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Landrieu Places 1st in Primary

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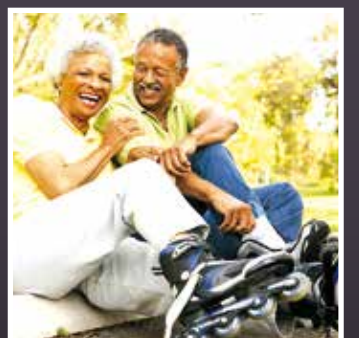
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Landrieu Places First in Primary

Challenges Bill Cassidy to Six Debates before General Election



Three-term Democratic US Senator Mary Landrieu will face Republican challenger Bill Cassidy in a runoff election for the coveted seat. "We have the race we have wanted, for months he has hidden from the voters and have distorted and twisted our record of fighting and delivering for Louisiana and now those days are over," Landrieu said.

By Edwin Buggage
Photos by Glenn Summers

It has been a tough re-election battle for three term Louisiana Democratic U.S. Senator Mary Landrieu. In what's up to this point has been a three person race is now down to the two top vote getters who will face

off on December 6th in the general election. Landrieu placed first with 42% of the vote will be up against challenger Republican U.S. Congressman Bill Cassidy who placed second with nearly 41% of the vote.

In a room full of supporters and local, state and national media on hand Landrieu came out on stage surrounded by her family, key staffers and other elected

officials. She came out and was energized about hitting the restart button on the campaign and seemed ready to match up head-to-head with Bill Cassidy. "We have the race we have wanted, for months he has hidden from the voters and have distorted and twisted our record of fighting and delivering for Louisiana and now those days are over," Landrieu said.

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This line of attack is surrounding the primary election cycle where Cassidy did not appear at several debates, something that Landrieu alluded to feeling if more people knew where he stood on the issues they would see a clear difference between her and her challenger. "You cannot run and hide anymore this race starts tonight," she said to applause.

Speaking on the attack on President Obama by the Cassidy campaign and not talking about where he stands on the issues or discuss his own record or agenda she said,

"This race is not about who the president is or was, this race is about the future of Louisiana." Continuing she said contrasting herself to Bill Cassidy, "Which candidate has a proven record of standing up and fighting for our state and which candidate has been hiding his record from the voters?"

During her nearly 15 minute speech she challenged Bill Cassidy to take part in 6 debates in the four weeks between now and the general election. "I issue a challenge to Bill Cassidy, six debates, six hours, one hour for each year of a senate

term. I don't think is too much to ask from a guy who wants to represent 4.5 million people in the United States Senate." In a direct jab at Cassidy she said in reference to her debate challenge, "In these debates we can talk about education, the economy, Social Security and Medicare, critical issues for our state and you are going to have to say more than President Obama's name." she said as the audience applauded in agreement.

The crowd of supporters was waving signs throughout the night, one of which has become symbolic

of her campaign, "I'm with Mary." But a new sign that seems to be an introduction of things to come was a sign saying with Bill Cassidy's face that says "Where was Bill?" Hammering this new message home Senator Landrieu ran through a list of issues that included Medicare, hurricane relief funding, veterans, equal pay for women, seniors and a host of others with the audience joining in asking, "Where was Bill?"

In closing she talked about her experience in the U.S. Senate being key to getting the things the people of Louisiana needs. In addition, she

talked about her political independence and the importance of coalition building. Something she feels that she brings to the table that challenger Cassidy has not shown the ability to do as a member of the House of Representatives and will not bring to the U.S. Senate which consequently, would have an adverse effect on the people of Louisiana. "As a U.S. Senator I have put together coalitions and been willing to stand up to my own leadership and party to get the job done and unlike Bill Cassidy I have the record to prove it."

Congratulations to Those Who Won but We're Not Done



Terry B. Jones
Publisher,
Data News Weekly

The Primary Elections are done and Data News would like to congratulate Judge Chris Bruno for his victory in the race to retain his seat on the bench in Civil District Court Division F and Nakisha Ervin-Knott in her bid to occupy the bench in Civil District Court Division D.

We are continuing our support of Janet Ahern in the run-off for Civil District



Nakisha Ervin-Knott



Chris Bruno



Janet Ahern

Court Domestic Section 2 and of course, we are backing Mary Landrieu who placed first in the race for the U.S. Senate. It is important that

we get out and vote on December 6th. Turnout will be very important in who will be victorious. And remember in the end it is not only solely

about them, the candidates, but it is about whom will best serve us and our interest.

In the upcoming weeks until the General Election Data

News will dedicate page space to keeping you informed and encouraging you to get involved and take control of the future direction of our City and state and vote. We must do everything we can to place people in office who gives a voice to our issues. We can no longer be denied, with some of the results of the national elections this should be our wake up call. So please get out and vote and get involved in things that affect and impact our community.

