On schools, Vitter and Edwards rarely agree

BY WIL SENTELL
wsentell@theadvocate.com

Democrat John Bel Edwards and Republican David Vitter have radically different ideas about how to improve Louisiana’s public schools.

Edwards is a longtime ally of state teachers unions, which have bitterly opposed most of the sweeping school changes enacted since 2012.

Vitter, a U.S. senator from Louisiana, generally favors the business model for turnaround schools, with lots of options just like those enacted three years ago.

Edwards is a critic of school vouchers, long denounced by traditional public school groups.

Vitter backs them, as does state Superintendent of Education John White and his allies on the other side of the Edwards divide.

Vitter supports charter schools.

See SCHOOLS, page 5A

Congressional leaders. Obama agrees to budget and debt deal

BY ERICA WERNER
ewerner@theadvocate.com

WASHINGTON — Striving to end a cycle of crisis, congressional leaders and the White House agreed Tuesday behind ambitious budget and debt deal aimed at reversing a recurrence of order at Capitol Hill and ending the threat of government shutdowns and default until well after a new president takes office.

The ongoing House speaker, Republican John Boehner of Ohio, prepared to push the deal through his nearly empty chamber on Wednesday as his last act before departing Congress at the end of the week.

But forced to resign under conservative pressures, Boehner was nonetheless going out on his own terms. The budget deal stands as an in-your-face refutation to his hard-line antagonists, on Capitol Hill and off, who angrily oppose spending increases and compromise with Democratic President Barack Obama.

They rejected but acknowledged they were powerless to stop an agreement all but certain to pass with votes from Democrats and a sizable number of Republicans. Boehner brushed off their complaints, saying that he intended to make good on his promise to leave a “clean barn” for his successor. Ryan finely tuned the final plan, which is set to get the GOP nomination for speaker on Wednesday and win election on the House floor the day after.

“I didn’t want him to walk out of the house,” said a party leader. “I didn’t want to walk out of the barn full of rear-know-what.”

See BUDGET, page 1A

NYPD CALL WAITING

RESPONSE TIMES HAVE SKYROCKETED AS THE FORCE WITHERS

BY JEFF JORDAN, MATT SLEEGER and DAVID BARRETT
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dbarrett@theadvocate.com

When a woman was choked nearly unconscious in Gentilly last year, police took 39 hours to arrive.

It took 43 minutes for an officer to show up after a man was beaten in an alley on the Marigny in October of this year.

When the garb in New Orleans acts as it does, the witnesses were gone and so was the victim.

A man broke Skelton’s fence boards during the course of a domestic dispute with his mother in the 7th Ward last year, and his alarmed landlord called.

An officer showed up a full 17 hours later and deemed the call “miscellaneous,” so it no crime had taken place.

Each logged responses to emergency police calls in New Orleans have

NYPD RESPONSE TIMES RISING

An analysis of nearly 2.7 million records by The New Orleans Advocate and WWL-TV shows that the average time the New Orleans Police Department takes to respond to an incident has more than tripled since 2010.

N. 2010 figures are through Aug. 11.

See WAITING, page 1A

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WEDNESDAY

OCTOBER 23, 2015

3rd year, No. 45

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GRADING THE SAINTS
Who scored high in Sunday’s win over the Colts? sports 1C
The average call in 2010. This year, the total hours spent handling calls was 49,800 hours, which is a decrease of 6.7 percent from 2009.

The next section discusses the impact of Hurricane Katrina on the NOPD, noting that the city was hit by Hurricane Katrina in 2005, which caused widespread destruction and displacement.

Two days, countless calls
Leblanc and her colleagues are eye-popping stories, the stories of residents who have called 911 for help and waited in vain.

Two days, countless calls
Leblanc and her colleagues are eye-popping stories, the stories of residents who have called 911 for help and waited in vain.

The NOPD response times for district 2010-2015

Location, location
How quickly an officer will arrive on the scene is largely determined by how many incidents occur and how quickly the dispatcher can route the call.

The data show that a large number of calls get stuck in the system, and the response times in these cases are significantly higher. The New Orleans Police Department has taken steps to improve response times, including increasing the number of officers on the street and improving dispatch procedures.

Overall, the NOPD continues to work to improve its response times, as reflected in the data provided in this section.
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HARD KNOCKS

Ted Lewis: Eli and Peyton having unManninglike seasons sports 1C

NEW ORLEANS ADVOCATE

Voodoo experience beauceoup

THURSDAY
OCTOBER 20, 2015

3rd year, No. 46

NYPD: CALL WAITING

Crime and New Orleans police response times keep rising in the East

New Orleans police investigate the crime scene where a 17-year-old boy was killed and a 4-year-old wounded in barrage of bullets in New Orleans East on July 21.

