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Dedicated to the Spirit
and Service of God

Your Vote Uplifts Your Community

When we think about elections, our minds often jump to presidential races, but the truth is that local elections shape our daily lives just as much—if not more! From the roads we drive on to the schools in our neighborhoods, the leaders we elect locally make decisions that directly impact our communities. That’s why voting in local elections is one of the most powerful ways to make a difference.

Local governments handle the services and programs we rely on every day: schools, public safety, parks, transportation, and even how new businesses are developed. City councils, school boards, and county officials make choices that affect everything from classroom sizes to road repairs. When you vote locally, you choose the leaders who will decide about the place you call home.

Ever wonder where your hard-earned money goes? Local officials create budgets determining funding for schools, emergency services, and community projects. By voting, you help decide whether more funding goes to things like public safety, libraries, or road improvements. Your tax dollars should work for you—voting makes sure they do.

Some of the biggest policy changes in history started at the local level before becoming national movements. Issues like education reform, environmental initiatives, and public health policies often begin in cities and states before they grow into larger-scale action. By participating in local elections, you help set the stage for the changes you want to see.

Local elections often see low voter turnout, which means your vote is even more powerful. While millions vote in presidential elections, local races can be decided by just a handful of votes, every vote counts. In some cases, elections have come down to single digits or even a coin toss! When you vote locally, your voice is amplified.

Local officials are right here in our communities, making them more accessible than national leaders. You might spot them at the grocery store, at a fun community event, or even have the chance to chat with them directly! This close connection means they’re more likely to listen to us, the voters—especially those who show up at the polls. Let’s make our voices heard and celebrate the power we have to shape our community together!

It Is Time To Get Your Money Right

By Adebola Williams

Medium

It seemed like adults had life completely figured out when you were a kid. They had jobs, they had money, they had stuff, and you were counting down to when you’d be an adult too. Now that you’ve grown, you know that adulthood is a lot to handle.

One of the first things you learn in adulthood is to be responsible for yourself. You need to take care of yourself - physically, mentally, emotionally, and financially.

Being responsible for your finances isn’t the same as being financially responsible. Being responsible for

your finances means that you must make money if you intend to spend it. Your parents, uncles and aunts do not see you as their primary responsibility anymore. Why? You’re a full-grown human. As an adult, you’re the one responsible for making the money you want to spend.

Being financially responsible, on the other hand, is understanding how money works and how you can make yours work for you. It means becoming financially literate and know how to allocate resources for today and future purposes.

You need the two to be able to survive, let alone thrive in today’s world.

Money isn’t as complicated as many people think. One of the rea-

sons young adults find money difficult to make and manage is because it isn’t taught in school. If we took classes on money and financial management, many people would be doing better with their finances today. But it’s never too late to learn and that’s why we are highlighting the most important financial tips and money management tips for young adults.

These are the things you need to know:

KNOW THAT WORKING HARD DOESN'T GUARANTEE WEALTH: If hard work equals great wealth, we will have a different breed of billionaires on our hands.

KNOW HOW MONEY WORKS:

You can’t get your money right if you don’t understand the fundamentals of finance.

KNOW WHEN TO MAKE MONEY MOVES:

Time is an important factor. If you read the biographies of wealthy people, you’ll see a common theme — the time everything changed for them.

KNOW THE RIGHT PEOPLE:

If you want to get your money right early on, you should be friends with people who are already doing that.

KNOW THAT BUILDING WEALTH IS A JOURNEY:

“The journey of a thousand miles begins with just one step” has never been truer than in finance.

Advance N.C. Discussion On Project 2025 Featuring Atty Dawn Blagrove

By Jordan Meadows

Staff Writer

On Monday, civil rights attorney Dawn Blagrove sat down with Dr. Dovita Lee to discuss Project 2025, a long-term strategy developed by the Heritage Foundation to advance a conservative agenda in the federal government, and its impact thus far during the Trump presidency as part of Advance North Carolina’s series on the Republican playbook’s effects in the state.

The episode, Advance Notice | Season 3, Ep. 11: “Project 2025: Where Are We Now?”, explored how this sweeping political plan has shaped the current administration and the broader implications for democracy, education, and civil rights in North Carolina and beyond.

Dr. Lee opened the discussion by reflecting on the rapid implementation of the project:

“If someone had told you a 900-page political playbook would be nearly implemented in just 8 months, would you actually believe them? While the world was busy reacting to chaos, Project 2025 quietly became the real playbook shaping our government and our futures.”

Blagrove, who has emerged as one of North Carolina’s leading voices against systemic racism and mass incarceration, expressed concern that the country underestimated both the scope and speed of Project 2025’s execution.

“I think that the Democratic Party, particularly, but the country in general, simply did not take Project 2025 as seriously as we should have. Nor did we take President Trump’s determination, and his team’s deter-



mination, to implement this process as quickly as they did.”

According to Blagrove, over 50% of Project 2025’s agenda has already been implemented or is in the process of being implemented. Among the most impactful elements, she cited the ongoing elimination of the Department of Education and significant cuts to government safety net programs like SNAP and housing vouchers.

She warned that once these changes are fully realized, it will be “devastating for many working-class, poor, and black communities.” Blagrove also raised alarms about the growing presence of military forces in American cities, describing it as part of a dangerous normalization process.

“The military being in American cities is an attempt to desensitize America to seeing military-occupied citizen cities and also to make America feel very comfortable about the fact that the only cities that are going to be attacked are the ones that are

predominantly black.”

When asked how communities could respond, Blagrove emphasized the importance of local action and self-reliance. She argued that people must stop waiting for the government to fill needs so that communities can begin addressing themselves, especially around education and access to food. Discussing the impact of cutting free lunch and breakfast programs.

“I would have liked to have seen us start doing, and what I hope we will start doing now is strategically planning as communities around individual schools to make sure that those babies are able to eat to make sure that they have the books that they need,” Blagrove said. “When they started banning books, we needed to make sure that we were buying those books so those books were in our own homes. We do not need the government, nor should we rely solely on the government ever to educate our children to keep us housed and to keep us fed. And there was a time in America when black folks knew that.”

Blagrove’s outlook on the state of North Carolina over the next five to ten years was grim. She predicted a complete loss of democracy, the whitewashing of history and news in schools, defunding of education, hardship for women of color, particularly those in leadership positions, and even a reversion to full Jim Crow-era policies.

She supported the characterization of Project 2025 as “the most extreme rollback of civil rights in decades.”

Her pessimism, she explained, is fueled by the actions of Republicans

in North Carolina, who have explicitly stated that their redistricting efforts are aimed at maintaining Donald Trump’s power at the national level.

In response, Blagrove issued a strong call to action: “It’s so important that folks get out, folks vote, and we change who holds power not only in the general assembly but also in the judiciary.” She further argued that “the best place and the most effective place for us to take control and reclaim the power politically is on a municipal level and state-wide elections,” where the effects of gerrymandering are moot.

Advance North Carolina (Advance Carolina) is a statewide, independent, Black-led organization with a mission to build political power and advance racial and social justice. Dr. Jovita Lee, who moderated the discussion, serves as Program Director for the North Carolina Black Alliance and Policy Director for Advance Carolina, while also convening the North Carolina Black and Brown Policy Network.

Dawn Blagrove, a graduate of Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University (FAMU) and North Carolina Central School of Law, has dedicated her career to dismantling systemic injustice. After serving eight years with North Carolina Prisoner Legal Services, she became a recognized expert on racial equity and criminal justice reform, having been consulted by Governor Roy Cooper’s Task Force on Racial Equity in Criminal Justice. Her activism gained statewide attention following the murder of George Floyd, when she organized a protest in Raleigh that drew over 5,000 people.



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NC ATTORNEY GENERAL JOINS STATES SUING TRUMP ADMINISTRATION TO CONTINUE SNAP FOOD AID

NC NEWSLINE – North Carolina Attorney General Jeff Jackson sued the Trump administration Tuesday, seeking to force continued funding for food assistance ahead of an expected pause in benefits Friday.

Jackson, a Democrat, filed suit in Massachusetts alongside a coalition of Democratic-led states against the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Office of Management and Budget. Their suit argues that the Trump administration should dip into reserve funds to continue funding SNAP benefits, rather than pausing them — which Jackson called “unprecedented.”

“The truth is, the department is choosing not to use the emergency money they’ve been given,” Jackson told reporters Tuesday. “I believe the reason they’re doing that is to play shutdown politics. They are looking to ratchet up the pain in an already painful moment.”

USDA had initially planned to use its \$6 billion contingency fund to continue sending out food assistance as the federal government shutdown drags toward one month. But it reversed course last week, informing states that it would not tap into that money.

SNAP helps feed about 1.4 million North Carolinians monthly. The state’s Department of Health and Human Services said Monday that November benefits would not arrive on schedule.

“The USDA must take immediate action to keep families from going hungry as it is required to do by law, and I thank Attorney General Jackson for standing up to secure these critical resources,” Gov. Josh Stein, a Democrat, said in a statement.

USDA did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Jackson and Democratic states’ suit alleges that the administration is violating federal law by pausing benefits, arguing that “USDA has historically funded SNAP benefits during prior lapses in appropriations.” The lawsuit is asking the court to act as quickly as possible to resume benefits, but it is not yet known if action will be taken before Friday.

Other states have begun moving to continue funding food assistance on their own as the pause approaches. In Louisiana, state leaders are using \$150 million monthly to cover benefits. Nevada is funneling \$38.8 million toward local food banks.

North Carolina does not appear poised to pursue a similar solution.

State lawmakers were in session as recently as last week, redrawing the state’s congressional voting districts and passing a stopgap spending bill for some state needs. But emergency funding for food aid was not included in that bill or even publicly discussed.

The offices of both General Assembly leaders — House Speaker Destin Hall (R-Caldwell) and Senate leader Phil Berger (R-Rockingham) — did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

In other states, governors have ordered the release of emergency funds. Stein on Monday issued a statement requesting USDA to release contingency funds, but Stein’s office did not immediately respond to a request for comment on whether there were other avenues the state could seek ahead of the Friday pause.

DHHS is not able to cover the gap in funding, said Jonathan Kappler, deputy secretary at the department.

“Unfortunately, the size and scope of this program is one that that avenue was not really available to us,” he told reporters Tuesday.

The looming pause in food aid would have an outsized impact on families — over 580,000 children and 40,000 babies in North Carolina rely on SNAP. Similarly, rural counties would take a hit, with one in six residents in those counties depending on the program, according to Kappler. More than 80% of those on SNAP in North Carolina are currently working, according to state officials.

Food banks and nonprofits can provide some aid, but cannot come close to filling the gap that a pause in SNAP would create. For every nine meals provided through SNAP, food banks provide one, one food bank leader told NC Newsline on Monday.

The CEO of Interfaith Food Shuttle, Ron Pringle, joined Jackson on Tuesday and warned that nonprofits and food banks would be forced to make “tough choices” without the “safety net” of SNAP.

“Nobody wants to make a decision on whose child gets to eat,” Pringle said.

A group of North Carolina food banks called on elected leaders to reach an agreement to end the shutdown in a statement Tuesday. They said they had experienced high levels of need “even before the shutdown.”

“Shutdowns and short-term fixes are not strategy,” said Eric Aft, chair of Feeding the Carolinas and CEO of Second Harvest Food Bank of Northwest NC. “Continuing resolutions are not stability. Nutrition programs must be funded fully and predictably so that families, farmers, schools and health systems are not held hostage to gridlock.”

The federal nutrition program that helps pay for baby formula could also see a future pause.

State health officials said Monday that benefits for more than 262,000 women, infants and children will continue through early November, but did not give an exact end date. Wake County said WIC benefits will continue through Nov. 15.

“We are on guard against that,” Jackson said of a potential stoppage in WIC.

There Is No Progress For Poor Areas Despite Years Of North Carolina Tier System Designed To Spark Growth

Carolina Public Press—When economic developers from Anson County pitch their community to prospective businesses, they advertise its railroad access, its proximity to Charlotte, its airport and its available industrial sites. What they don't mention is Anson County's official tier designation as one of North Carolina's most economically distressed counties — a cloud that's been hanging over county officials' heads since 2007.

That label is intended to help the county. More often, it does the exact opposite.

North Carolina's attempt to promote economic growth in its poorest, most rural communities is rife with perversities like this one. In counties rich and poor across the state, officials wrestle with the state's unique and inflexible approach to economic development.

North Carolina has been steadily adding both jobs and population for more than a decade, with the exception of during the COVID-19 pandemic. The problem, however, is that parts of the state are left out of that promising economic picture — with no way to join the fray.

This is the first article in Trapped By Tiers, a three-part Carolina Public Press investigative series examining North Carolina's economic distress tiers, a system intended to promote economic mobility across the state. CPP analyzed state data and found that this system is ineffective, stagnant, and at times, counterproductive.

This article focuses on our findings and their consequences for North Carolina communities across the economic spectrum. The second article focuses on the root causes of the system's failures, while the third article will explore possible improvements and alternatives.

What are distress tiers? State law requires North Carolina's Department of Commerce to sort the state's 100 counties into three tiers each year.

In theory, Tier 1 is home to the most distressed counties. Tier 2 represents medium distress, and Tier 3 the least distressed. But Department of Commerce officials apply just four criteria on a countywide basis to determine which counties are placed in which tier:

- Unemployment rate
- Population growth
- Median household income
- Property tax base per capita.

Each year, there must be 40 Tier 1 counties, 40 Tier 2 counties and 20 Tier 3 counties — regardless of overall progress or decline in the state or local economies. This is a central assumption from which many of the system's issues stem.

The state uses the tiers in order to more prudently distribute its limited money to the counties that need it most. Or at least, that's the idea.

The funding that is officially impacted by tier designations includes public infrastructure grants, competitive business incentive programs and building redevelopment funds. However, many more state programs now rely on the tier system — including several noneconomic programs. Some private foundations and nonprofit organizations use it to deal with counties as well.

Tier 1 counties are given preference

in their economic development grant applications and often receive higher state matches for local dollars. The One North Carolina Fund, a job incentive program, divvies it up like this:

- In a Tier 1 county, the local government must provide no less than one dollar for every three dollars provided by One NC.
- In a Tier 2 county, the local government must provide no less than one dollar for every two dollars provided by One NC.
- In a Tier 3 county, the local government must provide no less than one dollar for every one dollar provided by One NC.

The idea is that Tier 1 counties, like Anson, need the money more but have less resources to compete for it. They need the extra help. In some counties, however, that one-to-three requirement may still be too steep of a challenge for the county to take advantage of the program.

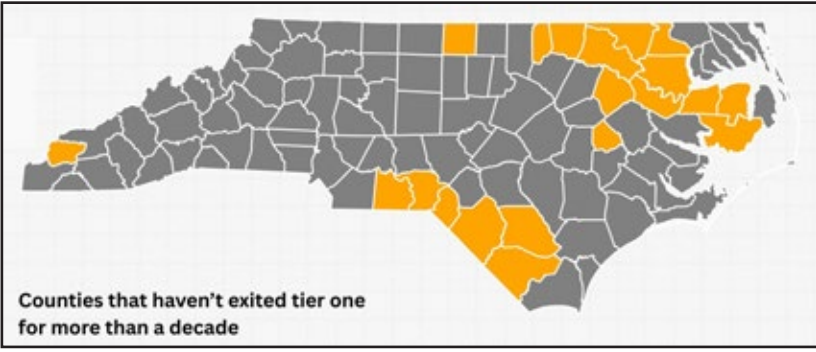
Although annual tier designations are usually announced late in the year, late changes in the data cannot always be captured, so a lag occurs between tier designations and potentially major shifts. The 2025 tier designations were announced in late 2024 and did not account for the economic disruption of Tropical Storm Helene, which hit the state in late September. The 2026 tiers will likely be announced in early December.

Key findings
Carolina Public Press analyzed publicly available state economic records on distress tier assignments, economic indicators and demographic information between 2014 and 2025, finding that:

- 20 of the 40 Tier 1 counties have held that same status for more than a decade. Even though the system was originally intended to promote economic growth, it has failed to move the state's most disadvantaged communities forward.
- 19 counties operate in a kind of permanent recession, posting unemployment rates 20 to 55% higher than the state average for decades.
- 13 of the 20 Tier 3 counties have held that same status for more than a decade. Many counties have become stuck, unable to progress to Tier 2, with Tier 3 completely out of reach for them.

In Eastern North Carolina, two distinct clusters of counties have remained in the most distressed tier since the system's inception, pointing to a regional economic issue that the system has been unable to address. The northeastern cluster maps onto the counties with the highest percentage of Black North Carolinians, revealing deep socioeconomic problems spurred by inequity and systemic disadvantages based on race, often with long historical roots. The tier system obscures these kinds of issues and has not led to economic progress for these counties.

It is possible for a county to improve in nearly every indicator and still shift down to a more distressed tier. This happens because counties



are judged against other counties, not on their own, and a fixed number of counties will always be in each tier. The system is not flexible enough to respond to economic crises in real time, such as a hurricane, factory closure or pandemic. The 2025 tiers, for example, did not address or represent the economic havoc wrought by Hurricane Helene in late 2024 in many mountain and Western Piedmont counties.

Wealthy enclaves distort rankings by obscuring real poverty in adjacent communities within the same county. In Tier 3 Union County, for example, wealthy Charlotte suburbs in the west prevent heightened state attention to the eastern town of Marshville, where the poverty rate is 18%.

The system, once designed to distribute a single tax credit, now is applied across state agencies, economic and not. In some cases, this punishes counties with a system that was intended to incentivize growth.

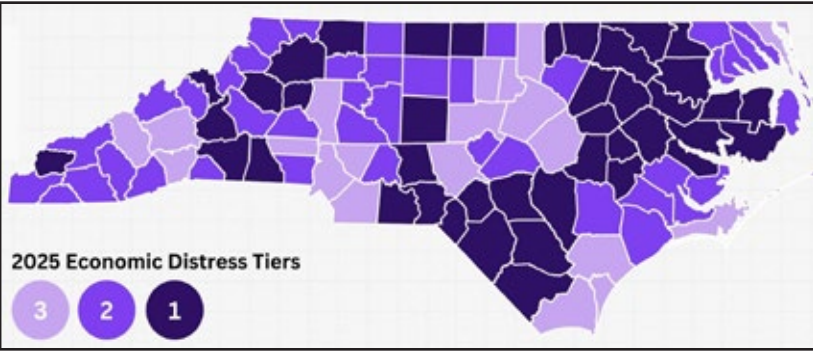
A lack of mobility
Since North Carolina implemented

its three-tier system in 1987, the designations were meant to be dynamic. The ranking was intended to incentivize growth in struggling areas, eventually helping them move out of the most distressed tier and make room for other counties that needed special attention from the state.

