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‘THIS ISN’T  
BUSINESS AS USUAL’



STAFF PHOTOS BY SOPHIA GERMER

Rolanda Teal, an anthropology professor, walks past signs for the Magnolia Plantation at Cane River Creole National Historical Park in Derry on Aug. 20.

Louisiana national  
park tells a story of  
slavery that some  
fear will be erased

BY JENNA ROSS | Staff writer

**DERRY** — Rolanda Teal strode onto the old plantation at Cane River Creole National Historical Park, blowing past a map. The anthropology professor knows this park and its stories. As a student, she helped tell them.

Teal once sifted through dirt beside the Magnolia Plantation’s slave quarters to find dice and coins. She interviewed former tenant farmers to trace the outlines of a typical day. She gave tours, once to a man who had lived there.

Over the years, the oral histories she collected made their way into archives and onto the dozens of historic signs and markers arranged across the national park’s two sister plantations, set a few miles apart along the winding Cane River in Natchitoches Parish.

One sign near the entrance of Magnolia describes the scale of the plantation at its height: 275 enslaved people



A dog stands on the porch of the former Magnolia plantation hospital at Cane River Creole National Historical Park in Derry.

living in 70 cabins cultivated cotton and other crops. Near those small brick cabins, later home to tenant farmers, a sepia sign describes the gardens that once encircled them, quoting from one of Teal’s interviews. “We had a big garden... Peas, okra, tomatoes, pumpkins...”

Now, the 62-year-old worries about what stories this place will soon tell.

Signs posted across this national park’s 63 acres, like those at parks,

monuments, battlefields and historic sites across the country, might disappear or look very different in coming weeks.

As part of President Donald Trump’s directive to restore “truth and sanity to American history,” the National Park Service is reviewing signs and materials at its 433 sites for “inappropriate content.”

➤ See **PARK**, page 8A

Edwards  
touts  
Thrive  
EBR  
plan

Voters to weigh in on  
reshuffling of parish  
property taxes

BY PATRICK SLOAN-TURNER | Staff writer

East Baton Rouge Parish Mayor-President Sid Edwards will face one of his first major political tests in two months when voters weigh in on “Thrive East Baton Rouge,” his plan to reshuffle the parish’s property taxes to fix budget problems.

The proposal is far from a routine tax renewal. It would redirect money that currently goes specifically to the library, council on aging and mosquito abatement to the parish’s general fund, where Edwards says it can be more flexibly spent and help pay down debt.

That’s why the mayor’s team has launched a campaign emphasizing that Thrive is not a new tax — though residents may see a slight increase in their overall property taxes compared to last year.



Edwards

“We certainly want them to know this is not a new tax,” said Mason Batts, executive director of Edwards’ office. “People hear ‘millage’ and they’re like, ‘Oh my god, another property tax. Here we go again.’ That’s what we want to avoid. This is not a new tax.”

Thrive will appear on ballots as three separate items, asking voters to renew taxes for the three agencies and also re-dedicate a portion of money from each back to the city-parish’s general fund. The general fund is short millions of dollars since St. George incorporated and took some sales tax dollars with it, and Thrive could help fill some of that hole.

Backers of Thrive face the challenge of not only simplifying its complexities for voters but also overcoming a climate where ballot measures and tax proposals have been repeatedly rejected at both the local and state levels.

Over the next week, residents will begin to see ads on streaming services and the internet featuring the mayor, in which Edwards says Thrive is “as easy as 1-2-3.”

If all three items pass, it would generate about \$24 million-\$26 million in recurring revenue for the city-parish on top of some of the debt Edwards hopes to pay off.

➤ See **PLAN**, page 9A

BR gang members plotted to kill murder witnesses, police say

Calls reveal victim  
info, records show

BY MATT BRUCE | Staff writer

For two years, six men affiliated with a Baton Rouge gang stalked, hunted and plotted to kill the relatives of a man gunned down by one

of the gang’s active members, according to Baton Rouge police and arrest reports.

Police allege Khalil Amir Henderson shot 17-year-old Terran Fobb dead in broad daylight in June 2022.

Days after he was arrested in that killing, authorities say, Henderson began making jailhouse calls from the parish prison and

sending friends Instagram messages, urging operatives in the 60 Gang to track down Fobb’s family members.

Court records in an ongoing criminal conspiracy case reveal Henderson orchestrated an attempt to “eliminate” Fobb’s sister and offered a \$10,000 bounty to keep the woman from testifying against him

in court.

He instructed his fellow cohorts in the gang to “find her” and kill the woman, according to investigative reports filed in the 19th Judicial District Court.

Last October, after months of investigation to unravel the plan, Baton Rouge police arrested five alleged members of the 60 Gang on

suspicion of criminal conspiracy to commit second-degree murder: Henderson, 21; David Malik Hastings, 22; Michael Veal, 30; Dedric White, 31; and Lance White, 27.

Investigators later tied another reported member, 19-year-old Robert King Lewis III, to the plot.

➤ See **GANG**, page 6A

WEATHER  
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