vaccinations across the City, Mayor Cantrell is optimistic, "We need to get to 75-80% of our population being fully vaccinated to get to herd immunity. We are making some ground and are not there yet."



The City have used effective marketing campaigns using culture bearers to encourage residents to get vaccinated. (Mayor Cantrell getting vaccination)



ing the Johnson and Johnson dose after an 11-day suspension, more people are getting shots in arms. Of course, many know that New Orleans is a City with a unique culture, approach, and outlook on life. And in an attempt to get people to get the vaccine is no exception.

We have had our culture/bearers second lining, vaccine festivals with music and bars offering a shot of liquor for getting the vaccine and of course more conventional outreach efforts, with the goal to get to herd immunity.

"We need to get to 75-80% of the population being fully vaccinated to get to herd immunity. We are making some ground and are not there yet," says Cantrell.

While there are many who are rolling up their sleeves in this race to that number there is some reluctance among some of the citizens.

The Road to Herd Immunity

LaToya Cantrell, whose work as a community leader before be-

coming Mayor of the City of New Orleans is using some of these skills to go into neighborhoods in this effort to meet people where they are to promote the benefits of taking the vaccine.

"We are meeting people doing direct outreach. We have identified where the needs are, but we have to do a much better job in our Black and Brown communities."

Despite what some believe because of gentrification going on across the City, African Americans are still 59% of the population. Therefore, for the City to reach herd immunity, it is important that more African Americans roll up their sleeves and get vaccinated.

While many of the barriers have been removed relating to access, with RTA, UBER offering free rides and meeting people where they are, whether it is local pharmacies, drive through mega sites, everyone 16 and older can receive the COVID-19 Vaccine.

But much in the name of myths

and misinformation continues to swirl around the community that is preventing some from getting the vaccine.

"I understand why there is reluctance among some of our citizens, but we are working hard to educate and build trust among our people and get them to move past myths," says Cantrell.

"Many are concerned about side effects, and I was speaking to someone in Parkway Bakery, who voiced these concerns. And I told him the biggest possible side effect if you are not vaccinated is death, not just to yourself but those you love if they do not receive the vaccine."

Equity...The New Normal

While getting the vaccine is priority one, a full recovery for the City and what a new normal look like is an open question. This is something that Mayor Cantrell is considering as she and her team are charting the course for how to govern and



A City resident holding up her vaccination card. It is important that people get vaccinated for the City to re-open according to Mayor Cantrell.



Mayor Cantrell and Louisiana Governor John Bel Edwards have been working together following the science to keep people safe across the City and State and saving lives during the COVID-19 pandemic.

create policies that will help all the people of the City.

"We had disparity gaps in our City and as always I am looking at things through an equity lens and how we can empower more of our people," remarks Cantrell of what will guide the priorities of her administration.

To illustrate her point Mayor Cantrell speaks of the hospitality industry, which employs many in the City of New Orleans.

"I've talked to some of the leaders in the hospitality industry who are eager to getting people back to 100 percent capacity. But many already have a lack of staffing capacity, because some of those who worked in the industry have pivoted and not looking back."

Continuing she says, "Some are making more on unemployment than the industry pays. I believe moving forward, we should put

the focus on the industry to raise their wages."

Mayor Cantrell believes that the hard-working people employed in New Orleans should be able to live a better quality of life.

"We want them employed, we want them to have more than a living wage, we want them to have healthcare as well and this coming out of COVID-19 is all of our opportunity to help build bridges to the middle class for more of our citizens."

Mayor Cantrell has forecast that hopefully by October the City would reach herd immunity, but says it is up to the people to roll up their sleeves and get vaccinated.

"Our benchmarks have to be clear; we will not be going to 100 percent for a while and when we reach herd immunity it will be different, and it is my hope that can be a new day for our folks."

"April Showers Bring May Flowers"

Renée Dugué
Co-Founder Reborn and Rising

From Desire to Purpose...A Dreamer's Journey

How do you grow up at a time in the city considered the murder capital of the country and still have warm memories that make you smile and laugh? Growing up in The Desire, compared to most, we were poor boys and poor girls, who loved Po'Boys and Beignets, and playing outside until the streetlights lit up on both sunny and rainy days. Rainy days were my favorite. I loved playing in the rain. I'd splash in every puddle I found, make it home soaked, smelling like a wet puppy, and be welcomed in with a warm smile or quick smack (Momma's mood depending), a dry towel, and always something good to eat. Those were the days. Growing up free and fearless, protected by a village of elders who made it their business to mind ours.

