

Lighting The Road To The Future

New Orleans

Data

News Weekly

"The People's Paper"

FREE COPY

Valenetta "Val" Rainey Celebrates 50th Birthday

Data Zone Page 4

December 13 - December 19, 2025 60th Year Volume 34 www.ladatanews.com

A Data News Weekly Exclusive

New Orleans Sees Historic Drop in Homicides and Overall Crime in 2025

Page 2



Newsmaker

Holiday Health Includes Diabetes Control and Awareness

Page 6

National News

Race Shadows Every Assault on the Affordable Care Act



Page 7

New Orleans Sees Historic Drop in Homicides and Overall Crime in 2025



The New Orleans Police Department reports a sharp reduction in homicides and overall crime in 2025, underscoring the impact of sustained reforms, data-driven policing, and increased collaboration citywide.

Benjamin Bates
Data News Weekly Contributor

New Orleans is experiencing one of its safest years in more than five decades, marking a dramatic shift for a city that has long grappled with high rates of violence. By the end of 2025, homicides had fallen to approximately 105 for the year,

representing a 56% decrease from the 243 murders recorded just three years earlier. This sharp decline reflects a significant and encouraging reversal of long-standing crime trends. Analysts note that the city has not seen numbers this low since the early 1970s, placing 2025 as a potential benchmark year in the history of Public Safety in New Orleans.

Sharp Reductions Across Multiple Crime Categories

The decline in crime extends beyond homicides. Data tracked across the year reveal that Violent Crime Categories such as shootings, armed robberies, aggravated assaults, and carjackings all experienced substantial drops—many approaching reductions of 40–50% from previous multi-year averages. By mid-

Cover Story, Continued on page 3.

INSIDE DATA	
Cover Story	2
Data Zone	4
Newsmaker	6
State & Local News . .	6
National News	7

DATA NEWS WEEKLY

P.O. Box 57347, New Orleans, LA 70157-7347 | Phone: (504) 821-7421 | Fax: (504) 821-7622
editorial: datanewseditor@bellsouth.net | advertising: datanewsad@bellsouth.net

Terry B. Jones	Contributors	Art Direction &
CEO/Publisher	Edwin Buggage	Production
Edwin Buggage	Benjamin Bates	Pubinator.com
Editor	Daelyn House	Editorial and
Sharonda Green	Fleur De Lis	Advertising Inquiries
Executive Assistant	Stacy M. Brown	datanewsweeklyad@gmail.com
June Hazeur		Distribution
Chief Operating Officer		by Terrence Lee

Please call 504-309-9913 for subscription information or to obtain a back issue of the paper ONLY.
Dated material two weeks in advance. Not responsible for publishing or return of unsolicited manuscripts or photos.

Cover Story, Continued from page 2.

2025, the city had recorded just 55 murders, reinforcing the trajectory toward historically low annual totals. The decreases coincide with strengthened community programming, enhanced law-enforcement strategies, and ongoing collaboration among Civic Organizations working to reduce violence.

Non-fatal shootings, which have historically mirrored the city's homicide trends, also declined significantly. Carjackings and armed robberies fell at similar rates, suggesting that broader behavioral and environmental changes were occurring citywide. Taken together, these reductions point to a holistic decline in overall violence, not merely isolated improvements.

What's Driving the Drop?

City Officials and Public Safety Experts attribute the decline to several interconnected factors:

Targeted Policing and Hot-Spot Strategies that deploy officers to high-risk areas based on real-time data.

Growth in community-based Violence Interruption Programs, in-

Violent Crime Trends in New Orleans 2024-2025		
VIOLENT CRIME TYPE	2024 PERFORMANCE	CHANGE FROM 2023
Homicides	124 total	-35%
Nonfatal Shootings	44% reduction	-44%
Armed Robberies	38% reduction	-38%
Carjackings	49% reduction	-49%
Overall Violent Crime	Significant decreases	Historic improvement

New Orleans highlights newly released 2025 data showing homicide rates at their lowest levels in decades,

cluding youth mentorship, conflict mediation, and trauma-recovery initiatives.

Long-Term Institutional Reforms within the police department, including updated training, civilian partnerships, and more accountability-driven approaches.

Social-Service Expansion, such as mental health resources and violence-prevention outreach, which help stabilize vulnerable

communities.

