

THE ACADIANA ADVOCATE

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Artist Robert Dafford, second from left, visits with attendees after a series of murals he painted were unveiled on Saturday at the Piggly Wiggly in Rayne. STAFF PHOTOS BY BRAD BOWIE

Gunman wrote of troubles

Records show he had history of violence before deadly rampage in Shreveport

BY JAMES FINN and JUSTIN O'CONNOR
Staff writers

In the weeks leading up to the execution-style, fatal shootings of his seven children, Shamar Elkins brooded on social media about troubles in his marriage and asked God for help.

He shared a graphic on Facebook on March 8, the text asking fathers if they would consider having children again if they could do so with different women.

"Hell yeah I would," Elkins captioned it. Days later, he asked God to "help me guard my mind and my emotions."

But in the wee hours of Sunday morning, Elkins unleashed a tirade of violence across Shreveport that stunned north Louisiana's largest city. Before the sun rose, police say he shot and wounded two women, the mothers of his children, before killing eight children — seven of them his own, one his nephew — at two homes blocks apart.

Elkins then carjacked a red Kia SUV and led officers on a chase over the Red River, into Bossier Parish and to the Bossier City home of a man who had mentored Elkins in the Louisiana National Guard. The chase ended outside the man's house about 7 a.m., with gunfire and Elkins' death.

The slain children, police said, ranged from 3 to almost 11 years old. Some died as they slept. Those who died were Jayla Elkins, 3; Shayla Elkins, 5;

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STAFF PHOTO BY JILL PICKETT

Stuffed animals and other items sit outside of a house on West 79th Street in Shreveport that is connected to Sunday's mass shooting.

EYES ON THE FROG

Rayne spices up downtown building with new mural

BY JOEL THOMPSON
Staff writer

Downtown Rayne's Piggly Wiggly got a new look over the weekend in the form of a new mural unveiled by the city government.

Located on the side of the building adjacent to South Adams Avenue, the mural is titled "I Only Have Eyes For You" and features five red-eyed tree frogs, an animal that has come to be a symbol for the community and is featured prominently in the city's many murals.

The city, sometimes referred to as the "City of Murals," is known for its many visible pieces of frog-themed artwork featured at prominent locations across the community.

Rayne Mayor Charles Robideaux said that the Piggly Wiggly was selected to receive the newest mural because the locally operated business supported the community. "This is the ultimate gift that only seems appropriate for a business that's given so much to us over the years. A lot of time, businesses get hammered for donations and there's only so much you give. They've given a lot and it's commendable."

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Frogs are the stars of muralist Robert Dafford's work in Rayne.

Communication issues preceded man's escape

BY ASHLEY WHITE and STEPHEN MARCANTEL
Staff writers

A Duson man who escaped a drug treatment facility's transport only to be killed by police days later was supposed to be transported by the St. Landry Parish Sheriff's Office, per a request by the facility.

But the Sheriff's Office says it never received an official request and that it was unaware when a transfer would take place.

An administrator with Stoa Behavioral Health in Baton Rouge said Michael Vavasour, who escaped Wednesday and was killed

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STAFF PHOTO BY CHRIS GRANGER

Crews walk alongside the Artemis III core stage as it is slowly rolled out of the Michoud Assembly Facility in New Orleans on Monday.

Artemis III rocket heads out from N.O.

BY WILLIE SWETT
Staff writer

NASA employee Chandler Scheuermann had the Artemis II astronauts on his mind from "liftoff to splash down" of their 10-day mission around the moon earlier this month. But he was paying special attention to the first eight minutes.

Scheuermann is a program manager at the Michoud Assembly Facility in New Orleans, where NASA built the Artemis II rocket's core stage that powered the astronauts into space on April 1.

Takeoff — the first eight min-

utes after the countdown clock hits zero — is when the core stage gets put to the test. By all accounts, it was a success.

"It's just pure excitement, adrenaline. I can't imagine how the astronauts must feel because watching it on TV and watching it from the Cape is enough to make me sweat," Scheuermann said of the launch. "The moment they opened those doors and I saw some smiles getting off the capsule, you can certainly relax."

NASA is now readying plans for the launch of Artemis III, the

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WEATHER

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