Data News also congratulates Congressman Cedric Richmond on his victory where he received 80 percent of the vote. It is a testament to the great work he is doing and is a rising star on Capitol Hill.

Data News Weekly is Hiring

Data News Weekly Newspaper, The People's Paper, is hiring for two positions in our New Orleans Office.

Editor/Reporters

About the Job

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Sales Manager/Retail Ad Manager

About the Job

Data News Weekly Newspaper is the leading African American media company in New Orleans, publishing a weekly newspaper. Additionally, its website under ladatanews.com is the most read Black website in the region.

We are currently seeking a strong leader to proactively manage broad aspects of the advertising division. You will be working in a positive team-oriented atmosphere which has a modern press, leading website and award-winning newspaper.

Responsibilities include but not limited to:

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New Orleans Recognized For Work In Ending Homelessness Among Veterans

New Orleans Has Reduced Veteran Homelessness by 62 Percent in Last Three Years

NEW ORLEANS, LA – New Orleans was recognized by the National Alliance to End Homelessness (Alliance) for its efforts in reducing the number of veterans experiencing homelessness by 62 percent in the last three years. Since 2011, more than 300 veterans have been sheltered in New Orleans. This recognition is part of the Alliance's new ongoing educational initiative called Never Another Homeless Veteran campaign spotlighting communities like New Orleans that have taken advantage of new resources and new strategies like rapid re-housing and permanent supportive housing to ensure that homeless veterans are housed.

"It is thanks to cities like New Orleans that have implemented innovative homeless assistance programs for veterans that we have achieved an historic 33 percent decline in veteran homelessness," said National Alliance to End Homelessness President and CEO Nan Roman. "They are showing what we can accomplish when we have the resources and the determination to change lives for the better."

The National Alliance to End Homelessness is a nonprofit, non-partisan, organization committed to preventing and ending homelessness in the United States. As a leading voice on the issue of homelessness, the Alliance analyzes policy and develops pragmatic, cost-effective policy solutions; works collaboratively with the public, private, and non-profit sectors to build state and local capacity; and provides data and research to policymakers and elected officials in order to inform policy debates and educate the public and opinion leaders nationwide.

According to numbers released last week by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development, the number of people experiencing homelessness on a given night has declined by 11 percent nationwide since 2007. During the January 2014 Point-in-Time Count, volunteers counted



578,424 people experiencing homeless. Of those, 49,933 were veterans, a decline of 11 percent since 2013.

"Veteran homelessness is an issue that we are all too familiar with, and in New Orleans we are taking this challenge head on," Mayor Mitch Landrieu said. "Our veterans have served our great nation courageously and it's our turn to do our part and support these brave men and women. On Independence Day this year, we accepted First Lady Michelle Obama's Mayor's Challenge to End Veteran Homelessness and be the first major city in the United States to end homelessness among veterans by the end of this year. Through enhanced coordination of the New Orleans Interagency Council on Homelessness and the generous support of the over 60 service providers that make up our Continuum of Care, we are well on our way. I want to thank the National Alliance to End Homelessness for this recognition as we continue to serve our warriors and help them find homes."

Mayor's Challenge To End Veteran Homelessness

On July 4, 2014, Mayor Mitch Landrieu joined United States Senator Mary Landrieu, members of the New Orleans Interagency Council on Homelessness, and military leaders and veterans at The National World War II Museum to commemorate Independence Day and announce the City of New Orleans' drive to be the first city in the nation to end homelessness among veterans by the end of 2014. In June, Mayor Landrieu participated in a panel discussion at the White House with other mayors from across the country where they shared and discussed successful strategies which have reduced veteran homelessness. At the event First Lady Michelle Obama and then-HUD Secretary Shaun Donovan announced the Mayors Challenge to End Veteran Homelessness which aims to eliminate veteran homelessness in America in 2015.

The Mayors Challenge to End Veteran Homelessness is part of First Lady Michelle Obama and Dr. Jill Biden's Joining Forces Initiative

aimed to increase support and opportunities for veterans.

The City of New Orleans has already achieved outstanding results on the local level: veterans' homelessness is down 66% since 2012, and the City is well on its way to ending veterans' homelessness by the end of 2014. The results are significant, particularly in a community where homelessness skyrocketed after Hurricane Katrina. However, Mayor Mitch Landrieu made ending veterans' homelessness a top priority, and in partnership with the Obama Administration, the state and non-profits, the City of New Orleans has found a way.

In 2011, the City announced a Ten-Year Plan to End Homelessness and created the New Orleans Interagency Council on Homelessness to oversee its implementation. Together with 63 partner agencies and service providers that make up the Continuum of Care and in collaboration with the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), and the United States Inter-Council on Homelessness

(USICH), the City has launched a series of successful initiatives as part of its comprehensive plan to end homelessness.

