

ISLAND SUPERMARKETS

METAIRIE 504-885-5565 | RIVER RIDGE 504-737-8146
 GARDEN DISTRICT 504-262-6017 | CHALMETTE 504-262-0750
 BELLE CHASSE 504-393-1012

PRICES VALID 12/18/24 - 12/24/24

DUNCAN HINES CAKE MIX 15.2-15.25 OZ \$2.89

FRENCH MARKET BAGGED OR CANNED COFFEE 12-16 OZ \$4.99 EA

— SINCE 1837 —

The Times-Picayune

THE NEW ORLEANS ADVOCATE

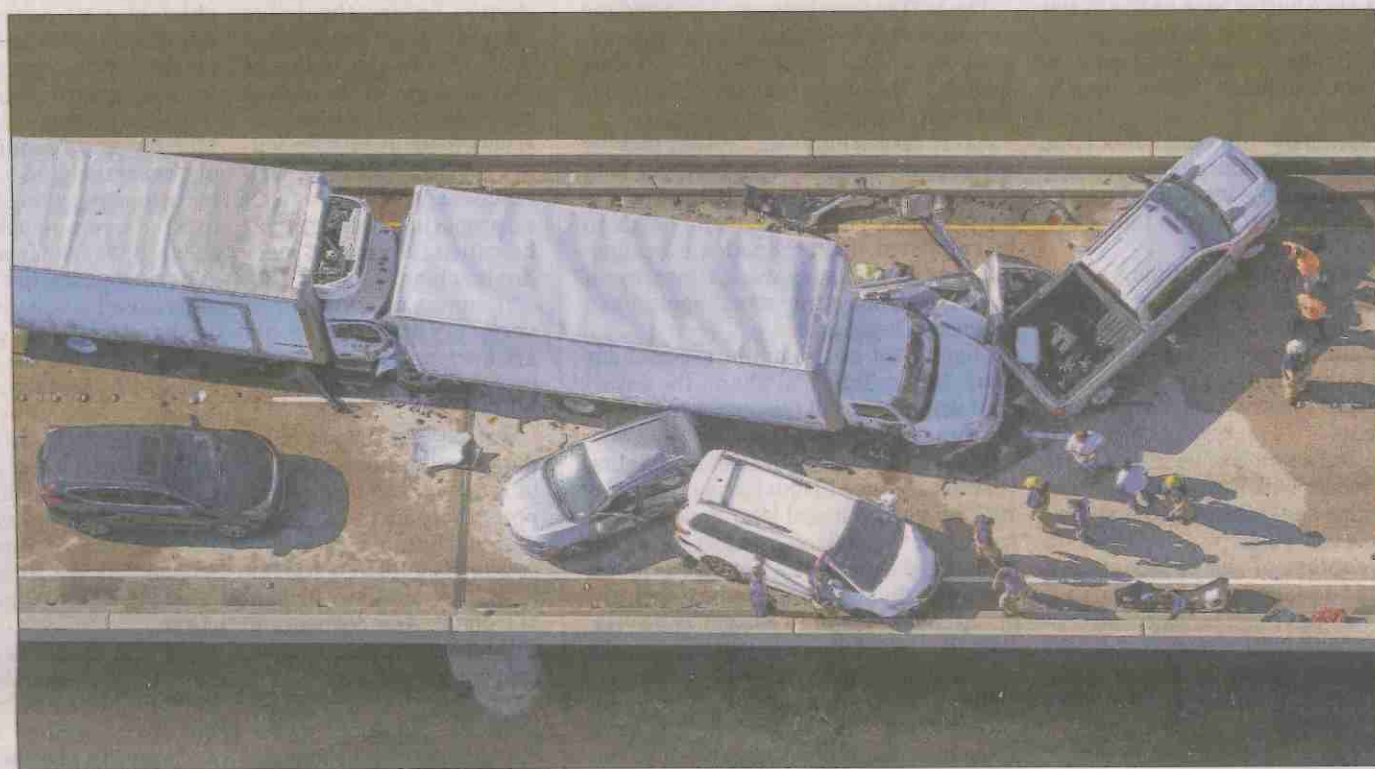
NOLA.COM

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 18, 2024

\$2.00

Multivehicle crashes shut down Causeway

At least 33 injured in multiple incidents on foggy roadway



STAFF PHOTO BY BRETT DUKE

Emergency response crews work the scene of one of the multivehicle crashes on the Lake Pontchartrain Causeway on Tuesday.