BY JOHN SIMMERMAN
MATT SLUGDE and JEFF ADELSON

Advocate staff writers

Sherland Martin’s story view of the New Orleans Police Department turned downright last year after her car vanished from her home’s house in Edison Drive and then two doors inside.

Several District officers never showed up, theeschutter said, that was her son to contact

New Orleans Advocate's call waiting is an occasional series examining how New Orleans police response times are affecting New Orleans.

NYPD: CALL WAITING is an occasional series examining how New Orleans police response times are affecting New Orleans.

MOST RESPONSE TIMES IN THE CITY

It takes almost two and a half hours for 7th District New Orleans police officers to respond to the average 911 call. That’s by far the longest response time for any of the city’s eight police districts.

See SWEET page 4A

See SWEET page 4A

NEW ORLEANS ADVOCATE

Campana becoming a battle of spies

DeVuex says he was paid by ‘businessman’ to research Vitter

BY TYLER BRIDGES

It was “Spy vs. Spy” — for real.

When U.S. Sen. David Vitter’s gambit, Robert Fenzel, stalked out the Royal Street coffee shop in Old Metairie the morning before Saturday’s gubernatorial primary, one of the men he was hired to spy on was a PI himself, who had been hired to spy on him.

In a state that’s nearly bankrupt, the first week of the runoff campaign has been dominated by a circumspect二线, as Vitter and his foes argue over the meaning of the opinion of espionage that feels a hit like a minimum Cold War being waged by Jefferey Parish and New Orleans.

Vitter, a Republican, will face Democratic state Rep. John E. Edwards in a Nov. 21 runoff.

Fenzel actually was after John Cummings — the man with the white hair — when Vitter’s gubernatorial campaign had wanted to spy on him.

When Cummings entered the coffee shop, however, it was right under his nose.

As Cummings joined his regular coffee chat at a table. Fenzel sat down, and with the other present were Jefferson Parish Sheriff Newell Normand, state Sen. David Martin and personal assistant. Joe Nome.

Initial news accounts suggested that the Vitter campaign was most interested in Normand — a vociferous critic of the U.S. senator — but it became clear that the campaign also had a keen interest in Devuex, though it’s not clear Fenzel was their man.

DeVuex now says he is the PI who recently reported that Vitter and Rischard Bolling, former president who was shot before the election, had been in contact.

Devuex is a private investigator and runs a private investigation firm.

Devuex and Bolling both claimed the sources on the Vitter campaign. In their story, Bolling’s law firm claiming that Vitter was under investigation.

In the background, Ellis claimed his relationship with Vitter was "under investigation," and he said he had been in the process of setting up a fund.

Reporters attended the meetings, some of which were held in 2007 in interviews with The Times-Picayune and an interview in 2007.

DeVuex and Bolling both claimed the sources on the Vitter campaign.

DeVuex now says he is the PI who recently reported that Vitter and Rischard Bolling, former president who was shot.

Devuex voiced the Advocate on Wednesday that he did the opposition research on Vitter for a “businessman,” whom he said he could not name.

The businessman asked him to check out Vitter’s immigration history and focus on the man.

DeVuex says he was paid by “businessman” to research Vitter.

By Mark Ballard

and MARSEINE SHERRILL

markb@advocate.com

The Advocate

A little political payback may have contributed to New Orleans state Rep. Nick Laneau’s defeat in Saturday’s election.

Lavene, who has been the representative for Brian Thelander, a political science professor who has written a book on traditional Democratic politics.

State Republican Party Chairman Roger Villere made a re-

broad call to strategic district voters to support Hillary.

He problems with Lasco’s invol-

volving in the election of political

organization’s finance reports.

He had some issues with some

things we were doing. Instead of sitting down and talking to us like reasonable people do, he went to the legislative auditor.

When asked.

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New Orleans police investigate a homicide on April 26 after the body of a woman was found in the parking lot of an vacant strip mall behind Fidelity Homestay Savings in the 5500 block of Crowder Boulevard in New Orleans East.

New Orleans police are investigating the death of a woman on April 26 after her body was found in the parking lot of a vacant strip mall behind Fidelity Homestay Savings in the 5500 block of Crowder Boulevard in New Orleans East.

The investigation began on April 26 after a woman was found dead in a vehicle in the parking lot of the strip mall.

New Orleans police say the woman was identified as 27-year-old Michelle Washington.

Washington was last seen on April 25 in the area of Crowder Boulevard and West Bank Boulevard.

Police say she was last seen wearing a white shirt and black pants.