Through the 100 Day Rapid Results Boot Camp, the New Orleans team aimed to make a real impact, real fast. The goal was to house 100 veterans in 100 days, which required streamlining old processes and collaborating like never before. With focus and coordination, the New Orleans team surpassed its ambitious goal - housing 120 Veterans in 100 days.

In 2013, New Orleans reached another milestone, when the Community Resource and Referral Center opened in the local VA hospital. The Community Resource and Referral Center serves as a day shelter for the homeless, and connects homeless veterans to case managers and services. To create synergy, the center houses multiple service providers, and it is the first and only resource and referral center in the nation that provides services to veterans as well as non-veterans.

Also in 2013, the City committed HOME funds in collaboration with the New Orleans Redevelopment Authority, VA, Housing Authority of New Orleans, and the Downtown Development District to pay for rental assistance and develop permanent supportive housing for persons who are homeless. This initiative has been selected by HUD as one of four National Best Practices Models for ending homelessness.

To fulfill the Mayors Challenge, New Orleans is working with HUD, VA, and USICH, and the National League of Cities to leverage federal resources and implementing a local strategy to make sure every veteran in the community has access to permanent and stable housing and the supportive services they need to stay off the street. The City is coordinating with local active duty military and veterans groups through the Mayor's Military Advisory Committee to develop new outreach services to better connect with homeless veterans with service providers ready to assist.

The public can help by donating gently used furniture, dishes, towels and bed linens to the UNITY warehouse. Those interested in supporting ongoing efforts to end chronic homelessness in New Orleans may contact UNITY of Greater New Orleans at (504) 821-4496 or by visiting www.unitygno.org.

McIlhenny's Avery Island



By LMG Calla Victoria

Famous as the home of internationally distributed McIlhenny Tabasco Sauce, Avery Island is so much more than just that. I organized a field trip for Master Gardeners of Greater New Orleans (MG-GNO) to Avery Island. Our interests was more in horticulture than Tabasco production.

Avery Island is privately owned by the McIlhenny family and the entire island is built on a salt dome that houses the nation's oldest salt mine. Salt from that mine is used on the tops of the wooden barrels in which the Tabasco Sauce is aged. Edmond McIlhenny started making the tangy condiment that we love so well between 1866 and 1868. Upon his passing, sons John Avery McIlhenny and Edward Avery McIlhenny took the reins. By the turn of the twentieth century, Mc-

Ilhenny's invention could be found on tables worldwide.

Edward Avery McIlhenny, along with heading the Tabasco Empire, was a conservationist. He set aside 170 acres of his property for plant cultivation and wild bird refuge. Today those acres are called Jungle Gardens and are planted with azaleas, Japanese Camellias, hydrangeas, Louisiana irises, Papyrus Sedges, bamboo, wisteria, and hundreds of varieties of exotic plants from around the globe. There is an egret sanctuary called Bird City, a golden bamboo forest, and a centuries old Buddha temple, yes Buddha is in Dixie!

Of all of the attractions at Jungle Gardens, I was most intrigued with why and how a Chinese Buddha got to Avery Island in New Iberia, Louisiana. Our tour guide, who boarded our Hotard charter bus, cleared up the quandary. It seems

in the 1920s a feuding Chinese warlord stole the Buddha, shipped it to New York, and had it placed in storage. Then the original owner of the Buddha caught up with said feuding warlord and lifted off his head. So the thieving warlord is dead and the Buddha is setting in a storage locker in the Big Apple. The Buddha eventually went on auction and two of McIlhenny's friends purchased the Buddha and shipped it down to Edward, who was President of the Tabasco Company at that time. Now we know the answer to the age old question, "What do you get for the person who has everything?"

Upon receipt the centuries old Chinese Buddha, circa 1100 A.D., Edward McIlhenny created an Asian-influenced garden to accommodate his amazing treasure. He commissioned the construction of a raised embankment for the temple to sit on which was built of dry

stack rocks. Unfortunately visitors started walking away with the rocks as souvenirs, and someone chipped off a piece of the Buddha's right ear. It was then that Edward McIlhenny had the rocks cemented in and built a glass casing around the Buddha. Although under glass, the Buddha is still an awesome sight, facing south looking out over a magnificent reflecting pool.

After leaving the Buddha, we slowly meander around the grounds until we reached the egret lookout. As Jungle Gardens is a sprawling 170 acres, it is more of a riding tour than a walking tour. As we got to a point of interest we would exit the bus and explore that serene, lush, wonderful natural environment. Our next stop was the amazing Golden Bamboo Forest. I felt like a kid again thrashing through gigantic stalks of golden bamboo that were as big

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Visit www.ladatanews.com for more photos from these events

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2014 Voodoo Fest Highlights

Photos by Kichea S. Burt



Halloween "Spooktacular" Fun

Photos by Glenn Summers

Everyone had a fantastic time at Halloween parties at Bertha's Place and at Elliot and Vickie's house party. And of course, Data was there!



