

Lighting The Road To The Future

New Orleans

Data

News Weekly

"The People's Paper"

Respect...

Jennifer Hudson Shines
as Aretha Franklin

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Closed City?

COVID-19 and the Future of New Orleans



The COVID-19 pandemic is wreaking havoc on communities across the nation and countries across the globe. It is affecting many in the New Orleans. Some of which were struggling before COVID-19.

Benjamin Bates
Data News Weekly Contributor

COVID-19 and Changing Times
As the City, nation and world continues to grapple with the scourge that is the COVID-19 Pandemic, the

latest strain (Delta Variant) threatens all the gains made since the Pandemic hit in the Spring of 2020. We have seen new normals of social distancing, mask mandates and lockdowns. In these tumultuous times, we've witnessed at warp speed vaccines that at this point half of the country have taken. But what is interesting is that a public health issue

has become politicized. In Louisiana, which according to health experts have some of the highest surges cases of the Delta Variant this is problematic. So much so, that it's caused cities to re-issue mask mandates as well as businesses to require proof of vaccination for entry into some venues. We must ask ourselves in these pressing times for us all, what

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Leaders argue that getting to herd immunity can help win the fight against COVID-19. While the vaccine is not full proof against the Delta Variant; evidence shows that the majority of the persons that are having fatal outcomes are among the unvaccinated.



With the threat of the Delta Variant getting worse, some are saying that many of the cities businesses may continue to struggle or in some cases close down.

course we will take to get ourselves out of this crisis that is affecting all our lives.

COVID...The New Normal

Since the Spring of 2020, COVID-19, have changed our lives forever. Its effects are varied as we are entering the beginning of the school year in the City of New Orleans.

With questions being, what will we do with our school age children under 12, who cannot get vaccinated? Further, what will its impact be on teachers and others whether vaccinated or not who could possibly put themselves in harm's way?

We as a City, must decide how are we going to get to herd immunity, or is it a goal that is unobtainable. We must ask ourselves that after over a year is this plague up with is to stay. If so, how we will survive it,

if part of the population for a host of reasons will not get vaccinated, wear masks, or respect and follow the safety protocols.

To Vaccinate or not to Vaccinate

The problem it seems as it relates to the increase Delta Variant cases there is a disparity between those who are and are not vaccinated.

Those who choose not to get vaccinated reasons vary from reasonable to in some cases believing misinformation on the web. This has served as part of the reason there's been a spike in cases.

This is especially the case in Louisiana, while New Orleans has the most vaccinated people in the state, because the City is a destination for people coming from other places all the time; the City is vulnerable.

Mixed Messaging Leads to Confusion and Chaos

In this Pandemic there's been a lot of messaging by medical authorities that's led to problems for cities and states implementing sound policies around keeping people safe as well as getting people vaccinated.

Secondly, an honors system was put in place to further muddy the waters with no verification system in place. It seems that commercial interest, as well as the need for people wanting to gather again was a shortsighted solution to meet the moment.

In retrospect, it was a mistake by many cities, and now these same cities are asking the private sector to do what should have been done in the first place; which is have a verification system in place and continue to have indoor masking requirements and

social distancing. But of course, hindsight is 20/20.

Working Towards Solutions

As we will soon be into fall and winter, the numbers may become worse. It will be up to the city, state, medical and businesses leaders to provide proper guidance and policy, but most importantly citizens to decide that getting to herd immunity should be the goal. That it's shown as the best way to fight the spread of the Delta Variant, and possibly any new strain that's on the horizon.

But for those who have not gotten vaccinated, they must realize that it is not only them, but all of us. That the public good is what is most important. And getting the vaccine and following safety protocols are key if we are to make a turn in a positive direction in the fight against COVID-19.

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COUNCIL**

Respect...

Jennifer Hudson Shines as Aretha Franklin

Elise Schenck
Data News Weekly
Contributor

The subject of Aretha Franklin is one that's been covered recently in the recent film releases. While in the most recent offering by National Geographic, sought to document the life of the Queen of Soul.

The feature film, *Respect*, chronicles the life of Franklin, who goes from child prodigy on the gospel circuit to an international superstar and cultural icon.

It is entertaining and gives a glimpse of the life of this legendary singer. Oscar Award Winning Singer/Actress Jennifer Hudson, stars as Franklin.

In her performance, she captures the essence of this compelling singer and the many facets of her complex and amazing life.

There is also great performance by Mary J. Bilge, as singer and instrumentalist Dinah Washington. Also, Marlon Wayans gives a soul stirring performance as Ted White, first husband of Aretha Franklin.

In his role he is a harrowing figure reminiscent of the Laurence Fishburne as Ike Turner in *"What's Love Got To Do With It"*.

