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MONDAY, JUNE 5, 2006

# The Times

SHREVEPORT ■ BOSSIER CITY ■ ARK-LA-TEX



## Planning for Minority Expo under way

Planning is already under way for the Nov. 1 Minority Opportunity Expo, and a "Business to Business" reception is being added.

**MONEY, 4B**

## Moviesauce festival wraps

The three-day Moviesauce film festival, which featured 25 independent films and a teddy bear mascot, wrapped Sunday evening.

**LOCAL&STATE, 2B**



## Swim, bike, run

Amy Marsh, of Austin, Texas, was the overall winner at the annual Red River Triathlon on Sunday morning. More than 200 men and women competed.

**LOCAL&STATE, 1B**

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### Weather



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## Grace period for loud, darkly tinted vehicles nears an end



Jim Hudelson/The Times

Andy Ezell installs window tint to a car Friday afternoon at Audio Plus in Bossier City. The Bossier City Police Department will change the way it handles nuisance traffic ordinances.

### Change in Bossier City law aims to make ticketing violators easier

By Adam Kealoha Causey  
acausey@gannett.com

Bossier City drivers who like to blast their stereos, ride with dark window tint or make their tail pipes roar have numbered days — 17 to be precise.

June 22 will mark 30 days since the Bossier City Council voted to change the way the Police Department handles nuisance traffic ordinances at Chief Mike Halphen's request. Now police can simply write tickets rather than having to fill out more paperwork to charge motorists with violations.

Halphen said at the May 23 meeting he would allow a 30-day grace period for drivers to make adjustments to their vehicles and habits. Vehicles must not be heard more than 25 feet away, and window tint must be in compliance with state regulations.

Several Bossier City business owners say they do not expect the stepped up enforcement to have much effect on their profits, while some drivers say they disagree with the law itself.

Nannette Chimaplee, co-owner of Audio Plus window tint and car stereo center in the 1000 block of Westgate Lane in Bossier City, said businesses have little power to enforce ordinances because customers find loopholes.

"They'll say, 'I just bought this car, and I'm moving to Texas,'" Chimaplee said. "What can you say?"

Tint laws can get



Jim Hudelson/The Times

Andy Ezell installs window tint on a car Friday.

complicated: The darkness of film allowed differs depending on whether windows are in the front or back or even whether the vehicle is a sedan or a truck.

Each state also determines its own tint laws. Texas and Arkansas permit darker film that allows 25 percent of light that shines on it into front seat windows while Louisiana requires film to allow at least 40 percent, according to information compiled by the International Window Film Association in Martinsville, Va.

Chimaplee said her store will not tint windows darker than other state laws allow except for law enforcement vehicles, which are exempt

according to city ordinance and state law.

The police crackdown may even make Chimaplee's job easier, she said, since angry customers have said they should not have to abide by state law.

"It gives us more ammunition when the customer comes in and wants to get a tint that's illegal," she said.

Lynn Johnson, owner of A&B Muffler and Louisiana Truck Outfitters in the 2100 block of East Texas Street in Bossier City, agreed that stricter enforcement "takes the heat" off businesses that provide after-factory accessories.

■ See **NUISANCE 3A**

**"I think the spirit of what they're doing is more to stop people that go to the extreme."**

Lynn Johnson, owner of A&B Muffler and Louisiana Truck Outfitters in Bossier City

**"I think it's part of American tradition to have your vehicle modified like that."**

Benny McKinsey, 31, Bossier City resident

### Nuisance penalties

The penalty for loud music from a vehicle or a loud muffler is a fine from \$100 to \$500 for each offense and/or 10 days in jail.

The penalty for illegal window tint is a fine of up to \$150 for a first offense, up to \$250 for a second offense and up to \$350 for third and later offenses.

# La. hasn't resolved school funding

By Mike Hasten  
mhasten@gannett.com

shreveporttimes.com

With two weeks left in this legislative session, state lawmakers and education officials are getting antsy about what a more than \$2.6 billion spending plan for public schools is going to look like.

"It's very frustrating," said Freddie Whitford, executive director of the Louisiana School Boards Association. "We've got school systems out there that don't know where they stand because right now, it's still up in the air."

