



## How To Start Your Business With Absolutely No Money

**Investopedia**—Whether you want to open a new restaurant or sell homemade crafts online, starting your own business can seem like a daunting task, especially if you don't have a lot of money on hand.

The one-year survival rate of small businesses, across various regions of the country, ranged from roughly 74% to more than 78% in 2022, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS).

Another BLS report found that just over one-third of private-sector businesses established in 2013 were still in operation 10 years later.

However, even if you're not flush with cash, it's still possible to open

a successful business, though it may require a lot of effort and time. You'll want to work on developing a strong idea, establishing a business plan, and drafting a budget before figuring out how to finance your business.

### Come Up With an Idea

Starting a small business doesn't necessarily have to be costly. Not all businesses require a retail space or an initial investment in expensive equipment. For example, running a freelance writing business, selling crafts on Etsy from your home, or tutoring online could have relatively low startup costs. In contrast, opening a coffee shop or running a store with a brick-and-mortar location will

be much more expensive.

Additionally, note that opening some types of businesses, like a restaurant, will require certain certifications or licenses, so make sure to look into the requirements in your city and state.

To come up with a successful idea, you'll want to determine your skill set, expertise, and interests: What knowledge or skills can you capitalize on? If you have an eye for spotting vintage clothing when thrifting, you may consider reselling clothes on platforms like Depop or Mercari. Or if you have a knack for photography, you might think about launching your own wedding photography business.

Beyond figuring out what you enjoy doing, try using market research to identify possible customers. Market research can help you understand whether there's a market for your small business, who your competitors are, pricing, and customer preferences.

### Create a Budget

Before you develop a business plan, you'll want to sit down and run the numbers. Can you afford to start a small business? How much will you need to invest initially?

The more detailed your budget is, the better, so get granular about any possible expenses, like the cost of

(See **START YOUR BIZ**, P. 2)



## New Exhibit Aims To Tell History Of Cherokee People Ahead Of The 250th

**BPR News** – The Museum of the Cherokee People is opening a new exhibit to highlight Aniywiya (Cherokee) voices and perspectives in response to the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence.

The exhibit is called "Unrelenting: Cherokee People and the American Revolution" features historic artifacts, images, and documents displayed alongside works by Cherokee artists.

Brandon Dillard, a citizen of the Cherokee Nation is a guest curator for the exhibit. He told BPR that it was important for the museum to center the voices and work of enrolled members.

"People get excited about anniversary years," Dillard said. "They pay attention to the past in different ways. And so we wanted to use that as a way to invite people in to consider what do Cherokee people think about this time period and what happened in this part of the world in 1776 and the decades that followed because the conflict was ongoing for a really long time."

The museum invited artists from the Cherokee Nation, EBCI and the United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians to create new works in re-



sponse to historic treaties and documents from the Revolutionary era.

One of the featured artists is Laura Walkingstick, a citizen of the Eastern Band. Walkingstick works in a variety of mediums but most recently has focused on corn husk dolls, one of which appears in the exhibit.

"Growing up I didn't see any dolls

that represented who I was or my identity so I'd started creating my own dolls," Walkingstick told BPR. "It wasn't until a family vacation when I was younger, when I got to see my first Native dolls that came from the Diné Nation in Arizona. I really didn't know how I got into the corn dolls. I think it was just more, like,



## How N.C.'s Almost 100,000 Service Members Are Affected By Iran War

**WUNC** – The military's presence in North Carolina is dominated by Fort Bragg, the nation's largest Army base by population, and Camp Lejeune, the Marine Corps' main east coast infantry base. The state also has a major Army National Guard brigade of several thousand citizen soldiers.

With no ground fighting, the state's major units of soldiers and Marines haven't been tapped for the war with Iran.

But troops and military families here are still being affected, includ-

ing those with ties to Seymour Johnson Air Force Base, which has jets involved in the conflict flying out of an undisclosed site in the Middle East.

Here are some of the ways the conflict is — and isn't — touching North Carolina-based troops and military families:

**SEYMOUR JOHNSON AIR FORCE BASE:** Websites that focus on the defense industry and national security issues reported last month that F-15E Strike Eagle jets from Seymour Johnson had been sent to the Middle East as part of the U.S. military buildup there. That's based on flight tracking data, airport tower communications, and other sources.

The three jets shot down over Kuwait March 2 in a friendly fire incident were F-15Es, but a spokesman for U.S. Central Command declined to say which base, unit or units they came from, citing operational security.

All six crew members ejected and parachuted safely to the ground, according to a Pentagon news release.

**NORTH CAROLINA NATIONAL GUARD:** About 800 soldiers of the North Carolina Army National

Guard left the state at the end of January for a long-planned, year-long deployment to Kuwait as part of an ongoing U.S. presence there that began in 2012.

Those soldiers are with the Wilmington-based 1st Battalion, 120th Infantry Regiment, which is part of the 30th Mobile Brigade Combat Team.

They are still in Texas, doing final preparations on a normal timeline for these kinds of routine deployments, and it's unclear yet whether or how their mission might be affected by the fighting.

The North Carolina Air National Guard flies C-17s, the military's key long-distance transport jet. The unit specializes in medical missions, but can also fly troops and cargo. Its Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron has 40 flight nurses, medical technicians, and flight crews, as well as its aircraft, deployed to Germany and operating under federal control for use however the Pentagon needs them.

The state's National Guard is among the largest in the nation. It's also one of the most relied-on,

(See **NC MILITARY**, P. 2)



### COMMUNITY GROUPS SUE OVER PLANNED DATA CENTER IN STOKES COUNTY

**NC Newsline** - Community groups and Walnut Grove residents in Stokes County are suing the county to block a large hyperscale data center complex, known as Project Delta, that they say will harm environmentally sensitive areas along the Dan River corridor, damage sacred cultural sites and threaten the region's rural character.

The lawsuit claims the Stokes County Board of Commissioners inappropriately approved a zoning map amendment and zoning text amendment to pave the way for the data center without following procedures required under state law.

The lawsuit was filed in Stokes County Superior Court by the Southern Coalition for Social Justice (SCSJ) and Southern Environmental Law Center (SELC), and announced at a news conference Friday.

"This lawsuit isn't suggesting that the county should be anti-tech or anti-development, but it must be done smartly, deliberately, equitably, according to law, and with some attempts at foresight," said Anne Harvey David, an environmental justice attorney at SCSJ, "not simply buying into the pie-in-the-sky hype and grandiose speculation to fill the pockets of developers and tech investors while the community of Walnut Grove again pays the cost."

In January, commissioners narrowly approved the controversial rezoning of more than 1,800 acres along the Dan River at the request of property owner David Couch, a High Point developer. The data center would be built by Charlotte-based Engineered Land Solutions. NC Newsline was unable to reach the developer.

The lawsuit claims commissioners overrode their own planning board's recommendation against rezoning, and made their decision prematurely before a data center operator was identified or details about the project's scale were available.

In a statement Friday, Stokes County acknowledged the lawsuit. "We recognize that land-use decisions can have significant impacts on residents, and the County remains committed to transparency, public participation, and the fair administration of all zoning and planning processes," the county said. "Stokes County will not comment on specific allegations contained in the complaint at this time, but will provide additional information when appropriate and permitted."

The plaintiffs say commissioners' decision to allow data centers in the county's heavy manufacturing districts threatens more than a dozen sites across the county that have remained largely rural.

"Data centers bring significant impacts — from air, noise, and light pollution and massive energy demand, to pressure on local water resources and land," Megan Kimball, senior attorney with SELC, said in a news release.

In addition, the plaintiffs say the county's approval process was "flawed from the start" because commissioners never gave the required public notice about the zoning changes and failed to assess the potential environmental impact of the rezoning. They say the area includes sacred sites tied to Saura tribal history and the Hairston Plantation, where descendants of those enslaved on the property still live and maintain cemeteries nearby.

"For Indigenous people of this region, the Dan River corridor is not just land — it is a living cultural landscape tied to the Saura and other Siouan-speaking nations who have lived along these rivers for centuries," said Crystal Cavalier-Keck, co-founder of 7 Directions of Service, an indigenous-led organization focused on environmental justice.

The plaintiffs are asking the court to throw out the Project Delta rezoning, void the decision by commissioners to allow data centers in any area zoned for heavy manufacturing, and block the county from implementing those decisions.

challenge and curiosity."

Her piece, titled *Then and Now: Wrapped in Survival*, depicts a woman standing upright in well-dressed clothing with a distressed American flag at her feet. She is surrounded by Indian corn, which represents life, fertility, nourishment, resilience, and cultural continuity — elements central to Cherokee survival.

According to Walkingstick's artist statement, the work reflects on the American Revolution as a turning point in Cherokee history.