Watching the Elections from Abroad



George C. Curry
NNPA

JERUSALEM — On Election Night, I usually stay awake as long as my eyelids are willing to cooperate. But this year was different. Instead of alternating between watching CNN and tracking results on the Internet, I was in the Holy Land, nearly 6,000 miles from my office in Washington, D.C.

With Daylight Savings Time going into effect last Sunday, I was in a time zone Tuesday seven hours ahead of Eastern Standard Time. That meant that instead of hearing

the TV network projections trickle in as polls closed in different regions of the U.S., I had to go to bed not knowing if Democrats had lost control of the Senate, as predicted, and how well African Americans had turned out in the pivotal states of North Carolina, Georgia, Louisiana and Arkansas.

I fell asleep in my hotel room confident of two things: First, no matter how strong Blacks went to the polls in this off-year election, when voting historically favors the party out of the White House, Democrats were unlikely to regain control of the House of Representatives. Second, if Republicans managed to wrestle control from Democrats in the Senate, Democrats would blame the low turnout among African Americans.

Before departing Washington, I already saw this scenario unfolding. Both the New York Times and

the Washington Post, the two most politically influential newspapers in the nation, had published stories about the importance of the Black vote in Tuesday's midterm election and that without a heavy Black turnout, the prospect of Democrats retaining the upper chamber were doomed.

Missing in the analysis was how Democrats had shot themselves in the foot. It is important to understand that most White voters don't support Democrats. The last three Democrats elected president — Jimmy Carter, Bill Clinton and Barack Obama — won each time with a minority of the White vote. Considering there are more White voters in the U.S. than Blacks, perhaps a more appropriate question is: Why are White voters not turning out for Democrats? All that weight should not fall on the shoulders of Black voters.

A second point to remember is that even with Black voters being key to Democratic success, Democratic strategists have not, as the old lady making church announcements puts it, governed themselves accordingly. Even in battleground states, they didn't purchase ads in most Black newspapers, if they bought any ads at all, until the waning days of the campaign. Last-minute White House efforts were largely directed at radio programs hosted by comedians and DJs, as if they could mobilize Black voters all by themselves with shallow drive-by interviews.

Although I was on foreign soil on Election Night, I did my civic duty by voting before I left. That, too, was different. I usually enjoy the energy of voting on Election Day, seeing who turns out and watching as children enter the voting booth with a parent. Voting early this year had

its own satisfying sensation. There was the sheer joy of knowing I had made my voice heard, even though I wouldn't be home on Tuesday.

My attention for the past two weeks has been split between the midterm elections in the U.S. and growing tension between Israel and Palestine. Though I have been in the Middle East for that period, at times I had to double-check to make sure I wasn't reliving my childhood in segregated Tuscaloosa, Ala.

Israeli Defense Minister Moshe Ya'alon, reacting to pressure to settlers on land formerly occupied by Palestinians, has proposed barring Palestinians who live in the West Bank, but commute to work in Israel from riding the same buses as Jewish riders. The proposal to operate segregated buses like the ones I grew up with in Alabama is facing a

Curry, Continued on page 11.

Online Colleges Flunk Common Sense



Julianne Malveaux
NNPA Columnist

The most common model of college attendance is that a young person who graduates from high school and heads directly to college, perhaps taking a year off in between to work, take a "13th class." While many students start off right after high school, some of them have breaks in their higher education, dropping out to save money to continue, or to deal with family matters.

The most common model is not the only model, however. Mature adults who did not attend or finish college through the most common model are referred to as "returning students" or "nontraditional students." Some get their degrees through online programs. A few

colleges (Bay Path College in Massachusetts, is one example) have developed Saturday programs where women can earn a four-year degree by attending college only on Saturdays.

Concerned by high unemployment rates and eager to enhance their employability, many mature college students turn to for-profit colleges (sometimes called "career colleges") for their education. Some of these students, barraged by television ads, are convinced that for-profit colleges, where they can attend during the evening or online, allow them the flexibility they need to manage work, family and education. And since federal funds, such as Pell grants and subsidized loans, are available to take care of costs, some students who attend for-profit colleges are pressured to take out these loans. If they drop out, they are still required to repay their loans, just as they would have to in any other college.

But all colleges are not created equal. About once a week, I get a call from a mature student whose time at a career college was unrewarding. One woman failed a math

test but could not get feedback from her instructor on what she did wrong. Appeals to others in the chain of command went unanswered.

