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INSIDE, 5A

THE COURIER

MONDAY, AUGUST 31, 2026 | HOUMATODAY.COM

PART OF THE USA TODAY NETWORK



Elroy Air CEO Andrew Clare showed off his drone, “Chappy,” which was the first fully autonomous drone in history to carry freight. It took place Aug. 24 at the Houma-Terrebonne Airport.

A LIFT FOR LOUISIANA

Unmanned flight from Houma airport makes U.S. aviation history

Colin Campo Houma Courier-Thibodaux Daily Comet | USA TODAY NETWORK

Houma made aviation history this week through a drone affectionately named “Chappy.” Chappy’s accomplishment has many government officials excited about Louisiana’s future. • “History was made here in Houma-Terrebonne,” Elroy Air CEO Andrew Clare said. • Chappy carried a handful of Jerry cans, a pelican case, some Fed Ex packages and a military rucksack out and around the airbase. It is part of a phased approach Clare has planned for eventually having the drone do more.

Chappy and Clare’s accomplishment marks the first flight of an unmanned aircraft carrying freight in the nation, and it took place at the Houma-Terrebonne Airport on Monday, Aug. 24, 2026.

That, among other accomplishments in aviation, was discussed by a gathering of aviation industry executives, and government officials showed off the future of aviation with electric aircrafts and a multitude of drones Thursday, Aug. 27.

Attendees were handed mock boarding passes with Gov. Jeff Landry’s name on them, a large sign above the head read “The Future of Flight,” and a projector screen showed footage from Chappy’s flights set to music from the 1986 movie “Top Gun.” This accomplishment, among others to come, proves America is putting its boot forward in aviation technology, officials said.

“The eyes of American aviation are on Houma,” The Houma-Terrebonne Airport’s Director Ed Jarvis said. “Let’s show them

See HISTORY, Page 2A



Houma-Terrebonne Airport Commissioner Josh Alford announces the airports accomplishments.

PHOTOS BY COLIN CAMPO HOUMA COURIER/THIBODAUX DAILY COMET

Wildlife agents up reward in case of Louisiana bald eagle shooting

Greg Hilburn
Shreveport Times
USA TODAY NETWORK

A reward is being offered for information about who illegally shot and killed a Louisiana bald eagle in Vermilion Parish.

Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service agents have been conducting an investigation since the bald eagle was discovered at the intersection of Robert and Wilmer Road Dec. 5, 2025.

Now a \$20,000 reward is being offered for anyone with information that

leads to a conviction, including \$13,000 from Center of Biological Diversity, \$3,500 from the Humane World for Animals, \$2,500 from the USFWS and up to \$1,000 from Louisiana Operation Game Thief.

See REWARD, Page 3A

State Farm begins to send out dividends

Presley Bo Tyler
Shreveport Times
USA TODAY NETWORK

State Farm has started issuing payments to qualifying auto customers as part of a one-time \$5 billion cash-back dividend.

Dividend payments are possible because of State Farm’s financial strength and a stronger than expected underwriting performance in 2025, according to State Farm.

Payment amounts are determined based on a percentage of the premium the customer paid for each qualifying policy in 2025. Percentages range between four and 10%, depending on the state where the policy is assigned.

While amounts vary by state and premium paid, the dividend payments average \$100 per vehicle.

How will State Farm customers receive dividends?
How to get your payment

Initial emails notifying customers of their pending dividend will include

See DIVIDENDS, Page 3A

GOP endorses Cordell in 5th District race

Greg Hilburn
Shreveport Times
USA TODAY NETWORK

Louisiana higher education leader Misti Cordell has secured the endorsement of the state Republican Party in the open 5th Congressional District race, she told USA Today Network on Aug. 28.

Cordell, a Republican from Monroe, is chair of the Louisiana Board of Regents that governs the state’s colleges and universities.

“I’m grateful that my party recognizes that our campaign and message is resonating across the 5th District,” Cordell said in an interview with USA Today Network. “It’s a huge endorsement that accelerates the momentum we’re achieving in the race.”

She is seeking to replace incumbent Republican Congresswoman Julia Letlow, who gave up the seat to run for the Senate. Letlow faces Democrat Jamie Davis in the Nov. 3 Senate race.

The new 5th Congressional District boundaries include most of northeastern and central Louisiana with Monroe, Alexandria and Ruston as the population hubs.

Cordell, the only woman in the crowded nine-candidate field, said she likened herself to Letlow, a former university administrator, in many ways as a higher education leader, woman and mother.

See ENDORSES, Page 3A

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Volume 148 | No. 205
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