We were kept safe by Grand-Maws, GrandPaws, neighbors, NaNans, Aunties, Uncles and Parans, Big Cousins, The Candy Lady, and even The Watermelon Man. They had wisdom for days! Most times shared in clichés that I was too young or stubborn to understand. Sayings about your left-hand hiding things from your right-hand, multiple baskets for different eggs, when it rains, it pours...and my Grandma would say April showers bring May flowers not just in April, which made no sense to me then. But Oh Bay-Bay! Best believe I get it nah!

Saved by God's grace and mercy, standing on the shoulders of my Mother and Grandma, I survived the storm of statistics that poverty



Renée Dugué, pictured with her Maternal grandmother, Veronica Lawrence Fedison, along with her mother, Bernadette Fedison Baudy, daughter, Tyranny Dugué Griffith, and granddaughter, Veronica Reine Dugué Griffith. Four Generations of Divine Femininity, sowing seeds to be nurtured by The Son with grace and mercy to rise and blossom forever. An LMT based in Houston, TX., her practice provides in-person and virtual services. Visit ReneeDugue.com to connect and learn more about her personal philosophy of healing through helping, and to support her WALK4WATER Campaign.

pours, leaving The Crescent City on the waves of Hurricane Katrina and washing up in The Bayou City. Truly understanding that water is life, I no longer fight against its currents. Instead, I dance in the rain, the way I used to as an innocent child, knowing that all showers bring flowers. Be encour-

aged to do the same with passion and purpose on your path. As you bring flowers to your Divine Feminine this Mother's Day, be mindful in each moment as you celebrate. Whether you gather physically or spiritually, purpose to see, hear, and feel their love as truly perfect. Our women are

our backbone, our caretakers, and miracle makers. They've weathered storms that watered seeds and produced the most beautiful blossoms. Their creations are magical. Their greatest being YOU! Let's give our Mothers their flowers daily, as we honor them in all that we do.

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New Orleans Own Jon Batiste Wins Oscar and Continues to Make His Mark in the Entertainment Industry.

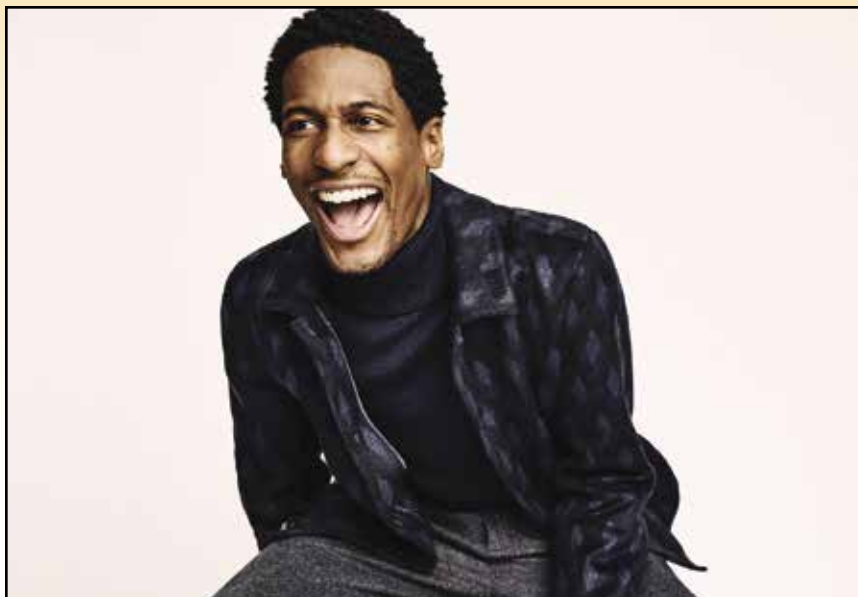
Data News Weekly Staff Edited Report

Jon Batiste is a talent that is re-defining what it means to be a relevant artist and is at the forefront of this generation of creatives.

The animated feature *Soul* picked up its second Oscar win of the night for Original Score and Jon Batiste called out Duke Ellington, Bach, and Nina Simone in a stirring celebration speech.

Batiste scored the Pixar feature along with Nine Inch Nails founder Trent Reznor and Atticus Ross.

"You know what's deep is God gave us 12 notes, it's the same 12 notes that Duke Ellington had, that Bach had, and Nina Simone," he said. "I want to point out that every gift is special. Every contribution with music that comes from



Jon Batiste, is a talent that is at the forefront of the entertainment industry, winning awards and representing the best of New Orleans.

the divine into the instruments into the film, into the minds, hearts and souls of every person who hears it, the stories that happen when you listen to it and watch it and the stories you share, the moments you make, the memories you create, man, it's just so incredibly special. It's just so incredibly special... we're incredibly humbled and thankful. I'm thankful to God for those 12 notes."