"During that era, Cherokee towns and cornfields were deliberately destroyed, and treaties promising protection were repeatedly violated," Walkingstick said.

She goes on to write that the distressed flag at the figure's feet symbolizes the broken treaties and the instability inflicted on Native Americans "through colonization."

Dillard said he hopes the exhibit encourages visitors to imagine what it was like to live through that period of conflict and consider what lessons it holds today.

The exhibit is open on March 17 through Dec. 30.

## Wake Co. Board Discusses Progress & The Challenges With Homelessness

By Jordan Meadows

Staff Writer

Members of the Wake County Board of Commissioners' Affordable Housing Committee met Monday morning to review programs aimed at expanding affordable housing and addressing homelessness, including new funding initiatives, partnerships and ongoing planning efforts as the county continues to face rising housing costs and a growing population.

The meeting focused on the work of the Wake County Continuum of Care (CoC), a collaborative network that coordinates housing and services for people experiencing homelessness. It works with county departments, municipalities, and nonprofit partners to connect residents with housing and support services.

Commissioners also shared positive updates about individuals who have been able to move from homelessness into short- or long-term housing through county programs.

A major initiative discussed during the meeting was the Wake County Housing Opportunity Fund, supported by a new \$10 million investment. The fund is a 2026 initiative designed to finance affordable housing development, including site acquisition and gap financing for low-income residents. Officials said the program works alongside the county's Bridge to Home program, which uses \$10.5 million to provide services such as housing navigation,



financial assistance, and case management.

Bridge to Home is specifically targeted at people experiencing homelessness and offers services such as rental assistance, case management, and connections to healthcare resources.

County officials said emergency services for people without housing are coordinated through the Wake County Continuum of Care, which works with shelters and street outreach teams across the region. Residents who are at risk of losing housing are encouraged to contact Wake Prevent, a program focused on early intervention and prevention.

For individuals already experiencing homelessness, officials recommend connecting with Oak City Cares or other partner organizations. Many of the county's nonprofit partners like Triangle Family Services, are trained to conduct initial assessments and help people access services through the CoC system.

County leaders said they are also working toward a simpler system for people seeking help. Officials discussed plans to develop a single online platform where residents could easily find information about available programs and services.

Commissioner Vickie Adamson said having too many disconnected

options can make it harder for people to get help and may lead to confusion or misinformation.

"If we can have one entry point, and let the community know, we'll be able to help more people," Adamson said.

Governance of the homeless response system is handled by the Wake County Continuum of Care Governing Board, the lead decision-making and policy-setting body focused on ending homelessness in Wake County. The board coordinates resources, sets strategic priorities, and oversees funding for local housing and service programs while emphasizing a trauma-informed and equitable approach to services.

Officials emphasized the importance of broad representation within the governance structure.

"It's important to have municipalities represented (on the CoC governance board), but especially the municipalities that may not have housing departments so they can learn and grow, and have input," said Commissioner Shincia Thomas.

Commissioners also discussed the role that community organizations and faith groups can play in helping address homelessness.

"I know a lot of churches and religious organizations do a lot of work in our community. How can they get involved in helping their neighbors

(See **WAKE COUNTY BOARD**, P. 2)



## NC MILITARY

Continued from page 1

by both state and federal governments. Its main Army unit, the 30th, with nearly 4,000 soldiers, is among the best-trained and equipped in the country, which led to Pentagon to send it to Iraq for two full rotations during the war there.

The 30th also is one of the first armored brigades — active duty or National Guard — chosen by the Pentagon to be reconfigured for modern conflicts as part of an Army-wide modernization initiative. It's now in the process of trading its tanks and other heavy armor for fast-moving smaller vehicles.

Because the Southeast has been hit by so many major storms in recent years, the N.C. Guard has been busy with domestic, state-led duty. Guard units have provided crucial recovery help in the aftermaths of storms like Hurricane Floyd, Hurricane Maria in Puerto Rico, and Helene in Western North Carolina, among several others.

FORT BRAGG: The Fort Bragg-based 82nd Airborne Division is an obvious choice if the Trump Administration makes an unexpected decision to send ground troops into the war. The 82nd is often referred to as the nation's 911 force. It keeps a brigade of 4,000 to 5,000 soldiers ready to deploy and can put hundreds in the air within hours. In a dire situation, it can deliver them via parachute.

## WAKE COUNTY BOARD

Continued from page 1

in this housing initiative for the unsheltered and homeless?" Commissioner Tara S. Waters asked during the meeting.

County officials said faith-based organizations can participate in the Continuum of Care as member organizations and help by volunteering, providing meals, and continuing their own outreach initiatives that connect people with services.

"Faith-based organizations certainly have a place at the table as CoC member organizations," said Deputy County Manager Duane Holder, who oversees Wake County's consolidated Health and Human Services agency. Officials also reviewed the core operational systems that support the county's homelessness response. These include the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), which tracks data on housing services and outcomes and recently completed federal fiscal year 2025 reporting.

Despite those efforts, county data show that approximately 3,400 households are new or returning to homelessness each year. About 92 percent of individuals use shelters for an average of 38 days, and roughly 36 percent of those who exit the system return within six months. Officials estimated that about \$24,000 per year is required to end homelessness for one household through housing and support services.

Officials said additional resources will be needed to meet the growing need through targeted investments. Planning for the new housing initiatives will continue over the coming months. County leaders outlined a timeline that included community outreach in February, public comment on a draft plan in March, with a final review and governance vote in April and continued program design and implementation through May of this year. Officials expect a formal launch and rehousing efforts to begin in July.

Earlier this week, Congresswoman Deborah Ross announced \$850,000 in federal funding to renovate Second Street Place, a Wake County shelter serving people experiencing homelessness. The shelter, operated by The Bryant Center, will receive accessibility upgrades, showers, and other improvements as part of a broader \$13 million package Ross secured for 15 projects across the county. The 98-bed facility connects guests with case management and services aimed at helping them move toward permanent housing.

"These funds help transform a building into something more important—a place of stability, a space that is safe and a place that provides opportunity," said Vance Haywood, executive director of the Bryant Center.

Local leaders say the challenge is intensified by Wake County's rapid population growth.

"Our county is at 1.2 million people. We've got six people moving in every day, and 25 kids being born every day. This isn't just a city of Raleigh concern—we work with 11 other municipalities, and we appreciate Congresswoman Ross for helping bring this forward," said Don Mial, chair of the Wake County Board of Commissioners.

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development data shows homelessness increasing in many communities across the country. Wake County has experienced a similar rise. The county's most recent point-in-time count identified about 1,258 people experiencing homelessness, roughly 27 percent more than the previous year.

# A Computer On Every Lap? NC Schools Rethinking One-to-One Device Access

CAROLINA PUBLIC PRESS — Due to exhausted funds and concerns about excessive computer-screen time, some North Carolina public and private schools are considering reversing course on one-to-one device access and scaling back on in-class use.

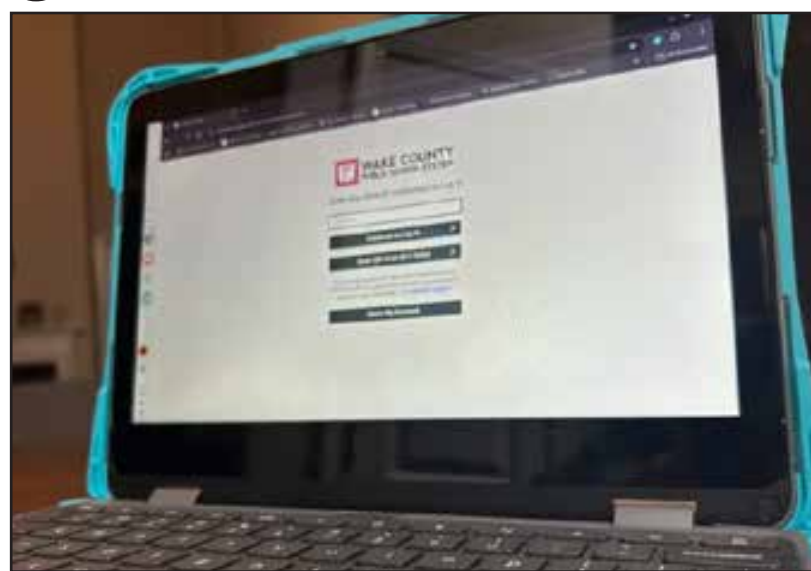
Districts across the country received billions in federal funding during the pandemic, hundreds of millions of which went toward purchasing technology for students to complete work at home in North Carolina. This is also when one-to-one access, where each student is assigned a personal device to be taken home as opposed to classrooms sharing a communal set, became more common.

Krista Glazewski, the executive director of NC State's Friday Institute for Educational Innovation, said districts are likely facing a costly issue with those pandemic-era devices reaching the end of their life cycles.