That is not what happened. CPP analysis showed that half of the 40 Tier 1 counties — or the most economically distressed — have held that same status for more than a decade. It reflects a kind of economic fatalism that's becoming increasingly pervasive.

"There are parts of North Carolina that do not have anything, and may never have anything much," Orange County economic development director Steven Brantley told CPP.

The pattern holds at the other end of the spectrum as well. More than half of the 20 Tier 3 spots have always been occupied by the same counties, CPP analysis showed. Think counties like Wake, home to Raleigh, and Mecklenburg, home to Charlotte.



The static tiers hide the fact that the poorest counties don't improve while the richest counties just get richer.

In Eastern North Carolina, two distinct clusters of counties have remained locked in the most distressed tier since the system's inception. An economic issue plagues these counties that the tier system does not, and cannot, address.

The northeastern cluster of Tier 1 counties is aligned with the cluster of counties that are home to the highest percentage of Black North Carolinians. Some of the economic challenges in these counties are rooted in the history of racial economic disadvantage going deep into the region's history. The tier system obscures these counties' specific struggle into a broader category of distress.

One such northeastern county, Edgecombe, is currently tied with an adjacent county, Halifax, for highest unemployment rate in the state. It has been designated as Tier 1 for as long as the system has been around. "I'm sick and tired of Edgecombe

County being at the top of every bad list," Edgecombe County Manager Eric Evans told Carolina Public Press.

"We've been able to capitalize on it and tap into resources that we otherwise might not have. But really changing the economic outlook for these counties takes a whole lot more than just a designation and first dibs at federal and state funding."

Because of its tier designation, Edgecombe County received a job development grant and other incentives from the state that helped the county attract Natron Energy, an international industrial battery manufacturer. Natron planned to bring more than 1,000 jobs and an investment of \$1.4 billion to Edgecombe County with a "gigafactory" at Kingsboro Business Park, midway between Rocky Mount and Tarboro.

Other companies had promised to come to the business park before — namely CSX and Triangle Tire — but pulled out at the last minute. Now,

(See **NC TIER SYSTEM** P. 3)

Congress Shielded Gun Companies From Lawsuits. Some Blue States Think They've Found A Loophole



HARTFORD, Conn. (AP) — Two decades after a Republican-controlled Congress gave gun manufacturers immunity from being sued over crimes committed with their firearms, blue state Democrats upset about gun violence think they've found a way to penetrate that legal shield.

Since 2021, 10 states have passed laws intended to make it easier to sue gunmakers and sellers.

The newest such law, in Connecticut, took effect this month. It opens firearms manufacturers and retailers up to lawsuits if they don't take steps to prevent guns from getting into the hands of people banned from owning them, or who should be suspected of intending to use them to hurt themselves or others. Other states have allowed lawsuits against companies deemed to have created a "public nuisance" through the sale or marketing of firearms.

The legislation — and flurry of lawsuits against gun companies that followed — has outraged gun rights advocates, who accuse the states of trying to skirt the 2005 Protection of Lawful Commerce in Arms Act.

That law, which blocked a wave of similar lawsuits two decades ago, says gun companies operating legally cannot be held liable for violent acts committed by people misusing weapons.

"They know these laws are unconstitutional. They know these laws violate the PLCAA," said Lawrence G. Keane, senior vice president for government and public affairs at the National Shooting Sports Foundation. "They don't care," he said, adding that the real goal of the lawsuits was to harass the industry and drain it financially.

Gun control groups say the states have simply set clearer requirements for gun companies to ensure their products aren't sold or used illegally.

"These laws don't just open the

courthouse doors to survivors. They also force the gun industry to operate more responsibly and, most importantly, can help prevent future tragedies," said Po Murray, chair of the Newtown Action Alliance, a gun-violence prevention group founded after the 2012 Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting.

Two decades of federal immunity Congress adopted protections for the gun industry after lawsuits filed in Chicago, New York, Los Angeles and elsewhere attempted to hold the firearms industry responsible for violent crime.

Many of those suits argued that gun companies had knowingly oversupplied certain markets with cheap handguns and ignored signs that those weapons were being trafficked to places with strict gun controls.

The firearms industry and the National Rifle Association saw the lawsuits as unfair. As long as gun companies weren't breaking rules around sales, they shouldn't be held responsible for violence, they said.

President George W. Bush, a Republican, agreed and signed the shield law in 2005, saying it helped stem "frivolous lawsuits."

Black Rodeo History Meets High-Fashion

By India Roby

Teen Vogue

In the heart of Houston, the Sweet Tooth Rodeo promises a few things: cowboys, culture, and creativity. Black rodeo culture has long existed for many years, but it's slowly moving to the forefront. Despite it being a Thursday evening, a crowd of locals, and rodeo enthusiasts alike, packed the bleachers of Monumental Plaza Garibaldi. In true Texan style, ongoingers, including VIPs like Julez Smith, Ben Da Donn, Maxo Kream, and Young Thug, were decked out in bedazzled boots, cowboy hats, leather looks, and daisy dukes that fringed at the hems. But the spectacle went not without intention, and behind it was Bill Pickett Invitational Rodeo (BPIR), the nation's longest-running African American touring competition.

It wasn't your typical rodeo — SP5DER, the Los Angeles-based fashion and lifestyle brand partnered with the nonprofit organization and transformed the circuit into a runway; before the show, models kicked off the night by sporting vibrant sweat-suits and logo-adorned tees, an unexpected collaboration that still channeled true Southern spirit. The night transitioned into a series of seven competitions with more than 50 cowboys and cowgirls participating in barrel racing, bull riding, calf roping, and more. Competitors as young as 10 years old wrangled cattle, while



award-winning cowboys roughed it out on bulls for as long as they could. As for their uniform? Custom button-down competition shirts, courtesy of SP5DER, of course.

Beyond the street style and non-stop thrill, the Sweet Tooth Rodeo continued its legacy to honor decades of Black history that refuses to go ignored. For Valeria Howard-Cunningham, the president and producer of BPIR, the mission is simple: bring visibility to Black rodeo culture, which often goes under-represented in the mainstream.

"My now-deceased husband [Lu Vason] founded BPIR when he went to a rodeo in Cheyenne, Wyoming, and he didn't see anybody that looked like him participating in the rodeo," Howard-Cunningham

tells Teen Vogue. "Afterwards, he researched and found out that there were thousands of Black cowboys and cowgirls across the country, but they were not given the opportunity to perform." At first, his idea to create a rodeo rooted in African American contributions received a fair share of backlash. "Everybody told him he was crazy and that it wouldn't be successful. But it didn't deter him. He did it anyway."

Thus, BPIR was born in 1984, and named after William "Bill" Pickett, a prominent Black cowboy credited for being the creator of steer wrestling, also known as bulldogging. Now, the cultural organization travels all across the U.S., educating and entertaining the community while preserving and promoting Black

Western history. "We're preparing the next generation to keep the legacy going," Howard-Cunningham adds.

When it came to this past Sweet Tooth Rodeo, she admits to being hesitant about the merge of fashion with rodeo, but realized the importance of this unlikely partnership, especially with celebrities like Beyoncé embracing Western culture in Cowboy Carter. Her nephew, Julez Smith, was in attendance, showing off his Southern roots.

"While we're having fun, we're also educating people so that they know about their own history and know how relevant Black people were in the development of the West...[and this collaboration with SP5DER] is a marriage made in heaven," she says.

SP5DER co-founder Maria Rubin echoes similar sentiments on the growing interest in Western trends. "Some of it feels a bit posery, and no offense to other brands, but as most of our team hail from the South, we felt we could do it in a way that was honest because we all grew up around it." But by honoring the past and future of rodeo, Howard-Cunningham reminds us of the importance of bringing Black excellence to the forefront: "Everything that happens in life started with [Black Americans]," she says. "Our history has been clouded and sometimes, attempted to be erased, but you cannot erase the truth."

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Business & Finance

Center For Global Africa Catalyzes U.S.–Africa Trade Momentum At Pan African Global Trade Conference

The Center for Global Africa (CGA), in partnership with the Marcus Garvey Institute for Human Development (MGIHD) convened the Pan African Global Trade & Investment Conference (PAGTIC-DE), held September 17–20, 2025, in Wilmington, Delaware on the margins of the United Nations 80th General Assembly (UNGA) in New York.

The conference, themed Shaping the Future: Connecting Markets and Building Prosperity, drew government officials and leadership throughout the region, the state of Delaware and Africa as well as investors, labor leaders, and policymakers to advance U.S., Africa, and Caribbean trade relations.

CGA’s Role as Catalyst

As convener, the CGA and the International Longshoreman’s Association (ILA) were at the center of high-level discussions that linked Delaware’s \$635 million Port of Wilmington upgrades with Africa’s fast-growing, multi-billion dollar markets, advancing port-to-port partnerships with a strong show-

ing from CGA host nation representatives that included Ghana’s Minister of Foreign Affairs, Samuel Ablakwa; Ambassador to the U.S. Victor Smith; and Ecumenical and Economic Envoy, Elvis Afriyie-Ankrah. Also, representing Sierra Leone’s government was Amara Leone, Minister of Public Administration and Political Affairs.

With CGA being distinguished as a strategic partner to the African Union’s (AU) African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), the conference demonstrated the value of Diaspora leadership in building viable and functional 21st-century frameworks to strengthen U.S. trade relations globally at a time of great geopolitical complexities.

“The conference was a platform for key U.S., African, and Caribbean stakeholders of like minds to strategize on trade and development that considers African priorities such as Agenda 2063 and the Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)” said Professor Ezrah Aharone, Founder & Chairman of the Center for Global Africa. “Through our



Caption: Dr. Tigist Dessu, EthioAlliance, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia- CGA Partner, Jamaica’s Honorary Consul to Sierra Leone, Dr. Rosalea Hamilton, AI Washington, Chair, USAfrica Chamber of Commerce (California), Dariel Janerette, JD, Ph.D., CGA Advisor (Florida); Mary Anchang, Esq., African Chamber of Commerce – FICOTA (Cameroon)

commercial diplomacy channels with the AU, APRM, and African host nations, the CGA operates as a strategic managing partner to bring high level representatives and decisionmakers together for mutually beneficial socioeconomic engagements that are Diaspora driven.”

Delaware as a Critical Port Two-Way Launchpad

The event also highlighted the state of Delaware’s interests as a U.S.-Africa trading hub, through the presence of the Governor of Delaware, Matt Meyer, and Secretary of State, Charuni Patibandha-Sanchez, State Representatives Larry Lambert and Frank Cooke and New Castle County Executive, Marcus Henry and Chief of Staff, House Republican Caucus David Deputy, ILA Business Agent, Ronald Kimoko Harris, business owners, faith-based leadership and NAACP DE State Conference President Fleur McKendall. By connecting the Port of Wilmington’s to African markets and supply chains, particularly in agriculture and cold storage logistics, CGA can posi-

tion the state to expand its trading partners and products to and from African nations.

“The work of Prof. Ezrah and the CGA-APRM partnership is so important,” stated Hon. Samuel Okudzeto Ablakwa, Ghana’s Minister for Foreign Affairs. “The Foreign Ministry has clear targets for new investment opportunities, new markets for Ghanaian products, new economic cooperations and creating new markets for trade in the USA. Economic Diplomacy must be impactful . . . Diplomacy that leads to job creation, industry and economic advancements,” he concluded.

A Foundation for the Future

The conference and post agenda plans have built momentum for long-term CGA economic platforms that places Diaspora voice and expertise at tables of trade, policy, and governance. With Africa projected to be a dominant global growth engine, the CGA emphasized that U.S.-Africa trade must move beyond transactions to create sustainable prosperity on both sides of the Atlantic.

Officials Warn Federal Food Aid Programs Will Be Suspended

By Lynn Bonner

NC Newsline

Food banks in North Carolina are bracing for a surge in demand as federal nutrition benefits begin to run dry on Friday.

SNAP, or the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, helps feed about 1.4 million North Carolinians each month. The federal government shutdown means benefits for November are suspended.

On Monday, the state Department of Health and Human Services warned people who use SNAP that their next round of monthly benefits won’t arrive on schedule.

More than 580,000 children rely on SNAP, NCDHHS said in a news release, and more than 80% of people who receive food benefits are working.

Food banks are doing what they can, though their directors know there’s no way they can fill the gap.

For every nine meals provided through SNAP, food banks provide one, said Liz Reasoner, CEO of Food Bank of the Albemarle.

“We’re trying to approach this from a disaster mitigation strategy,” she said.

The state’s food banks, which supply food pantries and other distributors, were already feeling a financial pinch. A federal program that helped food banks nationwide purchase locally grown food was cancelled this year. The state legislature had routinely appropriated money to food banks, but did not include them in this year’s stopgap budgets.

The Food Bank of the Albemarle decided to pay for seeds and labor for a local farm to grow vegetables, Reasoner said. “One way we can mitigate some of the loss is by investing in intentional planting programs.”

The government shutdown was putting pressure on nonprofits before the SNAP suspension. A food pantry



in Elizabeth City saw a 50% increase in traffic last Saturday, which Reasoner attributed to paychecks lost through the government shutdown.

“We knew it was going to happen,” she said, as households adjusted

their budgets to account for limited cash.

Federal benefits that help pay for baby formula set to run out

N.C. Rep. Monika Johnson-Hostler spent part of Monday calling people about providing formula to babies who will lose access to it when funding for the federal nutrition program focused on infants, young children and their mothers runs out.

With the attention on SNAP, Johnson-Hostler (D-Wake) worried that people won’t know that federal support for parents buying baby formula is also at risk.

“That’s what’s scary to me,” she said. “I don’t think people knew it was happening.”

Money for the federal nutrition program Women, Infants and Children, known as WIC, won’t end as soon as SNAP does, but won’t last too much longer than the larger program.

NCDHHS said in an email that benefits will last until early November, but did not give an exact end date.

Wake County said in an email that WIC will issue benefits through Nov. 15.

More than 262,000 babies, pregnant women, new mothers, and young children in North Carolina use WIC, according to NCDHHS.

Wake County is advising mothers who are supplementing breast milk

with formula to increase breastfeeding to help boost milk supply.

Pediatricians may be a short-term source of formula, Wake’s email said. In special cases, WIC will coordinate with hospitals or manufacturers to arrange for direct deliveries, the email said.

Political finger-pointing

In a statement Monday, Democratic Gov. Josh Stein urged the USDA to use federal contingency funds to keep SNAP benefits available after Nov. 1. The USDA said last week it would not use contingency fund to help cover the cost, the New York Times reported.

“The administration’s refusal to use these available funds as temperatures cool and the Thanksgiving holiday approaches is a cruel abdication of the responsibility to support families and communities,” Stein’s statement said.

Meanwhile, Congressional Republicans and the Trump administration continue to blame Democrats for the shutdown that threatens to suspend food benefits in days.

Most Democrats have voted against a short-term budget in an effort to pressure Republicans to extend Affordable Care Act marketplace tax credits for health care coverage.

U.S.House Speaker Mike Johnson defended USDA’s decision not to use the contingency fund.

NC Tier System —CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

it’s happening again.

“We just found out recently that (Natron) just couldn’t make things work, and they pulled a plug on the project,” Evans said.

The state incentives are enough to get companies interested in North Carolina’s poorest areas, but not enough to ensure follow-through.

For all the bad PR that Tier 1 counties get, many don’t actually receive that much special treatment from the state. In the two years that Renee Perry has served as Vance County manager, she hasn’t seen any money or incentives come in as a result of Vance’s economically distressed status.

Halifax County Manager Dia Denton doesn’t think her county will ever ascend out of Tier 1, but she doesn’t necessarily see that as such a terrible thing — the system just fails to appreciate Halifax’s dominance in the agriculture sector, she says.

But that may not be of much help to workers in Halifax County who don’t happen to own farms. Like Edgecombe, Halifax has a perpetually high level of residents without jobs.

Challenges in every tier

Tier 1 counties aren’t the only ones with challenges.

Many wealthy, older North Carolinians own second homes in the mountains. Should that mean that the county receives less funding to repair buildings? What about counties whose populations are rapidly growing — should that mean they receive less funding to build new schools?

Logic would suggest not, but that’s the way it works under the current system.

For Tier 3 counties, their relative success can handicap parts of the county that aren’t as affluent as others.

Karen Howard is a county commissioner in Chatham County, which has been designated as non-distressed for upwards of a decade.

“In a community like Chatham, we certainly have condensed wealth and a lot of opportunity, but we also have deep pockets of poverty,” Howard said.

“The lack of access to some of the grant and funding opportunities in towns like Siler City and Goldston has been crippling. The model itself is the challenge. Towns that are distressed and unable to access or manage the funding opportunities because of where they are located are just at this permanent disadvantage.

The system is unable to take in nuance.”

The same sentiment is felt by other Tier 3 counties, such as Iredell and Mecklenburg.

“Being a Tier 3 county excludes us from multiple revenue sources that are desperately needed,” Beth Milton, Iredell County manager, told CPP.

“It punishes a less vibrant area of a county because of another’s success.”

In the state’s largest city, Charlotte, the tier system breeds even more contradictions. Mecklenburg County Commissioner Arthur Griffin argues that Charlotte has many more poor people than sparsely populated, rural counties, but those people are excluded from the benefits of the tier system.

In North Carolina’s cities, economic success is accompanied by deep pockets of poverty. The system is designed to ignore those pockets, Griffin argued.

Officials from Tier 3 counties like Iredell feel they contribute more to the state economy, and are unfairly punished for it.

“In North Carolina, counties classified as Tier 1 and Tier 2 — accounting for 80 out of the 100 counties — receive a far greater share of state funds despite paying less than 20% of the state’s total taxes,” said Gene Houpe, an Iredell County commissioner.