Batiste, who is the band leader on *The Late Show with Stephen Colbert*, becomes the third Black winner of the original score category after Prince in 1985 for *Purple Rain* and Herbie Hancock for *Round Midnight* in 1987.

He's also a Golden Globe winner and recording artist and activist Jon Batiste that recently released the highly anticipated and critically acclaimed album *WE ARE* on (Verve Records).

YOU CAN DISTANCE AND STILL BE SOCIAL.

Get vaccinated when it's your turn.

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Festivals Return to New Orleans

Fleur De Lis
Data News Weekly
Contributor

New Orleans is on its way back to normal with a post COVID-19 twist. The City taking a gradual approach to re-opening as more people are getting vaccinated.

In a City that its heartbeat and lifeblood is festivals, the last year because of COVID-19 many were cancelled. This is the case no more as some of festivals return to New Orleans. Although with COVID protocols, the food, fun and music are now returning to the Crescent City.

This past weekend, the Crawfish Festival brought out people in what is only the beginning of the City's recovery and hopefully moving back to a new normal with many great events that will be back in the coming months.



Actress Samantha Beaulieu with New Orleans Music Legend Al "Carnival Time" Johnson.



New Orleans residents are excited about festivals beginning again in the City.

State & Local News

Women and Girls More at Risk During Pandemic

Laycee Ramsey
Data News Weekly
Contributor

When it comes to gender-based violence during the Pandemic, it's an issue often swept under the rug. The United Nations' Commission on the Status of Women has dubbed it a "silent pandemic" citing 243 million women and girls between ages 15 to 49 who have suffered from sexual or physical violence by an intimate partner since the Pandemic started.

The Pandemic has forced more women and girls to stay at home in close proximity to domestic abusers with restricted movement to get away or get help at school or at work. With many public spaces deserted, women are more vulnerable to public assaults. In this state, homicide data over the last few years has ranked the state among the top three deadliest for women.

"Louisiana is the most dangerous state to be a woman," said Dr. Petrice Sams-Abiodun, the Executive Director for the Lindy Boggs National Center for Community Literacy at Loyola University, New Orleans.

"Black women in Louisiana live in poverty and Louisiana is



Dr. Denise Shervington is the President and CEO of the Institute for Women and Ethnic Studies in New Orleans. She called for society to change its norms on how it treats and regards women.



Dr. Petrice Sams-Abiodun is the Executive Director for the Lindy Boggs National Center for Community Literacy and studies the prevalence of gender-based violence in Louisiana.



Dr. Rosanne Adderley is an Associate Professor of African Diaspora History at Tulane University. She suggests that sexual education begins at an earlier age to better prepare children to be aware of abuse.



Sandrine Kenol Wiener works with YWCA Haiti and noted that counseling and psychological services are needed more than ever during this time to help victims cope.

the second largest state in the country for women being killed by men," Abiodun said of recent data while speaking on gender-based violence around the globe during the Pandemic among a panel discussion sponsored by The Crescent City Chapter of The Links, Incorporated on March 25th. The YWCA of Greater New Orleans and the New Orleans Regional Black Chamber of Commerce (NORBCC) co-sponsored the event to have a community conversation around

protecting women and girls.

The biggest need among victims right now is emotional and psychological support, experts shared.

"You don't have to be ashamed of your life or ashamed of who you are because you were a victim of violence," said Sandrine Kenol Wiener, who launched her private practice working with children with behavioral and emotional difficulties in Haiti. Wiener has been working with the YWCA Haiti as the Program Director, by providing Psychosocial Support Pro-

grams to families in need.

She added that it was time that society educates young boys and men on how to treat women and recognize all types of violence whether it's verbal or physical. The sexualization of young women prevents them from being seen as children, and more vulnerable to gender-based violence.

"It's what we are teaching our girls, and what we are preparing for, we need to change what is being taught and what they think is socially accept-

able," Kenol Wiener added.

What experts say is common locally and around the globe is that treatment of women, particularly low-income and marginalized women, and girls, is consistent from place to place.

"We create norms that we inherited and don't question," said Dr. Denise Shervington, the President of the Institute for Women and Ethnic studies, who spoke on the panel. "I agree with this and think if we can inherit these norms, we can spread new ones," Shervington said.