Schools nationwide have reported they tend to replace the laptops every three to five years, though Google is making attempts to extend the lifespan of their Chromebooks, the typical device brand that districts have purchased en masse in recent years. Now, six years since the pandemic's onset, those devices are nearing or well past the time to be replaced — a cost for which many districts are ill-equipped today.

A survey by the NC Department of Public Instruction found that more than half of the individual public and charter school respondents said they had no funding source to replace the laptops once they broke down for good.

In a 2025 committee meeting, Superintendent Robert Taylor of Wake County Public Schools System said the county's one-to-one program



launched during the pandemic is something Wake County, the largest school district in the state, can no longer afford.

A spokesperson for WCPSS told Carolina Public Press the district is currently in conversation about its anticipated needs over the next several years in areas like technology, security and building renovations. The district's next step on devices is part of those deliberations, and a decision is to come in the near future, though an exact timeline isn't set.

The maintenance of the devices is becoming increasingly costly in general, Glazewski said, but the bulk of the burden often falls on smaller, rural districts that don't have as many resources for repairs and upkeep. Some districts, like Nash County and Durham Public Schools, address that by charging a yearly technology fee to cover minor damage and support overall device sustainability.

Carolinas Academic Leadership Network President Bryce Fiedler

said he became aware of the cost burden when WCPSS raised concerns about the laptops' affordability last year. An often unnoted aspect, Fiedler said, is that public schools are also facing widespread decreasing enrollment in the state, which is directly tied to how much money schools receive.

While the finances are undoubtedly burdensome, Fiedler finds the disadvantages to learning when classrooms rely on the devices to be the most important.

Several studies have yielded clear results that children learn better via paper than digital devices, specifically when it comes to reading, which North Carolina students have struggled with since the pandemic.

"Digital learning is not done as effectively, or at least the brain doesn't retain information as well as it does through paper-based learning," Fiedler said.

Possible remedies could look like other districts following the lead of

Burke County, Fiedler said. In the summer of 2025, the school board passed a resolution urging teachers to prioritize pen-and-paper learning in hopes of developing more balance between the technological and the traditional.

Less than a year later, parents and educators report improvements in reading comprehension, knowledge retention and homework-related stress, as well as higher test scores overall, though the district noted there are other variables at play in addition to decreased technology use.

Other suggestions by Fiedler besides purely emphasizing pen-and-paper work include focusing on mitigating factors like returning to the computer lab model or confining laptop usage to the classroom rather than students being reliant on an assigned personal device at all times. It's also critical to consider the ways technology use can impact different age groups and to acknowledge at which points it becomes necessary.

"It should be balanced, strategic, if not completely a pull back from providing laptops for elementary students," he said.

"We should look into tech-based electives based on student interest as they get into middle school and high school. But the idea that one-to-one has to start as early as elementary school, we're finding financial reasons and learning reasons is just not feasible right now."

Broadly speaking, state lawmakers and school districts are more focused on managing cellphone use in school, Fiedler said. He feels there is more pushback against suggestions that schools scale back on laptop

(See *NC SCHOOL DEVICES*, P. 12)

## Jasmine Crockett Confirms Security Team Member Killed By Dallas Police In Standoff

AP NEWS — Democratic U.S. Rep. Jasmine Crockett on Monday confirmed that a 39-year-old man who was killed in a standoff with Dallas officers last week was a member of her security team who had been using a fraudulent identity.

Diamon Mazairre Robinson lived as "Mike King" for years, during which he operated security businesses that hired off-duty officers, Dallas police said during a Monday press conference. Robinson's real identity was exposed after Irving police put out a bulletin for a vehicle with stolen government plates, which a Dallas officer had seen while working with Robinson on a security job six months earlier.

Robinson fled Dallas police, who attempted to pull him over on March 11, escaping a brief chase before being located once more in a hospital parking garage, officials said. After an hours-long standoff with negotiators, officers shot and killed Robinson after he stepped out of the vehicle and drew a handgun.

In a statement posted on social media, the Dallas congresswoman confirmed that Robinson had helped provide security for her for years,



and said her team had followed U.S. House procedure for contracting security. She also said Robinson, acting as Mike King, had worked with multiple law enforcement agencies, including Capitol Police. A spokesperson with the Capitol Police did not respond to an immediate request for comment.

Crockett said that her team was unaware he had been acting under an alias, but that Robinson had always maintained positive community relationships and never gave anyone reason to suspect he had misconstrued his identity.

"What we're learning about his past doesn't fit the person we came

to know as Mike King," Crockett said. "His death evokes a range of emotions. Our hearts grieve the loss of someone we knew and the lost good that could have come from his redemption."

DPD Deputy Chief William Kenneth said investigators did not discover Robinson's true identity until after Crockett's campaign for the Democratic nomination in the U.S. Senate race had ended. Crockett, a former public defender, said in her statement that she believed in people's capacity for redemption and second chances. She also acknowledged Robinson's prior criminal history and said they did not believe he had been charged with any violent offenses.

Robinson had posed as a federal officer under the "Specialty Dignitary Police," a nonexistent agency he created identification cards for, officials said. He also had two active felony theft warrants from 2017, a parole violation, two vehicles with stolen government plates and multiple stolen firearms, including the one he produced before being shot, Kenneth said.

## Michael B. Jordan Wins Oscar For Best Actor

LOS ANGELES, March 15 (Reuters) — First-time nominee Michael B. Jordan won the best actor Oscar on Sunday for playing twin brothers in the genre-bending vampire tale "Sinners."

Jordan took to the stage for his acceptance speech, thanking director Ryan Coogler for giving him the opportunity to be seen and heard.

He also paid tribute to those who paved the way for him, including his ancestors and trailblazing Black men in Hollywood such as Sidney Poitier,

Will Smith, Denzel Washington and Jamie Foxx.

He vowed to continue pushing himself and striving to be the best version of himself, before closing by thanking audiences who have watched "Sinners" multiple times.

Jordan, 39, plays dual roles as war veterans Elijah "Smoke" and Elias "Stack" Moore who try to use stolen money to open a juke joint in Mississippi during the Great Depression. "As Smoke and Stack, Jordan has to make each character distinct yet in

sync ... inhabiting a thick Southern drawl that sings and swings effortlessly with each word and turn of phrase," NPR said in its review, opens new tab.

The California native, who grew up in New Jersey, rose to stardom in Coogler's "Fruitvale Station" and has played Donnie Creed in three sequels to the "Rocky" franchise, while also directing "Creed III." He also played Marvel villain Killmonger in two "Black Panther" movies and a TV series.



## Start Your Business—CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

renting out a retail space, purchasing equipment, buying inventory, hiring a lawyer or an accountant, launching a website, and more.

You'll want to break down your expenses based on whether they're variable or fixed costs. Fixed costs could include monthly rental fees or insurance payments, while variable costs are expenses, like raw materials, that may change based on your level of output.

Options for Financing Your Business

**Bootstrapping**  
Bootstrapping refers to financing your small business with your own funds. Rather than rely on debt from a lender—like a bank—you tap your own money to fund your business. This could involve drawing money from savings accounts, liquidating your investments, or taking out a home equity loan.

Some people may also consider taking money out of their 401(k) or other retirement accounts, but this might not be the best idea, as you could end up with insufficient retire-

ment savings later on and pay an early withdrawal penalty.

Bootstrapping can be a good option if you don't qualify for a small business loan because you don't meet certain credit score requirements, business size standards, or other rules.

**Crowdfunding**  
Crowdfunding is one way of raising money for your new small business. Rather than just requesting money from people you know, crowdfunding involves raising money from a large number of people. With crowdfunding, people who contribute money don't have a stake in the company and typically don't expect to receive a return. You can use online crowdfunding platforms like Kickstarter or GoFundMe to post about your business idea and solicit donations.

**SBA Microloans**  
The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) provides loans worth up to \$50,000 to small businesses. These loans can be used for purposes like buying inventory, purchasing

supplies, repairing equipment, and more. Microloans are issued by specific lenders, and interest rates on these loans range from 8% to 13%. If you're interested in applying, the SBA provides a list of lenders that administer these loans.

**Small Business Loans**  
For traditional small business loans, lenders like banks and credit unions may have stringent requirements for qualification. They may require a minimum personal credit score, a certain annual revenue, and a minimum amount of time in business. Therefore, they may not be the best option for business owners who are getting their business off the ground for the first time.

**Market Your Goods and Services**  
In order to market your small business, you don't necessarily need to spend a lot of money hiring a marketing consultant or buying ads. Social media platforms like LinkedIn, Facebook, X, TikTok, and Instagram are free to join and can be an effective tool for marketing.

