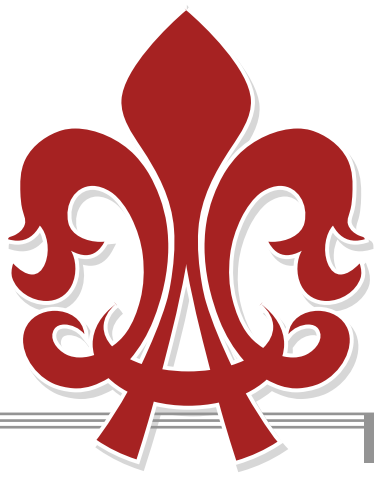




Oak Grove's 5-star Caroline Bradley commits to LSU

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Echols builds war chest for 5th Congressional District campaign

Greg Hilburn
Shreveport Times
USA TODAY NETWORK

Michael Echols will report \$1.4 million cash on hand to fuel his 5th Congressional District race, the campaign said in a text to USA Today Network April 6.

Echols, a Republican state representative from Monroe, has raised \$1.8 million since announcing his campaign on Feb. 12 for the seat, which came open with incumbent Congresswoman Julia Letlow's decision to run for the U.S. Sen-

ate.

Federal Election Commission campaign finance reports for the first quarter are due April 15, but candidates can release their numbers early if they believe it will advance their campaigns.

Echols is one of four candidates running in the May 16 Republican primary election. The others are Louisiana Board of Regents Chair Misti Cordell of Monroe, state Sen. Rick Edmonds of Baton Rouge and state Sen. Blake Miguez of New Iberia.

Echols said he has invested \$1 million of his own money in his campaign in ad-

dition to \$800,000 that he has raised from donors.

"I've invested heavily in this campaign, but what's most encouraging is the overwhelming support we've received from donors across Louisiana and throughout District 5," Echols said in a statement. "We've already raised hundreds of thousands from supporters, and we're on pace to raise \$1 million or more from donors during this cycle."

Greg Hilburn covers state politics for the USA TODAY Network of Louisiana. Follow him on Twitter @GregHilburn1.

Estate planning guide helps common mistakes

Aaron Gonsoulin
Lafayette Daily Advertiser
USA TODAY NETWORK

Residents across Louisiana soon will have a new resource to help them make sense of one of life's most complicated and often overlooked responsibilities: estate planning.

Andrew Mims, founder and managing attorney of Oak Grove Estate Planning, is set to release a new book, "Don't Let the State Decide," on April 14, which offers practical guidance on wills, trusts and estate planning tailored specifically for Louisiana families.

After nearly 20 years of advising clients throughout Acadiana and across the state, Mims said he has repeatedly seen the same challenges unfold when families fail to prepare.

"This is something I see every day," Mims said. "Families are forced into difficult situations, not because they did anything wrong, but because they didn't realize how the law works. This book is meant to bring clarity to that."

Unlike many estate planning resources written with other states in mind, Mims' book focuses on Louisiana's distinct civil law system, which

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Rozie Felix participating in community service activity as The Lafayette Police Department host the first annual Junior Police Academy. As part of Junior Academy, the cadets learn about community service by picking up trash on Castille Ave. near the Northgate Mall June 21, 2021. SCOTT CLAUSE/USA TODAY NETWORK

Mounted patrol facility upgrades completed

Aaron Gonsoulin
Lafayette Daily Advertiser
USA TODAY NETWORK

Lafayette Consolidated Government (LCG) announced that it has completed renovations to the Lafayette Police Department's Mounted Patrol facility, delivering a permanent, modernized space that strengthens operations and supports public safety across Lafayette.

The Mounted Patrol Unit is used in crowd management and high-visibility policing, particularly during major events such as Mardi Gras, festivals and parades, according to LCG. With a regular presence in Downtown Lafayette, the unit enhances safety while remaining approachable and accessible to the public.

The \$360,000 renovation delivers approximately 1,307 square feet of

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Love the Boot Week surpasses 1,000 events

Lafayette Daily Advertiser | USA TODAY NETWORK

Love the Boot Week, the state's largest litter removal and beautification effort, has surpassed 1,000 registered events across all 64 parishes.

The annual event is scheduled for April 18-26. Residents can register cleanup or beautification projects, volunteer locally, pick up litter independently or support the effort through donations and social media participation.

"Love the Boot Week has grown into a true statewide movement," Nungesser said. "With more than 1,000 events already registered, it shows people across Louisiana are ready to take pride in their communities."

This year's campaign also recognizes the nation's 250th anniversary, with organizers encouraging par-

ticipants to pick up 250 pieces of litter as part of the celebration.

"From state leaders to local volunteer groups, Love the Boot Week gives people the opportunity to make a difference where they live," said Susan Russell. "It's not just about removing litter, but also about preventing it through education and awareness."

With support from sponsors, the organization distributed supply kits — including shirts, gloves and trash bags — to the first 800 registered groups.

Last year, nearly 27,000 volunteers contributed more than 81,000 hours across 1,408 events statewide, removing more than 500 tons of litter. Volunteers also planted trees and plants and refurbished community spaces.

Organizers expect participation to grow even further this year.

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