BY BOB WARREN, GABRIELLA KILLET and WILLIE SWETT
Staff writers

Dozens of vehicles ping-ponged across the fog-shrouded Lake Pontchartrain Causeway early Tuesday, combining for at least six separate multivehicle crashes that sent at least 11 people to the hospital and left a trail of wreckage that forced officials to close the bridge for more than eight hours as they slogged through a massive cleanup.

"It's a mess," Causeway General Manager Carlton Dufrechou said at one point as reports of new wrecks continued to arrive. "Just a mess."

A St. Tammany Parish fire official who was among the emergency responders said 33 people reported injuries. Eleven were transported to area hospitals, Dufrechou said. Dozens more people were trapped on the bridge for hours, stuck behind the wreckage.



STAFF PHOTO BY CHRIS GRANGER

A truck is hooked up to a wrecker to be pulled off the Lake Pontchartrain Causeway following a series of crashes Tuesday morning.

As for the number of vehicles that were involved, Dufrechou said late Tuesday that officials were still counting, but had confirmed "several dozen."

"Have I seen worse crashes? Yes," he said. "But have I seen anything of this

magnitude? No."

In a scene frighteningly reminiscent of the foggy October 2023 pileup on Interstate 55 that involved nearly 170 vehicles and claimed seven lives, Dufrechou said the first crash was reported just before 8:30 a.m. at mile marker 18 on the southbound span. Two minutes later, there was another multivehicle crash, this one on the northbound span roughly at the same spot as the southbound crash.

Then, four additional crashes were reported as authorities and emergency responders scrambled to pick their way through the wreckage to reach injured drivers and passengers. The wrecked vehicles include a Causeway police car and a Causeway Motorist Assistance Patrol truck, both victims of rear-end crashes.

Unlike the 2023 crash on the elevated I-55, there were no fatalities reported in Tuesday's chaos on the Causeway.

➤ See **CRASHES**, page 4A

La. tops nation in flu activity

RSV levels in wastewater also soaring, resulting in patient spike

BY EMILY WOODRUFF
Staff writer

On a map of flu activity across the U.S., Louisiana glows a bright red, the only state where flu rates are considered "high," making it a hotbed for the dreaded winter-time virus. At the same time, RSV levels in wastewater in Louisiana are soaring, resulting in hospital wards that are overflowing with patients.

"We're chock-full," said Dr. Mark Kline, an infectious disease expert and physician in chief at Children's Hospital New Orleans. "The wastewater data is off the charts for RSV, and influenza is up there, too."

Children's has 34 NICU beds and 50 babies currently in need of care, Kline said. To cope, the hospital is boarding patients in the emergency department and post-anesthesia areas typically reserved for patients coming out of surgery.

"We're not turning anybody away," he said.

But it's not just kids who are suffering.

Louisiana currently ranks a level 10 out of 13 for flu activity overall, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Only Washington, D.C., is also in that category.

"Unfortunately, Louisiana is leading the country," said Dr. Sandra Kemmerly, infectious disease specialist and system medical

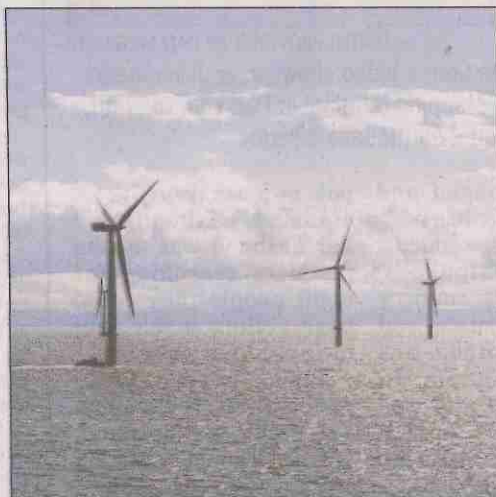
➤ See **FLU**, page 4A

Firms pitch wind projects

Gulf of Mexico areas spark interest in fledgling industry

BY JOSIE ABUGOV
Staff writer

After a period of stagnation for the offshore wind



Suspect in CEO killing charged with terrorism

BY JAKE OFFENHARTZ and JENNIFER PELTZ
Associated Press

NEW YORK — The man accused of killing UnitedHealthcare's CEO has been charged with murder as an act of terrorism, prosecutors said Tuesday as they worked to bring him to a New York court

on a midtown Manhattan street "was a killing that was intended to evoke terror. And we've seen that reaction."

Mangione's New York lawyer, Karen Friedman Agnifilo, declined to comment.

Thompson, 50, was shot while walking to a hotel where Minnesota-based UnitedHealthcare — the