EBONY 75th Anniversary Book Chronicles Black American Excellence and History

Stacy M. Brown
NNPA Newswire Senior
National Correspondent

Since 1945, Ebony has chronicled Black life and the multitude of contributions of generations of African American icons, trailblazers, change makers, and the unsung.

As the Pandemic continues and keeps some essential milestones off the front pages, Ebony quietly changed ownership while finally receiving overdue recognition for more than 75 years of Black excellence.

"My parents, I believe, strategically placed those magazines there so that anyone who entered that space would be exposed to the powerful messages of Black excellence displayed so wonderfully both on Ebony's breathtaking covers and within the content of its articles," the Congresswoman declared.

Jackson Lee's remarks came during the celebration of the book "Ebony: Covering Black America," by Lavielle Lavette, the best-selling author and president and publisher of One Street Books and Ebony Magazine's imprint Ebony Publishing.

Former NBA Star Junior Bridgeman recently purchased Ebony and Ebony.com, a member of the National Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA), representing the largest contingent of Black owned newspapers and media companies in America.

"Ebony kind of stood for Black excellence, showing people doing positive things that could benefit everyone," said Bridgeman, who starred with the Milwaukee Bucks and Los Angeles Clippers.

"It just made you feel good."

Lavette's expansive book counts as a national treasure, which the publisher said marks not only history but also makes history.

"Growing up in the Midwest, Ebony was considered on par with



Lavielle Lavette's expansive book counts as a national treasure, which the publisher said marks not only history but also makes history. (Photo: Dr. Benjamin F. Chavis Jr., President and CEO, National Newspaper Publishers Association),

the nation's most prestigious magazines of the era, Time and Life magazines, and rightfully so," said Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) Chair Joyce Beatty (D-Ohio).

"This book, 'Ebony: Covering Black America,' brings back so many memories of how we as a people relied upon Ebony to share both our strivings, setbacks, and undying determination to keep moving forward," Congresswoman Beatty added. "This book gets people talking both about the past and about the connections between the past and our present moments as a people."

The CBC and others joined with Lavette on Capitol Hill in April to celebrate the book and the history of Ebony. Tennis Superstar Venus Williams, Entertainer Common, Kimora Lee Simmons, and retired NBA Champion Dwyane Wade and his wife, Actress Gabrielle Union count among the contributors to the book. Sean "Diddy" Combs also contributed to the work that features photos of Dr. Martin Luther

King Jr., Diana Ross, Sidney Poitier, President Barack Obama, Muhammad Ali, and many others.

Lavette said she and her staff expect to peruse the market of – particularly African American – authors this summer with an eye toward a banner year of publishing in 2022. "We are standing on the shoulders of giants that set the standard high, and so I want to be sure that we keep and always are trying to improve and make it even better,"

Lavette remarked. "We're not trying to compromise an author's experience or the type of product that we put out. It's going to stand toe-to-toe and above what's out there."

Lavette continued: "I am a story hunter. The people I work with are story hunters, and there are several books we can probably announce and put out. But I want to take our time and prepare for next year so that in that process that we are going through, we're staying steady to the vision and staying true to some

of the traditional things Ebony has been known to publish like the Lerone Bennett books that speak to our culture."

Lavette, who holds a master's in Education, has worked as a school teacher and administrator. She also served as a special advisor to former U.S. Secretary of Education Dr. Rod Paige.

During the recent Capitol Hill visit, which also included NNPA President Dr. Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr., Lavette presented a limited commemorative edition of the book to congressional leaders. Each expressed their delight.

"Growing up in rural Sumter, South Carolina, I cherished as a teenager, devouring the pages of Ebony magazine," House Majority Whip James Clyburn (D-South Carolina) declared. "I recall memories of sitting in the local barbershop awaiting my turn in the chair. While waiting, my eye was always attracted to those compelling Ebony covers."

Congressman Clyburn continued: "But more than that, Ebony opened up an entire world of possibilities to my young mind by sharing stories about our people making wonderful social contributions all over the country and the world via an unmatched work-ethic whether in sports, entertainment, or politics. And that's exactly what 'Ebony: Covering Black America' does today."

Dr. Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr., President and CEO of the NNPA, affirmed, "We are so proud that EBONY Magazine and Ebony Publishing are members of the NNPA and we are encourage by the outstanding leadership of Junior Bridgeman and Lavielle Lavette who are taking Ebony and Ebony.com to the next level of the highest personification of what Black Excellence exhibits and engages in America and throughout the world. The next 75 years will be the greatest for sure."

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