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‘New ambassador’

UL introduces Catahoula Leopard Dog as its new live mascot



STAFF PHOTO BY BRAD KEMP

University of Louisiana at Lafayette President Ramesh Kolluru holds up the official portrait of the new mascot during an unveiling at Our Lady of Lourdes Stadium in Lafayette on Saturday.

BY KRISTIN ASKELSON and KEVIN FOOTE
Staff writers

The University of Louisiana at Lafayette has welcomed a new four-legged member of its family: a Catahoula Leopard Dog that will serve as the university’s live mascot.

The university unveiled the puppy Saturday during halftime of the Ragin’ Cajuns football game against South Alabama at Our Lady of Lourdes Stadium. The selection brings together two Louisiana traditions.

The new mascot was introduced in two parts. First, was a narrated video on the scoreboard that introduced the breed to the crowd. The video also included video of the new 7-week-old dog with his mother and siblings.

Secondly, public address announcer Ed Perkins then directed the fans to a presentation on the field with a photo of the new mascot with a countdown to the statement, “Today a new tradition begins.”

The crowd was also given a QR code on the scoreboard to vote on the name of the new mascot.

“There’s only one Ragin’ Cajuns, and we’re the only public university and NCAA Division I athletics program in the nation with a live Catahoula as its mascot,” President Ramesh Kolluru said. “Our fans wanted a mascot they could connect with. We listened. This new ambassador will bring our university community together, inspire school spirit and strengthen the bonds among students, alumni and fans. Now, we’re inviting everyone to help name him.”

➤ **See complete coverage of the Cajuns game.** PAGE 1C

The university has selected five possible names, and fans can rank their favorites through Nov. 17. The winning name will be announced during the Nov. 21 home football game against Coastal Carolina.

The 7-week-old puppy has a blue merle coat, with silvery-gray fur and charcoal and black markings. He has lighter markings above his “glass” eyes, a dark forehead and a gray muzzle.

➤ See **MASCOT,** page **6A**

Does midterm blue wave leave Landry vulnerable?

Democrats see opening, but governor has formidable war chest

BY TYLER BRIDGES and SAM KARLIN
Staff writers

The Louisiana Democratic Party is looking for another John Bel Edwards.

After Tuesday’s shockingly close U.S. Senate election, Democratic Party leaders are turning their attention to next year’s governor’s race. For now, they have no obvious candidate to challenge Gov. Jeff Landry, who is heavily favored as the race begins.



Landry



Davis

But the narrow miss by Jamie Davis in the Senate race — and the repudiation by voters across the country of candidates backed by President Donald Trump — has given Democratic Party officials a fresh burst of optimism that one of their candidates can defeat Landry in 2027.

For many, Edwards is the obvious choice because, with his election as governor in 2015 and reelection in 2019, he has been the only Democrat to win statewide office in Louisiana since 2008.

In an interview, Edwards said his phone blew up Tuesday night and Wednesday with friends calling and texting him about the governor’s race.

Edwards said he did not think the constitutional amendment that voters approved Tuesday imposing a limit of two lifetime terms for governors would apply to him retroactively. But he said he has ruled out being a candidate next year for any office.

“I am not hiding the ball here,” he said. “I’m not running for governor.”

In a follow-up text, Edwards wrote, “The decision isn’t at all rooted in any calculus

➤ See **LANDRY,** page **4A**

18-year-old wins seat on Carencro council

‘It’s my passion for helping people,’ Savage says

BY JOEL THOMPSON
Staff writer

It isn’t often that a high school student decides to run for city council. It’s even less often that high schooler ends up winning.

Eighteen-year-old Alex Savage, now a nursing student at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette, did just that when he was elected to one of five at-large seats on the Carencro City Council, coming in fourth with 1,203 votes.



Savage

“It’s a little out of the box,” Savage admitted. “Some people were definitely skeptical at first.”

Savage said his campaign began while he was returning home from a soccer tournament in New Orleans with his father. They were engaged in a familiar topic on local government and civics when the inspiration to run for local office hit.

“When I found out I’d be eligible to run, it was a no-brainer to me because I love this community so much and this is one of the best ways I can serve it,” he said.

Savage engaged thousands of Carencro residents throughout his campaign with push cards, yard signs, text blitzes and relentless door-knocking.

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Secrecy around coastal damage settlements questioned

Balance between protecting negotiations, public’s right to know debated

BY ALEX LUBBEN and MIKE SMITH
Staff writers

Gov. Jeff Landry’s push to settle dozens of lawsuits seeking to hold the oil and gas industry financially responsible for damage to Louisiana’s coast has gained momentum — but the results so far are impossible to judge.

The settlements with major oil companies including Shell, Exxon and BP are being kept secret even though they potentially involve hundreds of millions of dollars or more in public assets, leaving it unclear how much they are worth and to what degree they will benefit coastal restoration.

➤ See **SETTLEMENTS,** page **6A**



The Louisiana coastal damage settlements with oil majors including Shell, Exxon and BP are under wraps even though they potentially involve hundreds of millions of dollars in public assets.

STAFF PHOTO BY SOPHIA GERMER

WEATHER

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