Overall, the film is a gripping portrait of the Queen of Soul, and Hudson shows she has the acting and singing ability to pull off a role that required many layers.

It is a must see...



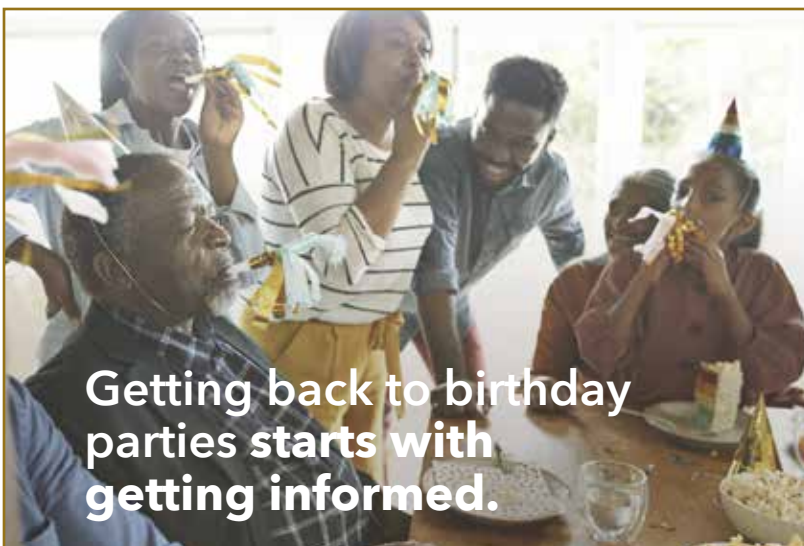
Jennifer Hudson gives a stunning performance as the Queen of Soul Aretha Franklin, in the film *"Respect."*



Hudson plays opposite Marlon Wayans, who portrays Franklin's husband Ted White. Wayans gives a remarkable performance reminiscent of Laurence Fishburne as Ike Turner in *What's Love Got To Do With It*.



Jennifer Hudson, became friends and got to know her idol, the late Aretha Franklin, who asked her to play the role in this film on her amazing life.



Getting back to birthday parties starts with getting informed.



IT'S UP TO YOU ::
COVID-19 VACCINATION

Get the latest information about COVID-19 vaccines at
GetVaccineAnswers.org

Six Louisiana Schools Receive more than 1,200 Free Hotspots, Internet Service

Through Free Connectivity Solutions AT&T is Breaking Down Barriers to Remote Learning for Students Who Need it Most.

Charles Bassett
AT&T Corporate
Communications

Baton Rouge, August 2, 2021
— As students and teachers begin the new school year, AT&T and leading nonprofit Connected Nation are continuing work to put the connectivity solutions vital to education into the hands of those who need it most.

Today, AT&T is announcing that six Louisiana schools will receive more than 1,200 free hotspots as well as free internet connectivity. They are part of more than 100 organizations and school districts that will benefit from a \$10 million commitment first announced last year to provide free internet subscriptions and wireless hotspots to 35,000 vulnerable students across the country.

“The Pandemic has highlighted the importance of connectivity in the home, and this kind of support and engagement from AT&T and Connected Nation is beneficial to keeping students connected to the classroom,” said Louisiana State Superintendent of Education, Dr. Cade Brumley.

An estimated 17 million K-12



where the effects disproportionately impact 1 in 3 students of color, as well as students with disabilities, and roughly 10 percent of all public-school teachers.

“What makes this program so critical is that it seeks to help students who have been disproportionately disconnected from formal learning opportunities due to COVID-19,”



students nationwide and more than 281,000 students in Louisiana currently lack access to the connectivity and devices required for successful online learning. While this homework gap is not new, the Pandemic has heightened the challenges – most acutely in rural and under-resourced neighborhoods,

said Tom Ferree, Chairman & CEO, Connected Nation. “The investment being made through the AT&T K-12 Homework Gap Program will not only allow these kids to fully participate in remote learning now, but also to catch up on learning lost during the pandemic. We must all work together to minimize and mitigate the impact



that the Pandemic has had on our most vulnerable youth.”

The schools and organizations receiving the hotspots are:

- Cristo Rey Baton Rouge Franciscan High School, Baton Rouge (50)
- Living School, New Orleans (89)
- Louisiana Schools for the Deaf and Visually Impaired, Baton Rouge (167)
- Warren Easton Charter High School, New Orleans (175)
- Elan Academy Charter School, New Orleans (262)
- InspireNOLA Charter Schools, New Orleans (500)

“Schools like these are critical to serving and supporting students across Louisiana,” said Sonia Perez, President, AT&T Southeast States.

“By helping to expand connectivity for these students, we can play a role in narrowing the homework gap, bringing opportunities for virtual learning into many more homes.”

