



STAFF PHOTOS BY BRAD KEMP

Silo Creek may be among the shiniest and most visible projects to open recently. Construction is still not complete on the 11-building, 252-unit development, yet the occupancy rate is ‘better than we expected,’ said Michael Lang, New Orleans-based Key Real Estate managing principal for development.

Housing crunch

Lafayette rental market named one of the hottest in the U.S.

BY ADAM DAIGLE
and ZETA McCASKILL
Acadiana business editor
and contributing writer

When Brandon Gilley left student housing at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette in 2020, he lived in his car, his sister’s house, a partner’s house and later paid a co-worker \$200 to sleep on her couch for two months.

Thanks to his job at Jimmy John’s, where he worked up to 70 hours a week, he was finally able to afford an apartment in Lafayette in 2021.

Yet that ended poorly. The next summer, he landed at The Heritage at UL in a four-bedroom apartment. But the rent, which he estimated ended up costing over \$2,200 for the semester, was too much.

“It put me in the worst financial bind of my life,” said Gilley, an Opelousas native. “Ever since then, I’ve kind of been on the struggle bus. I couldn’t afford to pay for that. My sister had to end up giving me about \$1,200 so I could pay that and still continue classes in the fall.”

His housing struggles continued. There was the apartment near campus that at times had no refrigerator, stove, air-conditioning or hot water. Instead



Toni Landry is manager of Silo Creek apartments, Lafayette’s newest complex.

Apartment market running hot in Lafayette

The Lafayette market was named the fastest-rising small market in the U.S. for rentals. Here are four indicators of how hot the market is:

	2024	2025
Occupancy rate	89.3%	93.7%
Lease renewal	64.3%	68.9%
Average applicants seeking a unit	6	11
Average days a unit stayed vacant	37	34

Source: RentCafe

Staff graphic

of addressing the issues, management merely lowered the rent.

Now he’s sharing a place near campus and paying \$555 a month that includes rent, utilities and Wi-Fi.

“I am a little stretched thin,” he said. “I feel like I’m just at my last little wick, honestly, like the

candle is almost gone.”

In Lafayette Parish, where just over 1 out of every 3 households is a rental property, the challenge to find an affordable rental has gotten more challenging.

The market has been competitive since the coronavirus pandemic, but

► Finding a place to live a monthslong endeavor for one University of Louisiana at Lafayette student. PAGE 4A

now it’s tighter. Analysts at RentCafe, a national apartment service, identified the Lafayette market — which includes Lake Charles — as the fastest-rising small market in the U.S. for rentals earlier this year.

Occupancy is up significantly, and the number of applicants seeking a typical available unit has nearly doubled. The population has gradually risen in Lafayette Parish, which had the biggest population spike in Louisiana in census data revealed earlier this year.

Over the past three years, the total number of jobs in the parish has risen 6%, according to data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Those aren’t surprising numbers to Steven Hebert, CEO of Billeaud Companies, which is a partner in the 300-unit Villa Broussard apartments in Broussard. The occupancy rate in recent years was in the high 80s, but in the past 18

► See HOUSING, page 4A

LSU, Kiffin center stage in debate on college athlete pay

Bill reshaping NIL tabled following bipartisan backlash

BY MARK BALLARD
Staff writer

WASHINGTON — As the top Democrat in the U.S. House took the podium Thursday to speak out against a bill to regulate college athletics, he set his sights squarely on LSU, its new football coach — and two of the school’s alumni who are among the most powerful people on Capitol Hill.

“Why would Mike Johnson and Steve Scalise think it was a good idea to bring the Lane Kiffin Protection Act to the floor of the House of Representatives?” said House Majority Leader Hakeem Jeffries, a New York Democrat.

Jeffries posited that it might have been to please big donors to the state’s flagship university.

“Legislation that would do nothing to benefit college athletes and everything to benefit coaches like Lane Kiffin, who got out of town, abandoned his players in the middle of a playoff run to go get a \$100 million contract from LSU



Jeffries



Johnson



Scalise

► See PAY, page 5A

Construction on paused LNG project can resume

Regulators reissue permit for Cameron Parish facility

BY JOSIE ABUGOV
Staff writer

Louisiana regulators have reissued a permit for a multi-billion dollar liquefied natural gas terminal less than a month after a state judge ruled they had failed to consider the impacts of climate change and environmental justice, a judgment described as a first-of-its-kind.

The permit allows Commonwealth LNG, the Houston-based company planning the gas export facility in Cameron Parish, to move forward with its project. The Nov. 18 permit dismayed environmental groups and advocates, who saw the judge’s previous order as a marginal win against the rapid industrial expansion in southwest Louisiana.

► See PROJECT, page 6A

WEATHER
HIGH 70
LOW 50
PAGE 6B



Business1E Deaths3B Nation-World2A
Classified14A Living1D Opinion4B
Commentary5B Metro1B Sports1C

101STYEAR, NO. 160

ACA Sunday



DAVID YURMAN



AVAILABLE AT

Lee Michaels
FINE JEWELRY & DISTINCTIVE GIFTS

CORPORATE AT BOCAE • MALL OF LOUISIANA
CAUSEWAY BLVD AT LAKESIDE SHOPPING CENTER
4235 AMBASSADOR CAFFERY PKWY
1-800-543-4367 • SHOP ONLINE AT LMFJ.COM