



Conviction overturned in Whitmer plot case

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New SBC president on some abuse reform: 'politicized and weaponized'

Liam Adams
Nashville Tennessean
USA TODAY NETWORK

The newly elected president of the nation's largest Protestant denomination, though he bemoaned abuse in Southern Baptist churches, also said abuse reform advocacy was "politicized and weaponized."

Florida pastor Willy Rice's comments at a June 10 news conference point to a shift in the Southern Baptist Convention following a historic third-party report and the conclusion of a U.S. Department of Justice investigation. Since then, the Nashville-based SBC balked at certain reforms recommended by that third party, Guidepost Solutions, and a faction of Southern Baptists have resisted characterizations that the convention faced an abuse crisis.

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A slide show presentation is projected on the screens as Josh Wester, for the abuse reform task force, speaks during the SBC Executive Committee conference at the SBC building in Nashville on Feb. 19, 2024.

NICOLE HESTER/THE TENNESSEAN

AMERICA 250

Funding reaches communities across the state

Aaron Gonsoulin
Lafayette Daily Advertiser
USA TODAY NETWORK

Communities across Louisiana are gearing up to celebrate the nation's 250th anniversary thanks to a new round of grant funding aimed at highlighting the state's unique role in shaping American history.

The Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities (LEH), in partnership with the America 250 Louisiana State Commission and the Louisiana Office of the Lieutenant Governor, has awarded \$34,500 in first-round Parish America 250 Program Mini Grants to organizations in 23 parishes, according to a news release.

The grants will support a wide range of public humanities projects designed to engage residents with Louisiana's contributions to the founding and development of the United States.

"It is truly inspiring to see the varied ways Louisiana is planning to celebrate our state's role in the founding of America," Miranda Restovic, LEH president and executive director, said.

Restovic added that the projects showcase the ways historical thought, education, public art and community conversations can all play a part in the celebration.

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C&C Forest Products rebuilds after fire



Louisiana Gov. Jeff Landry and Louisiana Economic Development Secretary Susan Bourgeois are shown during the Aug. 20 visit to Donaldsonville. MICHAEL TORTORICH

Louisiana, other states combat tegus

Invasive lizard has made its way north from South America

Presley Bo Tyler
Shreveport Times
USA TODAY NETWORK

Wildlife officials in a number of states are trying to combat the rise in invasive Argentine black and white tegu populations.

The tegu is a large, invasive species of lizard that's native to South America, originating from Argentina.

The invasive species can be found in large quantities within Florida, and their numbers are on the rise in states like Georgia, Texas, South Carolina and Alabama.

What are Argentine black and white tegus?

These lizards can grow up to four feet long and weigh up to ten pounds or more, according to Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.

Unlike some species of lizard, the tegu rarely climbs more than a few feet off the ground, although, they are strong swimmers.

These lizards were first introduced to the U.S. in Florida in 2006 via pet

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Company will triple workforce at Coushatta sawmill

Greg Hilburn
Shreveport Times
USA TODAY NETWORK

C&C Forest Products is investing \$21 million to rebuild its Coushatta sawmill and triple its workforce there following a 2025 fire at the Red River Parish facility, Louisiana Economic Development Secretary Susan B. Bourgeois announced June 11.

The company will transform its layout at the Wilkinson Street facility and its

product line, focusing on specialty lumber and timbers with a production capacity of up to 90 million board feet annually.

"C&C Forest Products' investment in Coushatta reflects the continued growth of Louisiana's agribusiness industry, with companies modernizing operations and expanding into specialty production," Bourgeois said in a statement. "By rebuilding this facility, the company is creating high-quality jobs while adding new capacity that strengthens Loui-

siana's position in the timber industry."

Bourgeois said the project will create 77 direct new jobs with an average annual salary of \$65,260, while retaining 27 current positions. LED estimates the project will result in an additional 256 indirect new jobs.

"This investment reflects our commitment to the region's timber industry and the skilled workforce that make operations like this possible," C&C

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