Additionally, think about opening

a website for your business, which can make it easier for potential customers to find your business online. You can use platforms like WordPress, Wix, and Squarespace to create a website.

Lastly, leverage your personal network and connections to help spread the word about your small business. For example, if you have a friend who owns a local coffee shop, consider asking if they'd be willing to display or sell your homemade candles in exchange for a small commission. This type of collaboration can introduce your products to a new audience and help boost your business's visibility.

**The Bottom Line**  
Starting a business without money isn't easy. However, with some resourcefulness, time, and effort, it's possible to launch a successful small business. By brainstorming ideas with low start-up costs, calculating potential costs, and making the most of free marketing tools and alternative funding options, you can build a business even on a tight budget.

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e-mail: info@caro.news

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# Business & Finance

## N.C. Is Losing 100,000 Acres Of Farmland Annually. Ag Commissioner Seeks Lawmakers' Help To Stem The Tide

NC NEWSLINE - North Carolina Gov. Josh Stein isn't the only one urging the legislature to pass a critical needs budget in the short session. North Carolina Agriculture Commissioner Steve Troxler says it's urgent that the state earmark more funds for farmland preservation.

Troxler told members of the N.C. Council of State that North Carolina is losing 100,000 acres of farmland and forest land a year. He called it the biggest issue in agriculture in the state.

North Carolina ranks second in the nation, just behind Texas, for projected farmland loss, according to the American Farmland Trust.

Troxler, a Republican from Browns Summit, worries that at the rate rich farmland is disappearing, farmers in the future may have fewer options, even as the world's growing population needs more food.

"The question is, when do we get to the tipping point?" Troxler asked.

Troxler is planning a big legislative push this year for additional



funds dedicated to farmland preservation.

The legislature has allocated \$5 million in recurring funds in previous budgets for permanent easements, but Troxler worries the state may not be acting quickly enough.

Permanent easements are subsidies that allow farmers to continue to own and farm their land while agreeing not to allow it to be devel-

oped for residential or non-farming commercial use.

"Because we haven't had a budget in two years, there's never any [new] one-time money added," said Troxler. "And that \$5 million in recurring [funding] - just to put that in perspective, this year we have requests for \$47 million for the permanent easements and 114 applications."

Dr. Mike Walden, professor

emeritus of Agricultural and Resource Economics at NC State University, said it's a balancing act for North Carolina.

Rural landscapes that once defined places like Holly Springs and Benson are being gobbled up for biotech and manufacturing expansion. And with each new mega-site and job announcement comes a workforce that needs a place to live.

"If we're still a growing state, and we want people to have access to affordable land and affordable houses, oftentimes that's going to be those new subdivisions that are built on the exterior of the big cities," explained Walden. "It's a tradeoff, and that's what we pay people in the legislature to try to figure out - what's the correct side to choose?"

Walden says he recently took note that the small farm off U.S. 401 South in Garner where he has purchased strawberries every season was up for sale.

"We're sure it's going to be developed," he said.

Foreign adversaries, fertilizer,

and the future

In the last legislative session, the N.C. House and N.C. Senate advanced competing bills that would bar "adversarial" foreign governments from holding agricultural land in North Carolina.

Senate Bill 394 specifically defined those adversaries as China, Iran, North Korea and Russia. The intent was to protect the state's military installations and ensure "farmers are able to produce a safe, abundant, and affordable supply of food and fiber."

This year, the threat may be more to likely come from developers with deep pockets and from the rising cost of fuel and fertilizer.

It's estimated that one-third of the world's fertilizer supply comes through the Strait of Hormuz, which is virtually closed due to the Iran war.

"We're an economy based on energy, and not only will farmers face higher costs for fertilizer, but they'll also face higher costs for delivering their products to market," Walden told Newsline.

Higher costs mean smaller prof-

its, and that may increase the temptation to sell.

North Carolina Insurance Commissioner Mike Causey said the majority of farms in Guilford County have vanished since he was growing up.

"One of the big reasons I hear from farmers is the high tax rate that farmers are having to pay on that land. And then there's good offers they get from developers for turning it into housing," said Causey. "It's a problem that needs funding and needs to be addressed before it's too late."

At the end of March, the N.C. Cooperative Extension and N.C. State will help coordinate the N.C. Farm Succession School, a day-long event to encourage farm families to plan for the future and successfully transition to the next generation.

Without intervention and a concerted preservation effort, it's projected that North Carolina could see 1.2 million acres of farmland repurposed by 2040, according to UNC-CH researchers and the American Farmland Trust.

## Dudley Flood Center Announces \$525,000 in Grant Funding

Raleigh, NC — The Dudley Flood Center for Educational Opportunity is proud to announce the receipt of a combined \$525,000 in grant funding over three years from the Burroughs Wellcome Fund and the Conway/Holderness Family Fund. This catalytic and sustaining investment represents a powerful vote of confidence in the Center's continued expansion of racial equity work, its mission, operations, and the students and communities it serves every day.

At a time when education systems and equity-centered work across the country face increasing challenges and constraints, this support ensures the Dudley Flood Center can continue to operate with strength, clarity, and purpose. These multi-year commitments provide not only



critical financial resources, but also stability allowing the Center to continue its recovery from funding loss, deepen its programming, sustain its team, and remain focused on long-term impact rather than short-term

survival.

"Sustained partnership like this allows us to do more than maintain our work, it allows us to strengthen it," said Deanna Townsend-Smith, Sr. Director of the Dudley Flood

Center. "Because of this support, we can focus on delivering programs with care and consistency, ultimately impacting students and educators across the communities we serve."

The Dudley Flood Center works to expand educational opportunity through research, professional learning, strategic support, and convening, serving as a hub for leaders and organizations committed to creating more just and effective education systems. The Center's work is grounded in the legacy of Dr. Dudley Flood, a pioneering civil rights leader, educator, and policy architect whose lifelong commitment to fairness and access continues to guide the organization's vision.

"In this moment, honoring Dr. Flood's legacy requires more than

reflection; it requires action," Townsend-Smith added. "This funding allows us to continue that work with integrity and resolve, even as equity-focused efforts like the Flood Center are increasingly threatened, misunderstood, defunded, or not resourced. It affirms that this work matters, and that it must continue."

The Burroughs Wellcome Fund and the Conway/Holderness Family Fund have been long-standing partners in advancing opportunity, innovation, and community-rooted solutions. Their combined investment will support core operations as well as programming that directly serves educators and students across North Carolina and beyond, ensuring the Dudley Flood Center remains responsive, resilient, and impactful

over the next three years.

As the Center looks ahead, this partnership reinforces a shared commitment to sustained change, thoughtful leadership, and the belief that students deserve systems designed to support their full potential. The Burroughs Wellcome Fund and the Conway/Holderness Family Fund have demonstrated leadership in exploring and participating in collaborative funding models that prioritize and sustain racial equity initiatives and practitioners while courageously encouraging other funders and philanthropic partners to support equity-focused efforts across NC. For more information about the Dudley Flood Center for Educational Opportunity and its work, visit <https://floodcenter.org/>.

