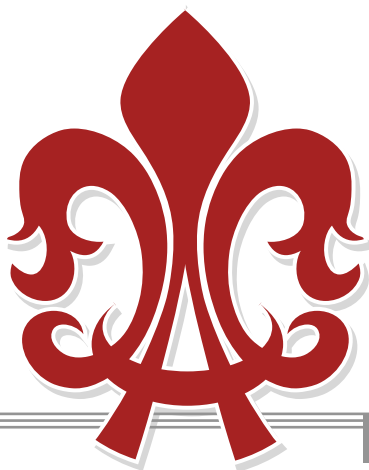




Top 25 HS defensive players to watch in 2026

SPORTS, 1B

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FRIDAY, AUGUST 21, 2026

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U.S. debt crosses \$40 trillion threshold



The National Debt Clock in New York City clicked closer to \$40 trillion on Aug. 19. BRENDAN MCDERMID/REUTERS

Doubling across Trump and Biden presidencies

David Lawder and Jacob Bogage
REUTERS

WASHINGTON – Total U.S. debt has topped \$40 trillion for the first time, the Treasury Department said Aug. 19, drawing fresh warnings that a fiscal crisis is brewing as ballooning costs for social safety-net programs and interest payments far outstrip revenues held back by tax cuts.

The Treasury's latest daily cash and debt balances statement showed total public debt outstanding at \$40.047 trillion on Aug. 18, a total that includes Treasury securities held by the public of \$32.266 trillion and intragovernmental debt holdings of \$7.782 trillion.

The federal government's IOU has now more than doubled in less than a decade, from \$19.95 trillion when President Donald Trump was sworn in for the first time in January 2017. Roughly one-third of that increase occurred during two years of frantic government borrowing to fund the COVID-19 pandemic responses undertaken by Trump and former President Joe Biden, while the fiscal policy choices of both presidents combined with long-running tax-and-spending imbalances account for the rest.

Budget watchdog groups have anticipated crossing the threshold for weeks and issued stark warnings that a full-blown debt crisis could erupt unless lawmakers confront an unsus-

tainable fiscal outlook and raise taxes, cut spending or both.

"Forty trillion dollars of debt doesn't exist solely on the government's ledgers; it is felt throughout the economy and finds its way to the pocketbooks of people one way or another," said Maya MacGuineas, president of the nonpartisan Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget.

"The more we borrow, the more we exacerbate inflation, squeeze out other priorities in the budget, and leave ourselves vulnerable to emergencies at home and turmoil abroad," MacGuineas said in a statement just after the Treasury data was released.

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Rare brain infection confirmed in state

Aaron Gons
Lafayette Daily Advertiser
USA TODAY NETWORK

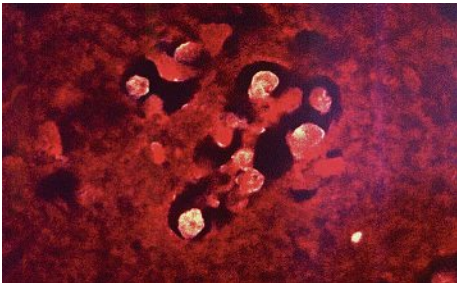
The Louisiana Department of Health (LDH) is reporting a confirmed *Naegleria fowleri* infection in a Louisiana resident.

According to LDH, the resident most likely acquired the infection while swimming in Lake Claiborne, located in Claiborne Parish, shortly before illness.

Naegleria fowleri, often referred to as a brain-eating amoeba, is commonly found in warm freshwater lakes, rivers, canals and ponds throughout the U.S. It can cause primary amebic meningoencephalitis (PAM), a brain infection that may result when water containing the amoeba rushes up the nose and reaches the brain. The infection is extremely rare, but nearly always fatal.

Naegleria fowleri cannot infect people if swallowed and is not spread from person to person. The amoeba is not found in salt water or in properly maintained and chlorinated pools. Symptoms of *Naegleria fowleri* infection typically start with severe headache, fever, nausea and vomiting.

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A handout photomicrograph provided by the CDC depicts characteristics associated with a case of a rare brain infection known as primary amebic meningoencephalitis, a type of brain-eating amoeba.

PROVIDED BY CDC VIA REUTERS

Five restaurants that top Yelp's best in state list

Presley Bo Tyler
Shreveport Times
USA TODAY NETWORK

In Louisiana, you can always find somewhere good to eat, and you always have a plethora of cuisines to choose from.

However, if you can't decide where to go, you may turn to Yelp for a recommendation.

Yelp has released its list of the most popular restaurants in Louisiana for August based on user reviews and ratings, as well as the volume of positive feedback.

One hundred restaurants made Yelp's list of the most popular restau-

rant in Louisiana for the month of August, but these are top five.

1. Fork N Spoon in Baton Rouge

Fork N Spoon in Baton Rouge is the top restaurant in Louisiana on Yelp for August.

This restaurant serves all-day breakfast and lunch.

With five stars on Yelp, this restaurant is well-known for its French toast, classic bowl, egg plate, breakfast burrito, country bowl, grits bowl, steak and eggs, maple bacon berry toast, maple melt and steak bowl.

See RESTAURANTS, Page 2A

Flashing beams to warn of speed traps not illegal

Presley Bo Tyler
Shreveport Times
USA TODAY NETWORK

If you've ever been driving and noticed a vehicle flash their high beams at you, they were likely doing so for a number of reasons.

Drivers might flash their lights to warn someone of an upcoming speed trap, let a driver know their lights are off when they should be on, let a driver know their high beams are on when they should be off or if a driver needs to move out of the passing lane.

While many drivers may consider this action a courtesy, some police departments may consider it a crime.

In Louisiana, any vehicle may be equipped with lamps for the purpose of warning other vehicles of the presence of a vehicular traffic hazard requiring the exercise of unusual care in approaching, overtaking or passing, according to Justia Law.

This law outlines the usage of vehicular hazard lights, however, it does not stipulate the use of flashing high beams as a warning signal.

Louisiana state law also makes it unlawful to drive a vehicle with flashing lights on, although there are exceptions.

Exceptions include flashing lights

See FLASHINGS, Page 2A