In contrast, Tier 3 counties like Iredell contribute the majority of the tax revenue yet receive little to no support back from the state. This disparity leads to severe reductions in state incentives for economic development, local grants, and much-needed capital funding for school projects.

“One of the most pressing issues we face in Iredell is the lack of adequate funding for school capital projects. Due to rapid growth, our county is required by law to build new schools to accommodate the increasing population. However, we do not receive enough funding from the state to meet these obligations, and the financial strain is becoming unsustainable.”

Growing uses for the tiers

The tier system was never intended to impact public school funding. Over the nearly 40 years the system has been in effect, its influence has grown beyond the purposes for which it was designed.

“The program was built in 1987 for one specific economic development incentive program,” explained Anson

County Planning Director Nick Addison.

“Since then, the state has expanded this program to kind of be all-encompassing. Michelangelo didn’t paint the Sistine Chapel in broad strokes.”

The tier system doesn’t just dictate which counties get which job creation incentives. It now impacts random county programs, like spay-and-neuter programs, farmland preservation programs, school construction, waste- and drinking-water reserve programs, community colleges, oral health preventative services and medication assistance programs.

The tier system has seeped into the grant-making decisions of nonprofits like the Golden Leaf Foundation, a major grantor for counties impacted by the decline of the tobacco industry. It can also affect federal funding streams, when those are operating normally.

The School of Government at UNC-Chapel Hill recently published a study examining the effectiveness of the tier system. One of the authors, Carolyn Fryberger, blames the increasing use of the tiers for many of the system’s unintended consequences.

“The goal of the system is now very unclear,” Fryberger said.

“It was originally created under this one very specific statute for a very specific use. It is now used in every program, across every department, in every issue area, in ways that it was not intended and was not designed.”

These tier designations, whose influence has grown to represent so much of counties’ identity, in many cases, are not all that meaningful.

Tier soup

The prescribed number for each tier results in a “musical chairs” effect where a county can improve or decline just because of another county’s unrelated performance.

Some counties wobble between tiers. The counties that hover near tier boundaries need not experience meaningful changes to switch. Caldwell County, for example, has switched between Tier 1 and Tier 2 six times in the last 10 years.

In the most recent rankings, Caldwell once again moved tiers, from medium distressed to most distressed — with hardly any meaningful, or negative, changes in its economic outlook.

Between 2024 and 2025, Caldwell County’s property tax base increased by \$9,700. The median household

income increased by \$8,900. These are positive changes.

It experienced population growth at a rate of 1.32% between July 2020 and July 2023, which is faster than it had been growing in previous periods, but slow compared to the statewide growth rate of 3.95%.

The unemployment rate in Caldwell was 3.65%, exactly on par with North Carolina’s over the same period. It represented an increase in unemployment in Caldwell, but just by 0.3%. That tiny fraction amounted to a decline of 12 positions in the unemployment rate rank among North Carolina counties.

The county moved from Tier 2 to Tier 1, spurring bad PR and making it less attractive for potential businesses.

“Last year, when we moved down in the tier rankings, we saw improvements in three of the four categories,” Ashley Bolick, Caldwell County economic development director, told CPP.

“The only area that we saw a decline was in unemployment rate, and our unemployment rate was still the second-lowest unemployment rate we’ve reported since we’ve been keeping records. So it’s hard to think of yourself as a Tier 1 community when all of your metrics are improving. People think we are going backwards, and that is not the case.”

In Surry County, the median household income dropped by just \$2,300 between 2024 and 2025. That amounted to a drop of 30 positions in the median household income ranking, and Surry moved from Tier 2 to Tier 1. That marks the sixth time Surry County has shifted in 10 years, complicating the county’s economic planning.

The distress tiers system magnifies relatively insignificant changes like these while obscuring more meaningful changes. A Tier 1 county could improve dramatically without ever exiting its tier, and that improvement would be completely obscured by the system.

The tier system touches nearly every corner of North Carolina’s economy, from school construction to businesses recruitment to animal control. It has calcified into a static ranking that fails to capture economic reality and punishes counties at both ends of the economic spectrum. It resists the very changes it was intended to promote.

For North Carolina’s poorest counties, the system represents anything but a beacon of hope.



TARGET CONTINUES TO MISS THE MARK: PARTNERSHIP WITH ULTA TERMINATED

By Jheri Hardaway

Staff Writer

Target continues to face significant challenges since the boycott was launched in early 2025 due to its withdrawal from DEI commitments. The ongoing backlash has undoubtedly influenced the recent decision to end its partnership with Ulta Beauty. This collaboration, which is scheduled to conclude by August 2026, marks another significant setback for the retail giant.

Forbes reports that this “breakup is a significant blow to Target, which faces declining sales, foot traffic, and a tarnished reputation.” While Ulta is expected to be minimally impacted financially, the disassociation allows them to focus on their core business and international expansion. Ulta prides itself on diversity with shelf space for notable minority-owned brands like Pattern, Fenty, Black Girl Sunscreen, Cceerd, Miele, and many others.

In response to slumping sales, Target is also implementing widespread corporate job cuts. Additional reports indicate that the company will cut 1,800 corporate jobs, with 1,000 layoffs scheduled for next week, as part of an effort to streamline operations. These cuts represent approximately 8% of Target’s global corporate workforce, with the majority of affected employees located at the Minneapolis headquarters. It’s important to note that store employees and workers in Target’s supply chain facilities will not be affected by these job cuts.

Rick Gomez, Executive Vice President and Chief Commercial Officer at Target, has stated his commitment to “offering the beauty experience consumers have come to expect from Target,” even amidst these changes. The coming months will undoubtedly be critical as Target navigates these challenges and seeks to regain its footing in the competitive retail landscape with customers more conscious of their spending than ever before.

With tariffs, job layoffs, and an overall stressed economy, holiday season spending looks bleak. Will Target survive? Only time will tell, but the business is indefinitely impacted by its own decisions, and the consequences are tangible.

Amazon Cuts 14,000 Corp Jobs As Spending On AI Accelerates

(AP NEWS) Amazon will cut about 14,000 corporate jobs as the online retail giant ramps up spending on artificial intelligence while cutting costs elsewhere.

Teams and individuals impacted by the job cuts will be notified on Tuesday. Most workers will be given 90 days to look for a new position internally, Beth Galetti, Senior Vice President of People Experience and Technology at Amazon, wrote in a letter to employees on Tuesday. Those who can't find a new role at the company or who opt not to look for one will be provided transitional support including severance pay, outplacement services and health insurance benefits.

Amazon has about 350,000 corporate employees and a total workforce of approximately 1.56 million. The cuts announced Tuesday amount to about a 4% reduction in its corporate workforce.

In June CEO Andy Jassy, who has aggressively sought to cut costs since becoming CEO in 2021, said that he anticipated generative AI would re-



tech giants making leaps in AI. Amazon is competing with OpenAI, Google, Microsoft, Meta and others. In a conference call with industry analysts in May, Jassy said that the potential for growth in the company's AWS business is massive.

"If you believe your mission is to make customers' lives easier and better every day, and you believe that every customer experience will be reinvented with AI, you're going to invest very aggressively in AI, and that's what we're doing. You can see that in the 1,000-plus AI applications we're building across Amazon. You can see that with our next generation of Alexa, named Alexa+," he said.

Amazon's workforce doubled during the pandemic as millions stayed home and boosted online spending. In the following years, big tech and retail companies cut thousands of jobs to bring spending back in line.

The cuts announced Tuesday suggests Amazon is still trying to get the size of its workforce right and it may not be over. It was the biggest

culling at Amazon since 2023, when the company cut 27,000 jobs. Those cuts came in waves, with 9,000 jobs trimmed in March of that year, and another 18,000 employees two months later. Amazon has not said if more job cuts are on the way.

Yet the jobs market which has for years been a pillar in the U.S. economy, is showing signs of weakening. Layoffs have been limited, but the same can be said for hiring.

Government hiring data is on hold during the government shut down, but earlier this month a survey by payroll company ADP showed a surprising loss of 32,000 jobs losses in the private sector in September.

Many retailers are pulling back on seasonal hiring this year due to uncertainty over the U.S. economy and tariffs. Amazon Inc. said this month, however, that it would hire 250,000 seasonal workers, the same as last year's holiday season.

Neil Saunders, managing director of GlobalData, said in a statement that the layoffs "represent a deep

cleaning of Amazon's corporate workforce."

"Unlike the Target layoffs, Amazon is operating from a position of strength," he said. "The company has been producing good growth, and it still has a lot of headroom for further expansion in both the U.S. and overseas."

But Saunders noted that Amazon is not immune to outside factors, as global markets tighten and underlying costs climb.

"It needs to act if it wants to continue with a good bottom-line performance. This is especially so given the amount of investment the company is making in areas like logistics and AI. In some ways, this is a tipping point away from human capital to technological infrastructure," he said.

Amazon will post quarterly financial results on Thursday. During its most recent quarter, the company reported 17.5% growth for its cloud computing arm Amazon Web Services.



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Health and Wellness

Antioxidants Help Stave Off A Host Of Health Problems

(THE CONVERSATION) When it comes to describing what an antioxidant is, it’s all in the name: Antioxidants counter oxidants. And that’s a good thing. Oxidants can damage the structure and function of the chemicals in your body critical to life – like the proteins and lipids within your cells, and your DNA, which stores genetic information. A special class of oxidants, free radicals, are even more reactive and dangerous.

As an assistant professor of nutrition, I’ve studied the long-standing research showing how the imbalances in antioxidants and oxidants lead to oxidative stress, which is linked to cancer, diabetes, cardiovascular disease and dementia and Alzheimer’s disease. In fact, a primary cause of aging is the damage accumulated across of a lifetime of oxidative stress.

Simply put: To help prevent oxidative stress, people need to eat foods with antioxidants and limit their exposure to oxidants, particularly free radicals.

The research: Food, not supplements

There’s no way for any of us to avoid some oxidative stress. Just metabolism – the processes in your body that keep you alive, such as breathing, digestion and maintaining body temperature – are a source of oxidants and free radicals. Inflammation, pollution and radiation are other sources.

As a result, everyone needs an-

tioxidants. There are many different types: enzymes, minerals, vitamins and phytochemicals.

Two types of phytochemicals deserve special mention: carotenoids and flavonoids. Carotenoids are pigments, with the colors yellow, orange and red; they contain the antioxidants beta-carotene, lycopene and lutein. Some flavonoids, called anthocyanins, are pigments that give foods a blue, red or purple color.

Although your body produces some of these antioxidants, you can get them from the foods you eat, and they’re better for you than supplements.

In fact, researchers found that antioxidant supplements did not reduce deaths, and some supplements in excessive amounts contribute to oxidative stress, and may even increase the risk of dying.

It should be pointed out that in most of these studies, only one or two antioxidants were given, and often in amounts far greater than the recommended daily value. One study, for example, gave participants only vitamin A, and at an amount more than 60 times an adult’s recommended intake.

Foods rich in antioxidants

In contrast, increased antioxidant intake from whole foods is related to decreased risk of death. And although antioxidant supplementation didn’t reduce cancer rates in smokers, the antioxidants in whole foods did.

But measuring antioxidants in

foods is complicated. Extensive laboratory testing is required, and too many foods exist to test them all anyway. Even individual food items that are the same exact variety of food – such as two Gala apples – can have different amounts of antioxidants. Where the food was grown and harvested, how it was processed and how it was stored during transportation and while in the supermarket are factors. The variety of the food also matters – the many different types of apples, for instance, can have different amounts of antioxidants.

Nonetheless, in 2018, researchers quantified the antioxidant content of more than 3,100 foods – the first antioxidant database. Each food’s antioxidant capacity was determined by the amount of oxidants neutralized by a given amount of food. The researchers measured this capacity in millimoles per 100 grams, or about 4 ounces.

For fruits easily found in the grocery store, the database shows blueberries have the most antioxidants – just over 9 millimoles per 4 ounces. The same serving of pomegranates and blackberries each have about 6.5 millimoles.



For common vegetables, cooked artichoke has 4.54 millimoles per 4 ounces; red kale, 4.09 millimoles; cooked red cabbage, 2.15; and orange bell pepper, 1.94.

Coffee has 2.5 millimoles per 4 ounces; green tea has 1.5; whole walnuts, just over 13; whole pecans, about 9.7; and sunflower seeds, just over 5. Herbs and spices have

a lot: clove has 465 millimoles per 4 ounces; rosemary has 67; and thyme, about 64. But keep in mind that those enormous numbers are based on a quarter-pound. Still, just a normal sprinkle packs a powerful nutritional punch.

Other tips

Other ways to choose antioxidant-rich foods: Read the nutrition facts

label and look for antioxidant vitamins and minerals – vitamins A, C, E, D, B2, B3 and B9, and the minerals selenium, zinc and manganese.

Just know the label has a drawback. Food producers and manufacturers are not required to list every nutrient of the food on the label. In fact, the only vitamins and minerals required by law are sodium, potassium, calcium, iron and vitamin D.

Also, focus on eating the rainbow. Colorful foods are often higher in antioxidants, like blue corn. Many darker foods are rich in antioxidants, too, like dark chocolate, black barley and dark leafy vegetables, such as kale and Swiss chard.

Although heat can degrade oxidants, that mostly occurs during the storage and transportation of the food. In some cases, cooking may increase the food’s antioxidant capacity, as with leafy green vegetables.

Keep in mind that while blueberries, red kale and pecans are great, their antioxidant profile will be different than that of other fruits, vegetables and nuts. That’s why diversity is the key: To increase the power of antioxidants, choose a variety of fresh, flavorful, colorful and, ideally, local foods.

HERE’S WHAT HAPPENS TO YOUR BODY WHEN CLOCKS ‘FALL BACK’ AN HOUR



(AP NEWS) Plan on a glorious extra hour of sleep as most of America “falls back” into standard time. But make sure to get outside for some morning sun, too – it’ll help your body clock reset faster.

Daylight saving time ends at 2 a.m. local time Sunday, which means you should set your clock back an hour before you go to bed. Standard time will last until March 8 when we will again “spring forward” with the return of daylight saving time.

There’s a lot of grumbling about the twice-a-year time changes. The spring switch tends to be harder, losing that hour of sleep we allegedly recover in the fall. But many people also mourn fall’s end of daylight saving time, when days already are getting shorter and moving the clocks can mean less daylight after school or work for exercise or outdoor fun.

Some health groups, including the American Medical Association and American Academy of Sleep Medicine, have long urged adopting standard time year-round.

New research from Stanford University agrees, finding that switching back-and-forth is the worst option for our health. The study showed sticking with either time option would be a bit healthier, but they found permanent standard time is slightly better – because it aligns more with the sun and human biology, what’s called our circadian rhythm.

“The best way to think about it is as if the central clock were like a conductor of an orchestra and each of the organs were a different instrument,” said Jamie Zeitzer, who co-directs Stanford’s Center for Sleep and Circadian Sciences.

More light in the morning and less at night is key to keeping that rhythm on schedule – all the instruments in sync. When the clock is regularly disrupted by time changes or other reasons, he said each of the body’s organ systems, such as the immune system or metabolism, “just works a little less well.”

Most countries do not observe daylight saving time. For those that do – mostly in North America and Europe – the date that clocks are changed varies. In the U.S., Arizona and Hawaii don’t change and stay on standard time.

Here’s what to know about the twice-yearly ritual.

How the body reacts to light

The brain has a master clock that is set by exposure to sunlight and darkness. This circadian rhythm is a roughly 24-hour cycle that determines when we become sleepy and when we’re more alert. The patterns change with age, one reason that early-to-rise youngsters evolve into hard-to-wake teens.

Morning light resets the rhythm. By evening, levels of a hormone called melatonin begin to surge, triggering drowsiness. Too much light in the evening – whether from later time outdoors doing daylight saving time or from artificial light like computer screens – delays that surge and the cycle gets out of sync.

And that circadian clock affects more than sleep, also influencing things like heart rate, blood pressure, stress hormones and metabolism.

How do time changes affect sleep?

Even an hour change on the clock can throw off sleep schedules because even though the clocks change, work and school start times stay the same.

The spring change to daylight saving time can be a little rougher as darker mornings and lighter evenings make it harder to fall asleep on time. Those first few days have been linked to increases in car crashes and even an uptick in heart attacks.

Some people with seasonal affective disorder, a type of depression usually linked to the shorter days and less sunlight of fall and winter, may struggle too.

Many people easily adjust, like how they recover from jet lag after traveling. But a time change can add pressure on shift workers whose schedules already are out of sync with the sun, or those regularly sleep-deprived for other reasons.

About 1 in 3 U.S. adults sleep less than the recommended seven-plus hours nightly, and more than half of U.S. teens don’t get the recommended eight-plus hours on weeknights.

Chronic sleep deprivation is linked to heart disease, cognitive decline, obesity and numerous other problems.

How to prepare for the time change

In both fall and spring, changing bedtimes by as little as 15 minutes a night in the days before the change can help ease into it.

But sunshine in the morning is critical to helping reset your circadian rhythm for healthful sleep. If you can’t get outdoors, sit by windows.

Will the US ever get rid of the time change?

In Congress, a bill named the Sunshine Protection Act that proposes making daylight saving time permanent has stalled in recent years.