Witnesses report hearing a loud noise and seeing a vehicle leave the area shortly after the woman was last seen.

Anyone with information is asked to call 504-826-1111 or Crimestopper at 504-822-7117.

New Orleans police are investigating a possible hate crime in the city's Mid-City neighborhood.

The investigation began on April 25 after a group of people were found dead in a vehicle in the 5500 block of Crowder Boulevard.

Witnesses report hearing a loud noise and seeing a vehicle leave the area shortly after the people were last seen.

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NYPD: CALL WAITING

As police response time lags, public safety hangs in the balance

BY JIM MUSTIAN, JEFF ADELSON and KATIE MOORE
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Sofa Froths never needed the police like she did the night of the attack—the night a good Samaritan called 911 while she lay bloated and barely conscious on a French Quarter sidewalk. That January evening, a mugger still remains at large, chased Froths until she passed out and took her BUY, as well as two cellphones. Also clear is her sense of security—a void left not just because of the attack but the time it took for Froths to get the police on her case.

Even with her wounds healed—it bears a mark on the back of her hand from the initial blow—Froths still reflexively checks the back seat of her car for assists—a symptom of post-traumatic stress disorder.

“It’s something I deal with every day,” Froths said in a recent interview. “I feel like I’m always looking over my shoulder.”

The New Orleans Police Department has no record of an officer ever responding to the scene of the Jan. 11 carjacking. It took Froths nearly two months to get the report.

See SAFETY page 6A

Letter grades at all-time high statewide

Questions raised about results

BY WILL SENTEL
w sentinel@theadvocate.com

Fueled by improved student performance and controversial bonus points, Louisiana public high school letter grades are at an all-time high, state Superintendent of Education John White said Thursday.

“Schools met the standards that we needed them to meet,” White said reporters. “They have stepped up to give kids the support they need...”

The results show that 23 percent of high schools are rated A for 2014-15, up from 10 percent in 2013-14.

Advocate file photo by NATHAN HIRT
The Orleans Parish Communications District Office on City Park Avenue where 911 calls are received

NPD: CALL WAITING is an occasional series examining how skyrocketing emergency response times are affecting New Orleanians.
Sofia Frebola had never needed the police more than she did the night she was carjacked. She called 911 as she bled and screamed in the French Quarter, the city’s marquee tourist attraction, the city’s crime response center now stands at 13 minutes and 16 seconds in 2015, a 7 percent improvement over 2010.

In many cases, the delayed involvement of law enforcement hampered any follow-up investigation. It also may be slowing the city’s crime rate, particularly because officers appear increasinglyarriving as fast as they are written of as ‘on foot’. ‘It’s a designation that offically means a crime didn’t happen, but in at least some cases, officers are getting to the scene after both the victim and perpetrator have been taken off, Sofia Frebola’s case, for instance. The victim said she was robbed on the street near her home and then reported the robbery in its annual crime report but Frebola not been present.

The LAPD is not yet beginning to comprehend the impact of the manpower shortage, and the community is paying the price for this in the form of crime and violence.

He said that he could just take everything, ‘she said. ‘He was trying to force her to the street.

At some point, Frebola last contact ran with her car near her home. It was 10:44 a.m., New Orleans Police. The boyfriend, Brian Elridge, left work in panic and run to the crime scene, where they all met an ambulance.

‘She could barely move and was crying,’ Elridge said. ‘I tried to help her but she wouldn’t let me help up in my life.

Frebola and Elridge both felt that no police officer responded to the scene and that they didn’t speak with an officer until Frebola had been taken to the hospital.

Victim, an NOPD spokesperson, said there are no discrepancies an officer may have gone to the scene about 25 minutes after the initial 911 call — about the time Emergency Medical Services took the wounded woman to the hospital — but the officer arrived time.

The NOPD offered little elaboration — beyond the failed mandate of calls for its delayed response in any case. It was 10:44 a.m. April 15 in the 3700 block of Main Street. 24 years later, mother told her ex-boyfriend to leave her house that morning according to a police report. ‘The perp man, personized, demanded to speak with her relationship. ‘He became regulations report’, the report says, ‘and used his body to push the door of the residence open.

Frightened, the woman called police from her cell phone. The man, Joseph Pits, walked out of the car. Pits, who had been carjacked but called police but lingered on the phone. The previous absence of law enforcement, he accounted the woman 15 minutes later when she stepped outside to change the man.

Pits — who later admitted to the carjacking and was sentenced to five years behind bars — grabbed the woman’s hair, pushed her into a bathroom full of clothes, and forced her to stand by the bathroom door. Pits forced her last daughter into the bathroom and slammed the door behind her, continuing to grill the area about their relationship. ‘He yelled at me, he was still in the hospital.

