

Future Hall of Fame manager Francona is back to help Reds win

SPORTS, 1B

THE TOWN TALK

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ALEXANDRIA-PINEVILLE, LOUISIANA

GULF OF AMERICA

La. schools update Freedom Framework

Makenzie Boucher
Shreveport Times
USA TODAY NETWORK

The Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) has announced that it will be updating its Freedom Framework in social studies to reflect President Trump's executive order on renaming the Gulf of Mexico as the Gulf of America.

On March 12, the Louisiana Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) approved this change following the recommendation of Dr. Cade Brumley, Louisiana State Superintendent.

Brumley said, "updating our academic standards ensures alignment with the leadership of President Trump and Governor Landry while reinforcing the Gulf's significance to our state's future."

He continued by stating that the Gulf is a sustaining engine for Louisiana and helps fuel the energy sector and seafood industry which sustains generations of families.

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LOUISIANA NURSERY FESTIVAL

2025 queen talks about upcoming festival

Melinda Martinez
Alexandria Town Talk
USA TODAY NETWORK

Alayna Grace Arnold grew up participating in the Louisiana Nursery Festival Queen pageant. On March 1, she was crowned its 2025 queen. And, she celebrated her 17th birthday March 14.

"Just growing up and doing it for so long, to finally be able to be queen, it was really nice. It was special," said the Alexandria Senior High School junior while sitting at Little Cakes with Big Attitude in Alexandria to talk about the festival.

The Nursery Festival will be March 21 in Forest Hill and continue until March 23. The festival will include food and craft vendors, and of course, plants.

"It's all about plants and nurseries in Forest Hill so they are going to have mostly plants there," said Arnold.

Vendors will be at festival from 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Friday and Saturday and from 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Sunday. Aside from the carnival, there is no fee to attend.

Carnival wristbands are $25 presale and $30 at the gate. Festival

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State public defenders accuse state official of violating their free speech

Julie O'Donoghue
LOUISIANA ILLUMINATOR

Five local public defenders say the state official who oversees their offices violated their right to free speech when he fired them from their positions. They are asking the Louisiana's State Public Defender Oversight Board to intervene in the coming layoffs.

"I believe my pending termination is an act of retaliation against me for the exercise of my 1st Amendment right to freedom of speech," Brett Brunson, who has run the Nachitoches Parish public defender's office since 2007, wrote Wednesday in a letter to the oversight board.

Rémy Starns, who has been state public defender since 2020, sent notices to the five local public defender chiefs at the end of February informing them their employment contracts would not be renewed in July.

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Starns and the district's chief public defenders have had several standoffs in the past two years over their compensation. The attorneys have fought off Starns' plans to cut their pay and to pressure them into opening private law practices alongside running their local public defender offices.

Louisiana's 37 chief public defenders hire and manage lawyers who represent criminal defendants who cannot afford their own attorneys.

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Hummingbirds on the move



GETTY IMAGES

When will they be spotted in Louisiana?

Presley Bo Tyler
Shreveport Times | USA TODAY NETWORK

Each year, hummingbirds spend the winter in Central America or Mexico, then migrate north to the Southern U.S. as spring begins and travel farther north in the U.S. later in the spring. • The first arrivals of hummingbirds in spring are typically males, however, some do not migrate, in regions such as California, the upper Pacific coast, the Southern regions of states bordering the Gulf of Mexico and some areas along the Southern Atlantic coast, says Hummingbird Central.

In Louisiana, hummingbirds have mainly been seen in the Southern region of the state, however, there have been a few sightings in the Northern and Central region of the state as far north as Shreveport and Arcadia.

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