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St. George mayor projects tax cut for school district

‘Our foundation is rock-solid,’ Yates says of proposed system

BY CHARLES LUSSIER
Staff writer

The proposed St. George school district, if approved by voters on May 16, would have so much money when it opens that it will be able to give residents an immediate tax break, Mayor Dustin Yates said.

“You heard that right. Better schools, local control, lower taxes,” Yates told reporters Monday.

At a news conference held at the City Club of Baton Rouge, Yates was flanked by five state lawmakers representing the Baton Rouge area and two members of the St. George City Council.

“We have rigorously crunched the numbers and our financial foundation is rock-solid,” he said.

Yates did not say the manner in which taxes would be cut, but other school districts, including Central,

have in the past lowered property tax rates when financially flush.

Voters are being asked to amend the state constitution — Amendment 2 on the May 16 ballot — to create the new school district, which would mirror the boundaries of the city of St. George, which voters approved in 2019.

The East Baton Rouge Parish school district last month unveiled a webpage

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STAFF PHOTO BY JOHN BALLANCE
St. George Mayor Dustin Yates discusses Amendment 2 and its impact on students, families and public education in the region on Monday.

Gunman wrote of troubles

Records show he had history of violence before deadly rampage in Shreveport

BY JAMES FINN and JUSTIN O’CONNOR
Staff writers

In the weeks leading up to the execution-style, fatal shootings of his seven children, Shamar Elkins brooded on social media about troubles in his marriage and asked God for help.

He shared a graphic on Facebook on March 8, the text asking fathers if they would consider having children again if they could do so with different women.

“Hell yeah I would,” Elkins captioned it. Days later, he asked God to “help me guard my mind and my emotions.”

But in the wee hours of Sunday morning, Elkins unleashed a tirade of violence across Shreveport that stunned north Louisiana’s largest city. Before the sun rose, police say he shot and wounded two women, the mothers of his children, before killing eight children — seven of them his own, one his nephew — at two homes blocks apart.

Elkins then carjacked a red Kia SUV and led officers on a chase over the Red River, into Bossier

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STAFF PHOTO BY JILL PICKETT
Stuffed animals and other items sit outside of a house on West 79th Street in Shreveport that is connected to Sunday’s mass shooting.

JOURNEY TO SPACE



STAFF PHOTOS BY CHRIS GRANGER
Crews walk alongside the Artemis III core stage as it is slowly rolled out of the Michoud Assembly Facility on Monday.

Artemis III rocket heads out from New Orleans

BY WILLIE SWETT
Staff writer

NASA employee Chandler Scheuermann had the Artemis II astronauts on his mind from “liftoff to splash-down” of their 10-day mission around the moon earlier this month. But he was paying special attention to the first eight minutes.

Scheuermann is a program manager at the Michoud Assembly Facility in New Orleans, where NASA built the Artemis II rocket’s core stage that powered the astronauts into space on April 1.

Takeoff — the first eight minutes after the countdown clock hits zero — is when the core stage gets put to the test. By all accounts, it was a success.

“It’s just pure excitement, adrenaline. I can’t imagine how the astronauts must feel because watching it on TV and watching it from the Cape is enough to make me sweat,” Scheuermann said of the launch. “The moment they opened those doors and I saw some smiles getting off the capsule, you can certainly relax.”

NASA is now readying plans for the launch of Artemis III, the next mission on the space agency’s calendar in preparation for a potential moon landing in 2028.

On Monday, Scheuermann and hundreds of other NASA employees at Michoud gathered to watch the rocket they built for that mission begin its long journey from Louisiana to a

Florida launch pad.

Artemis III, scheduled for next year, will launch astronauts into low Earth orbit where they will test out the docking capabilities of at least one of the two lunar landers from Elon Musk’s SpaceX and Jeff Bezos’ Blue Origin that are competing to ferry people to the moon’s surface.

The tests on Artemis III will be critical to the future missions, NASA officials said Monday.

Though the Artemis III rocket will reach speeds of thousands of miles per hour when it blasts off from Cape Canaveral, Florida, sometime next year, the first part of the orange-hued cylinder’s journey was remarkably

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Labor Secretary Lori Chavez-DeRemer leaving Trump’s Cabinet

BY SEUNG MIN KIM
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Labor Secretary Lori Chavez-DeRemer is out of President Donald Trump’s Cabinet, the White House said Monday, after multiple allegations of abusing her position’s power, including having an

affair with a subordinate and drinking alcohol on the job.

Chavez-DeRemer is the third Trump Cabinet member to leave her post after Trump fired his embattled Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem in March and ousted Attorney General Pam Bondi earlier this month.

In a statement posted on social media, Chavez-DeRemer praised Trump and wrote, “I am proud that we made significant progress in advancing President Trump’s mission to bridge the gap between business and labor and always put the American worker first.”

Unlike other recent Cabinet

departures, Chavez-DeRemer’s exit was announced by a White House aide, not by the president on his social media account.

“Labor Secretary Lori Chavez-DeRemer will be leaving the Administration to take a position in the private sector,” White House communications

director Steven Cheung said on the social media site X. “She has done a phenomenal job in her role by protecting American workers, enacting fair labor practices, and helping Americans gain additional skills to improve their lives.”

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Chavez-DeRemer

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