I didn’t know what to do, I was in fear of my life and my daughter, Frebola said. I just wanted to be safe in my life.

Frebola, who had spent the next two months trying to return the NOPD in her area. Finally, on March 5, an officer at the 6th District took a report at the armored store. The report to the woman’s home was not the 1000th time women and girls, who finally arrived at home two hours and 15 minutes after the initial call, according to the report.

Pits was booked with aggrega- tion of violent behavior by outling and two counts of aggravated battery.

‘When you call for the police, the first thing they do is to gather opinion, then not preventing the police from going to the scene after the scene. ‘I went to the store, ‘I called the police, ‘I called the NOPD, ‘I called the police, ‘I called the NOPD.

‘If somebody calls the police, he has to have the right to expect the police to go and help her.

Sofia Frebola’s case proved that law enforcement services are not doing enough to protect the city’s most vulnerable.

‘I don’t understand why they didn’t dispatch right away. That’s what I don’t understand the most. She was frantic, from what I understand, on the phone.

The man standing over her truck at about 9 a.m. Fifteen minutes later, the truck was on fire. Responding firefighters discovered a body inside.

Samoson was later taken into custody and remains in jail as of 2:5 million bond. The District Attorney has charged or indicted him with murder.

Dufrene is now raising her daughter, who she is haunted by the thoughts of her mother’s murder.

‘It’s hard. Just knowing she’s not here anymore saved,’ Dufrene said. ‘The way she loved us, that was the hardest part. It was brutal and vicious broken heart.

Dufrene praised the work of NOPD detectives but saw few. She wished her husband had.

‘The detectives did such a great job, and they found the DNA only and that DNA,’ said Dufrene. ‘But maybe the police, and the detectives, could have done more. She wished her husband had.

Staff writer Jeff Allesdon contributed to this report.
Christine Villines shows her pickup that was sideswiped by a hit-and-run driver Oct. 8 near Dejailo Community College in New Orleans. Villines said she waited more than 1½ hours for a police officer before giving up.

BY MATT SLEDDGE
Jeff Adelson
and Mike Prillaman
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mreport@theadvocate.com

Christine Villines waited for an officer for more than 1½ hours after another motorist sideswiped her truck near City Park last month and then hit several other vehicles before driving off. She finally gave up. If she hadn’t called the police back the next day, she said, the wreck might never have been recorded as a hit-and-run.

With average police response times rising since 2010, reporting crimes in New Orleans is increasingly an act of persistence. Officers often arrive at scenes hours later to find victims long gone and, in many instances, to mark crimes “unfounded” — meaning that in the department’s view, they never occurred.

Christine Villines: ‘Unfounded’ crimes on rise as response times soar

Attack on California man called self-defense

The increasing number of “unfounded” incidents is almost certainly defying official crime statistics and making the city appear safer than it really is, according to a joint investigation by The New Orleans Advocate and WWL-TV.

Since 2010, the percentage of all incidents handled by the New Orleans Police Department that are marked unfounded has jumped from 10-12 percent to more than 15 percent, according to department records.

If police were to report all that was witnessed, as many as 911 calls at the same rate as they did in 2010, an additional 1,382 major crimes — including aggravated batteries, burglaries, robberies and thefts — would have been reported through mid-August of this year. Were all these crimes

N.O. native Payton returns to face Pelicans sports 1C

MISS PEARLIE MAE’S BREAD PUDDING ‘My secret ingredient is love’
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THE NEW ORLEANS ADVOCATE.COM

John Besh to reopen Caribbean Room

Portchartrain Hotel coffee shop, bar also to be revived

BY SAN MCLUCY
www.sanmc lucy.com

One of the great New Orleans restaurants of a generation past is coming back, led by a top chef from the city’s finest restaurants.

John Besh plans to reopen the Caribbean Room in the Pontchartrain Hotel when that historic St. Charles Avenue property itself reopens after a major renovation and update.

The chef’s Besh Restaurant Group has signed a deal with the hotel’s owners, Al Caporal Partners, to operate a new coffee shop and a French-only restaurant for an early 2015 opening.

The partnership, Besh group will renovate the second-floor Caribbean Room, which was the famous O’Charley’s bar on the hotel’s penthouse level. Windows will be opened and widened, including a chef for the Caribbean Room, Besh said he intends to revamp the beloved Creole restaurant to its past prominence.

“IT was an important room, and it will be an important room again,” he said. “It’s not about trying to bring history back but bringing what the Caribbean Room gave us and be a good steward of that foundation. We don’t want to re-create the past but rather honor it.”