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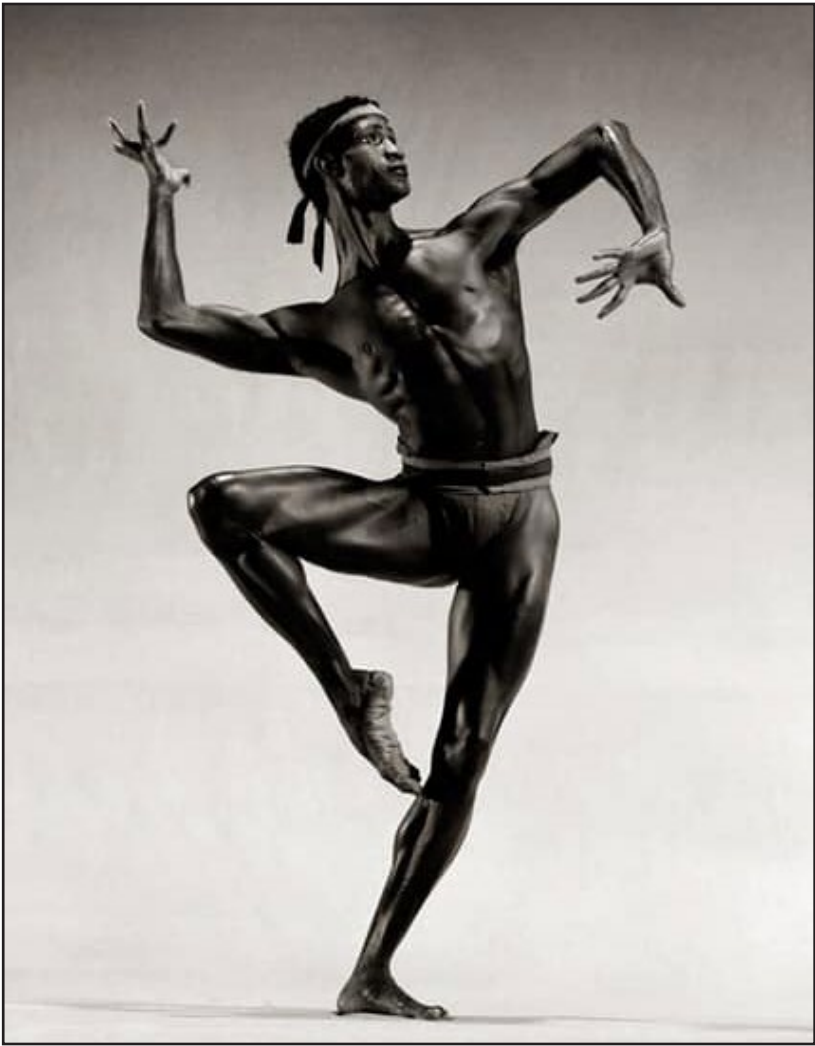
The Story of Mel Alexander Tomlinson: The Man Once Called "The Most Exciting Black Dancer in America"

By **Jordan Meadows**
Staff Writer

Mel Alexander Tomlinson’s life began in Raleigh, North Carolina, and continued to the grand stages of America’s greatest dance companies. Born on January 3, 1954, Mel Tomlinson grew up in the Chavis Heights public housing neighborhood of Southeast Raleigh. The son of Tommy and Marjorieine Tomlinson, Mel’s father worked for Krispy Kreme Doughnuts and as a delivery man for a jeweler, while his mother was a homemaker. Even as a child, Mel stood out for his energy and determination. While most children rode bicycles, he proudly rode a unicycle—a Christmas gift his father saved for when Mel was just nine. His love for movement took shape in his teenage years at Fred J. Carnegie Junior High School, where he studied under local ballet teacher Betty Kovach. At John W. Ligon Senior High School, a segregated school in the 1960s, he continued to explore dance and gymnastics. It was during a high school half-time performance, where he served as the school mascot, that a local ballet instructor noticed his natural talent and offered him free dance lessons—a gesture that would set the course of his life. Tomlinson pursued formal training at the North Carolina School of the Arts (now the University of North Carolina School of the Arts), where his talent quickly distinguished him. Choreographer Agnes de Mille discovered him there and

called him “the most exciting black dancer in America.” After earning his Bachelor of Fine Arts in dance, he joined de Mille’s Heritage Dance

Theater, marking the beginning of his professional career. In 1974, Tomlinson moved to New York City and joined the Dance The-



atre of Harlem, founded by Arthur Mitchell and Karel Shook. He was also courted by the Joffrey and Boston Ballets but chose Dance Theatre of Harlem for its groundbreaking mission of representing African Americans in classical ballet. As a soloist, he performed stand-out roles in Manifestations, Swan Lake, and Scheherazade. In Manifestations (1975), he portrayed the Snake with such realism that he studied and mimicked an actual snake he kept in a cage — a testament to his immersive artistry. He later danced with Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, where audiences were captivated by his performances in Alvin Ailey’s Pas de Duke alongside Judith Jamison. Returning to Dance Theatre of Harlem in 1978, he continued to establish himself as a performer of both emotional depth and technical precision. Tomlinson’s ascent reached a historic peak when George Balanchine invited him to join the New York City Ballet in 1981—making him the company’s only African American dancer at the time. He debuted on November 27, 1981, in Balanchine’s Agon, dancing opposite Heather Watts in the role originally created for Arthur Mitchell. The New York Times described his performance as “electrifying.” During his years with the New York City Ballet, where he rose to the rank of soloist, Tomlinson questioned his place in a predominantly white company. He once asked Balanchine, “Am I here because I’m an artist, or because I’m an only-est?”

Copeland Hangs Up Her Pointed Shoes After Performing For Adoring Crowd

NEW YORK (AP) — Misty Copeland took one last spin on her pointe shoes Wednesday, showered with golden glitter and bouquets as she retired from American Ballet Theatre after a trailblazing career in which she became an ambassador for diversity in an overwhelmingly white art form. Copeland, who a decade ago became the first Black female principal dancer in the company’s 75-year history, was feted at its star-studded fall gala at Manhattan’s Lincoln Center. Oprah Winfrey and Debbie Allen were among those who gave speeches of praise. Winfrey spoke of the power of young people of color seeing Copeland lead iconic ballets like “Swan Lake.” “Misty didn’t just perform ballet,” Winfrey said of the ballerina who has achieved a unique crossover fame. “She changed it. She redefined who belongs, who gets to be seen, and who gets to lead.” In a way, the gala was both a return and a departure for Copeland, 43. She was dancing with the company for the first time in five years. During that time, Copeland has been raising a son, Jackson, with her husband. The 3-year-old came onstage to hug his mother during curtain calls, wearing a tuxedo. Copeland has also been continuing her career as an author — the second volume of her “Bunheads” series appeared in September — and working to increase diversity in the dance world with her namesake foundation, including “Be Bold,” an afterschool program designed for young children of color. But she decided to dust off the pointe shoes so she could have one last spin on the ABT stage — including as Juliet, one of the most passionate roles in ballet and her personal favorite. Copeland’s Romeo in the balcony pas de deux was Calvin Royal III, who in 2020 became ABT’s

first Black male principal dancer in two decades. The duo later reappeared for another duet, this time a modern one, in “Wrecka Stow,” by Kyle Abraham. For Copeland’s final performance of the night, she performed Twyla Tharp’s “Sinatra Suite” with another of her favorite partners, Herman Cornejo. The night, which also celebrated ABT’s 85th anniversary and was curated in large part by Copeland herself, included speeches and film clips about her career. And her fellow dancers performed excerpts of ballets in her honor. At the end, a beaming Copeland was given a quintessential ballet farewell, as colleagues, teachers, friends and family came out to greet her, one by one, with hugs and bouquets while glittery confetti poured from the rafters. On to the next stage Though Copeland has not closed the door on dancing altogether, it’s clear an era is ending. “It’s been 25 years at ABT, and I think it’s time,” she told The Associated Press in an interview in June, when she announced her retirement. “It’s time for me to move to the next stage.” She added: “You know, I’ve become the person that I am today, and have all the opportunities I have today, because of ballet, (and) because of American Ballet Theatre. I feel like this is me saying ‘thank you’ to the company. So it’s a farewell. (But) it won’t be the end of me dancing. ... Never say never.” On the carpet Wednesday before her performance, she said: “I feel good. I feel ready to take this next step.” She noted that she would be continuing her work promoting diversity: “There’s so much work and effort that has to be continuous.” Allen told reporters that Copeland had “helped to redefine the face of ballet. She’s inspired millions of people around the world and hopefully,



American Ballet Theatre will not wait another 50 years before they have another beautiful Black principal dancer.” The evening at Lincoln Center’s David H. Koch Theater was streamed live to nearby Alice Tully Hall across the plaza, with attendance free to the public — another sign of Copeland’s unique brand of fame in the dance world. Copeland was born in Kansas City, Missouri, and raised in San Pedro, California, where she lived in near poverty and through periods of homelessness as her single mother struggled to support her and five siblings. For a future professional dancer, she came to ballet relatively late — at 13 — but soon excelled and went on to study at the San Francisco Ballet School and ABT on scholarship opportunities. After a stint in the junior company, Copeland joined ABT as a member of the corps de ballet in April 2001, becoming a soloist six years later. In June 2015, Copeland was promoted to principal dancer. Unlike other promotions, which are announced quietly, Copeland’s was announced at a news conference — a

testament to her celebrity. Only days before, she’d made a triumphant New York debut in “Swan Lake” in the starring role of Odette/Odile, drawing a diverse and enthusiastic crowd to the Metropolitan Opera House. Trying times for DEI efforts In the AP interview, Copeland acknowledged that it’s striking that when she leaves ABT, there will no longer be a Black female principal dancer at the company. “It’s definitely concerning,” Copeland said. “I think I’ve just gotten to a place in my career where there’s only so much I can do on a stage. There’s only so much that visual representation ... can do. I feel like it’s the perfect timing for me to be stepping into a new role, and hopefully still shaping and shifting the ballet world and culture.” She also noted this is an especially trying moment for anyone working in the area of diversity, equity and inclusion. “It’s a difficult time,” she said. “And I think all we can really do is keep our heads down and keep doing the work. There’s no way to stop the people that feel passionate about this work. We will continue doing it.”

The Importance of Buying Locally Grown Produce

The food we consume often travels thousands of miles before reaching our plates. While this system of food distribution offers variety and convenience, it also comes with significant economic, environmental, and social costs. As consumers become more aware of these issues, there is a growing movement towards supporting local farmers and buying locally grown produce. This shift not only benefits individual consumers but also strengthens communities and promotes sustainable agriculture. By understanding and supporting local food systems, we can all contribute to a healthier, more sustainable future. Boosting the Local Economy One of the most compelling reasons to buy locally grown produce is the positive impact it has on the local economy. When consumers purchase food from local farmers, they are directly contributing to the economic stability and growth of their

community. Money spent at local farms and farmers' markets tends to stay within the community, supporting local businesses and generating more local jobs. This economic boost can lead to improved infrastructure, better schools, and more vibrant local economies, benefiting everyone in the community. Fresher and More Nutritious Produce Local produce is often fresher and more nutritious than food that has traveled long distances to reach supermarket shelves. Fruits and vegetables begin to lose nutrients as soon as they are harvested. By the time produce that has been shipped from afar reaches consumers, it may have lost a significant portion of its nutritional value. In contrast, locally grown produce is typically harvested at peak ripeness and sold shortly thereafter, ensuring that consumers receive the freshest and most nutrient-dense products available.

— meaning the only Black man. After leaving New York City Ballet in 1987, Tomlinson received the first annual North Carolina Prize for outstanding work in the performing arts. He returned home to North Carolina, joining the faculty at his alma mater, the North Carolina School of the Arts. He also danced as a principal with the North Carolina Dance Theatre in Charlotte, later performing and teaching with the Boston Ballet and serving as a master teacher in the CITYDANCE outreach program. Throughout his career, Tomlinson taught at Harvard University, Boston Conservatory of Music, the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, the Greensboro Ballet School, and Charlotte Ballet, influencing generations of young dancers with his discipline and warmth. But life dealt him severe trials. In the 1990s, after collapsing, Tomlinson was diagnosed with HIV, which later developed into AIDS. By December 1998, he was admitted to the House of Mercy hospice in Belmont, North Carolina, where doctors expected him to live only six months. He nearly died three times

but defied all odds, recovering and leaving the hospice in 2000. During his stay, he became a certified phlebotomist and earned a Ph.D. in theology from the Carolina University of Theology. In his later years, Tomlinson lived in Charlotte and served as a minister at St. Paul Baptist Church, where he led The Hallelujah Dance Corps and delivered sermons in American Sign Language — performing spiritual expression with the same grace and emotional depth that had marked his stage career. Even after his illness, Tomlinson occasionally returned to the stage. In December 2018, just weeks before his death, he performed as Drosselmeyer in Nut ReMix with New Ballet Ensemble & School in Memphis. Mel Tomlinson passed away on February 5, 2019, in Huntersville, North Carolina, at the age of 65, from pancreatic cancer. Today, the Mel Tomlinson Scholarship at the University of North Carolina School of the Arts inspires young dancers to pursue their dreams beyond all boundaries—just as he did.



“LAMENTATION”

There’s a sound that echoes through our history—a cry, a moan, a song. It’s the sound of lamentation. And for many of us, it’s not just a word from the Bible—it’s a lived experience. In Scripture, lamentation is the act of pouring out sorrow to God. It’s not quiet or polite. It’s raw, honest, and holy. The Book of Lamentations, written by the prophet Jeremiah, mourns the destruction of Jerusalem. “My eyes fail from weeping,” he writes, “I am in torment within” (Lamentations 1:16). Yet even in the depths of grief, Jeremiah declares, “Because of the Lord’s great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail” (Lamentations 3:22-23) Bible Hub. That’s the heart of biblical lament: grief wrapped in faith. It’s not just sadness—it’s a sacred protest. It’s saying, “Lord, this hurts. But I’m still talking to You.” We know that language. We’ve spoken it in hospital rooms, at funerals, and in the quiet of our bedrooms. We’ve sung it in spirituals like “Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child.” We’ve prayed it through tears when justice felt far away. And we’ve seen it in public, too. In recent years, lamentation has spilled into the streets. After the deaths of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and so many others, people gathered to cry out. Signs were held. Knees were taken. Names were chanted. These were not just protests—they were public laments. They were modern-day Psalms, asking “How long, O Lord?” (Psalm 13:1) These cries are familiar. Remember Emmett Till. Remember the marches, the hoses, the dogs. We cried out then—and we cry out still. But lamentation isn’t just about pain. It’s about presence. It’s about refusing to be silent. It’s about standing in the truth of our experience and lifting it to God. Since the beginning of time the world has experienced mass suffering, destruction, fear, war, death, and eventually rebirth as we experience manifestations of God’s grace for our lamentations, and we will again. However, right through here, things in this country feel off. To me it feels like a dark, heavy cloud of fear and intimidation has blocked the light of truth and the silenced the voices of dissent. There is an Orwellian, freedom-choking smoke filling our lungs, depriving us of the fresh air of freedom of expression and the right to disagree that is at the heart of the concept of America. We’re being bullied. The threat seems so massive, so far-reaching that it seems undefeatable. It’s not. This situation is similar to the Israelites’ fear of confrontation preventing their entry into the promise land. In Numbers 13:30-31 (NIV) when Caleb said, “We should go up and take possession of the land, for we can surely do it,” the response was, “We can’t attack those people; they are stronger than we are.” This was the land given to them by God. They were willing to abandon God’s plan because they were afraid. The story of the size of the enemy grew as the story made its rounds. What story are you listening to? Will we cower in fear and silence as we watch neighboring countries, major education institutions, cities and states wave the white flag of surrender? In church, we often rush past lament. We want to get to the praise. But the Bible doesn’t skip the sorrow. The Psalms are full of laments—more than any other type of prayer. David cried out, “I am worn out from my groaning. All night long I flood my bed with weeping” (Psalm 6:6). And yet, he kept praying. Kept trusting. Kept showing up. I don’t have THE answer, but I believe we cannot give up. We show up. We cry out. We keep the faith. Lamentation also connects us to each other. When we share our grief, our fear, our worry, we build community. We remind one another: you’re not alone. We have come too far to allow our lamentation to drive us back to whispers in the darkness. We must be the bridge between sorrow and strength. Our sacred cry says, “I’m still here and I will not give up.”

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Community

Bridging Divides: Senator Floyd McKissick Jr. On Civil Rights Legacy And The Call For More Bipartisan Action

By Jheri Hardaway
Staff Writer

Former North Carolina State Senator Floyd McKissick Jr. recently spoke to students at William Peace University, delivering a powerful message that wove his family's pioneering civil rights history with an urgent call for renewed political engagement and bipartisanship in today's deeply divided America.

The former Durham City Councilman and State Senator, who served 13 years in the General Assembly, praised the campus for its "perfect" and "intimate" academic community, encouraging students to "cherish the years that you're here, grow, thrive, and prosper for those experiences." Senator McKissick began by grounding his political life in the struggles of the segregated South he grew up in. Born and raised in North Carolina, he witnessed a reality where "restrooms were segregated, lunch counters were segregated, water fountains were segregated, everything that you can imagine was segregated."

His father, Floyd McKissick Sr., was a pivotal figure in the Civil Rights Movement. He was denied admission to the University of North Carolina Law School, leading to the landmark 1951 lawsuit, McKissick versus Carmichael. His attorney was Thurgood Marshall, who later became the first African American Su-

preme Court Justice. McKissick Jr. detailed the personal cost of breaking down racial barriers. His two oldest sisters were pioneers in desegregating Durham public schools in 1959. Years later, he integrated North Durham Elementary School at the sixth-grade level. He recalled the systemic prejudice he faced as a young Black student: "The teachers had never seen a Black student before. They assumed that you were inferior. You were tearing down those various discriminations. But that is the way it was when I was growing up."

His father's work with the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), which included organizing Freedom Rides, spearheading sit-ins, and speaking at the 1963 March on Washington alongside Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., provided a unique and formative experience. McKissick Jr. showed photographs of his father with Dr. King and Malcolm X, illustrating the historical exposure that "shaped my life, how they shaped my values."

The Senator transitioned from his historical roots to his philosophy on effective governing, which is centered on finding common ground and building bipartisan coalitions. He cited his time on the Durham City Council, where he worked with a politically split body to realize major projects like the development of downtown Durham, the construction



of the Durham Bulls stadium, and the Durham Performing Arts Center.

His time in the State Senate, serving under both Democratic and Republican majorities, further reinforced this belief. "One thing I found, regardless of the circumstances, if you build coalitions, you can get things done," he asserted. McKissick emphasized a strategic, selfless approach to lawmaking, often seeking Republican co-sponsors on bills, such as those dealing with criminal justice reform, to ensure passage. He detailed his successful effort to create a first-of-its-kind law for auto-

matic expunction of criminal records in cases of mistaken identity—a bill that had Republican co-sponsors and was signed into law by then-Governor Pat McCrory. "Don't worry about whether you get credit for the outcome all the time... you have to be content to know you change the outcome rather than worrying about the credit." He later successfully championed legislation that legalized and regulated companies like Uber and Lyft in North Carolina by working with 27 different stakeholders across the aisle. His guiding principle for working with those who disagree is

simple: focus on the solution, not the complaint.

