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Ban on camping looms in Lafayette

Homeless service providers question where people will go

BY STEPHEN MARCANTEL
Staff writer

Lafayette police will begin enforcing Louisiana's new anti-camping law Jan. 1, but local officials and homeless service providers say key questions about where people will go — and how the law will work — remain unanswered.

The law, signed by Gov. Jeff Landry, makes camping on public property a misdemeanor punishable by up to six months in jail and a \$500 fine. It also allows cities to create diversion programs and homeless courts designed to connect offenders with housing, treatment and other services.



Trouard

"Yes, we will be enforcing that," Lafayette Police Department Chief Paul Trouard said.

"No loitering" signs have already begun going up at bus stops in the city, said Christina Dayries, Lafayette Consolidated Government's chief of staff. And summonses are already being issued, with additional measures to make sleeping at bus stops more difficult under consideration, Trouard said.

Penalties for camping on public property, which is defined as any property controlled by state or local governments, include up to a \$500 fine or six months in jail. Violators would then be eligible for a "Homelessness Court" program, a minimum 12-month probationary program aimed at connecting people with services such as physical and mental healthcare, job training and rehabilitative treatment.

The legislation, minus the homeless court, is similar to an ordinance floated by the Lafayette City Council that would have made camping on public property a punishable offense, but discussions stalled

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School system land certified for future development

No formal leasing plans publicly discussed

BY JOEL THOMPSON
Staff writer

Three properties owned by the Lafayette Parish school system near Southside High School were recently certified for commercial or industrial development, positioning the land for potential future development.

The three properties are situated along Chemin Metairie Parkway in Youngsville on the opposite side of Almonaster Road across from Southside's campus, and are approximately 20, 25 and 84 acres respectively.

For years, LPSS has earned a steady stream of revenue from leasing out the properties for sugar cane cultivation, totaling around \$80,000 a year, according to LPSS Superintendent Francis Touchet.

The certifications represent a four-way partnership between LPSS, the city of Youngsville, One Acadiana and the

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ELECTION 2026

LETLOW ADVANCES

Backed by Trump, she edges Fleming to win GOP Senate primary

She will face Democrat Jamie Davis in the Nov. 3 election



STAFF PHOTO BY MICHAEL JOHNSON

U.S. Rep. Julia Letlow addresses the crowd at a watch party at DDG in Baton Rouge on Saturday after winning the Republican primary runoff for U.S. Senate.

BY TYLER BRIDGES
Staff writer

U.S. Rep. Julia Letlow fended off a tough campaign from state Treasurer John Fleming to win the Republican runoff for the U.S. Senate on Saturday and become the prohibitive favorite to be Louisiana's next senator.

Letlow captured the Republican Party nomination Saturday with the strong support of President Donald Trump — his endorsement of her in January to defeat Sen. Bill Cassidy prompted her entry into the race — and Gov. Jeff Landry, who raised millions of dollars for a super PAC that relentlessly attacked Fleming.

With the victory over Fleming, Letlow advances to the Nov. 3 general election ballot, where she will face Jamie Davis, a farmer from northeast Louisiana who overwhelmingly won the Democratic Party runoff Saturday over business owner Gary Crockett.

The victor in that race will replace Cassidy, a Republican from Baton Rouge who ran afoul of Trump and was eliminated in the May 16 Republican primary



Fleming



Davis

while seeking a third term.

Letlow will be heavily favored in November because no Democrat has been elected to the Senate since 2008, and Republicans hold all statewide offices in Louisiana.

Davis, however, vowed to run a competitive campaign.

Letlow took an early lead Saturday night when the first returns were posted — from early voters — and never relinquished her

advantage. The Associated Press called the race at 8:44 p.m., 44 minutes after the polls closed. The AP called Davis' victory at 8:09 p.m. Davis won 80%-20%.

Letlow spoke to a jubilant crowd at Duplantis Design Group in Baton Rouge at 9:15 p.m., surrounded by her parents, her two children, her fiance Kevin Ain-

sworth and campaign aides.

She thanked Trump, calling him "the greatest president this country has ever had." She said later that she had received congratulations calls from Trump and Fleming.

Fleming gave a concession speech surrounded by family shortly after 9 p.m. to a crowd of supporters chanting his name after the primary race was called for Letlow.

"I'm going to be just as happy tomorrow as if I had won the election because my happiness does not depend on getting elected to office," Fleming said. "My happiness depends on serving you, the people of Louisiana and the people of the United States."

Saturday's elections concluded a new closed primary system put in place by Landry and the state Legislature in 2024 that calls this year for a primary, a runoff and a general election — unlike the open primary system still in place for statewide and legislative races, where the top two finishers advance to

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State settles Lake Charles bridge chemical spill suit



STAFF PHOTO BY LESLIE WESTBROOK

Phillips 66 and Sasol will pay a small percentage toward the overall cost of building a new Interstate 10 bridge in Lake Charles.

Energy companies to pay small fee for new span

BY MEGAN WYATT
Staff writer

Two petrochemical giants will chip in a tiny percentage toward the overall cost of building the new Lake Charles Interstate 10 bridge after the state quietly settled a lawsuit earlier this year over a decades-old chemical spill at the foot of the current bridge.

The confidential settlement agreement, which The Advocate | The Times-Picayune received through a public records request, called for Phillips 66 and Sasol to pay \$2 million to the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development — roughly .06% of the price tag for the new bridge. The payment ended a lawsuit the state filed against



A BRIDGE TOO STEEP

Second in an occasional series about the Lake Charles I-10 bridge

the two companies over an infamous 1994 spill of ethylene dichloride near the bridge. The companies spilled millions of pounds of ethylene dichloride, or EDC, during an underground transfer pipeline failure, they acknowledged in legal filings. Federal agencies intervened with cleanup orders, soil and water sampling and a restoration plan.

But hundreds of workers who cleaned up the EDC said they became sick and said they were not properly informed of the hazards of working with the chemical, nor provided the

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ACA Sunday