In another case, a young woman desperately needed counseling. She ended up getting it from a community organization, not from her career college. To cite just a few cases to make a point is casual empiricism, but my direct knowledge of some students' plight raises a few questions for me.

Many students get training, but not jobs. Many are saddled with loans they cannot ever afford to repay; and the costs of attending career colleges are high. The Department of Education estimates that it costs four times as much to attend a career college as to attend a community college.

Why are costs so high when services are so limited?

Partly because many career colleges are publicly traded and the pressure is on for them to make a profit to provide dividends for their shareholders. Another reason is that salaries for leaders are extremely high. At ITT Techni-

cal Institute, CEO Kevin Monday earned \$8.76 million in 2012. DeVry University President Daniel Hamburger earned \$6.4 million in 2012. The Apollo Group, which includes the University of Phoenix, paid Gregory Cappelli \$4.54 million in 2013, and the Chairman Emeritus received nearly \$7 million each year in 2012 and 2013. In contrast only four presidents at public universities earned more than a million dollars. Harvard's president earns about \$900,000, but some of her benefits boost her salary to about 1.2 million.

These so-called career colleges are actually profit centers. The disproportionate enrollment of Black and brown students means that folks who are already poor and underpaid are creating profits for these publicly traded companies and their overpaid leaders. At ITT Technical Institute, the overwhelming majority of students (92 percent) were self-identified members of a racial and ethnic group. Nearly four in five took out a Pell grant. At DeVry about 45 percent were minority students. Meanwhile, students who enroll in these colleges

and do not graduate (the majority) have nothing to show for their education but more debt.

That's why the Department of Education is limiting the amount of federal loans that students can take out, pegging loan amounts to ability to pay, based on students' current salaries and income. "Attendance at career colleges should be a gateway to the middle class," said Education Secretary Arne Duncan. Too often mobility is downward, not upward, when large student loans go unpaid. The new regulations are imperfect, but a step in the right direction. They might be more efficient, but the for-profit colleges have lobbied hard, and gone to court, to prevent cautionary regulations.

Students of color who consider these colleges need to make sure they know what they are getting. Otherwise, they are up for a big surprise when student loans bills come due. For-profit colleges are exactly that, for profit. Students are not necessarily being educated, instead being treated as a profit center.

Julianne Malveaux is an author and economist based in Washington, D.C.

To Be Equal

National Urban League Survey Finds African American Parents Overwhelmingly Support Equitable Implementation of Common Core State Standards



Marc Morial
President and CEO
National Urban League

This week, the National Urban League released a new survey that shows overwhelming support from one of the most important, but rarely heard voices in the roiling and often distorted debate over Common Core State Standards – African American parents. Our survey of 1,600 African American public school parents found that 60% of respondents have a favorable impression of the new Common Core State Standards in English language arts and math that have now been adopted by 43 states and the District of Columbia. Sixty-eight percent of surveyed parents believe that Common Core will im-

prove student achievement, and 66% believe it will better prepare their children for college or the workforce. The survey also shows that a majority of parents believe what the National Urban League believes as well – that Common Core standards offer great potential for transformative educational excellence, but only if parents are pro-actively engaged, teachers are adequately trained and resources for schools and students are equitably disbursed.

Given the history and current state of unequal education in America, many African American parents are rightly concerned that their children not be short-changed by an inequitable implementation of Common Core. A majority of respondents (58%) agree that the school their child attends lacks the resources and facilities to effectively teach Common Core State Standards, and 54% agree that teachers are not prepared to teach the standards. Those numbers jumped to 64% and 62%, respectively, for parents with children enrolled in predomi-

“We have a powerful potential in our youth, and we must have the courage to change old ideas and practices so that we may direct their power toward good ends.”
– Mary McLeod Bethune

nately African American schools. This underscores the importance of ongoing efforts to ensure that students in all schools have the resources to learn and teachers have the resources to effectively teach the Common Core.

While the National Urban League has taken a leading role in educating parents about this issue via our Put Our Children 1st: Common Core for Common Goals campaign, our survey suggests that efforts will be necessary mov-

ing forward as well to dispel the myths and deliberate distortions that have been touted by many of Common Core’s politically-motivated opponents. Seventy-six percent of the parents surveyed understood that Common Core State Standards are a state-led effort that establishes a single set of educational standards, but 70% are under the misconception that the federal government was involved in their creation. This demonstrates the importance of

continued work to ensure the dissemination of accurate information about the Standards.

Nothing is more important in a child’s education than parental involvement. As I said in announcing the survey results earlier this week, “Our survey of African American parents on Common Core State Standards strongly indicates that when parents are fully informed – void of distortion, myth and political agendas, they tend to support Common Core and its potential to transform public education and help ensure that all of our children – regardless of their family income, zip code or ethnicity – are prepared for college or career. When parents are empowered and knowledgeable about the expectations and goals of Common Core, they are able to tune out the political rhetoric – and tune in to the potential for their children.”