Although staffing levels remain lower than in earlier decades, improved deployment strategies and coordination across agencies have amplified the effectiveness of existing personnel. Analysts caution, however, that the improvements should be viewed as promising but fragile; maintaining them requires ongoing commitment rather than short-term celebration.

A Broader Trend — and a Warning of Fragility

New Orleans' decline mirrors national patterns showing reductions in violent crime across many major U.S. cities. Researchers emphasize that these gains often stem from multiple sources, economic stabilization, increased Social-Service Support, and changes in community behavior, rather than any singular cause. The encouraging numbers do not elimi-

nate vulnerabilities, and public safety leaders stress that continued investment in prevention, reform, and community partnerships will be essential to sustaining progress.

Why This Matters

For residents, the sharp decline in homicides and Violent Crime represents more than statistical progress; it offers renewed hope for safer neighborhoods, stronger community trust, and a changing image for New Orleans. Families feel more secure, businesses benefit from increased stability, and civic institutions gain momentum in rebuilding the city's reputation.

The path ahead will require vigilance, collaboration, and sustained resources, but the successes of 2025 demonstrate what is possible when community engagement, data-informed policing, and Social Support Systems work together. After decades of struggle, New Orleans may finally be stepping into a new chapter, one defined by safety, resilience, and shared progress.

ROUSES MARKETS

VISIT OUR WEBSITE FOR MORE
WEEKLY SPECIALS

WWW.ROUSES.COM/WEEKLY-ADS

Prices good at New Orleans, Metairie, Gretna, Kenner, Marrero, Covington, Mandeville and Slidell locations
December 10th - December 17th, 2025.

SAVE
\$4.01
LB

USDA PRIME

CUT & WRAPPED
FOR FREE
BY OUR IN-STORE BUTCHERS

ONLY
\$16.98
LB

USDA PRIME BEEF
Boneless
Whole Ribeye

SAVE
\$3.11
LB

ONLY
\$1.88
LB

ROUSES
Twin Pack
Pork Tenderloins

TASTE OF THE
HOLIDAYS

Saturday, Dec 13th
11am-2pm

Join us for free samples of Rouses' family
recipes and festive holiday treats.
Celebrate the season with us!

AT ALL
STORES!

SAVE
up to \$3.58
When You Buy 2

ROUSES MARKETS
CAGE FREE EGGS
LARGE BROWN

ONE DOZEN
Rouses
Large
LIMIT 2
2/\$5

SAVE
\$2.11

Taylor Farms
SOUTHERN
CHOPPED
KALE

10 - 13 OZ
SELECTED
Taylor Farms
\$2.88

SAVE
up to \$7.97
When You Buy 3

PEPSI
7UP
Coca-Cola

6 PACK
HALF LITERS
Coke, Pepsi
3/\$10

SAVE
up to \$4.57
When You Buy 3

SWANSON
CHICKEN
BROTH

32 OZ
Swanson
Broth
3/\$

Valenetta “Val” Rainey Celebrates 50th Birthday in True New Orleans Style

Edwin Buggage
Editor-in-Chief
Data News Weekly

Valenetta “Val” Rainey celebrated her 50th Birthday surrounded by family, friends, and an abundance of love. The milestone event—held at Brittany’s Restaurant and Lounge on historic Chef Menteur Highway, was a joyful, vibrant gathering filled with music, laughter, and the unmistakable Spirit of New Orleans. The celebration reflected not only Val’s personal journey, but the warmth, resilience, and togetherness that define the city she calls home.

Val’s deep roots in New Orleans culture run generations deep. As a proud Lieutenant of the Mystic Krewe of Femme Fatale, an organization founded by her aunt, the esteemed Dr. Gwendolyn Rainey, she stands firmly within a lineage of women who uplift, lead, and inspire. The Krewe, known for its empowerment of Black women and commitment to service, has become a Pillar of Civic Engagement in the city. Val embodies these values with grace, serving her community with passion and purpose.

Her family legacy is equally rich. As the granddaughter of the late George V. Rainey, a revered leader in the Zulu Social Aid & Pleasure Club, Val carries forward a tradition rooted in cultural pride, community leadership, and a deep love for New Orleans. These traditions, celebrating heritage through music, dance, and service, and valuing community above all, are woven into her identity. They were beautifully on display at her birthday celebration, where multi-generational guests gathered like a living tapestry of New Orleans’ unique spirit.