Expressing deep and transparent concern over the current political divisiveness, which he called "unprecedented," McKissick issued a rallying cry to students, urging them to become "politically active, engaged, and conscious." When asked by a student how young people can get involved and form coalitions, the Senator offered concrete steps:

1. Look Locally: Join established political groups in the community or on campus, such as Young Republicans or Young Democrats, or form a new club based on shared aspirational goals.
2. See Government Firsthand: He encouraged students to seek internships at the General Assembly in Raleigh to "understand the levers of power" and "see how it functions, you see how it operates."
3. Develop a "Win-Win" Mindset: Addressing a question about foreign conflicts. McKissick shared his experience chairing the Democratic Party's resolutions committee. By spending dozens of hours researching and negotiating with people on both sides of highly divisive international issues, he helped craft a single, unifying resolution that everyone could embrace. The key, he stressed, is working to find a "win-win" outcome rather than settling for a "win-lose."

Senator McKissick concluded by reaffirming his faith in the "basic character" of North Carolinians and Americans. He spoke of the "lanky kid with a funny-sounding name who might go on to become the next president of the United States, like Barack Obama," reminding the audience that the true American dream is about granting every person the "opportunity to excel," regardless of their background. "That epitomizes the American dream, that epitomizes the opportunities for success, and that epitomizes what really, truly makes us great." The talk ended on a lighter note with the revelation of his primary hobby outside of politics: photography, a pursuit he has enjoyed since high school and which offers him a "creative way of doing" things. The importance of visual art and seeing the best in our people as community leaders was a powerful concluding note.

With Less God, There Is Less Giving?

By Karl Zinsmeister
Philanthropy Magazine

From its founding, the United States has been the most religious modern nation on earth. And that devotion has fueled many successes in character development, mutual aid, social reform, and national productivity. Yet right from the beginning, American religious activity has been cyclical—flowing and ebbing and flowing again. Historians have identified up to four "great awakenings" in U.S. history where religious conviction surged. In between were periods of backsliding.

Today, we are in a period of decline. Steep decline.

Open antagonism toward faith is increasingly common in the U.S. There are now regular calls for crimping longstanding religious protections. New York Times religion columnist Mark Oppenheimer urged that the peak of the gay marriage debate was a good occasion to end the historic tax exemption for houses of worship. The insistence that expressions of faith must be expunged from national discussions, from education, even from sporting and other public events, is on the rise.

"There are a lot of nonbelievers who want religious views kept out of the public square entirely. That's a big problem," pastor Tim Keller recently told Philanthropy.

Underlying this resistance to religion is an assumption that faith is not important to the functioning of our nation. It has little social value, according to this view, and may even be harmful to citizens and the republic in various ways. Rising numbers of Americans believe that religious activity can be stopped or pushed entirely into private sanctums without any public cost.

Those Americans are mistaken. American faith takes a tumble. As recently as 1972, 95 percent of Americans affirmed a religious affiliation. By 2016 that had fallen to 76 percent.

Younger Americans in particular are falling away. Just 27 percent of adults under 30 attend services weekly. And nearly four out of ten 18-29-year-olds now say they have no religious affiliation.

What does it mean to be religiously unaffiliated? Well, roughly six out of ten of this group consider themselves secular, and three out of ten are active atheists or agnostics.

The small remainder identify as "religious" but with no particular faith. Most of the unaffiliated are suspicious of religion.

A large majority of today's religiously unaffiliated Americans believe that religious institutions do little or nothing to solve social problems.

As a result, more of the U.S. population as a whole now say religion is "part of the problem" than say it is "part of the solution."

When it comes specifically to philanthropy, 57 percent of all Americans today believe that efforts to help the poor, comfort the needy, relieve disaster victims, and otherwise serve the common good would be just as prevalent "if there were no people of faith or religious organizations to do them." As a factual matter, is that accurate?

The humanitarian habits of religious people

When researchers document how people spend their hours and their money, religious Americans look very different from others. Pew Research Center investigators examined the behavior of a large sample of the public across a typical seven-day period. They found that

among Americans who attend services weekly and pray daily, 45 percent had done volunteer work during the previous week. Among all other Americans, only 27 percent had volunteered somewhere.

The capacity of religion to motivate pro-social behavior goes way beyond volunteering. Religious people are more involved in community groups. They have stronger links with their neighbors. They are more engaged with their own families. Pew has found that among Americans who attend worship weekly and pray daily, about half gather with extended family members at least once a month. For the rest of our population, it's 30 percent.

Of all the "associational" activity that takes place in the U.S., almost half is church-related, according to Harvard sociologist Robert Putnam. "As a whole," notes Tim Keller, "secularism is not good for society." Secularism "makes people very fragmented—they might talk about community, but they aren't sacrificing their own personal goals for community, as religion requires you to do."

Religious practice links us in webs

(See *WITH LESS GOD*, P. 8)



CELEBRATING THE LEGACY OF E. MARIE WATSON

Johnston-Lee-Harnett Community Action, Inc. held a reception to celebrate the legacy of the late E. Marie Watson, esteemed former Executive Director, and to recognize the donors who have supported the legacy fundraiser.

This special initiative aims to rename the Johnston County Headquarters the E. Marie Watson Building in her honor and is seeking financial support to advance the renaming and raise unrestricted funds for urgent community needs across the three counties.

Pictured: E. Marie Watson family members along with Sharon Goodson of NCCAA and Ruby Bryant of Johnston-Lee-Harnett Community Action



FWV RECEIVES MISSION DEVELOPMENT GRANT

Last month, Franklin Vance Warren Opportunity, Inc. received a \$40,000 grant from the SECU Foundation in support of the Mission Development Program. The funds will be used to strengthen organizational capacity and sustainability in support of programs supporting Henderson County and the region. Franklin Vance Warren is one of 14 recipients of the grant.



OMEGA PSI PHI FRATERNITY RITES OF PASSAGE

The Omega C.H.A.M.P.S. mentoring program held its annual Rites Of Passage Program on Sunday, October 26, 2025 at the Omega Multipurpose Center. Four students were recognized as having finished the Omega C.H.A.M.P.S. program and are now off to High School...Omega C.H.A.M.P.S. is a program sponsored through the Iota Iota Chapter of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc. This program has been in operation for 31 years. Four young men, Michael Braswell, Steven Culer, Jr., Taj Moore and Logan Thomas received the Rites of Passage. The guest speaker was Raleigh Chief of Police Rico Boyce. He encouraged the young men to stay in school and to follow the Omega C.H.A.M.P.S. motto: Stand Tall, Walk Proud, Shine Your Brightest.

FSU Bests Shaw 31-13 In CIAA Matchup

Durham, N.C. — Fayetteville State University extended its winning streak with a commanding 31-13 victory over Shaw University on Saturday, October 25, 2025, in a CIAA conference showdown at Durham County Memorial Stadium.

The Broncos set the tone early with strong offensive execution and explosive plays through the air. Wide receiver Kristian Golden (6) made a spectacular first-half catch over Shaw defensive back Greg Pinckney, Jr. (34), energizing the Fayetteville State sideline. Fellow receiver William Johnson (85) added to the momentum, breaking free past linebacker Josiah Shingles (31) for a big gain that helped build an early lead.

Shaw's offense showed flashes of resilience behind running back Fabian Diggs, who fought for yardage against Fayetteville State's Caden Davis (7) in the first half. However, the Bears struggled to sustain drives against a disciplined Broncos defense. In the second half, Shaw



defensive back Keyshawn Monk (3) provided a defensive highlight, pressing out Fayetteville State's Bryce Council, but the Broncos' balanced attack continued to find success.

Shaw attempted to rally behind wide receivers Antrel Gibson (4)



and Jeffrey McDonald (9), who both managed to slip past Fayetteville State's secondary for key receptions against defensive back Reginald Troutman (0). Yet, despite the late offensive spark, the Bears couldn't overcome Fayetteville State's early dominance.

The 31-13 win strengthens Fayetteville State's position in the CIAA standings as the Broncos continue their pursuit of another conference title, while Shaw looks to regroup ahead of their next matchup.

Photos by Steve Worthy

Desi Honored at National Genealogy Conference

Lillington, NC – October 2025 – Desi L. Campbell, Executive Director of the Harnett County African American Heritage Center, was recently recognized for his outstanding contributions to African American history and genealogy during the 47th Annual African American Historical and Genealogical Society (AAHGS) National Conference held in Charleston, South Carolina. Campbell received the prestigious "On the Spot Award," honoring individuals who have provided devoted and invaluable service in advancing the mission and goals of AAHGS.

In addition to receiving this national honor, Campbell served as a featured presenter at the conference, leading a creative and informative

session on "Canva and Genealogy: Creating Family History Charts and Memorabilia." His presentation demonstrated how digital tools can be used to visually preserve family legacies and celebrate African American heritage.

Campbell was also invited to present at the Dudley Flood Center for Education's Color of Education Annual Conference, held in Raleigh, North Carolina. This year's theme, "Collective Action: People & The Arc of Justice," focused on connecting historical lessons to modern efforts for educational equity. The event is led by Dr. Dudley Flood, a pioneering educator who played a pivotal role in integrating North Carolina's schools following Brown v. Board of

Education.

Campbell's presentation, titled "A Slave Named Jenny," shared the powerful story of his 5th great-grandmother, Jenny McLean, born in Virginia to parents from the Igbo land of Nigeria and enslaved in Harnett County, North Carolina. Through Ancestry DNA, wills, deeds, and probate records, Campbell and other descendants have traced and reunited over ten generations of Jenny's lineage.

That same weekend, Campbell was also a guest presenter at the North Carolina State Library and Archives' 2025 Family History Fair, where he shared "A Slave Named Jenny" with participants from across the state.



Church

Churches and Politics: A New Voice For Our Oldest Institution

By Jheri Hardaway

Staff Writer

FIn America, the Black church has always played a major role in black communities, dating as far back as slavery. In the historic book Angier North Carolina from an African American Perspective, the authors explain, “Because of the bondage imposed on them by a people that only valued them for their free labor, places of worship were safe havens for their spirits and souls. They were places to meet and socialize, places to share a common bond with others that found themselves in a similar predicament, places to cry out and talk to God, pleading to be delivered from their bondage. For African Americans, churches were the one place they felt accepted and free to express and be themselves.”

Thus, churches, particularly the Black church, are essential for communicating the thoughts and ideas to move the community forward. For decades, the Johnson Amendment, a provision in the 1954 tax code, has been the bedrock for regulating how much churches and other non-profits can engage in political activity. Specifically, it prohibited all 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organizations (including our local churches, charities, and universities) from “directly or indirectly participating in, or intervening in, any political campaign on behalf of, or in opposition to, any candidate for public office.”

However, we’re observing a significant shift, not through a congressional repeal, but through a new, narrower interpretation of this law by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). This change is primarily a result of legal challenges from religious groups who argued the Johnson Amendment infringed upon their First Amendment rights to free speech and the free exercise of religion. In a federal court filing in July 2025, the IRS settled a case brought by a Christian media group and two churches. The outcome is likely to impact the flow of the Sun-

day service significantly. The IRS has stated it will no longer interpret the Johnson Amendment to prohibit a house of worship from discussing the "character or qualifications" of a political candidate with its congregation, through its usual channels, and during religious services. Essentially, the IRS agreed that such communications, when made "in good faith" on matters of collective concern to a congregation during a service, aren't considered "intervening" in a political campaign. Instead, they're viewed as a private matter, similar to a "family discussion." The practical upshot is that houses of worship now have the right to endorse or criticize candidates from the pulpit during religious services without risking their 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status.

This shift formalizes what has often been an unspoken practice. Historically, the IRS has been reluctant to enforce the Johnson Amendment against churches for statements made from the pulpit. Furthermore, in 2017, then-President Donald Trump signed an executive order instructing the Treasury Department to "exercise maximum enforcement discretion" toward religious organizations under the Johnson Amendment, effectively telling the IRS not to pursue penalties for political speech. The 2025 IRS court filing is seen as the formalization of this policy through legal interpretation.

This amendment has profound implications for the relationship between church and state, and it's something we as bible belt residents

should be paying attention to. Experts are predicting this could lead to a significant increase in political endorsements during worship services, further blurring the line between faith and partisan politics. Critics are concerned that allowing churches to act as partisan political entities while retaining their tax-exempt status could erode public trust and potentially create an avenue for political

operatives to funnel untaxed money through churches in exchange for endorsements. Others argue that the church, a cultural hub, has always been political. Pastor Larry Cameron of Westwood Church of God of Prophecy in Erwin, North Carolina, shared, “With all these different denominations, we need to prioritize sticking to what it takes to raise our children and put food on the table.

If we focus on those things when we come together, we can address those issues for the community.” As our community navigates these changes, it's crucial to consider the long-term impact on our religious institutions and the broader political landscape. The conversation around faith and politics is only going to get louder, and understanding these shifts is key for all of us.

Obituaries



BENNIE A. MACK, JR., was born on January 5, 1942, in Raleigh, NC, to the late Bennie A. Mack, Sr., and Janie Watkins Mack. He departed this earthly life peacefully on Saturday, October 11, 2025, surrounded by love.

He attended public schools at Crosby Garfield Elementary School and Ligon Junior-Senior High School in Raleigh. He later matriculated at St. Augustine's College, now St. Augustine's University, where he earned a B.A. Degree in Physical Education. After graduation, he married the love of his life, Paulette Poe on December 26, 1965. Bennie went on to serve his country and held the rank of Sergeant during the Vietnam War, after which he received an honorable discharge in 1975.

His professional career began as a Physical Education teacher and coach. A highlight of his career was when he coached in Bertie County against Herman Boone, who went on to coach the historic T. C. Williams High School football team in Alexandria, VA. which was portrayed in the movie Remember the Titans. The two of them developed a mutual friendship, and Coach Boone later served as best man in his wedding.

Eventually, Bennie spent most of his career as Programs Director at Central Prison with the NC Department of Adult Correction. He introduced several innovative programs to the prison population, including “Aid to Ethiopia” and a weightlifting competition, among others. The programs' goals included helping prisoners relate positively to their humanity, developing problem-solving skills, and setting goals. Known as a self-starter, Bennie was innovative in his approach and was not reluctant to do things a little differently. Later in life he attended Civella's Beauty College and worked part time as a licensed

cosmetologist in several salons in the Raleigh and Garner areas during the 80's.

Over time, his interest in coaching grew, leading him to establish the Capital City Comets Track and Field Club. He worked closely with other like-minded track and field enthusiasts and community leaders who wanted to see young people do their best in track and field. The team's focus was not just athletic but also on building character, confidence, and caring.

Outside of work, Bennie's life was rich with community involvement, volunteerism and service. He was a motivational speaker to families and youth and was an avid sports fan with a special love for football. He was also a talented artist and a devoted dog lover. Having joined the Kappa Epsilon Chapter of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Incorporated, in 1962, while attending St. Augustine's University, he later affiliated with the Iota Iota Chapter of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc., where he participated and supported activities that uplifted young people in the community, which was

his passion.

Having grown up in the Chavis Heights Community, where his first job was a lifeguard, Bennie was an advocate for John Chavis Memorial Park. He spearheaded the John Chavis Community Day for several years, and was awarded a Certificate of Appreciation from Raleigh Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources in 2014. Other organizations with which he was connected included the Saint Augustine's College Falcon Foundation, where he served as President of the Board of Directors. He also took pleasure in being an Epopo with Eppie Paulette, participating in the fellowship of National Epicureans, Inc.

Bennie was honored to receive the Order of the Long Leaf Pine, awarded by former Governor Hunt in 2000. He was inducted into the St Augustine's University Athletic Hall of Fame in 2005 and the Southeast Raleigh Hall of Fame in 2010.

He was predeceased by parents, Bennie A. Mack, Sr., and Janie W. Mack; siblings, Alfred G. Mack, Delores Ann M. Washington, David L. Mack; and niece Jennifer W. Grillo.

Left to cherish his memory are his beloved and devoted wife of 59 years, Paulette Poe Mack; his loving children, Courtney Mack Telfaire (Darius) of Garner, NC; Cameron Todd Mack (Sherine) of Harrisburg, NC; Bennie A. Mack III (“Trae”) and Paul Nelson of Raleigh, NC; his dear grandchildren, Trinity Mack, Trystyn Woods, MacKenzie Telfaire, Madison Telfaire, Chandler Telfaire, MacKenna Telfaire, Dawson Mack, Olivia Mack and Owen Mack; his sister, Carolyn M. Tyson; brother-in law, David Washington; sister-in-law Elveta Mack; and a host of other nieces, nephews, cousins, close family, and friends.

Bennie is remembered with respect, laughter and love. May his legacy continue to inspire all who knew him.

Obituaries



MARGARET GRAHAM RORIE OBITUARY

Margaret Ann Rorie, beloved mother, grandmother, and friend, was born on August 23, 1949, to Dorothy and James Graham. Margaret's vibrant spirit and remarkable journey touched countless lives until her departure on October 8, 2025.

Margret was a proud graduate of J. W Ligon Senior High School in Raleigh and earned her Bachelor's degree in Hospitality from North Carolina Central University (NCCU). She made history as the first African American model for Hudson Belk, breaking barriers and paving the way for future generations. Her passion for service continued as a stewardess for USAir and Piedmont Airlines, and later at United Airlines, where she was known for her warmth and dedication to her passengers.

Margaret cherished her role as a

mother to her son, Oronde McLean, daughter, Ashleigh Simkins, and was a doting grandmother to her grandson, Mason Omari. Family was her greatest joy, and she loved spending time with them, creating lasting memories filled with laughter and love.

She is survived by her siblings:

James Graham Jr., Brenda Graham, John Christopher Graham, and Jerome Graham. She was preceded in death by her sister, Wilhemenia Graham.

An accomplished pianist, Margaret played for the choir at Davie Street Presbyterian Church, filling the sanctuary with her beautiful music. Her favorite colors, maroon and turquoise, reflected her vibrant personality and zest for life. Known for her culinary skills, she made the best fried chicken that will be missed at family gatherings.