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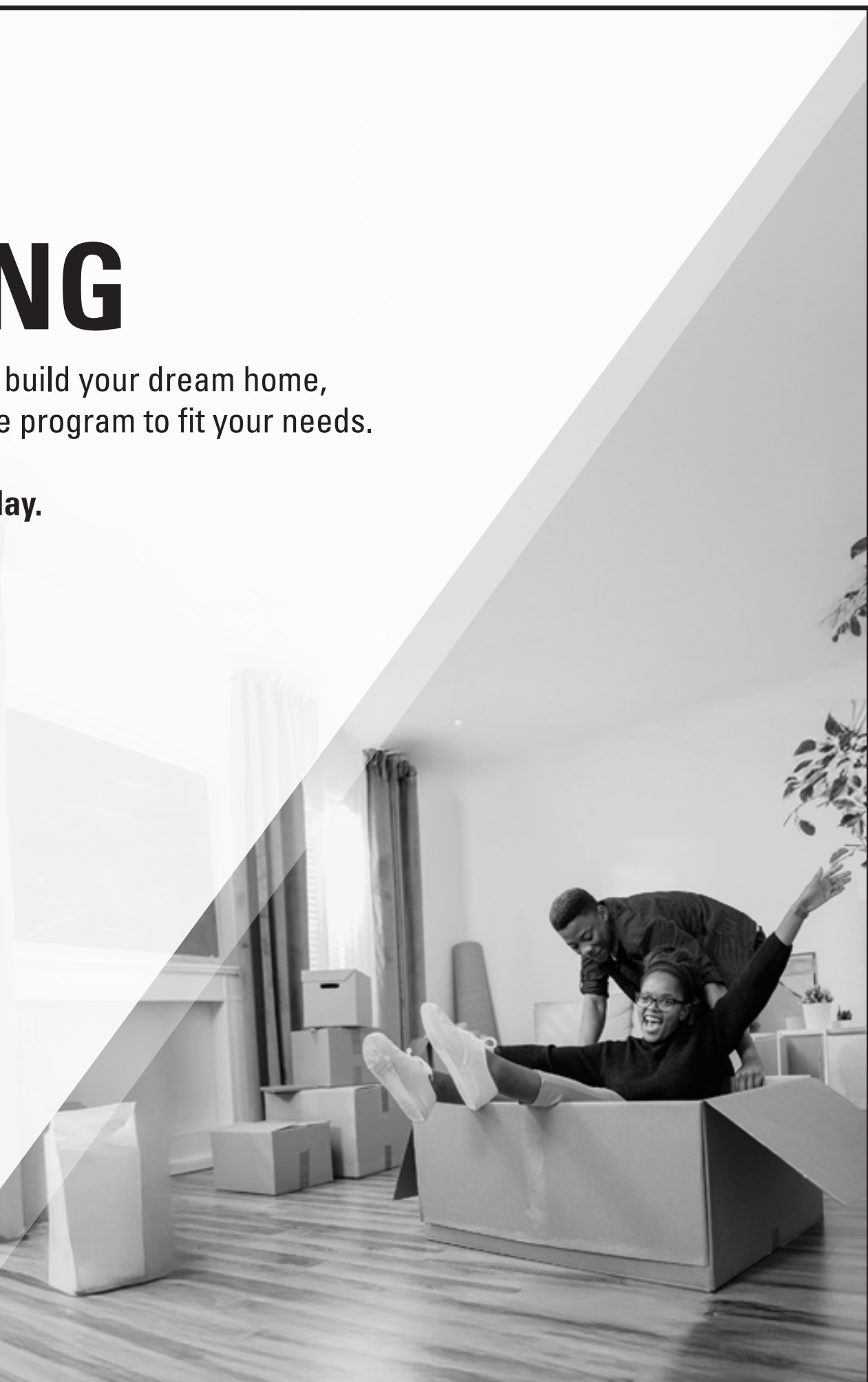
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# 'I Took Two Bites And Had To Spit It Out': How Candy Makers Are Phasing Out Real Cocoa In Chocolate Bars

THE GUARDIAN — Just before Valentine's Day, Brad Reese bought a bag of Reese's Unwrapped Peanut Butter Creme Mini Hearts from his local convenience store in West Palm Beach, Florida. It was a brand-new product, released especially for the holiday, tagline: "We'll never break your heart."

Reese is a Reese's aficionado who makes a point of trying everything the company produces. This isn't a coincidence: he's one of the Reeses, a grandson of HB Reese, the former Hershey dairy farmer who invented the peanut butter cup in 1928. Although he's never worked for Reese's or Hershey, which acquired the peanut butter cup company in 1963, Reese considers himself a custodian of HB's legacy. He also takes an avid interest in the Hershey company and its leadership.

The Unwrapped Peanut Butter Creme Mini Hearts proved to be a disappointment. "I took two bites and

I had to spit it out," Reese says. "I've never had that happen to me, ever, in the 70 years of my life. There was no taste. It was inedible."

Reese took a closer look at the packaging, specifically the ingredients. He noticed that instead of milk chocolate, the mini hearts were covered in a chocolate-flavored coating that was mostly sugar and vegetable oil; the list of ingredients contained a disclaimer that the candy contained less than 2% cocoa. He visited the candy aisle at a nearby supermarket to investigate further and found that several other Reese's and Hershey products, including Take 5, Mr Goodbar, and Heath bars, also lacked milk chocolate.

Cocoa, obviously, is the central ingredient in chocolate. It's a complex food that, on its own, tastes almost bitter. Since humans began eating it, they've combined it with other ingredients, such as cinnamon and chilis, to make it more palatable. Hershey,

Reese's, and other commercial chocolate companies use sugar, milk and oil. For Reese, the extras had finally overshadowed the bittersweetness of the cocoa.

Incensed, and also a little depressed, Reese went on LinkedIn and wrote an open letter to Todd Scott, the manager of corporate brand and editorial at Hershey, to complain. "How does the Hershey Company continue to position REESE'S as its flagship brand, a symbol of trust, quality and leadership, while quietly replacing the very ingredients (Milk Chocolate + Peanut Butter) that built REESE'S trust in the first place?" he wrote.

Scott did not respond directly, but, because of Reese's ancestry, the press took notice. MrBeast invited Reese on to his YouTube channel to try his own Feastables brand of peanut butter cup. The Hershey company did not respond to the Guardian's request for comment, but has put out a pair of statements about Reese's statements,



one from the Reese family about how most of HB Reese's descendants didn't share Brad's criticisms, and another defending the integrity of Reese's Peanut Butter Cups, which are still made with milk chocolate and peanut butter as they've always been, while acknowledging a certain amount of experimentation in other shapes and products.

"Hershey's has been blaming cocoa

bean volatility," says Reese. "They're squeezing every last penny they possibly can."

The volatile cocoa market is, in fact, a major factor in chocolate pricing. Since 2020, the climate crisis has led to a cycle of droughts and floods in Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire, which, combined, produce 70% of the world's chocolate. This led to diseases that destroyed the cocoa plantations and decimated the cocoa supply, says Alexis Villacis, an economist at the Ohio State University who studies the chocolate industry. (Like Reese, Villacis comes from a chocolate family: his grandparents were cocoa farmers in Ecuador.)

The demand for chocolate, though, has only increased. Our society, as Villacis notes, has been built around chocolate. It's become essential to holiday celebrations including Halloween, Christmas, Easter and Valentine's. It's marketed as the ultimate cheap luxury, something to brighten up a dreary time, and seasonal sales

have continued to grow in spite of the rise of GLP-1s and healthier lifestyles. Limited supply and greater demand led to higher prices: by 2024 cocoa had risen from \$2,000-3,000 per ton to \$12,000. "In my years in this industry, I've never witnessed a cocoa market quite like the one we're experiencing today," Mark Taylor, Hershey's senior director of strategic sourcing, wrote on the company's website in April 2025.

This led to a conundrum at Hershey's. The company, like its British counterparts Cadbury and Rowntree's, was founded to produce inexpensive chocolate for the masses: the original Reese's Cup sold for a penny (also now extinct). In order to keep prices low, large chocolate manufacturers have resorted to what Villacis calls "creative" strategies such as shrinkflation, or selling smaller candy bars at the same price. This is especially popular in the UK and in

(See **CANDY MAKERS**, P. 5)



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# Health and Wellness

## Medicare Advantage ‘Dark Money’ Group Attempts To Win Higher Payments For Some Insurance Companies

KFF HEALTH NEWS - Judging by more than 16,400 comments recently posted on a federal government website, you'd think there was a groundswell of older Americans demanding that federal officials hike payments to their Medicare Advantage health insurance plans.

Yet about 82% of the comments are identical to a letter that appeared on the website of a secretive advocacy group called Medicare Advantage Majority, a data analysis by KFF Health News has found.

The “dark money” group does not reveal its funders or much else — other than to say it is “dedicated to protecting and strengthening Medicare Advantage” and is “powered by hundreds of thousands of local advocates nationwide.”

“Our campaign provides information and offers tools for concerned Americans to use to reach decision makers,” spokesperson Darren Grubb said in an email. The group has spent more than \$3.1 million on hundreds of Facebook ads since September 2024, according to Facebook’s Ad Library, a database of the social media company’s online ads.

There’s no doubt health insurers are unhappy with a January proposal from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, or CMS, to keep Medicare Advantage reimbursement rates essentially flat in 2027 — far less than they expected from the Trump administration.

Medicare Advantage plans differ from traditional Medicare because private insurance companies administer them. The insurance plans enroll about 35 million members, more than half the people eligible for Medicare. The plans offer things like vision and drug coverage, but Medicare Advantage insurers restrict the hospitals and doctors that patients can use and require prior approval for various procedures.

CMS is set to announce a final decision by early next month on the rate proposal. The agency solicited public comments on the proposal from Jan. 26 through Feb. 25 to give interested parties and the public a chance to air their views.

Medicare Advantage Majority, which says the rate proposal amounts to a “cut” in services and warns of dire consequences for seniors should it go through, accounted for at least 13,522 of the 16,422 comments published as of March 12.

The proposed rate plan “puts my access to care at risk,” the group’s template letter to policymakers reads in part. “If the investment made by Washington in the Medicare Advantage program is nearly flat year-over-year, I could lose benefits I rely on every day, including affordable prescriptions, capped out of pocket costs, and access to trusted doctors and specialists.”