Dating to 1964, Caribbean Room produced a roster of dishes that have entered the Creole culinary lexicon. Among the famous dishes from its kitchen were street fare versions, with a sauce of bell pepper and green pepper, stuffed shell with lemon butter sauce, crab meat farrotto, tilted in a creole sauce with a spicy sauce,birthday on birthday and the towering “new Orleans Fish.””

Attack on California man called self-defense

BY JOHN SIEHRMAN
joes@theadvocate.com

A New Orleans man whose punch dropped a Californian man last month and left him paralyzed sued in self-defense, his attorney said Monday. The victim threw a can at the local man’s car and then approached when his cli
t get out of the car to check for damage. After de
ing 64-year-old re
ting Doug Davis, Christopher

Smith

Smith moved to a date night at the Blue Nile club on French
to some count of second
to over the Oct. 15 fistfight

 battery over the Oct. 15 fistfight

in Faubourg Marigny.

Gates called it a trumped-up charge for an incident that he said lacked the intentionally required under Louisiana law. A conviction for second-degree murder carries a maximum eight-year prison term.

It was his intention to be on a date with his girlfriend,” Gates said.

Gates claimed Smith is protected under Louisiana’s version of a “stand your ground” law. He also claimed “racial stings were involved” and that Davis “was kick

ing at him and had his feet up” when Smith, 30, landed the defil

ating blow.

Smith didn’t file, Gates insisted, but neither did he wait around for a police, who showed up some 40 minutes later.

lized. Gates attended New Orleans Parish Juvenile Court last Saturday and was booked early Monday Magistrate Judge Har

Courtland set bail at $35,000 for Smith on a count of second-deg

Russian jet goes down in a cloud of mystery

BY DMITRY LAVENSTEIN

and VLADIMIR SACHNOV

Associated Press

ST. PETERSBURG, Russia — Mystery and confu

designed to plummet suddenly from high altitude in the Egyptian desert, killing all 228 passengers aboard. The airline Monday ruled out sabotage or hijacking, and aviation officials dismissed these comments as premature.

Some aviation experts raised the possibil

gy into a white mushroom cloud. The jet lost altitude, and the black smoke from the engine erupted into a column visible from the ground.

Captain Yegorukov, the U.S. director of national intelligence, said that while there is no direct evidence, a plume of smoke suggests the jet was destroyed. It could not be excluded that the plane was brought down by Israeli or Jordanian forces in the Sinai Peninsula.

"It's unlikely, but I wouldn't rule it out," he told reporters in Washington.

Asked if a terrorist attack could be ruled

ATTACK ON CALIFORNIA MAN CALLED SELF-DEFENSE

BY JOHN SIEHRMAN

joes@theadvocate.com

A New Orleans man whose punch dropped a Californian man last month and left him paralyzed sued in self-defense, his attorney said Monday. The victim threw a can at the local man’s car and then approached when his client got out of the car to check for damage. After de

AdVeance staff photos by SCOTT THRELKELD

‘Unfounded’ crimes on rise as response times soar

Christine Villines: ‘Unfounded’ crimes on rise as response times soar

GATES CALLED IT A TRUMPED-UP CHARGE FOR AN INCIDENT THAT HE SAID LACKED THE INTENTIONALLY REQUIRED UNDER LOUISIANA LAW. A CORROBORATION OF THE SAME LEVEL AS A CRIME.
The longer the response, the less likely an investigation

When New Orleans police respond to a call, they categorize it in one of four ways:

- report to follow ("nothing to see here")
- "next available service" (the call is classified as "unanswered")
- "not available service" (the call is classified as "unanswered")

In the New Orleans area, the percentage of calls that are classified as "unanswered" is not counted as crimes. The percentage of calls categorized that way has steadily increased as response times have slowed. This chart shows that within the past year, New Orleans police have been less likely to classify a crime as unprocessed when police get to a scene quickly.

2015

- Unanswered/Unprocessed
- Unprocessed/Unprocessed
- Unprocessed/Unprocessed
- Unprocessed/Unprocessed

Less than 6 minutes
- Less than 6 minutes
- Less than 6 minutes
- Less than 6 minutes

6-11 minutes
- 11-27 minutes
- 27 minutes or more
- Less than 6 minutes

New Orleans police

- 14.7%
- 4.5%
- 3.9%
- 2.4%

85.3%

- 24,205 calls

- 24,205 calls

- 24,205 calls

- 24,205 calls

Note: Figures are through Aug 15.

Source: NOPD

Advocate graphic by JIM SANDERS

The longer the response, the less likely an investigation.

The longer the response, the less likely an investigation.

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