Margaret's legacy of love, resilience and creativity will live on in the hearts of all who knew her. She will be dearly missed, but forever remembered for he kindness, strength, and the beautiful impact she had on the world around her.

Rest in peace, dear Margaret. Your light will continue to shine in our hearts.

Practical Biblical Principles

BEING A GIANT KILLER

Read: 2 Samuel 21:15-22

By John L. Caldwell, Pastor

New Jerusalem Baptist Cathedral
Being a giant killer may appear to be a fable or story book theme in the twentieth century. Even when we speak of demons this is not twentieth century talk or language. Is this because we do not believe in giants or demons today? From a physical standpoint one may be right in not believing in either of these frightening images. No one sees giants or demons today. However, these images may not be real in a physical sense but are very real in the spiritual world.

In the Old and New Testament these two images are spoken of in a real sense because David physically fought of giants and even killed them. Jesus dispelled and destroyed demons as He encountered them in His ministry. These demons, however, were unseen, evil spirits living inside of people destroying their lives. And when they brought people filled with demons to Jesus, Jesus expelled the demon(s) from the lives of the people who suffered because of the demons and destroyed them.

Question: “Do you think there are demons and giants existing today whose objectives are to harass and destroy God’s children? If not, then one is spiritually blind and cannot see reality. There is a spiritual world which exists, and such a world is alive and functioning on the inside

of each of us right at this moment (Ephesians 6:12). The question is are you in control of these giants or demons inside of you? Or are the giants and demons in control? Or is it that you don’t know what’s going on in your life? These demons and giants are no misconception, they are real. The child of God must get use to this fact.

Fear, sickness, anger, unforgiveness, hate, loneliness, lust, the love of material things are but a few of the demons and giants we will encounter in our lives. The giant things in our lives overwhelm us and the demonic things in our lives irritate us. God’s children must learn to fight and conquer such demons and giants as they arise in our lives. One cannot overcome the giants or demons in one’s life without some help greater than us. Such help can only come from God.

How can one become a giant killer? One cannot kill what one cannot see. We are not wrestling with flesh and blood. All the above evil giants and demons are spiritual in nature. It boils down to being in spiritual warfare.

The giant that David slew was physical, yet he was also spiritual in nature in that he was filled with hate and fear towards the army of Israel. David’s sling shot took care of the physical part of the giant and David’s mindset took care of the spiritual part of the giant. David’s mind was not afraid of the over-sized giant in

any way. David knew he could kill the giant. How did David gain such confidence? How do we get such confidence?

Paul gives us the answer on how to kill the giants in our lives and how to overcome the demons that are harassing us setting us up to be destroyed.

“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.” This simply means to trust in God with all your heart and mind and never doubt Him. For some this may be easier said than done. How does one become strong in the Lord? One becomes strong in the Lord by putting on the whole armor of God.

In a practical sense, it is only when we are committed to being truthful in our lives, it is only when we commit ourselves to being and doing righteous things, it is only when we seek to bring peace into our lives and the lives of others, it is only when we believe and trust in Christ will we be able to quench the darts of the wicked one. It is only when we become saved and believe in the word of God, it is only when we are in constant prayer will we be qualified to receive and activate God’s strength in our lives, wherein, we truly become giant and demon killers in our lives. The truth is, it will be Christ who will be doing the slaying and destroying the giants and demons in our lives. Our responsibility is to just put on God’s armor and pray. This way we will be able to become giant and demon killers.



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With Less God—*CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7*

of mutual knowledge, responsibility, and support like no other influence. Seven out of ten weekly church attenders told Pew they consider “work to help the needy” an “essential part” of their faith. Most of them put their money and time where their mouth is: 65 percent of weekly church attenders were found to have donated either volunteer hours or money or goods to the poor within the previous week.

Philanthropic studies show that people with a religious affiliation give away several times as much every year as other Americans. Research by the Lilly School at Indiana University found Americans with any religious affiliation made average annual charitable donations of \$1,590, versus \$695 for those with no religious affiliation. Another report using data from the Panel Study for Income Dynamics juxtaposed

Americans who do not attend religious services with those who attend worship at least twice a month, and made fine-tunings to compare demographic apples to apples. The results: \$2,935 of annual charitable giving for the church attenders, versus \$704 for the non-attenders.

In addition to giving larger amounts, the religious give more often—making gifts about half again as frequently.



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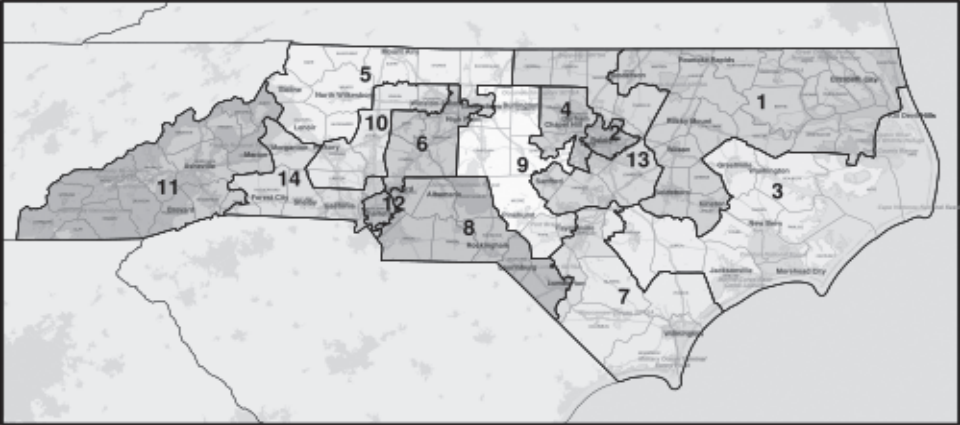
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Editorials

Editorial Policy

Unsigned editorials in this space are the opinion of the newspaper. All other opinion pieces, including those from regular columnists, are the opinion of the writers themselves. The Carolinian strives to provide provocative commentary that is likely to spur thoughtful debate, regardless of whether we agree with it.

Opinion: The New Congressional Map Silences a Region With a Long Fight for Civil Rights



By State Rep. Rodney D. Pierce, District 27

North Carolina’s First Congressional District has long been at the center of the Black political experience in this state. Encompassing much of eastern North Carolina, it includes counties where Black residents fought for the right to vote, to work with dignity, and to be represented. Now, that legacy is once again under threat.

The General Assembly aims to redraw the district in a way that would significantly reshape its boundaries to include counties that have very different political and demographic makeups. This would not only change who represents the region – it will dilute the voting strength of Black North Carolinians who have fought for generations to have a seat at the table.

As the state representative for House District 27 – which includes Halifax, Northampton, and Warren counties – I know how deep this struggle runs. Halifax and Northampton were among the 40 NC counties that were subject to federal “preclearance” under Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act. Halifax was the only county in the state that, because of its record of discrimination, was barred from relief from federal literacy imperatives (Alston v. Butts, 1964).

These discriminatory laws and practices kept citizens from voting, holding office, and controlling their own destinies. They turned to the courts – and won.

In Johnson v. Halifax County (1984) and Ellis v. Vance County (1987), lawsuits filed under Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act forced changes in election methods that finally allowed Black candidates to be elected to county commissions. Lassiter v. Northampton County Board of Elections (1959) and Bazemore v. Bertie County Board of Elections (1961) challenged the use of literacy tests to disenfranchise Black voters. Other lawsuits across the region – including NAACP v. Roanoke Rapids, Hines v. Mayor and Town Council of Ahoskie, and Wilkins v. Washington County Commissioners – successfully challenged similar discriminatory practices.

This region was also at the heart of Black political power during Reconstruction. Known as the “Black Second,” the 1st District and its predecessor elected some of the first Black members of Congress: John Hyman of Warren County, James O’Hara of Halifax County, Henry Cheatham of Vance County, and George Henry White – the last Black member of Congress from the South until 1928.

After nearly a century without Black representation, North Carolina elected Eva Clayton to Congress in 1992. She was followed by Frank Balfance, G.K. Butterfield, and now Don Davis.

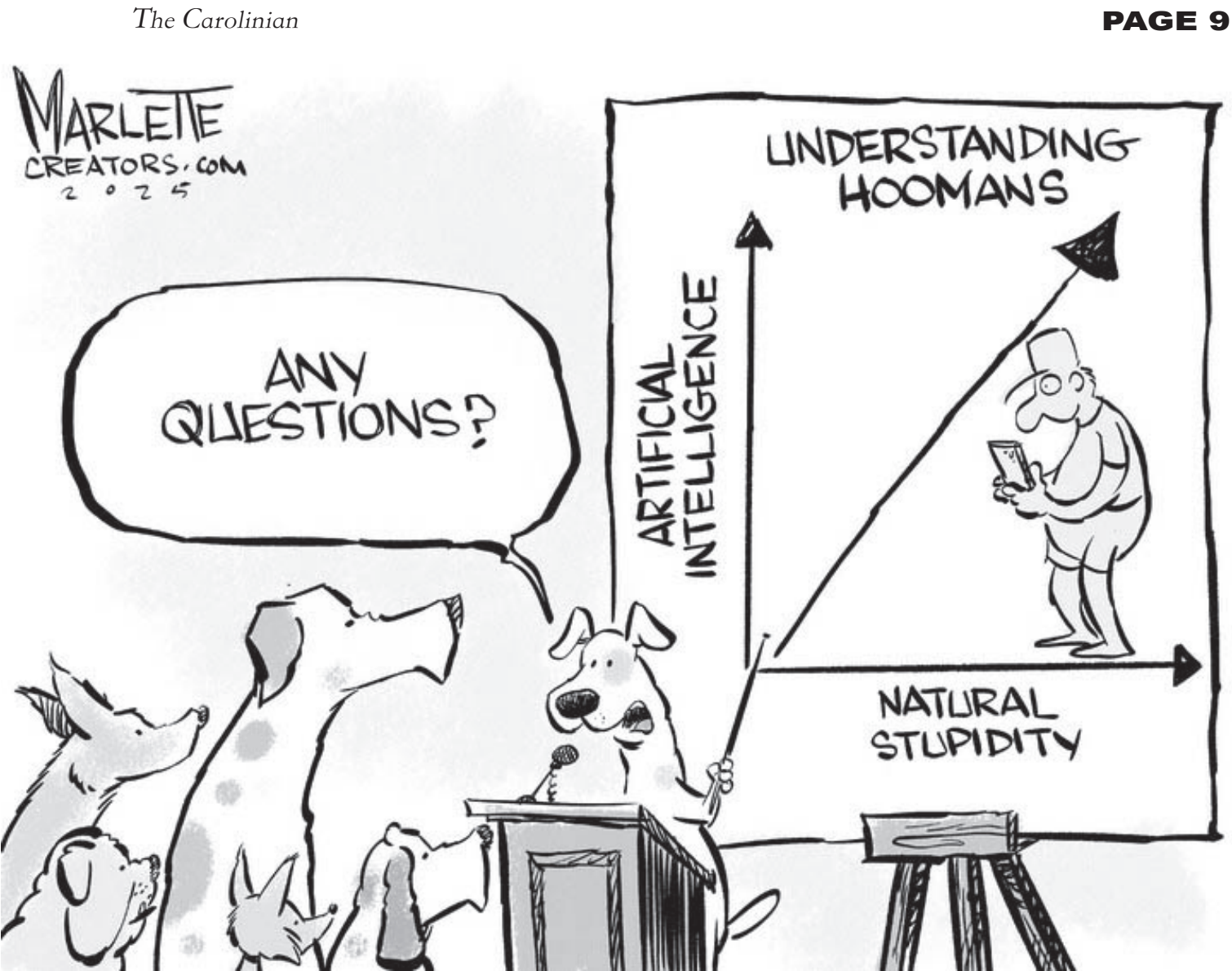
The proposed map shifts the district to include counties represented by two Republican state senators – Norman Sanderson and Bobby Hanig, the latter of whom has already announced his candidacy. In 1961, the U.S. Civil Rights Commission found that some of the counties they represent – Bertie, Camden, Currituck, Gates, Halifax, Northampton, and Warren – had the most discriminatory literacy tests in the state.

This is not a race-neutral process. Of the state’s eight majority Black counties, all lie in the 1st District. These changes fracture Black communities of interest and weaken the ability of Black voters to elect candidates of their choice. And they come at a time when the U.S. Supreme Court is set to hear Louisiana v. Callais, a case that could further erode Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act. Meanwhile, I am the lead plaintiff in Pierce v. North Carolina State Board of Elections, a federal case now before the Fourth Circuit that challenges the state’s 2023 legislative maps on similar grounds.

This is not just about politics – it’s about power, and who gets to keep it. But voting rights are only part of the story. In eastern North Carolina, the Black struggle has always touched every part of life: education (U.S. v. Scotland Neck City Board of Education), labor (Johnson v. Branch, Moody v. Albemarle Paper Company, Sledge v. J.P. Stevens), public accommodation (Blow v. North Carolina, Keys v. Carolina Coach), and property rights (Gary v. Halifax County). Each of these cases reflects the long arc of a fight – not just for civil rights, but for full citizenship.

We are not separate from that history – we are living in it. Redrawing this district to weaken Black voting strength is a betrayal of everything this region has stood for. There are currently only three Black members of Congress from North Carolina. We risk losing the only one who represents this region, and the only Black man in the delegation. That’s not coincidence – it’s design. Rodney D. Pierce State Representative, NC House District 27 Rodney D. Pierce represents Halifax, Northampton, and Warren counties in the North Carolina House of Representatives. He is a public school history teacher and a lifelong resident of northeastern North Carolina.

Rodney D. Pierce State Representative, NC House District 27 Rodney D. Pierce represents Halifax, Northampton, and Warren counties in the North Carolina House of Representatives. He is a public school history teacher and a lifelong resident of northeastern North Carolina.



Other Viewpoints

YOU DECIDE: CAN WE PREDICT THE ECONOMY?

As I have mentioned in previous columns, I’ve made over 3,000 presentations in my career as an economist. Most of them occurred during my 43-year career at NC State, but as a retiree, I am still asked to speak, and I try to accommodate the requests. Talking economics is one of my favorite activities!

I have a standard format for my presentations. I begin with a joke, usually one that involves economists. I like to put people in a jovial mood, and I also like to demonstrate that economists and economics – which many think are both dull – can be funny.

I then open the formal presentation by discussing the current economy, focusing on the situation for businesses, the job market, and, of course, inflation and interest rates. I next move to economic policy and review proposals and debates between the President and Congress, followed by a discussion of the Federal Reserve (the “Fed”).

After some comments about the North Carolina economy and its comparison to the national economy, I move to what audiences really want to hear about – forecasts for the future. Audiences want to know where inflation is headed, how good or bad the job market will be, what jobs will be helped and what jobs will be hurt by AI (artificial intelligence), whether interest rates will rise or fall, and, of course, what will happen to the stock market. My somewhat humorous, but true, forecast for the stock market is that it will fluctuate.”

Talking about the past and current economy because we have the numbers. Making forecasts is another matter because we have to make educated guesses about the unknown.”

Economists make economic forecasts based on their knowledge of the interactions in the economy. Economists formalize these interactions by developing “models” of the economy. An economic model is a mathematical representation of the interactions of the economy. Once developed, users input data and then let the model predict the economic results.”

For example, recently the Fed lowered its key interest rate. Many expect this move will cause other interest rates to also fall, and therefore will increase economic activities like purchasing homes, vehicles and other big-ticket items where borrowing is needed. Users of economic models can input the information on the size of the Fed’s interest rate drop into the model and then let it calculate the impacts on various economic outcomes, such as how much home building and homebuying are expected to increase.”

Hence, it appears economists have a straightforward way of making accurate predictions. Why, then, is the economics profession often wrong with its forecasts? Indeed, most surveys show economists are correct in their predictions only 20% to 30% of the time. Economics as a discipline has been around 250 years. Shouldn’t that be enough time to have worked out the kinks and made forecasts more reliable?”

Here’s my answer. Economics is a “social science” and not a “physical science.” Physical sciences like physics, chemistry and geology are based on the non-living natural world. Relationships and reactions are specific and long-lasting; hence, predictions are virtually certain.

In contrast, economics is a social science, along with sociology, psychology, and anthropology. These disciplines study behavior in the living human world. Hence, relationships are subject to change as a result of human decisions. For example, how people who are considering borrowing react to lower interest rates can vary from year to year, and it may take economists some time to discover the change and use it in their forecasts.

Here’s a good recent example. After the pandemic, there was a surge in the inflation rate. The year-over-year inflation rate rose to over 9% – the highest in forty years. The consensus view among economists and policymakers had been that inflation would remain moderate while the high unemployment rate, which jumped during the pandemic, would be the problem. But the exact opposite happened, with prices rapidly rising while the jobless rate plunged.

The mistake was the economic models were based on the reactions of workers, consumers and businesses that existed prior to the pandemic. However, the pandemic changed many attitudes about the economy, particularly in the labor market. Many older workers delayed returning to working because they were still fearful of being exposed to COVID. But more important were the changes in work attitudes among young workers. Equipped with funds to pay their bills made available from the numerous government programs created during COVID, such as stimulus checks, the “great resignation” occurred during and immediately after COVID. Annual job quits doubled between 2020 and 2022. With fewer workers, many companies couldn’t produce enough to keep up with the post-COVID spending, so prices jumped.

My advice is to consider many economic forecasts and see if there is some degree of consistency. However, be particularly cautious of forecasts following significant changes in the economy. Today’s imposition of tariffs is one of those potential “game-changing” situations, as is the application of AI in the economy. Both will change forecasts.

Should you listen to economists’ forecasts? I think you should, but with some caution and skepticism. But you decide.

Mike Walden is a William Neal Reynolds Distinguished Professor Emeritus at North Carolina State University



THE ZACCHAEUS TREE

Have you ever read the story in the Bible of Zacchaeus? It may be a good time to remind yourself of him. Luke 19:3–4.

We are living in times when we don’t know what’s going to happen today, much less tomorrow. It’s human to fear the unknown, yet spiritually it’s clear to us that we never really know much of anything, do we? I remember being able to count on the weather. I could prepare for my seasonal allergies in fall and spring. Now I consult my phone every morning to prepare for the temperature. I used to be able to put away jackets and coats in spring, and at the end of summer store away warm clothes. Not anymore. Now I leave out clothes for whatever temperature shows up.