For more on our survey findings and to learn more about the National Urban League’s “Put Our Children 1st” parent education campaign, visit www.PutOurChildren1st.org.

Small Businesses and the International Market



Erica A. Murray
Guest Columnist

While the scenery of many of our metropolitan cities is inundated with colossal corporate office buildings with individuals hurrying in and out, there is a false illusion that is presented about the American economy! There is a belief that Fortune 500 and 1000 companies hold the entire workforce within the palm of their hands. This ideology is so far from true and there is something grossly wrong with this hideous perspective. In essence, the ultimate backbone of the economy in most countries is small and

medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). With that stated, it is imperative that these companies aggressively assert themselves into the international market to create sustainability and to remain competitive amongst their counterparts.

Wealth creation, economic activity, innovation and employment are all a part of the focus as to why small firms and start-ups are important. Did you know that small businesses actually employ 49% of the private sector workforce in the United States, and 40% to 50% in other countries? The smallest companies in the world are the ones with the greatest power and impact! Small businesses with fewer than 500 workers account for half of the nation’s private, non-farm real gross domestic product (GDP), and half of all Americans who work in the private sector are employed by small firms (SBA, 2009).

Today these firms must focus on

globalization – increasing their involvement in international markets, if they don’t want to see the doors of their businesses closing within the next 10 years. Internationalization is a strategy that should be utilized by small businesses to increase resources. In comparison to larger enterprises, SMEs are considered to be resource-constrained, theoretically! On the contrary, SMEs are not limited at all to expanding to the global marketplace; actually they have more resources available to them than they realize. The soil and terrain has already been cultivated for them via the information super highway.

The internet and computer technology has done what no one could have foreseen over 30 years ago, tremendously condensed the distance between individuals around the world! It is now up to the business owner or entrepreneur to capitalize on this phenomenon by

utilizing the resources they possess effectively. Social media sites, Skype, and Oovoo to name a few are perhaps the most cost effective means by which one may tap into the global paradigm. Cross country expansions are taking place in record numbers through acquisitions and partnerships, even for SMEs.

The question that is probably at the forefront of the minds of business owners or entrepreneurs is where do I start and how do I know if my business is ready to expand around the world? I would like to suggest a few tips. The first and most important step is to critically identify if there is a need for your offerings in the region you would like to expand. Then analyze and vet your services or products. Ask yourself are my products or services good, great, or exceptional? Then compile a small survey with a diverse group of individuals to obtain unbiased feedback to ensure

that your results are not tainted. Next, consider the benefits of your products or services and how may they be improved...be HONEST! Compare the advantages and disadvantages. Finally consider how you can strategically position your products or services through effective pricing globally! Then consider hiring an international business consultant to assist you in developing and devising a strategic plan to tackle the market! Then execute your plan!

Erica A. Murray is an International Business Consultant who has worked diligently consummating many business transactions and establishing an impressive clientele (government officials, former prime ministers, municipalities, international airport authorities and SMEs) around the world (Caribbean, Asia, Canada, and Europe). She

Dollars & Sense,
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Improved Quality Of Medicare Plans And Steady Premiums Are Great News As Open Enrollment Begins

By Marilyn Tavenner

Fall is a wonderful time of year. Changing leaves. Cooler weather. It's also the season for people with Medicare to review their current Medicare coverage, as Medicare Open Enrollment begins.

As we prepare for Medicare Open Enrollment, which began on October 15 and ends on December 7, Medicare wants everyone to know that quality continues to improve both in Medicare Advantage and in the Part D Prescription Drug Program.

Each year, plan costs and coverage can change. During open enrollment, seniors and people with disabilities across the country have the opportunity to review their current Medicare coverage and see if they want to make any changes for the next year. It's important for people

with Medicare to take the time to make sure their current situation still meets their health care needs best.

To help people choose a plan, Medicare calculates plan "star ratings" for Medicare health and prescription drug plans. Each plan gets a number of stars on a scale of 1 to 5—with 5 being the best—based on quality and performance. These ratings are designed to help people with Medicare, their families, and caregivers compare plans, in addition to information on their premiums and benefits.

This year, people with Medicare who choose to enroll in a Medicare health or prescription drug plan will have access to more high-rated, four- and five-star plans than ever before. Approximately 60 percent of Medicare Advantage enrollees are in a Medicare Advantage Plan earning four or more stars in 2015,



compared to an estimated 17 percent back in 2009. Likewise, about 53 percent of Part D enrollees are currently enrolled in stand-alone prescription drug plans with four or more stars for 2015, compared to just 16 percent in 2009. Since the passage of the Affordable Care Act, enrollment in Medicare Advantage

will increase to 42 percent to an all-time high of over 16 million and Medicare Advantage premiums will have decreased by 6 percent.

