



Trump Touts Low Black Unemployment While Swiping at NFL Players for Protesting Police Brutality

by Frederick H. Lowe
Special to the Trice
Edney News Wire
from
NorthStarNewsToday.com

(TriceEdneyWire.com) -
These are the best of times
for Black workers, President
Donald Trump claimed during
his first

State of the Union Address
last week, in which he recog-
nized two Black/His-
panic couples and a Black
welder while taking a
veiled swipe at the Na-
tional Football League
players who took a knee
during the national anthem
to protest widespread po-
lice brutality.

(Please See TRUMP, Pg. 4)

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TEN PAGES, ONE SECTION

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PRICE 75 CENTS

Advocacy Groups Seek Answers Regarding Costly ITEP Discrepancies from Two Local Companies

Story and Photo
by Ronald Collins Jr.

The Industrial Tax Exemption (ITEP) was created in 1936 to encourage manufacturers to relocate to the state or expand their current facilities and create new jobs, thereby increasing employment opportunities and boosting state and local economies. According to Northern and Central Interfaith and fellow state advocacy group Together Louisiana, the ITEP process has been used in recent years not to attract new business but to subsidize existing business for routine maintenance. Their research indicates that in 2017, 89% of exemptions in Caddo Parish have been for investment and maintenance costing the Parish \$3,947,454 in lost tax revenue and a net loss of 4,151 jobs.

On Monday the organizations held a joint press conference before attending the Caddo Parish Commissioners' Economic Development Committee meeting. The groups were seeking answers involving two applications seeking exemptions from paying local property taxes. After analyzing public documents



Caddo Commissioner Steven Jackson speaking in support of Interfaith/Together Louisiana's position on the ITEP process.

linked to the ITEP application process the groups feel that Calumet Lubricants & Waxes LLC and Inferno Manufacturing each have applications seeking exemptions for work that has been completed.

According to their research Calumet Lubricants & Waxes LLC is requesting exemptions on \$38.9 million in plant upgrades. They estimate that the potential

exemptions would cost Caddo Parish \$5.8 million in lost revenue over the next eight years. Caddo Schools would lose \$2.7 million; the Caddo Sheriff would lose \$488,284; the City of Shreveport would lose \$1.65 million; Caddo Parish government would lose \$949,462. Their research indicates that one project currently being considered

January 2015 and completed in May 2016.

Additionally Together Louisiana and Interfaith cite that Inferno Manufacturing is currently seeking a 2018 "incentive" for an equipment purchase made in December 2016. Inferno is requesting an exemption on a \$480,000 machine purchase which would cost Caddo Parish \$71,612 in lost revenue. If that process

is approved Caddo Schools would lose \$33,548, the Caddo Sheriff would lose \$6,018, the City of Shreveport would lose \$20,344 and Caddo Parish government would lose \$11,703.

A legal opinion has confirmed that awarding a public subsidy to "incentivize" a project that is already completed would be illegal under the Louisiana consti-

(Please See ITEP, Pg. 4)

tution and there are several court cases that substantiate this opinion.

During Monday's press event Interfaith/Together Louisiana leaders continue to express that they are not opposed to the Industrial Tax Exemption and applaud the original intent of the law, but they are opposed to companies continuing to receive exemptions they are not eligible for.

Speaking on the subject Interfaith member Susan Caldwell said, "We want to make it clear that we are not anti-business, nor are we opposed to the Industrial Tax Exemption. We understand that this can be very valuable tools of economic development. When the incentives work as they are meant to they can create jobs and that is a wonderful thing, but we think that they should be married to a model of economic development that invests in us. In a skilled workforce, in better roads and bridges, for better Pre-K, our K-12 education, and better drainage and sewerage, providing cleaner water and air."

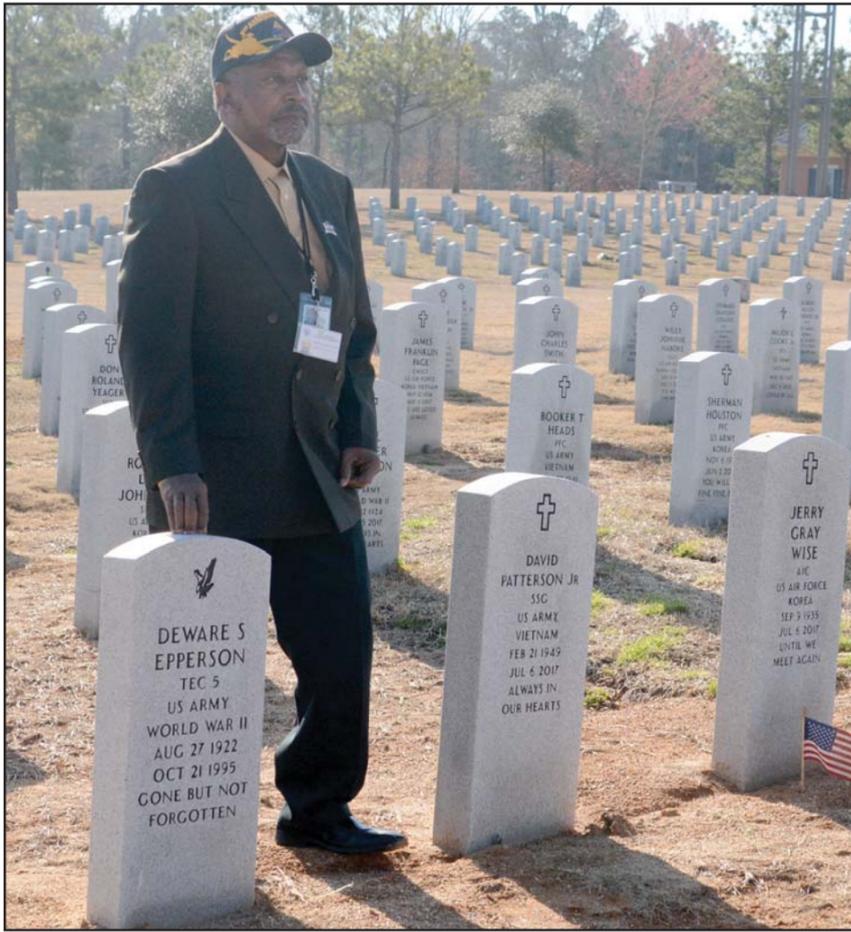
Caddo Parish Commissioner Steven Jackson also lent his support towards the