“Medicare Advantage is not optional for me. The cost protections alone have saved me thousands of dollars and made my health care manage-

able. Without this program, I would face higher costs, fewer providers, and fewer benefits at a time when I can least afford it,” the letter states.

Critics warn that these sorts of campaigns may create a misleading impression of grassroots support, especially when it’s not clear who is financing them.

“It puts a different spin on a massive groundswell of comments to know all are being driven by one specific organization,” said Michael Beckel, director of money in politics reform for Issue One, a group that seeks to limit the influence of money on government policy and legislation.

“There’s no way for the public to know what wealthy donors or special interests are funding dark money groups like this,” he said. “That means there’s no scrutiny of who’s really calling the shots.”

Some health care policy experts, who have long argued that the government overpays Medicare Advantage plans by tens of billions of dollars every year, believe industry groups or their surrogates routinely overstate possible negative impacts of rate decisions they don’t like.

“The plans always say that the sky is falling,” said Matthew Fiedler, a health care policy expert with the Brookings Institution. “The industry has a lot of money at stake here. They try to exert pressure on policymakers any way they can.”

At the same time, even critics concede that some of the millions of people enrolled in Medicare Advantage plans could face service cuts if insurance companies are not satisfied with government payments.

“It is legitimate for people to be worried,” said Julie Carter, counsel for federal policy at the Medicare Rights Center, a group that advocates for older adults and people with disabilities.

Her group argues that Medicare Advantage plans have never attained expected cost savings and instead have been overpaid for years at least partly due to “actions to maximize profits.” She said the health plans “are supposed to be saving money, not taking extra.”

People struggling to pay health care bills may have little use for the policy debate in Washington.

“If it wasn’t for being able to have this program, I really wouldn’t be able to afford any kind of medical services, to be honest,” said EsterAlicia Rose, 75, who works at the front desk of a hotel in Pagosa Springs, Colorado. She said she signed the Medicare Advantage Majority form letter to reach policymakers.

Kathy Lovely-Marshall, 66, a retired nurse who lives in Brookville, Ohio, did too. She said she receives “a lot of perks” from her plan, such as dental care, eyeglasses, and prescriptions.

“All those things are a big plus as far as I am concerned,” she said. “I’m very happy with the plan I have.”

But Corenia Branham, 90, a widow



and cancer survivor who lives in Alum Creek, West Virginia, said she wants nothing to do with Medicare Advantage plans run by private health insurance companies. She said she didn’t turn in any of the four form letters under her name, which were posted online by CMS on Feb. 23 and

signed, “Miss Corenia Branham Branham.” It’s not clear why her last name is signed twice.

Branham said she’s not on Medicare Advantage and doubts she could count on it for needed care.

“I wouldn’t recommend it to nobody,” she said. “I sure don’t want

anything to do with it.”

Grubb, the Medicare Advantage Majority spokesperson, disputed that account. He said Branham responded to an ad on Facebook. On Feb. 6, she “completed the form with her information and chose to send her comment to CMS as well as to her representatives in Congress and the White House,” he said.

Other Medicare Advantage advocacy groups have stepped up ad campaigns as the rate decision looms.

The Better Medicare Alliance, whose “allies” include a range of health insurers, health care providers, and consumers, is urging seniors to “Tell Washington to Stand Up for Medicare Advantage.”

“We’ve mobilized beneficiaries to write letters and make phone calls, and we’ve run digital ads on streaming platforms,” spokesperson Susan Reilly said.

Reilly said that this year roughly 3 million seniors “were forced to find new coverage” because plans either shuttered operations or left some areas.

She also said Medicare Advantage plans have “scaled back” benefits such as offering transportation to medical appointments, nutrition support, and dental and vision coverage, while over the past two years beneficiaries have faced an average \$900 increase in out-of-pocket maximums.

“We do view this as especially serious,” Reilly said. “This isn’t a single bad year; it’s the cumulative effect of years of underfunding and policy disruption from the previous administration that has left the program increasingly vulnerable.”

As of March 12, CMS said it had received 46,884 comments but had posted only 16,422 online.

CMS spokesperson Catherine Howden said the agency would make more comments public “as soon as practicable.”

“The agency focuses on reviewing the substance of timely submissions and does not speculate on volume, sentiment, or potential impact of comments while the comment period is open/under review,” she said in a statement.

### CANDY MAKERS

Continued from page 4

Europe: Toblerone in particular has come under scrutiny from fans who monitor the bars’ shape and size. But the most creative solution has been reformulation.

“They are just now replacing cocoa with other types of things, like more milk or more almonds or other types of coatings,” Villacis says.

One German brand, the Nestlé-owned Choco Crossies, recently announced it was eliminating cocoa altogether from its new Snack Vibes line, replacing it with ChoViva, a lab-grown “chocolate alternative” made from fermented sunflower and grape seeds.

The US, UK and EU all have government regulations about how much — or how little — cocoa an item can contain and still be considered “chocolate”, but those regulations are much stricter in Europe. In the UK, for instance, after Pladis reduced the amount of cocoa bean-derived ingredients in its McVitie’s Penguin and Club bars to below 20%, both treats were officially demoted from “chocolate” to “chocolate flavour”. In the US, the threshold is 15%, and low-cocoa items like the Unwrapped Mini Hearts can still be described as “chocolate candy”.

At the very end of 2025, cocoa prices fell for the first time in five years. The west African cocoa plantations had recovered from the weather shocks of the early 2020s and were producing again. This is not, however, a harbinger of the return of cheaper chocolate. Most chocolate companies already bought their cocoa in advance at the higher prices and are still working through it. They also have to rebuild their margins; last year, says Villacis, “they were absorbing a lot of the shock.” Also, when it comes to inflation, it’s much harder to lower prices than it is to raise them.

The cocoa supply still remains limited. The UK and EU have imposed stricter regulations against buying cocoa from deforested areas, and chocolate companies everywhere have become aware of the poor optics of working with growers that use enslaved children as free labor. Many younger cocoa farmers, says Villacis, are abandoning the plantations to look for work in the cities. Ecuador and Indonesia are both poised to replace west Africa as the world’s top source of cocoa, but they, too, are vulnerable to climate breakdown.

So what can the average consumer do? Brad Reese, for one, has sworn that he will never buy another Reese’s product again. “And for me, the grandson of HB Reese, to say that?” he says. “Blasphemy!”

It’s possible that if enough people join him, Hershey will respond. “These big companies are testing how consumers react,” says Villacis. “And they will adjust accordingly.”

Consumers are getting savvier, too, about reading packaging. Many have cracked the code of “milk chocolate” versus “chocolate candy” and know that ingredients are listed in order of largest first. A quick scan of Reese’s new Easter line reveals that the Snack Size Peanut Butter Eggs contain real milk chocolate, while the Mini Eggs, whose lead ingredient is sugar, merely have chocolate-ish coating.

Someone who is really serious about chocolate may be willing to pay more for a brand like Tony’s Chocolonely that makes a point of using ethically sourced ingredients, or for a premium chocolate bar like Pacari (Villacis’s personal favorite) that contains upwards of 50% cocoa and costs more than \$10. But the real appeal of mass market chocolate like Hershey’s has always been its cheapness.

# Arts & Culture

## How Eastern NC Became A Refuge For Runaway Slaves

By Jordan Meadows

Staff Writer

The Civil War dramatically reshaped the lives of enslaved people in eastern North Carolina, particularly after Union forces captured key coastal towns in 1862. Before the war, the conditions faced by enslaved African Americans in the region were harsh and restrictive.

Union forces launched a campaign to seize the North Carolina coast, with the reluctant approval of President Lincoln, in early 1862. The expedition began in the Outer Banks and moved inland, capturing several key locations, including Roanoke Island, New Bern, Washington, Beaufort, and Morehead City.

The fall of New Bern in particular became a defining moment for enslaved people across eastern North Carolina. News of the Confederate defeat spread quickly through nearby plantations and rural communities, signaling that Union forces now controlled a major stronghold in the region.

As they arrived at Union camps, their legal status was uncertain because under U.S. law, they were still technically considered property. Union commanders initially struggled with how to handle the influx of refugees until they declared escaped enslaved people “contraband of war,” arguing that their labor supported the Confederate war effort and could therefore be seized by the Union army.