For people with Medicare, this is good news in how they receive care. Plans that are higher rated deliver a high-level of care, such as improving the coordination of care, managing diabetes or other chronic conditions more efficiently, screening for and preventing illnesses, making sure people get much-needed prescription drugs, or getting appointments and care quickly. A high rating also means these plans give better customer service, with fewer complaints or long waits for care.

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If you have Medicare and need assistance, you can visit Medicare.gov, call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227), or contact your State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP). You should have received the 2015 "Medicare & You"

Handbook and important notices from your current plan, Medicare, or Social Security about changes to your coverage. If you're satisfied with your current coverage, there's nothing you need to do.

Better quality in Medicare health and prescription drug plans isn't the only good news for people with Medicare. For most seniors who have Original Medicare, the 2015 Part B premium will stay unchanged for a second consecutive year at \$104.90. This means more of seniors' retirement income and any increase in Social Security benefits will stay in their pockets. The Part B deductible will stay the same as well.

Medicare is working hard to make sure this good news continues so that seniors and people with disabilities will continue to get the health care coverage they deserve.

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around as your upper arm, and souring into the heavens. Bamboo (Bambuseae) is a tribe of flowering perennial evergreen plants in the grass family Poaceae, subfamily Bambusoideae, tribe Bambuseae. Giant bamboos are the largest members of the grass family. Bamboos are some of the fastest-growing plants in the world. Certain species of bamboo can grow 35 inches within a 24 hour period, and can get 80 feet tall.

Of course we could not go to Avery Island and not visit the fabled Tabasco Factory. The tour of the factory consisted of a short film on the history of Tabasco Sauce, some samples of the product, and a walk through the area where the Tabasco Sauce is bottled. Then finally you end up in a room which has interactive kiosks focusing on various aspects of the production process. There were also the wooden barrels capped with that heavy coating of salt used to age the sauce. Then there is a food truck with all of the most delectable food, and finally the Tabasco Country Store, with EVERYTHING Tabasco. There were tasting stations throughout with every flavor of Tabasco Sauce including Raspberry, there was even Raspberry Tabasco ice cream, and Tabasco Soy Sauce.



You could buy your basic 2.5 ounce bottle, variety packs, or you can buy it by the jug. It seems that our attendees were more the jug type crew walking out clutching their huge jugs with smiles on

their faces. Avery Island is a must-see experience, put it on your list!

See all of the images at thegardenindiva.com

Remember, never get too busy to stop and enjoy the beautiful flowers!

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NNPA Launches Social Media Hashtag Campaign to Celebrate 75th Anniversary

The Voice of the Black Community Offers Opportunity to Let Your Voice be Heard

Washington, D.C. As the National Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA) prepares to kick off its 75th anniversary in 2015, the organization is launching a new hashtag on November 3, 2014 to celebrate the milestone and engage the public in participating.

Beginning on November 3, 2014, #OurVoice75 will provide an opportunity for the public to participate in commemorating 75 years of the NNPA and its 200 member black newspapers delivering news, information, sports and entertainment to the world from the black perspective.

The NNPA, the Black Press of America, is inviting the public to Tweet @NNPABlackPress in response to "What does having a voice mean to you?" #OurVoice75. For ex-



ample: @NNPABlackPress "Having a voice means that I am not overlooked, but heard #OurVoice75" Be sure to include the period (.) before the @ in the response.

The NNPA serves as the only collective print source that covers

news from the black perspective. As 2015 marks 75 years of the NNPA serving as the Voice of the Black Community, #OurVoice 75 offers members of the public an opportunity to be heard on the important role black newspapers play in giv-

ing the black perspective on news.

"The Black Press is one of the only opportunities for black Americans to see their history from their perspective and have it recorded and archived in this unique way," said Cloves C. Campbell, Jr., chairman of NNPA. "The NNPA's 75th anniversary is a great opportunity for members of the public to voice their opinions on the special role that black newspapers serve in their lives."

#OurVoice75 will run throughout 2015.

"We have shown the nation the struggle, sacrifice, progress and triumph of black Americans and of America as a nation from the black perspective," said Dr. Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr., president and CEO of the NNPA. "The Black Press covers the progress of black Americans and provides interpretation of the events involved in our progress. No other print or digital media serves in this role quite like the Black Press."

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strong pushback from other Israeli leaders and supporters of Israel in the U.S.

Equally disturbing, a delegation of African Americans visiting the village of Bil'in Saturday afternoon was looking at the long, concrete wall encircling a large settlement on previously occupied Palestinian land in the West Bank when one of our hosts noticed a jeep inside the housing compound headed in our direction. No one worried because we were on the outside of the settlement, which is about seven miles west of the Ramallah, and we were not breaking any laws. Still, moments later, several canisters of tear gas were fired just yards from us, forcing us to flee. Most of us were coughing and feeling a burning sensation in our eyes as we quickly fled. It was but a small sample of what Palestinians experience in their everyday life.