For Valenetta Rainey, turning 50 was not simply a personal milestone; it was a tribute to the legacy that shaped her and a celebration of the community she continues to uplift. Her journey reflects the essence of New Orleans: joyful, resilient, rooted in history, and always moving forward together.

Photos by Dalphintales.com



Creme de la Femme krewe of Femme Fatale.



Valenetta “Val” Rainey celebrates looking Fabulous at 50.



L-R Zulu Tramps MKFF Parade Captain Dr. Takeisha Davis, Valenetta Rainey, and 2026 Grand Marshal Queen Tahj Williams.



L-R Wanda Garner, Keah Nelson, Kendra Williams, Natasha Charles, Valenetta Rainey, Waymon Davis, Jr., MKFF Parade



L-R Sharron Segue, Kendra Williams and Wanda Garner.

Visit www.ladatanews.com for more photos from these events.

It's always been easier
for me to help others
than to help myself



As a Veteran, when someone raises their hand for help, you're often one of the first ones to respond. But it's also okay to get help for yourself. Maybe you want or need assistance with employment, stress, finances, mental health or finding the right resources. No matter what it is, you earned it. And there's no better time than right now to ask for it. **Don't wait. Reach out.**



VA



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

Find resources at [VA.GOV/REACH](https://www.va.gov/reach)

TEXTING
AND DRIVING
MAKES
GOOD PEOPLE
LOOK BAD.

[STOPTEXTSSTOPWRECKS.ORG](https://stoptextsstopwrecks.org)



Help Wanted

Administrative Assistant

- Data News Weekly, "The People's Paper," is looking for an administrative assistant.
- Writing skills and detail orientation will be appreciated.
- Familiarity with Artificial Intelligence tools required.
- Proficiency with Social Media platforms Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok.
- Compensation is competitive.

Call
(504) 905-3235
to apply.

Holiday Health Includes Diabetes Control and Awareness

Daelyn House
Data News Weekly
Contributor

Americans often indulge in large holiday feasts, sometimes consuming more than 5,000 calories daily between Thanksgiving and Christmas. For many families, these traditions bring joy, but they also highlight a serious truth: Black Adults continue to experience disproportionately high rates of diabetes, and the risks only grow when holiday eating habits go unchecked.

"1-in-5 people don't know they have it. It is important to have an annual health checkup because early detection is crucial," said Dr. Katrina Nguyen, a Clinical Assistant Professor at Xavier University of Louisiana. "Type 2 Diabetes is preventable in most cases, and it is important to pay attention to what your body tells you."

Health Professionals say they hope to raise awareness of how chronic disease deeply affects Black communities across the United States.



Local groups, like bEHR Health are increasing holiday walks to improve healthy holiday habits over the season.

Listening to your body does not only mean attending doctor visits and annual screenings, it also includes making changes to daily habits such as meal frequency, diet choices, and physical activity, said Kwame Terra, a Fitness and Health Specialist. Increasing movement and building fitness can help lower the risk of premature death among people with diabetes and can significantly reduce blood sugar lev-

els, Terra explained. Exercise is an important tool against diabetes, he said, as it encourages muscles to absorb glucose rather than allowing it to circulate in the bloodstream, which can cause high blood sugar.

"Walk every day. Even 10-20 minutes can help your body use insulin better so sugar moves out of your bloodstream and into your cells the way it should," said Kwame Terra, who Co-Founded bEHR Health (the

Black Electronic Health Record) to encourage the Black community to take back control of their well-being. "I want our community to understand this because it means diabetes isn't random or something you're doomed to have," he said.

Diabetes remains one of the most widespread Chronic Illnesses in the U.S., affecting more than 34 million adults. Black Adults are 60-percent more likely to be diagnosed with diabetes and twice as likely to die of complications due to diabetes, due to limited access to healthy foods, safe places to exercise, and Affordable Healthcare, according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

"You are not stuck, and your body can heal," Terra said, explaining that Type 2 Diabetes often develops when the body is out of balance. "Too much of what it doesn't need, and not enough of what it does."

He advised that by removing processed, high-fat foods and adding more whole, plant-based meals and simple daily movement, people can regain control of their health.

