



### YOUR FORECAST

#### Chance of showers

High of 72 today.  
Chance of rain 50 percent.  
Low of 55 tonight.

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# Ruston Daily Leader

Sunday, April 22, 2018

Good Morning

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\$1.50

## City gets \$1M grant for connectors

Project aims to improve community's health by easing access to services

By Nancy Bergeron  
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The city of Ruston has been awarded a \$1 million grant by the Lincoln Health Foundation to expand the network of sidewalks and bike lanes that will connect to the Rock Island Greenway.

The award is the second such grant the city has gotten for the project. In September 2017, the Blue Cross Blue Shield of Louisiana Foundation also gave the city \$1 million for three miles of connectors that intersect the greenway at points in south Ruston.

"I think the biggest thing about (the Lincoln

Health Foundation grant) is the fact that it's leveraging the money we got from Blue Cross Blue Shield," Mayor Ronny Walker said Friday.

Official announcement of the grant, along with a dedication ceremony for the first block of connector sidewalk, is set for 11 a.m. Thursday at Duncan Park, located at 1311 Arlington St.

Though the initial phases of the connector project targets improving access to health care and other services for south Ruston residents, the overall plan emphasizes healthy living and connectivity throughout the city, all via the greenway

The Rock Island Greenway is a shared-use path that, when finished, will span the almost 6-mile length of the city along the old Rock Island railroad. The city's vision is the sidewalk and paths will link neighborhoods to the greenway and afford residents easier walking or biking access medical facilities, churches, schools and businesses.

"All of a sudden we start connection hospitals, doctors' offices, the sports complex. All of a sudden we become a more connected community," Walker said.

Norman Hanes, Lincoln Health Foundation's chief executive officer,

said the foundation was so impressed by the connector venture's potential for improving health in the community that it was willing to break a two-year freeze on funding new projects and consider the Ruston's grant request.

Committing to the grant, which will come in four annual disbursements of \$250,000, "was a huge, huge decision," Hanes said. "We're stepping outside our funding freeze only because of the importance to Lincoln Parish. We look at the benefits of this as being outstanding."

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Leader photo by NANCY BERGERON  
Construction is underway on the sidewalk connector that will eventually run from near I. A. Lewis School to Green Clinic. So far, 1,300 feet have been completed.

## Governor declares state of emergency in parish

By Nancy Bergeron  
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Gov. John Bel Edwards has declared a state of emergency in Lincoln Parish as a result of the severe weather that tore through the area April 13 and 14.

The emergency declaration, made public Friday, also includes Bienville, Bossier and Caddo parishes. The declaration means the state can provide assessment assistance to impacted parishes.

That's already happened in Lincoln Parish. On Tuesday — the day Edwards signed the executive order — a state police helicopter provided air support so local Homeland Security Director Kip Franklin could conduct an aerial evaluation of tornado that bounced across the parish April 14.

On Thursday, the Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness sent a preliminary damage assessment team to look

at residential damage. The state does not provide money to the parishes; it only covers the cost of damage assessment.

According to GOHSEP's preliminary damage assessment that was also released Friday, four Lincoln Parish homes were destroyed and six received major damage from the F1 tornado. The assessment does not include

estimated monetary damage.

In all, the report shows that 63 homes sustained some level of loss from the tornado. Some of the residences were being lived in and others were vacant. A number of the residences are likely uninsured, authorities said.

The parish findings will be part of the state-wide damage assess-

ment report sent to Edwards that he will use to determine whether to request federal assistance, said Allison Hadley, with GOHSEP's disaster recovery division, via email.

Most of the local home damage was categorized as "affected." That's defined as minimal damage including missing shingles; damage to porches, carports and garages; and downed trees that do not affect access to the residence or had not fallen into the

residence. Seventeen homes sustained minor damage, the report said. That category includes non-structural roof damage, broken window framings and nonstructural interior wall damage.

The six homes with major damage all suffered some structural issues, while the four tagged as "destroyed" were those with significant structural failures, such as load bearing walls or roofs decimated by fallen trees.



Edwards

## Local woman runs in Boston Marathon

By Heather Small Hawley  
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Nall Acosta Hummel is a runner.

She has been since she was little, and on the morning of March 16 she braced herself against the cold and rain to fulfill a dream — running in the Boston Marathon.

Even better, Hummel reached her goal by finishing the run in three hours and 30 minutes.

Born and raised in Ruston, her parents, Freddie

and Patricia Acosta, raised her to be herself.

That meant running, she said.

"At a young age my parents encouraged me to be active and find things that I enjoyed," Hummel said. "They told stories of me as a toddler and taking me to the (Louisiana) Tech track, where I would run my little legs off. During my childhood they let me explore and find my gifts, and I tried things like taekwondo, piano, soccer, drawing and painting, mountain biking, gymnastics and running.

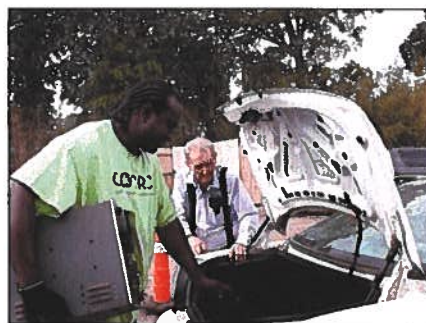
"I found joy in all those things, but from middle school and on I decided

to focus on running and playing soccer."

She was injured while playing soccer in high school and developed a permanent condition in her spine called spondylolisthesis, along with slight scoliosis.

"Although it makes exercise more challenging, I decided I wasn't going to let it stop me from doing the things that I love. I have to be smart though. I can't over train or increase my mileage too quickly or I'll have episodes where my back hurts to the point that I can't walk," Hummel said.

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Leader photo by NANCY BERGERON

### Great American Cleanup

Ruston resident Michael Theodos, right, watches as Jason Quiett, left, with Capital Area Corporate Recycling, unloads unwanted electronics from the trunk of Theodos' car during Saturday's Great American Cleanup. Cleanup collections included e-waste, outdated medications and litter. The annual event is sponsored by the Keep Lincoln Parish Beautiful organization.





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