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New Orleans

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News Weekly

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Freret Street Festival 2024

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A Data News Weekly Exclusive

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River Road African American Museum Celebrates 30th Anniversary



River Road African American Museum has a rich legacy, and recently celebrated its 30th anniversary. Many people came out for a joyous evening to welcome its new Executive Director L'Oreal "Kamaria" Evans, who plans to build on the work of founder Kathe Hambrick, continuing to celebrate and interpret the lives of African Americans in the River Road region.

By Marie Bell
Data News Weekly Contributor
Photos by Gerard Preen and Bruce Wayne

A Celebration of Culture and Introduction of New Executive Director L'Oreal "Kamaria" Evans

On Thursday March 21, 2024, River Road African American Museum celebrated its 30th Anniversary

with the launch of its newest music series Third Thursdays (a tribute to local Louisiana music), and a welcome reception in honor of its new Executive Director, New Orleans native, L'Oreal "Kamaria" Evans.

The Story of River Road African American Museum

The River Road African American Museum, located in Donaldsonville, Louisiana, is a cultural and historical gem dedicated to celebrating and interpreting the

lives of African Americans in the River Road region, both before and after the American Civil War. Founded in 1994 by Kathe Hambrick, it was among the first museums in Louisiana to focus on the contributions of Africans and African Americans. Originally established at the Tezcuco Plantation, the museum moved to Donaldsonville in 2003 after a fire destroyed the plantation.

The museum is part of the Louisiana African American Heritage Trail and offers a detailed portrait of African American life in the sugar parishes of the area,

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Kathe Hambrick, River Road African American Museum Co-Founder.



L'Oreal "Kamaria" Evans was recently appointed Executive Director of the River Road African American Museum.



Leroy Sullivan (L) Mayor of Donaldsonville, Louisiana, and Oliver Joseph (R) Ascension Parish City Councilmember.

Harambe: Celebrating A Community Coming Together

The night was enjoyed by Louisiana natives from Baton Rouge to New Orleans and featured the jazzy smooth flow of New Orleans' own Girls Play Trumpet Too, Troy Sawyer & The Elementz. In attendance were River Road African American Museum Founders, Kathe & Darryl Hambrick, the Mayor of Donaldsonville, Leroy Sullivan, and History Maker, Mrs. Juanita Collins Pearley (1st African American Queen Elks Lodge 1153 in 115 years). Industry leaders from Shell, BASF, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Louisiana, Donaldsonville City Council, and Members of Louisiana Pan Hellenic Council all came out to engage with young professionals, to celebrate 30 years of remarkable work and welcome the future and forward progression of the museum which is celebrated as the first institution for the preservation of African and African American Culture in the State of Louisiana.

with materials relating to slavery, freedom stories from Southeastern Louisiana's Underground Railroad, and the rural roots of jazz music. The museum also focuses on rural Black doctors, Creole life, Black inventors, and African influences on Louisiana cuisine.

Rebuilding And A Bold New Vision

The event was sponsored in part by Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Louisiana and held at the most recent of its five buildings to come online, the

Rosenwald School. Opened in only October of 2023, the building took over 20 years to completely refurbish and open. This past summer it hosted the first of its S.T.R.E.A.M. events for youth and will continue this summer with a full 2-month

program. Currently, it is hosting the 365 Days of Wellness Soul Line Dancing Classes, an initiative created by Evans designed to get Donaldsonville activated and promote awareness of Black Dance in Louisiana and America.

For more information about the River Road African American Museum go to riverroadaam.org

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Prom

Magical and Majestic



Tracee Dundas
Fashion Stylist

It is a night of glitz, glamour, and style. A magical evening that plays a significant role for a young woman and man. The event is senior prom. And what is worn on this special occasion is the most important part of the night.

One of the biggest desires for prom-goers is to stand out from the crowd and wear a dress that truly reflects their individuality. As a result, the demand for unique prom dresses is on the rise and often no expense is spared. Custom-made dresses, vintage finds, and re-designed gowns with added embellishments are becoming increasingly popular choices to ensure a gown that is both personal and extraordinary.

This year, prom-goers are embracing a mix of classic elegance with modern twists, making a statement on the dance floor with their fashion choices. For the fashion-forward individuals, bold and bright colors are stealing the spotlight. From vibrant neon tones to rich jewel hues, prom dresses are set to pop with personality. Think electric blues, fiery reds, and luxurious emeralds making a glamorous entrance at the event of the year.