"You can get better, your numbers can change, and you don't have to do this alone," he said about creating resources like the bEHR App to track fitness and diet.

In 2024, non-Hispanic Black or African American Adults were diagnosed with diabetes 24-percent more frequently than adults of the total population. In 2021, non-Hispanic Black or African Americans were diagnosed with end-stage renal disease due to diabetes 2.19 times more often than the total population. Most importantly, experts added that taking diabetes medication(s) the way your doctor prescribes will help keep diabetes management under control, said Dr. Brittany Singleton a Clinical Associate Professor of Pharmacy at Xavier.

"I want people to know they're not alone. Talk to your provider, talk to your pharmacist, and don't be afraid to ask questions about your medicine," Singleton said. "Many diabetes medications have early side effects, but most improve as the body adjusts, and so do patients' blood sugars," Singleton added.

State & Local News

Louisiana Rising: Tulane's Historic Playoff Berth and LSU's Texas Bowl Bid Mark a New Era for Football in the Bayou State

Fleur De Lis
Data News Weekly
Contributor

In a season that will be remembered as a Defining Chapter in Louisiana Sports History, two of the state's most storied programs, Tulane University and Louisiana State University, have each secured post-season appearances, signaling a moment of statewide pride and competitive resurgence. While Tulane made national headlines by becoming the first American Athletic Conference (AAC) Team to break into the expanded College Football Playoff, LSU also earned a berth in the Texas Bowl, reinforcing Louisiana's status as a formidable force in college football. Together, these achievements underscore the depth, resilience, and rising trajectory of football in the Bayou State.

Tulane's journey to the College Football Playoff has been a story

of strategic growth and unwavering determination. After years spent rebuilding coaching infrastructure, investing in recruitment pipelines, and modernizing facilities, the Green Wave surged through the 2025 season with precision and swagger. Their dominant defense, explosive offense, and ability to win pivotal conference matchups pushed them into the national spotlight early and often. By the time their regular season concluded, Tulane had cemented its claim to one of the coveted playoff positions, making history not just for the program, but for the AAC and all Non-Power Five Teams aspiring to break through longstanding barriers.

LSU's Campaign told a different, but equally compelling story. After navigating a season marked by injuries, depth challenges, and tough



SEC Competition, the Tigers rallied late to secure a spot in the Texas Bowl. Their berth represents more than a post-season reward; it reflects the program's ability to adapt, rebuild, and maintain national relevance even in transitional years. LSU's matchup in the Texas Bowl also sets up an intriguing regional narrative, as both of Louisiana's ma-



major football institutions will take the field in post-season play, spotlighting the state on two major stages.

For Louisiana fans, the simultaneous post-season success of Tulane and LSU is more than a coincidence; it is a celebration of the state's football culture at every level. From New Orleans to Baton Rouge, enthusiasm has surged as

both programs prepare for nationally broadcast games that will draw viewership, tourism interest, and additional economic benefits. The achievements arrive at a time when Louisiana sports, and New Orleans in particular, continue to carve out a place on the National Athletic Landscape through perseverance and innovation.

Tulane's playoff breakthrough has also ignited new energy on campus and across the city. Students, alumni, and supporters have flooded social media with celebration, framing the achievement as a transformative moment for the university's athletic identity. Meanwhile, LSU's post-season presence reinforces the stability and competitive ambition that have long defined Tigers football. Even in a challenging season, LSU demonstrated that the road to SEC excellence remains

State & Local, Continued
on page 7.

Race Shadows Every Assault on the Affordable Care Act

Stacy M. Brown
Black Press USA Senior
National Correspondent

The debate over the Affordable Care Act has never been only about policy, premiums, or the mechanics of federal subsidies. The arguments were never simply ideological disputes over mandates or the structure of the health insurance marketplace. From the moment the nation elected its first Black president, and that president placed the health of the poor and marginalized at the center of national legislation, a deeper truth emerged. It is a truth woven through American history, reappearing whenever racial progress threatens long-standing power structures. The target, in this case, became Barack Obama. The instrument became the Affordable Care Act.

Long before Republican leaders rallied around the slogan “repeal and replace,” the cultural battle lines had already been drawn. The same voices questioning Obama’s citizenship, legitimacy, and intellect turned their focus toward the most expansive health care reform in generations. Black lawmakers and health equity advocates understood what was at stake. They had shaped provisions within the ACA to confront the nation’s historic racial health disparities. Daniel Dawes, a leading architect of the law’s equity components, called the ACA “the most comprehensive minority health law” in American history, identifying sixty-two provisions that directly addressed inequities in access and outcomes.