Zacchaeus was a man who thought he would be able to see Jesus passing by, so he joined the crowd. However, he forgot one thing. Zacchaeus was short. I suspect he didn’t think of himself that way, probably because he had lived with his shortness for so long and usually found himself in situations where it didn’t matter. But this time there were many people who wanted to do the same thing he did, and the road was crowded with people taller than he was.

I love that Zacchaeus didn’t despair. He looked around, saw a sycamore fig tree beside the road, and climbed it. A friend once expanded this story for me in an inspirational message. Sycamore trees can live for hundreds of years. Here’s how strategic God is. Long before Zacchaeus was born, God said, “I have to plant a tree because in a few hundred years, a crooked tax collector who needs my mercy will come here. This tree will be necessary for him to meet my Son who will bring him into his purpose.” That tree didn’t appear overnight. Generations before, God was already thinking about Zacchaeus. It was from that vantage point that salvation came to him.

The time we are living in didn’t just happen. It has been growing since the beginning of time. As we live, there have always been people in our way. This time is not more difficult or impossible to conquer than past times.

A friend texted me last night. Every night when she can’t sleep, she sends reels about the history of Africa and Black America. She is white and is learning truths that expose the lies we’ve been told. It’s making her angry and despairing. Last night, her question was, “Why are we having to go through this? Why are we here?”

My answer was this. This country is backwards as hell. It’s the antithesis of what it was intended to be and what it can be. Every now and then, I see a glimpse of what it could be, and I walk toward it. I’m not totally sure why we are here, but I think it’s like a university. We’re here to learn. I believe one day we’ll live in the utopia of our imaginations, but to do that, we have to learn what utopia is and what it is not.

Unfortunately, we keep messing up because we listen to the inhumane, people like Trump who want to be God and think God got it wrong, believing they can do better. This country was founded with the right words but wrong behavior. The people who were here had a welcoming spirit, but the people who came had a conquering, controlling spirit. That battle is still being fought.

We go to church, but we don’t get the message. We don’t understand that we are supposed to treat every human being the way we want to be treated. Yesterday, a possibly homeless person came to our Sunday school class. Eventually, he went to sleep and even snored a bit. Afterwards, he apologized and asked why I didn’t wake him up. I said, “I believe we should treat others the way we want to be treated. If I had gone to sleep, I wouldn’t have wanted you to wake me up.” He looked at me for a long time and finally said, “I get it.”

I think the way we climb the sycamore tree is by fighting this insanity through doing good. We should stop judging others and rejecting them for doing things we think are terrible, and instead work on the things in ourselves that need to change.

There are blessings coming that God has been working on for generations. We don’t have to worry about the right doors opening, the right people showing up, or how we’ll overcome heartbreak. Zacchaeus made the decision to run to the tree and climb it. God has already lined up what we need for our purpose and has been working on what seems impossible to us.

Zacchaeus couldn’t have planted that tree. God already had it lined up. The hand of God is moving this country toward its purpose. We must see and endure the wrong, but if we stay faithful and don’t let fear or anger cause us to adapt their ways, we will see daily the hand of God working in our favor, urging us toward our own purpose.

I’m not God, and I don’t know if this is it, but I do know it feels and sounds right to me. Thank you, Maddie, for inspiring and sharing this in your own way. You are my co-author.



Classifieds

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
COUNTY OF HORRY
IN THE COURT OF COMMON
PLEAS FOR THE FIFTEENTH
JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
CASE#2025CP2200959
Jerome Bailey, Plaintiff v.
Alice Mae Christian, Defendant.
SUMMONS
TO THE DEFENDANTS ABOVE
NAMED:

YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED
and required to answer the
Complaint in this action, a copy
of which is herewith served upon
you, and to serve a copy of your
Answer to the said Complaint on the
subscriber at 11054 Highway
707, Murrells Inlet, South Carolina
29576 within thirty (30) days after
the service hereof, exclusive of the
day of such service; and, if you fail
to appear and defend by filing an
Answer to the Complaint within the
time aforesaid, judgment by default
will be rendered against you for the
relief demanded in the Complaint.

COMPLAINT
(Jury Trial Demanded)
Comes Now the Plaintiff,
complaining of the Defendant, and
alleging as follows;

- JURISDICTION
- The Plaintiff, Jerome Bailey, (hereinafter "Plaintiff"), is a citizen and resident of Horry County, South Carolina.
 - Upon information and belief, the Defendant, Alice Mae Christian, (hereinafter, "Defendant") is a citizen and resident of Wake County, North Carolina.
 - The accident at issue in this Complaint occurred in Horry County, South Carolina.
 - Therefore, jurisdiction is proper in Horry County, South Carolina. FOR A FIRST CAUSE OF ACTION (Negligence, Gross Negligence, Negligence Per Se)
 - The Plaintiff realleges all allegations contained herein as if set forth verbatim.
 - That on or about January 14, 2024, Defendant was operating a 2014 model Ford sedan, in Horry County, South Carolina, and struck pedestrain Plaintiff with her vehicle.
 - That Defendant left the scene of the accident after striking Plaintiff.
 - Upon information and belief, Defendant was operating a Ford sedan bearing vehicle identification number (VIN): 1FADP3K25EL285593.
 - As a result of the accident, Plaintiff suffered severe injuries, causing great bodily harm. The actions of Defendant, were negligent, grossly negligent, willful, wanton, and reckless in operating her vehicle in such a manner as to cause Plaintiff harm in one or more of the following particulars to wit:
 - In failing to keep a proper lookout; and/or
 - In failing to keep her vehicle under proper control; and/or
 - In driving too fast for conditions; and/or
 - In operating a vehicle under distraction; and/or
 - In failing to yield right of way; and/or
 - In failing to obey traffic laws and/or signs; and/or
 - In failing to keep a safe distance from Plaintiff; and/or
 - In failing to stay at an accident scene and render aid to Plaintiff; and/or
 - In negligently and carelessly operating Defendant's vehicle at a rate of speed which was improper under the circumstances and conditions then and there existing; and/or
 - In operating Defendant's vehicle in a negligent, grossly negligent, negligent per se, careless, reckless, willful, wanton, and unlawful manner so as to create a dangerous situation; and/or
 - In failing to use that degree of care and caution a reasonably prudent person would exercise under the conditions then and there existing. One or more of which were the direct and proximate cause of injuries and damages sustained by Plaintiff, and all of which were in violation of the statutory and common laws of the State of South

- Carolina.
- That, as a direct and proximate result of the negligence, gross negligence, negligence per se, carelessness, recklessness, willfulness, and wantonness of Defendant, as is set forth more fully above, Plaintiff was injured, has endured pain and suffering, has suffered mentally and emotionally, and has incurred, and will incur, various medical expenses, has incurred property damage, and has otherwise been damaged and injured.
 - That, as a direct and proximate result of the negligence, gross negligence, negligence per se, carelessness, recklessness, willfulness and wantonness of the Defendant, as is set forth more fully above, Plaintiff was jerked, thrown, and slammed to the ground, and, as a result of Defendant's actions, sustained serious and painful personal injuries and property damage.
 - That as a direct and proximate result of the negligence, gross negligence, negligence per se, carelessness, recklessness, willfulness, and wantonness of Defendant, as is set forth more fully above, Plaintiff has been damaged and injured in the following respects:
 - Plaintiff has been required to expend a significant amount of money for his medical care, treatment, and attendant services;
 - Upon information and belief, the nature of Plaintiff's injuries will require Plaintiff to expend a significant amount of money for her medical care, treatment, and attendant services in the future;
 - The pain of Plaintiff's injuries has resulted in Plaintiff's loss of enjoyment of life and change in Plaintiff's personality, all to permanent detriment to Plaintiff's health and physical well-being; and
 - Upon information and belief, Plaintiff was required to expend significant amounts of money to replace and repair property damage caused in the collision.
 - That Defendant's acts and omissions, as is set forth more fully above, show willful misconduct, malice, wantonness, and an entire want of care, raising a presumption of Defendant's conscious indifference to the consequences of such acts and omissions.
 - That, because of the Defendant's acts and omissions and the proximate harm resulting to Plaintiff, Plaintiff should be awarded punitive damages in an amount to be determined by the trier of fact in order to punish and penalize Defendant and to deter Defendant and others from similar behavior.
 - That, upon information and belief, Plaintiff is entitled to judgment against Defendant for actual, compensatory, exemplary, and punitive damages for Plaintiff's personal injuries and property damages set forth herein in an amount that is fair, just, and reasonable under the circumstances, plus whatever costs, interest, and attorney fees that Plaintiff may be entitled to be determined by a jury.
- WHEREFORE, Plaintiff prays for judgment against Defendant for an amount to be ascertained by the jury at the trial of this action as to all damages (punitive and actual), for the costs and disbursements of this action, both pre-judgment and post-judgment interest, and for such other and further relief, in law or in equity, in favor of Plaintiff as this Court may deem just and proper.
- MORRIS LAW, LLC
Jeffrey D. Morris: SC Bar No.: 102081
Randerson I. Stephens, Jr.: SC Bar No.: 101868
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rs@jeffmorrislawfirm.com
Murrells Inlet, South Carolina
FILED: September 5, 2025
10/16, 10/23, and 10/30/2025

DURHAM COUNTY

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
COUNTY OF DURHAM
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 21st day of October, 2025, as Executor of the Estate of NELLIE CATHERINE HUNT, also known as NELLIE CATHERINE RILEY HUNT, Deceased, does hereby notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against said Estate to exhibit them to the undersigned on or before January 31st, 2026 or this Notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to said Estate will please make immediate payment to the undersigned.
This, the 30th day of October, 2025.
Andrea Gayle Hunt Tart, Executor
ESTATE OF NELLIE CATHERINE HUNT AKA NELLIE CATHERINE RILEY HUNT
c/o Jennifer Dalman, Attorney
Walker Lambe, PLLC
240 Leigh Farm Road, Suite 100
Durham, North Carolina 27707
10/30, 11/6, 11/13, and 11/20/2025
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
In the General Court of Justice,
Superior Court Division
Before the Clerk
File Number 25E001216-310
THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 23rd day of October 2025, as ADMINISTRATOR of the Estate of LAURA FRANCES AIRHEART TERRY, Deceased, of Durham County, North Carolina, does hereby notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against said Estate to exhibit them to the undersigned on or before the 30th day of January, 2026 or this Notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to said Estate will please make immediate payment to the undersigned.
This, the 30th day of October 2025.
Frances Patricia Terry Byrd, Administrator, c/o Richard F. Prentis, Jr., 4 Consultant Pl., Durham, NC 27707
10/30, 11/6, 11/13, and 11/20/2025
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
FILE NUMBER 25E001340-310
All persons, firms, and corporations having claims against the Estate of JAMES MONROE BECK, deceased, of Durham County, North Carolina, are notified to present the same to the undersigned on or before February 1, 2026, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to the estate are requested to make immediate payment.
This the October 27, 2025.
James Monroe Beck, Jr. Administrator
902 Johnston Court
Mebane, NC 27302
10/30, 11/6, 11/13, and 11/20/2025
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
In the General Court of Justice,
Superior Court Division
Before the Clerk
File Number 25E001145-310
THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 22nd day of October 2025, as ADMINISTRATOR CTA of the Estate of LOUIS LIVERMORE SAWYER, Deceased, of Durham County, North Carolina, does hereby notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against said Estate to exhibit them to the undersigned on or before the 30th day of January, 2026 or this Notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to said Estate will please make immediate payment to the undersigned.
This, the 30th day of October 2025.
Lillian Livermore, Administrator CTA
107 S. Edenborough Street
Red Springs, NC 28377
10/30, 11/6, 11/13, and 11/20/2025
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
Having qualified as Personal Representative of the Estate of ESTHER LOUISE MOUSSETTE (25E001101-310), late of Durham County, North Carolina, the undersigned does hereby notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against the estate of said decedent to exhibit them to the undersigned at PO Box 40, Hampstead, NC 28443 on or before January 27, 2026 or this notice will

be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons, firms and corporations indebted to the said estate will please make immediate payment to the undersigned.
This the 23rd day of October, 2025.
Diana Jayne Luck, Personal Representative
c/o Shingleton Law, PLLC
PO Box 40
Hampstead, NC 28443
10/23, 10/30, 11/6, and 11/13/2025
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
In the General Court of Justice,
Superior Court Division
Before the Clerk
File Number 25E000802-310
THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 16th day of June 2025, as ADMINISTRATOR of the Estate of PEARL ELOZ MCGILL, Deceased, of Durham County, North Carolina, does hereby notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against said Estate to exhibit them to the undersigned on or before the 24th day of January, 2026 or this Notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to said Estate will please make immediate payment to the undersigned.
This, the 23rd day of October 2025.
Christopher Wayne McGill
Administrator
1110 Sweet Gale Drive
Durham, NC 27704
10/23, 10/30, 11/6, and 11/13/2025
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
In the General Court of Justice,
Superior Court Division
Before the Clerk
File Number 25E001284-310
THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 7th day of October 2025, as EXECUTOR of the Estate of RICHARD ALAN YENOFF, Deceased, of Durham County, North Carolina, does hereby notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against said Estate to exhibit them to the undersigned on or before the 24th day of January, 2026 or this Notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to said Estate will please make immediate payment to the undersigned.
This, the 23rd day of October 2025.
Elliot Irwin Klayman, Executor
8148 Avenida Navidad, #41
San Diego, CA 92122
10/23, 10/30, 11/6, and 11/13/2025
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
The undersigned, Sharon Duncan Tilley, having duly qualified as Executrix of the Estate of DONALD EDWARD TILLEY, deceased, late of Durham County, North Carolina, hereby notifies all persons, firms and corporations having claims against the Estate to present them to the undersigned in care of Ronald G. Coulter, Attorney for the Estate, 3400 Croasdaile Dr., Ste 205, Durham, NC 27705, on or before January 15, 2026 or it will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons and legal entities indebted to the Estate will please make immediate payment.
This the 16th day of October, 2025.
Sharon Duncan Tilley, Executrix
C/O Ronald G. Coulter, Attorney
3400 Croasdaile Drive Ste 205
Durham, NC 27705
1-919-246-5775
10/16, 10/23, 10/30, and 11/6/2025
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
In the General Court of Justice,
Superior Court Division
Before the Clerk
File Number 24E002494-310
THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 20th day of November 2024, as ADMINISTRATRIX of the Estate of ROBERT LONG JR., Deceased, of Durham County, North Carolina, does hereby notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against said Estate to exhibit them to the undersigned on or before the 17th day of January, 2026 or this Notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to said Estate will please make immediate payment to the undersigned.
This, the 16th day of October 2025.
Vicki Long, Administratrix
608 Orindo Dr.
Durham, NC 27713
10/16, 10/23, 10/30, and 11/6/2025
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 6th day of October, 2025, as Administrator of the Estate

of DICK KENT WALT, Deceased, of Durham County, North Carolina, does hereby notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against said Estate to exhibit them to the undersigned on or before January 17th, 2026 or this Notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to said Estate will please make immediate payment to the undersigned.
This, the 16th of October, 2025.
SARAH M. COX
ADMINISTRATOR
ESTATE OF DICK KENT WALT
c/o Richard G. Long III, Attorney
Walker Lambe, PLLC
Post Office Box 51549
Durham, North Carolina 27717
10/16, 10/23, 10/30, and 11/6/2025
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 21st day of August, 2024, as Ancillary Executor of the Estate of DUANE EDWARD PARRISH, Deceased, does hereby notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against said Estate to exhibit them to the undersigned on or before the 17th day of January, 2026 or this Notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to said Estate will please make immediate payment to the undersigned.
This, the 16th of October, 2025.
April P. Daley
Ancillary Executor
ESTATE OF DUANE EDWARD PARRISH
c/o Richard G. Long III, Attorney
Walker Lambe, PLLC
Post Office Box 51549
Durham, North Carolina 27717
10/16, 10/23, 10/30, and 11/6/2025
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
In the General Court of Justice,
Superior Court Division
Before the Clerk
File Number 25E003522-3 10
THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 17th day of September 2025, as EXECUTOR of the Estate of SUSAN JO ALBERTSON, Deceased, of Durham County, North Carolina, does hereby notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against said Estate to exhibit them to the undersigned on or before the 9th day of January, 2026 or this Notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to said Estate will please make immediate payment to the undersigned.
This, the 9th day of October 2025.
William A. Albertson, Executor
1108 Steinbeck Drive
Durham, NC 27703
10/9, 10/16, 10/23, and 10/30/2025
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
Estate of Marie Riggsbee Godwin
FILE NO. 25E001169-310
THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 1st day of October, 2025, as Co-Executors of the Estate of MARIE RIGGSBEE GODWIN, Deceased, do hereby notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against said Estate to exhibit them to the undersigned on or before January 10th, 2026 or this Notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to said Estate will please make immediate payment to the undersigned.
This, the 9th day of October, 2025.
Gus Travis Godwin, III, Co-Executor
Kevin Thomas Godwin, Co-Executor
ESTATE OF MARIE RIGGSBEE GODWIN
c/o E. Jack Walker, Jr., Attorney
Walker Lambe, PLLC
PO Box 51549
Durham, North Carolina 27717
10/9, 10/16, 10/23, and 10/30/2025
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
In the General Court of Justice,
Superior Court Division
Before the Clerk
File Number 25E000889-310
THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 2nd day of July 2025, as EXECUTOR of the Estate of SHARON ANNE SKOLNICKI, Deceased, of Durham County, North Carolina, does hereby notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against said Estate to exhibit them to the undersigned on or before the 9th day of January, 2026 or this Notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to said Estate will please make immediate payment to the undersigned.