Silhouettes are also taking center stage, with a nod to both the past and the future.

Ballgowns with dramatic volumes, inspired by vintage glamour, are making a comeback, while sleek and modern cut-out designs are offering a contemporary edge to traditional styles. Whether you prefer flowing trains or chic pantsuits, 2024 is all about embracing diversity and individuality.

Accessories are not to be forgotten this prom season. Oversized statement earrings, sparkling hair accessories, and bold clutch bags are the perfect way to elevate your



look and add a touch of personality. Don't be afraid to mix and match textures and styles to create a unique ensemble that truly represents you.

Finally, footwear is stepping up its game with the latest trends. Chunky platform heels, strappy sandals, and even embellished sneakers are making waves on the dance floor, ensuring that you can dance the night away in comfort and style. No matter what the style, the goal is to shine bright, express yourself, and make unforgettable memories in the hottest fashion looks of the year. This prom season is all about embracing your individuality and celebrating your unique style.

Fashion Editor – Tracee Dundas | @fashionablyoursnola
Photos Courtesy of Boutiques/Websites

Freret Street Festival 2024

Story and Photos
by Fleur De Lis
Data News Weekly
Contributor

We are at the beginning of the festival season. This past weekend the Freret Street Festival of 2024 was a vibrant celebration of art, music, and food, stretching across six blocks from Napoleon to Valmont. This event brought together over 200 local artists and chefs, showcased 46 brick-and-mortar businesses, and featured 20 bands across three stages for an unforgettable day. The festival not only celebrated the creative spirit of New Orleans but also aimed to support the local artists and businesses that give the city its unique charm. Data News Weekly was there to catch some of the highlights.



Angel Reese... LSU Lady Tigers Controversy... Bigger Than Basketball

Edwin Buggage
Editor-in-Chief
Data News Weekly



LSU Basketball Star Angel Reese (pictured) and the Lady Tigers are an inspiration to generations of young girls to aspire to greatness and excellence both on and off the court.

It was a great season for the LSU Lady Tigers Basketball Team. Last year's NCAA Champions made it to the Elite 8 this year, to be eliminated by their arch-rival Iowa led by Caitlyn Clark. This season the team took on more than basketball. It was one where the politics of race and gender became apparent. This was evident recently, as the Los Angeles Times apologized for publishing a story characterizing the team as "basketball villains and dirty debutants." Historically, sports are often a proxy for politics, and these narratives are nothing new. In many ways. This is an "instant replay" whether it was Jack Johnson, Jesse Owens, Muhammad Ali, Colin Kaepernick, LeBron James, and now Angel Reese. This subtext that demonizes Black excellence is from the "racist playbook" of a country that was

founded on the faulty premise that denied a people's humanity.

After a collective outcry of criticism, the writer Ben Bolch wrote on social media that he "failed miserably" in his choice of words and offered an apology when crafting his piece. Arguably, one that smacks of journalistic malfeasance. The fact

that he and his editors did not see the explicit bias in this piece was both abhorrent and irresponsible. First, not being aware that they are speaking of young ladies and referring to them as "dirty debutants" is offensive, misogynistic, and racist to the core.

Moreover, the vitriol that's

been aimed at LSU star Angel Reese, who's had to experience this season is problematic, to say the least. In a press conference with tears rolling down her face spoke of death threats and online abuse she's had to endure this season after winning the National Championship last year. She also stated, "I've

been through so much, I've seen so much, I've been attacked so many times. Death threats, I've been sexualized, I've been threatened, I've been so many things and I've stood strong every single time."

Her most telling and impactful

Newsmaker, Continued on page 7.

State & Local News

InspireNOLA Celebrates 10 Years of Inspiration at Inspire Higher Gala

New Orleans Agenda

The 2024 Inspire Higher Gala and Silent Auction was a great night of celebration of ten years of InspireNOLA! Everyone looked amazing, the joy was contagious, and we express our sincerest gratitude to all of the supporters of this event and the students of Inspire-NOLA Charter Schools.

The entire night would not have been possible without the support of our generous sponsors, and we hope that the loving energy of InspireNOLA was felt.