For many African Americans, who had endured decades of unaffordable care, predatory insurance practices, and disproportionate disease burdens, the ACA was more than legislation. It was a rare affirmation. Obama often spoke about



the law in race-neutral terms, mindful of a nation still clinging to post-racial mythologies, but Black communities knew its deeper meaning. And the backlash knew it, too.

Resistance to the ACA did not begin after it became law. It grew alongside the birther movement that attempted to delegitimize Obama personally. It mirrored the same racist suggestions that he was foreign, unqualified, or elevated only by affirmative action. Donald Trump leveraged these claims for political advantage, championing birtherism for years. Even after Obama released his long-form birth certificate, Trump continued attacking him. Former aide Michael Cohen later wrote that Trump harbored “hatred and contempt” for Obama and even staged a bizarre ritual in which a stand-in actor portraying the president was mocked and fired.

Trump’s fixation persisted throughout his presidency, and the fury directed at Obama inevitably attached itself to the ACA. Obamacare became symbolic—a legislative embodiment of a Black president’s moral vision. For critics, defeating the law became syn-

onymous with defeating Obama himself.

Polls, academic studies, and reporting from outlets like Politico have shown a striking pattern: hostility toward the ACA has been strongest among groups with the deepest resentment toward Obama. Kaiser Family Foundation surveys reveal that support for ACA benefits, such as tax credits, drops sharply among Republican and MAGA voters when described

as part of “Obamacare,” even when those same voters approve of the benefits when presented without Obama’s name attached.

The hatred of Obama and the hatred of Obamacare have always lived under the same roof.

The ACA directly challenged America’s racially stratified health system. It narrowed coverage gaps, expanded Medicaid in many states, and forced the nation to confront disparities long treated as inevitabilities. Those gains came from a president whose leadership carried the weight of historical expectation—and the backlash that accompanies it.

Republicans continue their assault on the ACA not because the law failed, but because it succeeded. It made the country fairer. It improved the health of the poor. It delivered concrete progress to communities that generations of policy had neglected. As Daniel Dawes noted, it remains “the most inclusive health law” in American history.

The ACA did exactly what it was designed to do. The fight against it has done the same.

KMEZ 102.9
New Orleans' Best Mix of R&B

FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA

KMEZ 102.9
@mykmez1029
@kmez1029

www.kmez1029.com

State & Local, Continued from page 6.

open through grit, development, and late-season cohesion.

Both teams now enter the post-season with a mix of pride and purpose. For Tulane, the playoff offers an unprecedented opportunity to compete against the nation’s elite and prove that the power structure of college football is shifting. For LSU, the Texas Bowl presents a valuable platform for growth, evaluation, and the cultivation of emerging talent, all while maintaining the program’s national profile.

Together, Tulane and LSU’s post-season berths signal a powerful message: Louisiana football is rising on multiple fronts. The state is not only producing competitive teams, it’s also shaping the national narrative.

DATA CLASSIFIED

Call 504-821-7421 to
place your classified ad.

Job Opportunity

Freelance Writers Wanted

Data News Weekly, “The People’s Paper,” is looking for freelance writers to join our team print and digital team. We need writers who can cover New Orleans news stories, ranging from local high school sports, community events, City Hall and entertainment. Experience in print is necessary, experience in digital and social media are encouraged.

Compensation is competitive and great story ideas will be appreciated.

If you are interested, please email your resume and 3 writing samples to: terrybjones@bellsouth.net and datanewseditor@bellsouth.net.

We can’t wait to hear from you!

Job Opportunity

Administrative Assistant Wanted

Data News Weekly, “The People’s Paper,” is looking for an administrative assistant.

Compensation is competitive and detail orientation will be appreciated.

If you are interested, please email your resume to: terrybjones@bellsouth.net

This space can be yours for only \$50

Call Now!

(504) 905-3235

OFF THE CHAIN

Dogs don't belong outside on a chain. They belong with you, their protector and companion. Stand up for neglected dogs, and speak out against chaining.

DEVIN FUNCHESS
FOR **PETA**