Whether students are learning remotely or in the classroom, having access to affordable high-speed internet and devices is a non-negotiable for successful learning outcomes.

In addition to contributions these organizations, AT&T is expanding wireless affordability and flexibility for all schools in its service with unlimited wireless data plans that include content filtering services to support online safety protocols.

Learn more about the offer here or visit www.att.com/closethegap.

Jazz Fest 2021 Cancelled Amidst Spike in COVID-19 Delta Variant

Eric Connerly
Data News Weekly
Contributor

In a move that is looking like it will affect the upcoming festival season, officials from Jazz Fest announced it will be canceled due to current COVID concerns, organizers said in a press release.

People were enthused about the return of the fest planned for October 8-17. But due to the COVID crisis, where Louisiana leads the nation per capita in new infections this is a pre-emptive move on the part of Jazz Fest organizers.

They added, they're looking forward to 2022's iteration April



Officials recently announce that Jazz Fest 2021 will be cancelled. It was also stated by festival officials, that people with tickets for the festival including tickets from 2020 will get an email with details on how to get a refund or a ticket for next year.

29th - May 8th.

It was also stated by festival officials, that people with tickets for the festival including tickets from 2020 will get an email with details on how to get a refund or a ticket for next year.

"In the meantime, we urge everyone to follow the guidelines and protocols put forth by public health officials, so that we can all soon experience together the joy that is Jazz Fest," the statement from organizers said Sunday.

An announcement of this magnitude will most likely effect festivals for the rest of 2021 and possibly 2022 depending on the state of the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Commentary

Documentary Film on Dick Gregory Sets the Record Straight on Activist Comedian's Legacy



Marc Morial
President and CEO
National Urban League

NEW YORK – In the four years since we lost Comedian and Civil Rights Activist Dick Gregory, his powerful voice has been missed amid the recent broadening and intensifying movement for racial justice and equity.

As the nation marked the 56th Anniversary of the Voting Rights Act this week, few remembered Gregory as someone who put not only his career but his very life on the line in support of voting rights. He was among the thousands arrested during the iconic Birmingham Campaign of 1963 that flooded America's newspapers and televisions with violent images of protestors being attacked with firehoses and police dogs. That fall, he spoke for hours in Selma, rallying

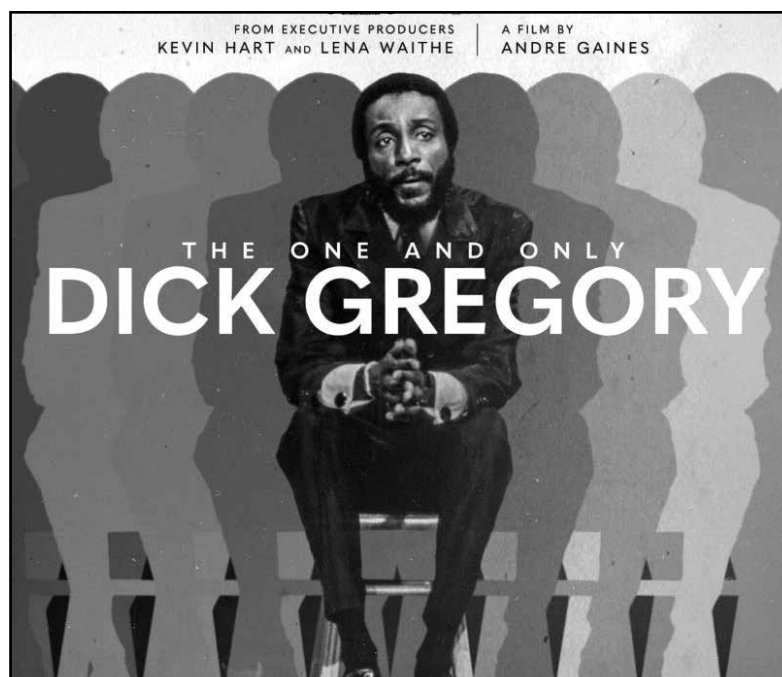
hundreds of Black residents to line up at the voter registration office on "Freedom Day."

The following summer, when voting activists James Chaney, Andrew Goodman and Mickey Schwerner went missing, a \$25,000 reward for information, raised by Gregory, led to the discovery of their bodies.

A new documentary, *The One and Only Dick Gregory*, sets the record straight on Gregory's legacy. I'm honored to be involved in several events surrounding the film's screening at the Martha's Vineyard African-American Film Festival this week:

On Wednesday, I'll take part in a panel discussion on Critical Race Theory, The Intersection of Race, Culture & Creativity, along with the Rev. Dante R. Quick, Senior Pastor, First Baptist Church of Lincoln Gardens, and Adrienne C. Smith, Senior Partner and Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer at Fleishman Hillard.