InspireNOLA Charter Schools is comprised of: Alice M. Harte Charter School, Andrew H. Wilson Charter School, Dwight D. Eisenhower Charter School, Pierre Capdau S.T.E.A.M. Charter School, Edna Karr High School, Eleanor McMain High School and McDonogh 35 Senior High School. InspireNOLA currently serves more than 5,800 students in pre-kindergarten through 12th grade.



InspireNOLA CEO Jamar McKneely receives plaque during 10-year anniversary celebration.



State Senator Royce Duplessis and wife Krystle celebrating InspireNOLA and the work they do to positively impact the lives of young people in the City of New Orleans.



Partygoers enjoyed the festivities of a night that included music and a silent auction.



Federal Aid Swiftly Released for Rebuilding Francis Scott Key Bridge after Tragic Collision

Stacy M. Brown
NNPA Newswire Senior
National Correspondent

In a rapid response to the devastating collision between a cargo container ship and the Francis Scott Key Bridge on March 26, the U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) announced the immediate release of \$60 million in Emergency Relief (ER) Funds to the Maryland Department of Transportation.

The collision resulted in the collapse of the Francis Scott Key Bridge, claiming the lives of six individuals, and causing substantial disruption to regional and national transportation networks. Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg said he and others in the Biden-Harris Administration understand that they must act with urgency, and he emphasized the federal government's commitment to assisting Maryland in the bridge's reconstruction.

"The federal emergency funds we're releasing today will help Maryland begin urgent work, with additional resources coming as recovery and rebuilding efforts progress," Buttigieg stated.

He reiterated President Joe Biden's assurance that the federal government would spare no effort in supporting the bridge's rebuilding and restoring operations at the Port of Baltimore.

The closure of the Francis Scott Key Bridge has already had far-reaching implications, disrupting shipping traffic to the Port of Baltimore's Seagirt Marine Terminal, and impeding vital transportation



Francis Scott Key Bridge in Baltimore, Maryland.



Maryland Governor Wes Moore gives an update on the progress of bridge repair plans.

corridors along the East Coast. FHWA officials said they will continue to collaborate closely with federal, state, and local partners to mitigate supply chain disruptions

and manage traffic while prioritizing the safe reopening of the port.

Maryland Gov. Wes Moore's declaration of a state of emergency helped to enable FHWA to approve

MDOT's emergency relief funding application promptly. Officials have allocated the funds towards debris removal, demolition, detours, emergency repairs, and the design and reconstruction of the affected infrastructure.

Biden also reaffirmed the federal government's unwavering support for Baltimore. "And to the people of Baltimore, I want to say: We're with you," the president declared. "We're going to stay with you as long as it takes. And like the governor said, you're Maryland tough, you're Baltimore strong, and we're going to get through this together. And I promise: We're not leaving. It's my intention that federal government will pay for the entire cost of reconstructing that bridge, and I expect to — the Congress to support my effort."

Biden said the tragedy called for a comprehensive response and demanded that Congress endorse federal assistance efforts.

Federal officials said FHWA's Emergency Relief program aligns with broader initiatives to enhance infrastructure resilience in the face of future challenges.

"The Port of Baltimore is one of the nation's largest shipping hubs. And I've been there a number of times as a senator and as a vice president," Biden remarked.

"Around 850,000 vehicles go through that port every single year, and we're going to get it up and running again as soon as possible. Fifteen thousand jobs depend on that port. And we're going to do everything we can to protect those jobs and help those workers."

Newsmaker, Continued from page 6.

words during this press conference were, "I'm still human. All this happened since I won the national championship. I haven't had any peace since, and I would not change anything and say I am unapologetically me and the little girls that look up to me and hopefully it's not that hard but keep being who you are."

While criticisms of the LA Times article came from every direction and had to be walked back by the writer and the newspaper, it speaks to the larger problem of racism and misogyny in American



Angel Reese is an example of a young Black woman who's worked hard to become successful as an athlete and businesswoman.

society. Of course, in the realm of sports trash talking and rooting for your team is part of the game. But in this case, it went too far, and we must begin to think of the impact of our words before we speak, publish, or write things on social media that can be hurtful, and bullying to others.

We say to Angel Reese and all the Lady Tigers, that you are champions both on and off the court. Keep inspiring young ladies (and men) to greatness in their "Pursuit of Excellence." And "Yes We Can" continue the work of becoming "A More Perfect Union."

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