Reflects Upon the 2018 Black History Month Theme NW-LA Veterans Cemetery Director Feels His Post is a Calling, Not a job

Story and Photo
by Ronald Collins Jr.

"My fathers dying wish was to be buried in a veterans cemetery," said former Army veteran and current Cemetery Director for the Northwest Louisiana Veterans Cemetery, Kenneth R. Epperson, Sr. "Upon his passing in 1995 the nearest veterans cemetery in Louisiana was in Pineville, LA., which was about 58 miles from our hometown in Winnfield, Louisiana. Unfortunately it was full. So he was buried in a private cemetery. Back when I was an elected official, that started me on a quest to seek out additional cemetery space for the many veterans in Louisiana that would like that same honor ... After doing some research we found out that while the federal government no longer fully built federal cemeteries, they did establish a federal grant program providing the initial money for construction from which the various states would take over and operate them from that point on."

After lobbying the Dept. of Veterans affairs, as well



Kenneth R. Epperson, Sr. stands next to his father's gravestone in the Northwest Louisiana Veterans Cemetery.

as getting support from congress, the Northwest Louisiana Veterans Cemetery was created utilizing a \$6 Million grant. Caddo Parish also contributed to the effort by donating 81 acres of land in Keithville, along with infrastructural support. In June the site will celebrate eleven years of operation. When the site

was established Epperson had the body of his father, Mr. Deware Epperson, exhumed from the private cemetery in Winnfield after 22 years and transported to the new Veterans Cemetery.

"When families come to a burial I first thank them for their loved ones service,"

Epperson said continuing. "That is not just a phrase for me. That's genuine. As I often say to the many clients that I have come into contact with during my tenure here, I tell them that this is not a job for me, it's my calling ... We let the families know that they earned this. Sometimes peo-

(Please See CALLING, Pg. 4)

Rev. Bernice King Among the Outraged Super Bowl Viewers Infuriated By Truck Ad Featuring Voice of Dr. King

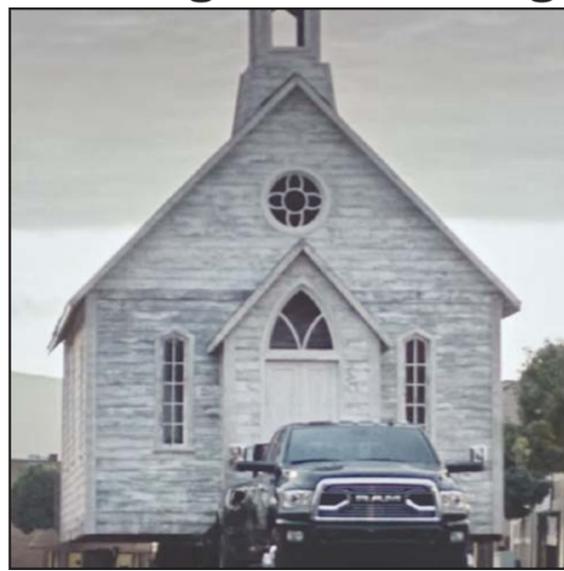


Image of church and truck in commercial that uses the voice of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Special to the
Trice Edney News Wire
from the St. Louis
American

(TriceEdneyWire.com) -
A Ram Truck Super Bowl
LI commercial sparked outrage
by using a recording of
a Martin Luther King Jr.
speech to push car sales. In
the 30-second ad, a recording
of Dr. King's 1968
speech serves as the sound-
track for snapshots of
everyday Americans en-
gaged in community ser-
vice. "In the spirit of Dr.
Martin Luther King, Jr.,
Ram truck owners also be-
lieve in a life of serving oth-
ers," the ad's description
said.

The reaction was swift
and harsh. An overwhelm-
ing consensus concluded
that the ad was a tactless at-
tempt to capitalize on Dr.
King's legacy. Among those
offering backlash was the
King Center. A tweet from
the King Center read: "Nei-
ther @TheKingCenter nor
@BerniceKing is the entity
that approves the use of
#MLK's words or imagery
for use in merchandise, en-
tertainment (movies, music,
artwork, etc) or advertise-
ment, including tonight's
@Dodge #SuperBowl com-
mercial."

Although the center car-
ries on King's teachings, a
separate entity controls
King's speeches and image

(Please See SUPER BOWL, Pg. 4)

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