The Board of Elementary and Secondary Education met its constitutional duty of submitting a spending plan, known as the Minimum Foundation Program, to the Legislature by March 15.

The House Education Committee, chaired by Rep. Carl Crane, R-Baton Rouge, began a line-by-line review of the proposal soon after the legislative session began March 27 and finished it May 24.

The panel sent the draft

Access this story online for more on the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education's Minimum Foundation Program spending plan.

MFP back to BESE with specific recommendations that Crane said he believes will result in BESE reworking the plan into something that's acceptable.

"It's drug out too long, as far as I'm concerned," Whitford said. "It is time to either have a movement or get off the crockery."

"It's getting very close to the end of the session," Crane said, and he was hoping to start debate on the real legislation this week. "We want it sooner (rather) than later."

BESE Chairman Linda Johnson has called a special board meeting for 10 a.m. today so all board members can agree on what is to be included in the final submission.

■ See **MFP 3A**

## Ghost hunters comb through historic Municipal Auditorium

By Joel Anderson  
joelanderson@gannett.com

Spirits.

The building once served as the largest American Legion Post in the country, a nuclear fallout shelter and the city morgue — in a basement right beneath the stage of the historic country music program, the Louisiana Hayride — for a few years in the 1950s.

Though the building was renovated in the late 1990s, the Municipal Auditorium has managed to retain much of its historical feel.

For instance, at opposite ends of the stage that was originally installed in 1929 are a piano once played by greats like Van Cliburn and Jerry Lee Lewis and a large wooden stage case rumored to have been left behind by Harry Houdini. The dressing rooms once used by Elvis Presley and other stars have been virtually untouched. And in the basement are black and yellow signs posted in the basement bearing the label, "Fallout Shelter."

"If any building here in this town has spirits," said Johnny Wessler, executive director of the Friends of the Municipal Auditorium, "this one does."

■ See **GHOST 3A**



Jim Hudelson/The Times

Todd Weaver, case manager for the Louisiana Spirits, sets up one of several digital infrared cameras Sunday night before the paranormal investigation at Municipal Auditorium in Shreveport.

## Residents wonder who will pay bills in wake of storms

By Adam Kealoha Causey  
acausey@gannett.com

DOYLINE — Tammy Pati calls Metairie home, but since August she, her husband and their three children have lived at Lake Bistineau State Park.

The Patis are among only a handful of families who remain in state and regional parks after more than 4,000 Gulf Coast evacuees took shelter on the government-controlled properties because of this past fall's devastating hurricanes. Though rules differed at individual parks, most evacuees stayed for free and left by December.

Pati, 34, who describes her family as "typical middle class," wanted to stay in Doy-

line until the end of the school year so her elementary-age children would not have to switch schools a third time. She said she has not been asked to pay rent for the nine months she and her family have spent at Lake Bistineau, though she has offered.

"I'm mostly just frustrated," Pati said. "I think the only reason I'm not totally aggravated is I know we're not the only ones in the boat."

The irony in Pati's statement applies to more than a watery exit from a flooded city. Many state and local officials seem to be in the same boat asking the same question: Who will pay?

Leaders from the Louisiana Office of State Parks, Lincoln

Parish Park and parks regulated by the Sabine River Authority are still negotiating with the Federal Emergency Management Agency over which office will carry the costly burden of evacuees who stayed in parks.

Louisiana State Parks officials waived fees for evacuees through December. State Parks Assistant Secretary Stuart Johnson said FEMA has paid about \$840,370 for cabin and camp site rentals to house evacuees from November to now.

But his office is still waiting to hear whether the agency will pay for September and October 2005.

"It's still a concern," Johnson

said in a phone interview from Baton Rouge. "We get positive responses one day, and it seems to fall through the next."

Lincoln Parish Park in Ruston housed about 150 evacuees just after Katrina. Park Director James Ramsaur said he is trying to get FEMA to reimburse the Police Jury, which oversees the park budget, for allowing evacuees to stay free for the month of September.

"They want to ask us what our profit is," Ramsaur said of his talks with FEMA. "They only want to pay for the electricity and water. I'm sure they didn't do that to a hotel."

■ See **BILLS 3A**