Thursday morning, at 10am Eastern Time, is a special Martha's Vineyard edition of ReMARC's Live, when I'll be joined by the festival's co-founders Stephanie Taveras-



Rance and Floyd A.B. Rance III.

Then, following the film's 8pm screening, I'll be leading a conversation with the director, Andre Gaines.

The release of the documentary and the discussions around it are especially meaningful to me. Dick Gregory was both a personal friend and a strong supporter of the Urban

League Movement. He was a guest at my wedding, and spent two weeks campaigning for me in New Orleans neighborhoods during my 1994 runoff campaign for Mayor. He was a frequent speaker at Urban League events.

The film recounts how Gregory's stand-up comedy career took off after a bravura performance before

an audience of white southerners at the Chicago Playboy Club and how he sacrificed it all to dedicate himself to the Civil Rights Movement.

My predecessor at the National Urban League, Whitney M. Young, Jr., felt that Gregory, with his biting satire mocking racism and segregation, could accomplish more for the cause of racial justice onstage than in the streets. Gregory's response: "When America goes to war, she don't send her comedians."

He was arrested dozens of times, often beaten, and shot at least once. His body became an instrument for protest, as he endured hunger strikes over the Vietnam War, the Equal Rights Amendment, police brutality, apartheid, nuclear power, prison reform, drug abuse and Native American rights.

The One and Only Dick Gregory comes at a moment when the rights for which Gregory fought and bled face a threat more serious than any in more than half a century. Gregory sacrificed fame, fortune and physical safety to secure these rights. We honor his legacy by defending them.

Dr. Gloria Ladson-Billings, HaSizzle and More Set to Participate in BE NOLA's Second Annual "Black Is Brilliant" Summit

Summit to Take Place Virtually with Viewings at Black-Owned Spaces across New Orleans

City of New Orleans

NEW ORLEANS- Black Education for New Orleans (BE NOLA) will host its Annual Summit, "Black Is Brilliant," virtually on Saturday, August 21, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. The summit will kick off on Friday, August 20, at 6:30 p.m. with a happy hour and outdoor screening of "In Our Mothers' Gardens" at the New Orleans African American Museum in Tremé and will continue on Saturday at the same location with a private "Black Is Brilliant Summit" viewing party for fifty Black educators that addresses the state of their work, wellness, and celebration of brilliance in our communities.

This year's lineup of speakers and artists includes New Orleans Mayor LaToya Cantrell, Dr. Jessica Clemons, Brittany Packnett Cunningham, Dr. Rashida Govan, HaSizzle, The Black School and countless others. Black educators and the general public can attend the event virtually on the BE NOLA's community app or in-person at several Black-Owned spaces across the city: BabyBangz, Headquarters, We Dat's Chicken and Shrimp, Second Vine Wine, Studio Be, NOAAM, CupCake Fairies, and Three Palms Bar and Grill.



Dr. Gloria Ladson-Billings

The goal of the summit is to provide resources and support to Black educators and visionaries in our New Orleans community working on behalf of our children. Black education is a lifestyle beyond classroom walls. "Black Is Brilliant" will also provide an opportunity for the general public to learn, engage and advocate alongside BE NOLA for the support and development of Quality Black Educators (QBEs) in our landscape.

"Quality Black Educators who

are supported to do their best work are the difference makers for New Orleans' Black children," Stevona Elem-Rogers, BE NOLA's Director of Programming Partnerships said. "By exploring the state of Black education and our community from a strengths-based lens, we will build on existing bright spots to articulate the next paradigm shift in education and lifestyle."

The summit will include sessions dedicated to Black teacher history, Black liberation politics, Black educator health and financial

wellness, Critical Race Theory, Environmentalism, Black diasporic food, and more. Participants will enjoy musical acts from drumming lead by Baba Luther Gray of Congo Square Preservation Society, an intimate concert with rock singer Grace Gibson and a performance by New Orleans's own HaSizzle.

The virtual summit is invitation-based. To participate in the summit, invitees must register on the website, blackisbrilliantsummit.org. Once registered, registrants will need to download the BENOLA Community App. The app will only be accessible to summit registrants. Registration closes August 17th.

The "Black Is Brilliant Summit" would not be possible without the support of amazing partners and sponsors, including Ochsner Health, Boeing, Cox, Nuestra Voz/Our Voice, Accelerise Corporation, Carver Darden, Education Leaders of Color, among others.

"We are honored to be a sponsor to this important event to support Black educators," said Deborah Grimes, RN, JD, MSHQS, the Chief Diversity Officer for Ochsner Health System. "This year's summit will provide a new perspective and ideas and further Ochsner's goals of promoting equity and wellness within our New Orleans community while bringing focused attention to diversity and inclusion matters."

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