



IT'S A LOVE STORY Travis Kelce, Taylor Swift engaged 2A

RATTLER TO START OPENER FOR SAINTS AT QB 1C



THE BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA  
ADVOCATE

THEADVOCATE.COM | WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 27, 2025 \$2.00

BACK ON CAMPUS



STAFF PHOTOS BY MICHAEL JOHNSON

Thousands of students filled the LSU campus on Monday as classes began for the fall semester.  
**ABOVE:** Students cross Highland Road at Veterans Drive during the first day of classes on Monday.  
**RIGHT:** Sisters Delaney Cousin, a freshman, and Danielle Cousin, a senior, pose together at a photo booth set up on campus for the start of the fall semester.



Plans dropped for solar farm

Project near White Castle drew local opposition

BY TIMOTHY BOONE  
Staff writer

NextEra Energy has dropped plans to build a 2,000-acre solar farm near White Castle, a project that drew strong local opposition.

In a Facebook post Tuesday morning, the Iberville Parish government said the Florida-based company had withdrawn its application for the solar farm, which had been dubbed Coastal Prairie Solar.

“While we are not actively pursuing an application for the Coastal Prairie Solar project at this time, our focus remains on identifying opportunities that align with the needs and priorities of Iberville Parish,” NextEra said in a statement.

Parish President Chris Daigle said in a statement Tuesday afternoon that Iberville is “at a crossroads” regarding solar farms.

“Our Parish has never accepted any Solar projects, but also have never denied any as well!” Daigle wrote. “We feel that after hearing the public’s concerns at the community meeting in White Castle this past May, NextEra Energy has made the decision to withdraw any future plans for the Coastal Prairie Solar Project.”

He said the Parish Council will make “smart growth” decisions about the future of the parish. No other solar farm project applications are currently under consideration, he said.

The 175-megawatt project would have been built near La. 993. Plans were for Entergy to sign a 20-year contract to purchase the power generated by the farm. It would have gone into

“Our Parish has never accepted any Solar projects, but also have never denied any as well!”

CHRIS DAIGLE,  
Iberville Parish president

➤ See **SOLAR**, page 9A

State argues to revoke man’s parole eligibility

Craig convicted of killing LSU student in 1992

BY MATT BRUCE  
Staff writer

More than three decades ago, four Baton Rouge teenagers carjacked, kidnapped, terrorized and pistol-whipped an LSU freshman before Dale Dwayne Craig killed the student execution-style.

Craig was a week shy of his 18th birthday in September 1992, when he shot and killed Kipp Earl Gullet at a secluded South Baton Rouge construction site. He was

➤ See **PAROLE**, page 9A



STAFF PHOTO BY DAVID GRUNFELD

Jaden Armstrong, a member of Mt. Canaan Baptist Church, pressure washes the swings at the church in Roseland after soot and residue coated the area following an explosion at Smitty’s Supply on Friday.

Explosion leaves many unemployed

Smitty’s blast drives employees to visit workforce officials

BY DAVID J. MITCHELL  
Staff writer

Jessie Hughes saw a 15-foot-high flame shooting from the top of a tank and knew he had little time to escape.

The 56-year-old had stepped out at midday on Friday to switch hoses on equipment at Smitty’s Supply Inc. near Roseland, only to see the fire when he returned to his work area.

Hughes, an 11-year employee of Smitty’s, said there was no time to find and use a fire

extinguisher on the 10,000-gallon motor oil mixing tank. He began evacuating an estimated 50 people from his part of the large lubricants plant.

“I told everyone to get out that was in my location. I told them to get out,” he said in an interview Tuesday.

Hughes, who specialized in mixing additives into the various brands of motor oil packaged at Smitty’s, survived the harrowing moments of the fire and related explosions with his co-workers. But now he is among hundreds of employees out of a job and one of at least 160 who have visited state workforce officials in Hammond for help over the past two days.

Hughes, a Greensburg

➤ See **EXPLOSION**, page 8A

WEATHER  
HIGH 91  
LOW 71  
PAGE 6C



Business .....3B    Commentary .....7B    Nation-World .....2A  
Classified .....7D    Deaths .....4B    Opinion .....6B  
Comics-Puzzles .....4D-6D    Living .....1D    Sports .....1C

101ST YEAR, NO. 58  
Wednesday