The policy allowed Union forces to keep them within military lines

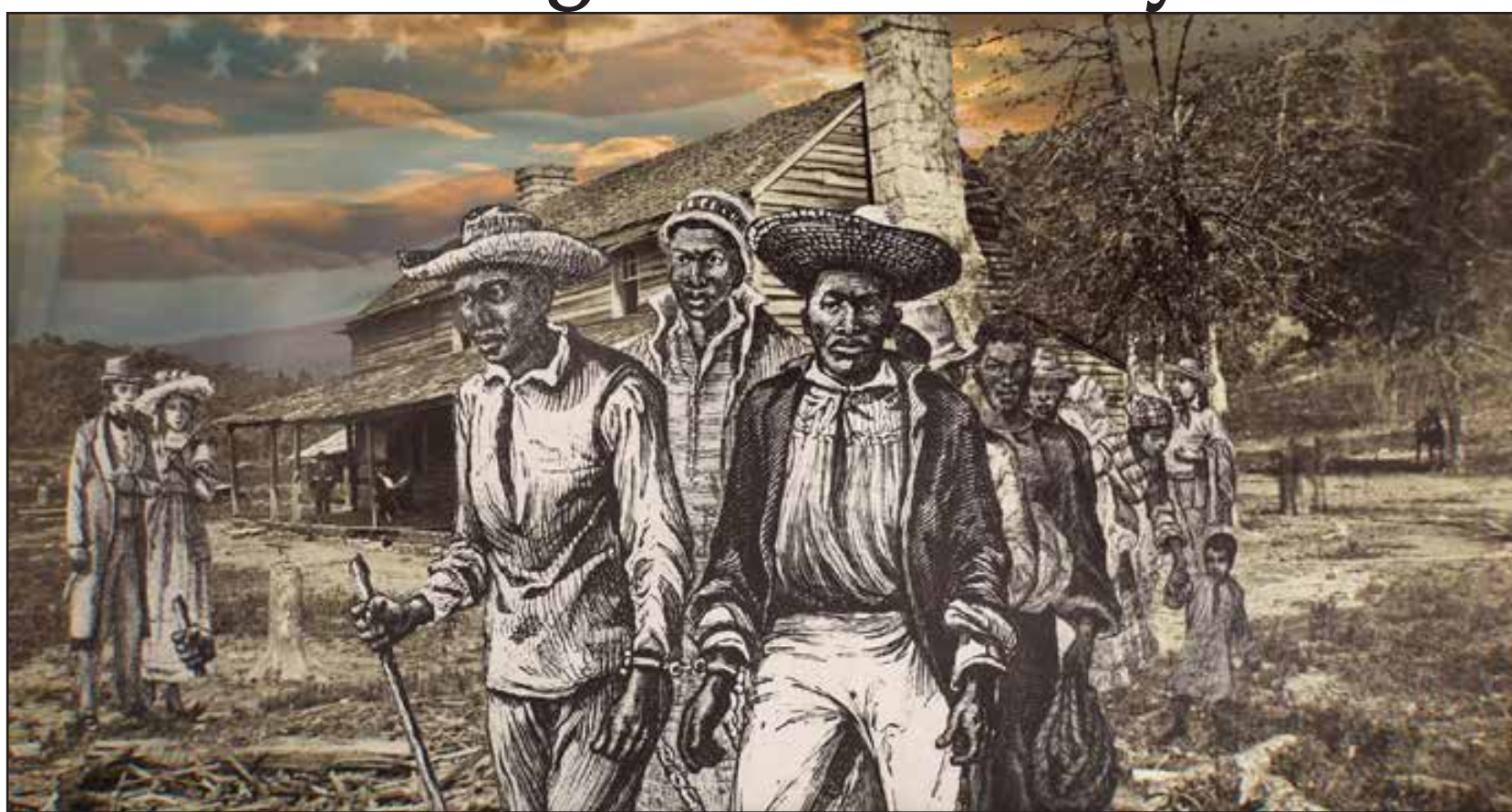
and prevented their return to enslavers. By 1862, reports estimated that roughly 10,000 freedpeople had gathered in New Bern and other Union-controlled areas across eastern North Carolina.

These newly freed men and women quickly became active participants in the Union war effort. Across the camps, they helped construct fortifications, cooked for soldiers, cared for the sick, and assisted with the daily operations of military bases. Black men were not initially permitted to serve as soldiers, but many contributed as scouts and spies. Their deep knowledge of the region’s rivers, swamps, and coastal terrain proved invaluable to Union commanders unfamiliar with the landscape.

Freedpeople also began building communities around the Union camps. In and around New Bern, they constructed homes, opened small trade shops, and cultivated garden plots to help feed their families during the war. Education quickly became a priority as well.

In 1862, educator Vincent Colyer established the first formal school for formerly enslaved people in New Bern. Yet African Americans themselves had already begun teaching one another before outside missionaries arrived. Black teachers such as Martha Culling organized schools in contraband camps.

While the Union presence created new opportunities for freedom, the war continued to bring violence and uncertainty. In April 1864, Confederate forces captured Plymouth, North



Carolina, and reports soon emerged of a massacre of Black residents and Union supporters following the town’s surrender. Although the exact number of victims remains unknown, the attack sent hundreds of freedpeople fleeing toward the safety of Union-controlled New Bern.

Throughout the war, several refu-

gee communities formed across the North Carolina coast as enslaved people escaped to Union territory. One of the earliest was Hotel De’Afrique near Hatteras Inlet, where enslaved people from the Outer Banks settled in abandoned military barracks after Union forces captured the area in 1861. Simi-

lar contraband camps emerged in Washington, Beaufort, and Morehead City as the Union tightened its hold on the coast. By January 1864, nearly 2,500 freedpeople were living in the camp at Beaufort alone.

Out of this network of wartime settlements emerged one of the most enduring communities of freedmen

in the state. After the fall of Plymouth, a settlement formed along the Trent River just across from New Bern. Known at the time as the Trent River Settlement, the community grew as freedpeople built homes, churches, and businesses. Over time, it became known as James City.

## Book Review: Permission to Be You

By Jheri Hardaway

Staff Writer

Alaina Love’s book *Permission to Be You* promises you can “discover your purpose and passions to bring your best self to everything and everyone.” The heart-beat of Love’s book is the *Passion Profiler*, a tool designed to move beyond “what you do” and identify “why you do it.” Love argues that most professionals suffer from “purpose-blindness,” where they achieve external success (the title, the sales quota, the published ar-

ticle) but feel an internal erosion because their daily tasks don’t align with their innate passions. Love works to help people process and transform into who and what they truly aim to be.

She categorizes passions into archetypes such as the Builder, the Connector, or the Altruist. The book serves as a diagnostic guide to help readers stop asking for permission to exist as they are and start demanding that their careers reflect their core identity. Chapters include: How Crisis Shapes us, Igniting the Spark, Ten Permissions

to Give Yourself, and many other exploratory topics to guide the reader towards empowerment.

An element of this book that I love is the “Pause and Ponder” portions that allow the reader to reflect deeply on the sentiments in each chapter. From questions to surveys, to insightful advice, this book is great for anyone looking to personally improve themselves and their families. Great for parents and wonderful for business leaders, *Permission to Be You* is a major key to personal empowerment.



## Nigeria’s Online Content Creator Market Has Boomed

THE HILL - On a humid afternoon in Lagos, a shoot for a comedy skit is under way on a set that looks more like a small film production.

Dozens of people mill about: lighting assistants, a sound engineer, a makeup artist and even a content creator recording unscripted behind-the-scenes footage. At the centre is Broda Shaggi, born Samuel Animashaun Perry, who is issuing instructions, rehearsing lines and performing caricatures.

Behind the punchlines and viral memes lies a lot of hard work, according to Olufemi Oguntamu, the chief executive of Penzaarville Africa, a Lagos-based media agency that manages Broda Shaggi.

“He shoots like he’s doing a movie,” Oguntamu said. “He gets buses to take the crew around. They use drones. They use big cameras. It’s serious business now ... people don’t understand how difficult it is to keep up creating content every day because it has to be new content.”

Broda Shaggi’s comedy career began at the University of Lagos, when he started uploading skits to social media platforms. He has since amassed 11.9 million followers on Instagram, released music and crossed over into film and television work.

The 32-year-old is one of the most popular figures in an ecosystem of Nigerian social media creators that includes skit-makers, YouTubers, TikTokers, podcasters, streamers and more who are building audiences across Africa and the diaspora.

According to the 2026 Africa Creator Economy Report, the sector is valued at \$3.1bn (£2.3bn) and projected to grow nearly six-fold to \$17.8bn by 2030. In Nigeria, however, one of the key countries driving this growth, many influencers say their fame is yet to translate to finan-

cial comfort.

Beneath the headline numbers lies a sad reality. More than half of Africa’s creators earn less than \$100 a month. Platforms make less money from advertising than in other parts of the world, which translates into lower payments to creators, meaning many rely on family, friends and brand partnerships for their income.

More than a third view their jobs as hobbies, in part because of severe operational challenges such as unstable power supply and access to funding.

“In Nigeria, public capital is not readily available to digital creators ... it doesn’t exist,” said David Adeleke, the chief executive of the newsletter *Communicate*, which co-authored the *Africa Creator Economy Report*. “A lot of the public capital that we find goes to filmmakers and infrastructure players, people building physical spaces.”