I will be returning home this weekend after a fascinating two-week trip. I will write a series of stories based on visit upon my return. And like all trips abroad, I will be following news out of the Middle East more closely than before. That is always one of the lasting benefits of traveling to other parts of the world.

George E. Curry, former editor-in-chief of Emerge magazine, is editor-in-chief of the National Newspaper Publishers Association News Service (NNPA.) He is a keynote speaker, moderator, and media coach. Curry can be reached through his Web site, www.georgecurry.com. You can also follow him at www.twitter.com/currygeorge and George E. Curry Fan Page on Facebook.

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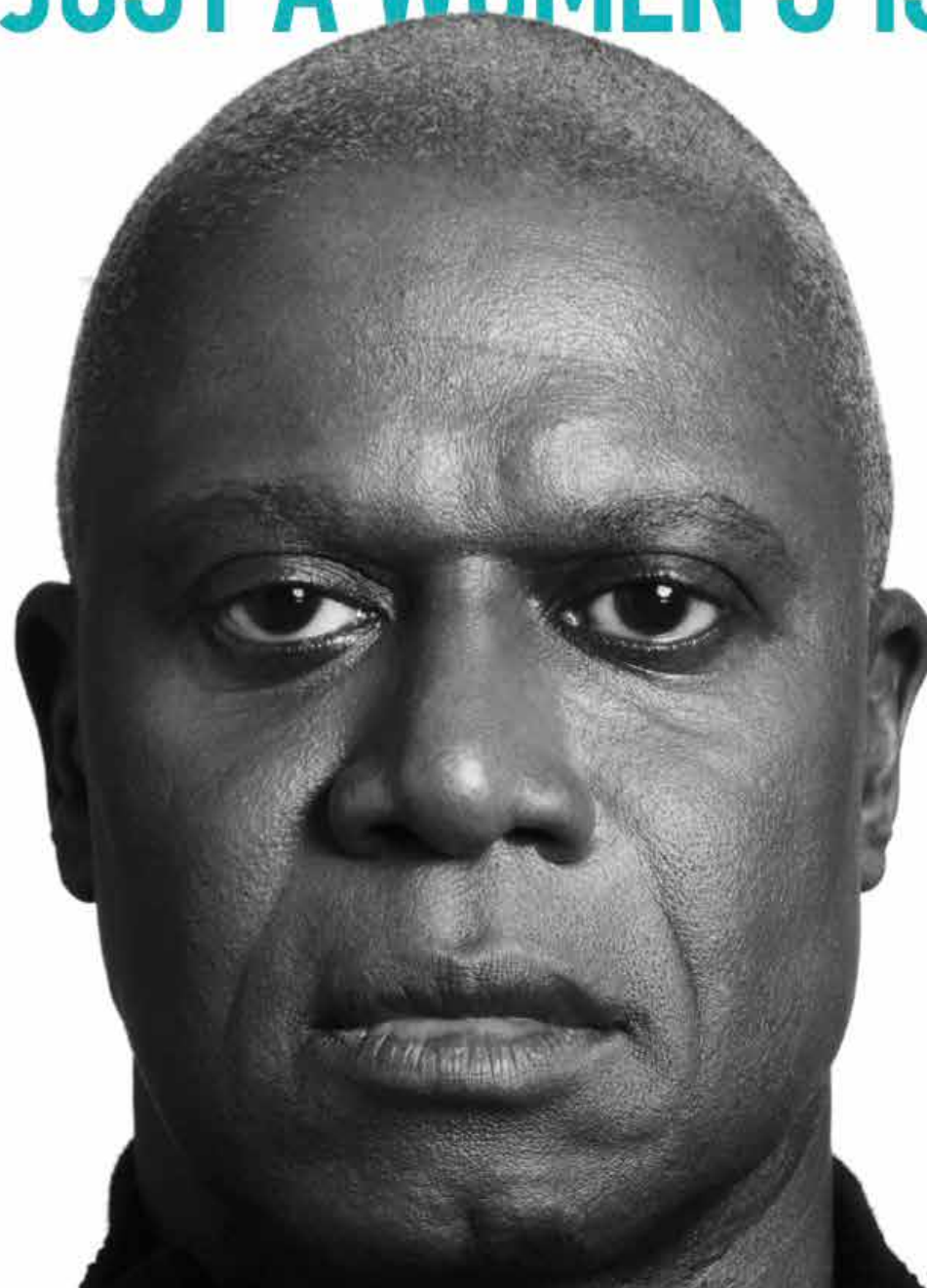
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