This, the 9th day of October 2025.
Beth A. Weese, Executor
6719 Hopewell Avenue
Springfield, VA 22151
10/9, 10/16, 10/23, and 10/30/2025
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
In the General Court of Justice,
Superior Court Division
Before the Clerk
File Number 25E001268-310
THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 2nd day of October 2025, as ADMINISTRATOR of the Estate of GERTRUDE ALLEN RITCHIE, Deceased, of Durham County, North Carolina, does hereby notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against said Estate to exhibit them to the undersigned on or before the 9th day of January, 2026 or this Notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to said Estate will please make immediate payment to the undersigned.
This, the 9th day of October 2025.
Lloyd W. Allen, Jr., Administrator
610 Ashe Ave
Cary, NC 27511
10/9, 10/16, 10/23, and 10/30/2025
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
In the General Court of Justice,
Superior Court Division
Before the Clerk
File Number 25E001270-310
THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 2nd day of October 2025, as ADMINISTRATOR of the Estate of TOMMY CHARLES EDWARDS, Deceased, of Durham County, North Carolina, does hereby notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against said Estate to exhibit them to the undersigned on or before the 9th day of January, 2026 or this Notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to said Estate will please make immediate payment to the undersigned.
This, the 9th day of October 2025.
Jane P Edwards, Administrator
1733 Wynne Rd.
Durham, NC 27713
10/9, 10/16, 10/23, and 10/30/2025
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
The undersigned having qualified as Administrator of the Estate of NAOMI SCHERRYE WILLIAMS, deceased, late of Durham County, North Carolina, this is to notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against the estate to present such claims to the undersigned at 2002 Knight Crossing Road, Durham, NC 27703 on or before the 7th day of January, 2026 or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to said Estate, please make immediate payment.
This the 9th day of October, 2025.
Kiira Lyons, Administratrix
2002 Knight Crossing Road
Durham, NC 27703
(919) 406-4736
Dates of Publication:
October 9, 16, 23, 30, 2025
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
File Number 25E000410-310
THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 2nd day of April, 2025, as Administrator of the ESTATE OF JASON STIRLING GARRARD, Deceased, do hereby notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against said Estate to exhibit them to the undersigned on or before January 10th, 2026 or this Notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to said Estate will please make immediate payment to the undersigned.
This, the 9th day of October, 2025.
Lorraine G. Ragsdale, Administrator
ESTATE OF JASON STIRLING GARRARD
c/o Richard G. Long, III
Walker Lambe, PLLC
PO Box 51549
Durham, North Carolina 27717
10/9, 10/16, 10/23, and 10/30/2025
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 1st day of October, 2025, as Executor of the Estate of FRANCES C. PATTERSON, also known as FRANCES RUBYLEE PATTERSON, Deceased, does hereby notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against said Estate to exhibit them to the undersigned on or before January 10th, 2026 or this Notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All

Classifieds

DURHAM COUNTY

persons indebted to said Estate will please make immediate payment to the undersigned.

This, the 9th day of October, 2025.
Hal E. Patterson, Executor
Estate of Frances C. Patterson Aka
Frances Rubylee Patterson
c/o Jennifer Dalman, Attorney
Walker Lambe, PLLC
240 Leigh Farm Road, Suite 100
Durham, North Carolina 27707
10/9, 10/16, 10/23, and 10/30/2025

WAKE COUNTY

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
WAKE COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
In the General Court of Justice,
Superior Court Division
Before the Clerk
File Number 25E003430-910
THE UNDERSIGNED, having
qualified on the 12th day of
September 2025, as EXECUTOR of
the Estate of MICHAEL WILLIAM
FAIRLEY, Deceased, of Wake
County, North Carolina, does
hereby notify all persons, firms
and corporations having claims
against said Estate to exhibit them
to the undersigned on or before
the 30th day of January, 2026
or this Notice will be pleaded in
bar of their recovery. All persons
indebted to said Estate will please
make immediate payment to the
undersigned.

This, the 30th day of October
2025.
Lashawn McLamb, Executer
2000 Gilliam Lane
Raleigh, NC 27610
10/30, 11/6, 11/13, and 11/20/2025
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
WAKE COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
In the General Court of Justice,
Superior Court Division
Before the Clerk
File Number 25E003893-910
THE UNDERSIGNED, having
qualified on the 6th day of October
2025, as ADMINISTRATOR of the
Estate of ALICE HART BALL A/K/A
ALICE HART PARTIN-BALL A/K/A
ALICE PARTIN BALL, Deceased, of
Wake County, North Carolina, does
hereby notify all persons, firms
and corporations having claims
against said Estate to exhibit them
to the undersigned on or before

the 24th day of January, 2026
or this Notice will be pleaded in
bar of their recovery. All persons
indebted to said Estate will please
make immediate payment to the
undersigned.

This, the 23rd day of October
2025.
Jammy Angela Ball, Administrator
2304 Dorety Place
Raleigh, NC 27604
10/23, 10/30, 11/6, and 11/13/2025
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
WAKE COUNTY

**NOTICE OF SERVICE OF
PROCESS BY PUBLICATION**
In the General Court of Justice,
District Court Division
File No. 25CV022844-910
CRYSTAL ANN BONE & JOSHUA
BROSSEAU, Plaintiffs VS TONY
BROWNE, Defendant
TO DEFENDANT: TAKE NOTICE
that a pleading seeking relief
against you has been filed in the
above-entitled action, by the
Plaintiff herein, the nature which
is as follows: COMPLAINT FOR
CHILD CUSTODY.

You are required by law to
appear and make defense to such
pleading no later than 30 days after
the first publication of this notice.
If you fail to do so the Plaintiff will
seek the relief sought herein, and
a Judgment for Child Custody may
be entered.

This, the 23rd day of October,
2025.
Crystal Ann Bone & Joshua
Brosseau, Plaintiffs
112 Griffin St.
Garner, NC 27529
10/23, 10/30, and 11/6/2025

WARREN COUNTY

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
WARREN COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
All persons, firms and
corporations having claims against
STEWART K. SUTTON, DECEASED,
are noticed to exhibit the same
to the undersigned on or before
January 21, 2025, or this notice
along with the appropriate general
statute will be pleaded in bar of
recovery. Debtors the deceased
are asked to make immediate
payment. This the 23rd day of
October, 2025. All correspondence
should be to the Estate of Stewart
K. Sutton, c/o William W. Browning,
Attorney, 120 E. Main Street,
Durham, NC 27701.
10/23, 10/30, 11/6, and 11/13/2025.

D/M/WBE

SUBCONTRACTORS/SUPPLIERS WANTED

T. A. Loving Company (NC General Contractor License No. 325) is seeking certified DBE, MBE, and WBE subcontractors and suppliers for the **Sun Valley Mobile Home Park Sanitary Sewer Improvements – Contract No. 1** project for the **Town of Magnolia** which bids on **November 13, 2025, at 2:00 PM**. Plans and specifications for this project are available at the following locations: T. A. Loving Company; 400 Patetown Road; Goldsboro, NC 27530 * Magnolia Town Hall; 110 East Carroll Street; Magnolia, NC 28453 * McDavid Associates, Inc.; 3714 North Main Street; Farmville, NC 27828-0049 * Dodge Data and Analytics website * ConstructConnect website * Construction Journal website * Builders and Contractors Exchange website.

Potential subcontracting opportunities include but are not limited to surveying, clearing and grubbing, hauling, asphalt paving, striping, traffic control, erosion control, seeding, electrical, linework/pipe installation, bypass pumping, flat-work, and fencing. Please contact **Jeff Price (jprice@taloving.com)** if you are interested in submitting a proposal on any portion(s) of this project. Contact via phone 919-734-8400; fax: 919-736-2148; or email. All quotations will be accepted up to the closing time of the bid date. T. A. Loving Company is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer.

Please advise if assistance is needed with obtaining necessary equipment, supplies, materials, or insurance/bonding to satisfy the work requirements. We are willing to accept quotations for all or partial quantities and items of work. We can offer 2-party check payments and quick payment agreements, but the agreements need to be negotiated prior to the bid date.



ADVERTISEMENT FOR BIDS

The North Carolina Department of Adult Correction has the following contract in Catawba County out for bid: C- 11787 Catawba CC Air Conditioning Information . The bid opening is scheduled for: Thursday, 11/20/2025 . To obtain the Notice to Bidders, any Pre-Bid Requirements, and any Addenda visit: North Carolina Department of Adult Correction - eVP



ADVERTISEMENT FOR BIDS

The North Carolina Department of Adult Correction has the following contract in Lincoln County out for bid: C- C11750 Lincoln AC installation . The bid opening is scheduled for: Thursday, 11/20/2025 . To obtain the Notice to Bidders, any Pre-Bid Requirements, and any Addenda visit:https://evp.nc.gov/solicitations/details/?id=e2381dfa-1b8f-f011-b4cc-001dd8062c20

D/M/WBE

SUBCONTRACTORS/SUPPLIERS WANTED

T. A. Loving Company (NC General Contractor License No. 325) is seeking certified DBE, MBE, and WBE subcontractors and suppliers for the **Cherry Run Pump Station Rehabilitation and 5th Street Force Main Replacement** project for the **City of Washington** which bids on **November 13, 2025, at 2:00 PM**. Plans and specifications for this project are available at the following locations: T. A. Loving Company; 400 Patetown Road; Goldsboro, NC 27530 * City of Washington Municipal Building, Public Works Division; 102 East Second Street, 2nd Floor; Washington, NC 27889 * Rivers and Associates, Inc.; 107 East Second Street; Greenville, NC 27858 * ConstructConnect website.

Potential subcontracting opportunities include but are not limited to surveying, clearing and grubbing, hauling, asphalt paving, traffic control, seeding, electrical, SCADA, linework/pipe installation, jack & bore, directional drilling, bypass pumping, manhole lining, painting, and fencing. Please contact **Jeff Price (jprice@taloving.com)** if you are interested in submitting a proposal on any portion(s) of this project. Contact via phone 919-734-8400; fax: 919-736-2148; or email. All quotations will be accepted up to the closing time of the bid date. T. A. Loving Company is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer.

Please advise if assistance is needed with obtaining necessary equipment, supplies, materials, or insurance/bonding to satisfy the work requirements. We are willing to accept quotations for all or partial quantities and items of work. We can offer 2-party check payments and quick payment agree-

D/M/WBE

SUBCONTRACTORS/SUPPLIERS WANTED

T. A. Loving Company (NC General Contractor License No. 325) is seeking certified DBE, MBE, and WBE subcontractors and suppliers for the **Southport Wastewater System Rehabilitation project for Brunswick County Public Utilities** which bids on **November 7, 2025, at 2:00 PM**. Plans and specifications for this project are available at the following locations: T. A. Loving Company; 400 Patetown Road; Goldsboro, NC 27530 * Brunswick County Public Utilities Operations Center; 250 Grey Water Road, NE; Supply, NC 28462 * Brunswick County website * Carolinas AGC Website * Dodge Data and Analytics website * ConstructConnect website * Construction Journal website * Hispanic Contractors Association of the Carolinas website * North American Procurement Council website * The Blue Book Building and Construction Network website.

Potential subcontracting opportunities include but are not limited to surveying, hauling, asphalt paving, striping, traffic control, erosion control, seeding, linework/pipe installation, jack & bore, directional drilling, bypass pumping, CIPP, manhole rehab, manhole lining, and painting. Please contact **Jeff Price (jprice@taloving.com)** if you are interested in submitting a proposal on any portion(s) of this project. Contact via phone 919-734-8400; fax: 919-736-2148; or email. All quotations will be accepted up to the closing time of the bid date. T. A. Loving Company is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer.

Please advise if assistance is needed with obtaining necessary equipment, supplies, materials, or insurance/bonding to satisfy the work requirements. We are willing to accept quotations for all or partial quantities and items of work. We can offer 2-party check payments and quick payment agreements, but the agreements need to be negotiated prior to the bid date.



ADVERTISEMENT FOR BIDS

The North Carolina Department of Adult Correction has the following contract in Wayne County out for bid: C- C11831 Marion FA Replacement. The bid opening is scheduled for: Tuesday, 11/18/2025. To obtain the Notice to Bidders, any Pre-Bid Requirements, and any Addenda visit: https://evp.nc.gov/solicitations/details/?id=26bdb56b-6ea8-f011-bbd3-001dd803d351

D/M/WBE

SUBCONTRACTORS/SUPPLIERS WANTED

T. A. Loving Company (NC General Contractor License No. 325) is seeking certified DBE, MBE, and WBE subcontractors and suppliers for the **Pump Station No. 7 Replacement project for the Town of Beaufort** which bids on **November 6, 2025, at 2:00 PM**. Plans and specifications for this project are available at the following locations: T. A. Loving Company; 400 Patetown Road; Goldsboro, NC 27530 * Rivers and Associates, Inc.; 107 East Second Street; Greenville, NC 27858 * Town of Beaufort; 701 Front Street; Beaufort, NC 28516 * ConstructConnect website.

Potential subcontracting opportunities include but are not limited to surveying, hauling, asphalt paving, electrical, SCADA, bypass pumping, painting, and fencing. Please contact **Jeff Price (jprice@taloving.com)** if you are interested in submitting a proposal on any portion(s) of this project. Contact via phone 919-734-8400; fax: 919-736-2148; or email. All quotations will be accepted up to the closing time of the bid date. T. A. Loving Company is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer.

Please advise if assistance is needed with obtaining necessary equipment, supplies, materials, or insurance/bonding to satisfy the work requirements. We are willing to accept quotations for all or partial quantities and items of work. We can offer 2-party check payments and quick payment agreements, but the agreements need to be negotiated prior to the bid date.

ATTENTION: DBE'S-WBE'S-MBE'S

Barnhill Contracting Company will be bidding on the following project on November 18th, 2025. We are most interested in receiving quotes from your company on these projects:

Raleigh Paving Division Contract ID: C205148
Contact: David Chopik, dchopik@barnhillcontracting.com , at 919-787-2442 or fax 919-783-5616 in our Raleigh Office, located at 4325 Pleasant Valley Rd., Raleigh, NC 27612.

Southeast Division Contract ID: C205155
Contact: Todd Hunt, thunt@barnhillcontracting.com , at 910-488-1319 or fax 910-488-5673 in our Fayetteville Office, located at 1100 Robeson Street, Fayetteville, NC 28305.

If you would like to join the pre-bid meeting via Teams plus, contact the estimator for a link to the meeting invite.

- For hauling operations, we will need to know how many of your own hauling units will be available for this project. We will need this on your written quote prior to bid time and this will be made a part of any subcontract.
- Plans and specifications are available at:
 - NC DOT https://connect.ncdot.gov/letting/Pages/Central.aspx
 - Plans may also be viewed in our offices. Please call for an appointment.
- These projects include opportunities on, but not limited to hauling, shoulder reconstruction, milling, curb & gutter, sidewalks, work zone safety, pavement markers, & seeding and mulching. All firms or people interested in bidding on any applicable portions of these projects or supplying materials for any applicable portion of this project are invited to contact us direct or by phone (we accept collect calls). By submitting a quote, it is understood that you have read and understand the specifications.

“The North Carolina Department of Transportation, in accordance with the provisions of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (78 Stat. 252, 42 U.S.C. §§ 2000d to 2000d-4) and the Regulations, hereby notifies all bidders that it will affirmatively ensure that any contract entered into pursuant to this advertisement, disadvantaged business enterprises will be afforded full and fair opportunity to submit bids in response to this invitation and will not be discriminated against on the grounds of race, color, or national origin in consideration for an award. In accordance with other related nondiscrimination authorities, bidders and contractors will also not be discriminated against on the grounds of sex, age, disability, low-income level, creed/religion, or limited English proficiency in consideration for an award.”

NC General Contractors Lic. # 3194
Attn: Tom Shannon

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THE MEDICARE PLAN THAT PUTS YOU FIRST



At Alignment Health, we’re redefining what it means to age. Our Medicare Advantage Plans are designed to put you in control of your health and well-being. With comprehensive benefits that fit your lifestyle, you can live with peace of mind, knowing that your health care is simplified, supportive, and catered to your needs.

See the benefits that come with the Alignment Health Platinum Select (HMO) plan:

\$0 PLAN PREMIUM

Stay on budget with a **\$0 premium**, **\$0 copay** for primary and **\$20 copay** for specialist doctor visits.

\$0 DENTAL, HEARING & VISION

Comprehensive dental, including cleanings and X-rays; hearing exams and vision coverage for exams and eyewear.

\$0 PRESCRIPTION COPAY

\$0 for a 100 day supply of your **Tier 1** and **Tier 2** drugs.

\$0 TRANSPORTATION

We'll provide **28** one-way rides when you have a doctor's appointment or need to pick up something like a prescription from the pharmacy.

\$0 PART D DEDUCTIBLE

Save money with a plan that has **\$0** Part D deductible for your prescriptions.

MONTHLY OVER-THE-COUNTER ALLOWANCE

\$40 monthly over-the-counter allowance usable at neighborhood retailers for items like toothpaste, vitamins, aspirin and more.

24/7 CONCIERGE TEAM

Our members get access to a concierge team, available 24/7 to help answer questions, book an appointment or even schedule transportation.

LET’S PUT YOU FIRST.

Join us for a seminar near you to explore your plan options, ask questions, and feel empowered to choose the plan that’s right for you.

10/29 @ 10am The Village Diner 600 West King Street Hillsborough	10/30 @ 10 am & 11/06 @ 4:30pm Cary Senior Center 120 Maury Odell Place Cary	10/31 @ 2pm W.E. Hunt Recreation Center 301 Stinson Avenue Holly Springs
11/04 & 12/03 @ 11am Original Carolina BBQ 733 U.S. 70 Garner	11/12 & 12/1 at 11am NoRa Cafe 12333 Strickland Road Raleigh	11/18 @ 1pm Original Carolina BBQ 733 U.S. 70 Garner



CALL OR VISIT US ONLINE TO LEARN MORE.

1-888-926-0302 (TTY: 711)

8am–8pm, 7 days a week

[Alignmenthealthplan.com/Carolinian](https://alignmenthealthplan.com/Carolinian)

LET’S MEET VIRTUALLY

Wednesday, 10/29 3 pm - 4 pm	Wednesday, 11/12 3 pm - 4 pm	Wednesday, 11/26 3 pm - 4 pm
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To meet virtually, go to: [Alignmenthealthplan.com/join](https://alignmenthealthplan.com/join)

Or to call, on the day and time of your seminar call: 1-866-789-6243; Conference ID: 929 259 974#

To register for a seminar, or to view a complete list of all seminars call 1-888-926-0302 (TTY: 711) or go to: AlignmentHealthPlan.com/seminars