

Times-Picayune Citizens' Group Speaks out on Proposed Changes to The Times-Picayune

NEW ORLEANS — A group of concerned civic and business leaders have come together in the wake of the recent announcement by the owners of The Times-Picayune to move to a three-day a week print version in addition to the current web-based nola.com product.

The group's purpose is to ensure the continuation of the delivery of a high quality, seven-day-a-week newspaper, with access to the entire community. The group intends to open discussions with the current owners as well as other interested parties to achieve its purpose.

Citing the unique New Orleans regional landscape, which has steadily and successfully rebuilt itself since the devastation of Hurricane Katrina to become a beacon for economic resilience and innovation, the group is reviewing all options and opportunities to influence the current plans, as is consistent with desires of the papers' customers and wider community.

As the daily news vehicle, The Times-Picayune has represented the Greater New Orleans community for more than 175 years, serving three critical functions: ensuring news access for all citizens; providing serious coverage that protects the public; and creating a common conversation and cultural cohesion amongst all New Orleanians.

With this history and service in mind, the Citizens' Group believes that it is important to clearly state its desire for The Times-Picayune to remain a daily newspaper, and that any possible future change be conducted in a more effective and considerate transition than what was announced to take effect beginning in September.

"In the next several years, the city will host an unprecedented amount of national and international visitors and media, including the NFL Super Bowl, NCAA Women's Final Four, NBA All-Star game, commemoration of the 10th anniversary of Hurricane Katrina and celebration of the city's 300th birthday," said Scott Cowen, president of Tulane University. "These events, along with the downtown opening of two new \$1 billion-plus hospitals, deserve a more robust approach to news delivery."

"Now is not the time to switch suddenly to a three-day a week publication," stated Anne Milling, Founder of Women of the Storm. "A daily *Times-Picayune* has been the backbone of the community in our post-Katrina environment and provides the foundation for all civic dialogue and discourse. It is our hope that the owners will respect the voices and desires of the community which has been so loyal to the printed newspaper for generations."

“I can and have accepted change in my life. But I do not think this is a good change,” said Leah Chase, Chef at Dooky Chase. “People like Sheila Stroup, Judy Walker, Doug MacCash, and Brett Anderson provide me with information about the things I love, and I can relate to what they write about. For people my age, this will be a terrible loss.”

“New Orleans was recently named the ‘#1 Fastest Improving Economy in the Nation’ by the Wall Street Journal,” said Michael Hecht, President & CEO of Greater New Orleans, Inc. “The drastic reduction of our paper is not only inconsistent with this economic renaissance, it also sends a negative – and erroneous – message to the rest of the world about our resurgent community’s viability.”

Signed,

Times-Picayune Citizens’ Group (Full list still being compiled)

Jay Altman
Chief Executive Officer
FirstLine Schools

Stephen Perry
President & CEO
New Orleans Convention & Visitors Bureau

Archbishop Gregory M. Aymond
Archbishop of New Orleans

Wendell Pierce

John Barry

Debby Pigman
President
Faubourg Delachaise Neighborhood Association

Kent Blackwell
President
Burtheville Association of Neighbors

Dr. Patrick Quinlan, Chief Executive Officer
Warner Thomas, President & CEO
Ochsner Health System

Ralph Brennan

James Carville and Mary Matalin

Larry Rase
Executive Director
Northshore Business Council

Tod Chambers, President
Mavis Early, Executive Director
Greater New Orleans Hotel & Lodging Association

Julia Reed

Henry Coaxum
Chairman
New Orleans Business Alliance

Stephen Reuther
Chief Executive Officer
St. Bernard Parish Chamber Of Commerce

Michael Cowan
Chair
New Orleans Crime Coalition

Charles Rice
President & CEO
Entergy New Orleans, Inc.

Scott Cowen
President
Tulane University

Flozell Daniels, Jr.
President & CEO
Foundation for Louisiana

Norman Francis
President
Xavier University of Louisiana

Ruthie Frierson
Founder & Chairman
Citizens for 1 Greater New Orleans

Melissa Gibbs, Chair
Tommy Faucheux, Vice-Chair
GNO, Inc. NextGen Council

Leon Giorgio
Chairman
Jefferson Business Council

Rafael C. Goyeneche III
President
Metropolitan Crime Commission

Julie Graybill
President
Faubourg Marengo Neighborhood Association

Lucien Gunter
Executive Director
Jefferson Economic Development Corporation

Stan Harris
President & CEO
Louisiana Restaurant Association

Michael Hecht, President & CEO
Dale Benoit, Chairman
Greater New Orleans, Inc.

William H. Hines

Walter Isaacson

Toni Rice
President
New Orleans Multicultural Tourism Network

Howard Rodgers
Executive Director
New Orleans Council on Aging

Nolan V. Rollins
President & CEO
Urban League of Greater New Orleans

Greg Rusovich
Chairman
The Southeast Regional Coalition of Business Councils

Harry Shearer

Nick Spitzer

Mark Vicknair

Dr. Thomas R. Warner
Chancellor
Nunez Community College

Dr. Joe Welch
Chancellor
River Parishes Community College

Alyssa Wenck
President
Young Leadership Council

Brandy Whisnant
President
Junior League of New Orleans

Rev. Kevin Wildes, S.J., Ph.D.
President
Loyola University New Orleans

Tim Williamson
Co-Founder & CEO
The Idea Village

Tamara Jackson
Executive Director
SilencelsViolence

Leslie Jacobs

Ben Johnson
President & CEO
New Orleans Chamber of Commerce

John Little
Chairman
New Orleans Regional Leadership Insititue

Dr. James E. Lyons, Sr.
Interim President
Dillard University

Nancy Marsiglia

Chassity McComack
Executive Director
River Region Chamber of Commerce

Ed McGinnis
Treasurer
Irish Channel Neighborhood Association

Reid McLellan
Chairman
Plaquemines Association of Business and Industry

Suzanne Mestayer
Chair
Business Council of New Orleans and the River Region

Anne Milling
Founder
Women of the Storm

Todd Murphy
President
Jefferson Chamber of Commerce

504ward

The Foundation for Historical Louisiana

French Quarter Citizens, Inc.

Lafayette Square Association

Louisiana Landmarks Society

Smart Growth for Louisiana

Vieux Carre Property Owners, Residents, and Associates, Inc.

Times-Picayune Loving Cup Recipients

*1992 Times-Picayune Loving Cup Recipient
Diana Lewis*

*1995 Times-Picayune Loving Cup Recipient
Anne Milling*

*1997 Times-Picayune Loving Cup Recipient
Leah Chase*

*1999 Times-Picayune Loving Cup Recipient
Herschel L. Abbot Jr.*

*2000 Times-Picayune Loving Cup Recipient
Alden McDonald*

*2003 Times-Picayune Loving Cup Recipient
Fran Villere*

*2006 Times-Picayune Loving Cup Recipient
Ruthie Frierson*

*2007 Times-Picayune Loving Cup Recipient
Bob Brown*

*2008 Times-Picayune Loving Cup Recipient
R. King Milling*

Thom Pepper
Chair
Lower 9th Ward Stakeholder Coalition

2009 Times-Picayune Loving Cup Recipient
Scott Cowen

2010 Times-Picayune Loving Cup Recipient
Tommy S. Cvitanovich

2011 Times-Picayune Loving Cup Recipient
William Goldring