Adeleke suggested a policy like the UAE’s renewable 10-year golden visa, which allows creators to live and work tax-free. “One of the biggest problems that Nigerian creators have is the shortage of monetisation systems. We need policies that specifically focus on encouraging international companies to come into Nigeria to enable local creators to monetise their content globally.”

Some creators in Kenya have been pushing for their government or startups to spend at least 10% of their digital advertising budget on creators and creator platforms.

The Nigerian government is hoping the creative economy can help to diversify its oil-dependent revenues. There is no specific creator tax, but those who earn more than 50m naira (£27,360) a year are taxed up to 25% as part of a bracket for freelancers and remote workers.

This January, the third African

Creators Summit drew thousands of content creators, including some from outside Nigeria, to Lagos. Speakers called for more supportive policies from government for the emerging sector, instead of taxing it first.

There was also talk of dismantling bureaucracy and updating existing legislation for federal agencies that regulate the sector. Some also accuse the government of wanting to censor online content under the guise of combatting misinformation and disinformation.

Beyond monetisation, creators face intellectual property theft and AI cloning. Experts say coordination between regulators and global tech firms to protect creators is key. Government officials say they are willing to engage industry players but are uncertain about whom, due to the existence of several creator unions.

Baba Agba, an adviser with the ministry of art, culture, tourism and creative economy, said at the summit: “The sector needs to come together and say, this is what we want ... and they need to want to work with us, too.”

Oguntamu agrees. “I’ve seen a lot [of unions], but none has weight ... maybe that’s why we’re not being taken seriously yet by the government. Because we don’t have one voice.”

He said meetings with government would need to focus on providing an “enabling environment” – including bringing internet data costs down – to be considered productive.

“As long as we have [that] enabling environment, every creator can thrive,” he said. “A lot of content creators who are big now resort to only shooting interior content because, when they go outside, every [street urchin] wants a piece of them ... if you are abroad and you are shooting content, it’s so different.”

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As part of this exciting process, Wake County Public Libraries and the Design Team would like to hear from you about your dreams for the new building and the types of spaces and programs that could make the library an even more valuable asset for the Southeast Raleigh community.

We will be hosting community engagement pop-ups at the two events listed below, and we would love to see you there and hear your ideas!

**Black Farmers  
Market**

May 24, 2026 from 1-4 p.m.

Montague Plaza

2718 Rock Quarry Road

Raleigh, NC 27610

**Juneteenth  
Celebration**

June 19, 2026 from 5-9 p.m.

John Chavis Memorial Park

505 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.

Raleigh, NC 27601



**Digital Survey**

You can also share your input virtually.

Please scan the QR code to the left with your phone’s camera to access our digital survey and share your input!



Wake County  
Public Libraries

VINES



The Carolinian wants your old family photos and stories. Our Legacy Foundation is archiving local history and we want your family’s story!

Please email us at [info@caro.news](mailto:info@caro.news) to set up a time to bring in your pictures so that we may scan, and to record your oral history so that future generations will know what was happening in the photos.

# Community

## Raleigh City Council Pushed for Safer Streets in Meeting

By Jordan Meadows

Staff Writer

A growing set of tax incentives meant to encourage development and expand affordable housing in Wake County is now raising alarms among local officials, who say a surge in property tax exemptions could jeopardize funding for schools, public safety, and other essential services.

During a Monday morning meeting of the Wake County Board of Commissioners, Deputy Housing Director Mark Pearlman outlined the complex landscape of housing incentives available to developers, while Tax Administrator Marcus Kinrade warned that one increasingly common strategy is rapidly eroding the county's tax base.

At the center of the concern is what officials and housing advocates call a "rent-a-nonprofit" structure. Under a 2013 ruling stemming from a North Carolina Court of Appeals case, for-profit developers can qualify for property tax exemptions by transferring a small ownership stake—sometimes as little as 0.1%—to a nonprofit partner, provided the property offers units at or below 80% of the area median income.

Kinrade told commissioners the impact has been significant.

"This is a huge leak in your tax base, and the City of Raleigh's also," he said. "Most of these things are occurring in the city, so it's affecting them even worse than it's affecting the county."

The number of exempt properties has nearly doubled in recent years, rising from 66 in 2020 to 136



RALEIGH RESIDENTS ARE INVITED TO SHARE IDEAS FOR SAFER STREETS AS THE CITY GATHERS INPUT FOR ITS SAFE STREETS FOR ALL PLAN.

in 2025. Those exemptions now account for a projected \$776 million reduction in taxable property value—equivalent to about \$4 million in lost annual revenue. This year alone, the county received roughly 170 applications covering \$1.2 billion in property value, which could result in an additional \$6.2 million loss.

"If this issue continues to grow," Kinrade warned, "it could encompass 94 percent of all the multi-family units in Wake County," potentially removing an estimated \$27 billion in value from the tax base and costing as much as \$140 million in revenue.

Lower tax revenues mean less funding for public schools, libraries, emergency services, and infrastructure—costs that may ultimately shift to homeowners.

As Janet Cowell put it, "We'd either have to cut services or raise taxes on single-family or townhome-

owning residents... or not hire those police, build those fire stations." She continued, "It's scary because you can see a train coming down the railroad track at you... That is the General Assembly."

State lawmakers like Representative Erin Paré of Southern Wake pledged to work toward closing the loophole, while Phil Berger has convened a committee to examine broader property tax concerns. Local officials are also urging reforms that would tighten definitions of affordable housing and require annual reporting to ensure tenants meet income eligibility requirements.

The loophole exists alongside a broader suite of incentives designed to spur housing development. These include Builders Exclusion tax breaks, which allow developers to defer taxes on new residential construction for up to three years and

commercial projects for up to five. Developers can also tap into federal Low-Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC), Opportunity Zone capital gains incentives, and Brownfields agreements that reduce taxes on redeveloped contaminated sites.

In Raleigh, additional tools such as expedited permitting for subsidized affordable housing and tax increment-style reimbursement programs aim to accelerate development in 2021. City leaders argue these programs are necessary to attract investment and address housing shortages, though critics say they can subsidize projects that would have been built anyway while accelerating gentrification.

Meanwhile, Wake County is also investing in affordable housing through financing mechanisms like the Wake County Opportunity Impact Fund, which partners with Raleigh-based CAHEC Capital. Since 2015, the organization has issued more than \$104 million in short-term loans supporting over 60 affordable housing developments, and has helped finance more than 890 communities nationwide since 1992.

Still, even as officials emphasize the need for more affordable housing, the fiscal pressures are mounting. Wake County's \$2.1 billion budget for fiscal year 2026 already includes a property tax increase, following a period in which property values rose by 51% between 2020 and 2024. Commissioners have also had to make tradeoffs, including reducing seed funding for a housing acquisition fund and scaling back planned EMS staffing increases to redirect resources toward schools.

As North Carolina continues without a full state budget, Governor Josh

Stein has called on lawmakers to pass a \$1.4 billion "critical needs" spending package to support essential services. At the same time, a national housing bill under discussion in Congress—ROAD to Housing Act—could reshape how large developers build rental housing

altogether. "We're not against affordable housing," Kinrade said. "But we want it to be in the classic form... not this rent-a-nonprofit structure we think is just taking advantage of taxpayers."

### Women's History Month Spotlight Alumna Rev. Dr. Tiffany Bennett-Cornelous

Shaw University proudly celebrates the women whose courage, leadership and service continue to shape our communities.

Leadership in action looks like Alumna Rev. Dr. Tiffany Bennett-Cornelous '98, '14.

A member of the Shaw University Class of 1998 and Class of 2014, Alumna Rev. Dr. Tiffany Bennett-Cornelous earned a Bachelor of Science in computer science before returning to ShawU to earn a Master of Divinity from the Shaw University Divinity School in 2014. She later completed a Doctor of Philosophy in organizational leadership from The Chicago School of Professional Psychology.

Alumna Bennett-Cornelous serves as pastor of worship, arts and media at Macedonia New Life Church in Raleigh, North Carolina. She continues to give back to her alma mater as an adjunct professor at the Shaw University Divinity School, where she has helped shape new academic opportunities for future faith leaders.

Professionally, she serves as the inaugural principal project and program manager of faith-based initiatives at Blue Cross NC, connecting faith leaders and organizations across North Carolina with resources that strengthen communities. Her work has also helped create employment opportunities for Shaw University students.



## Affordable Housing Loopholes Pushing Wake County Tax Hike on Residents

By Jordan Meadows

Staff Writer

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LADY RAMS GET SECOND NCAA DII VICTORY AFTER DEFEATING GANNON UNIVERSITY BY 19 POINTS

WINSTON-SALEM — The Winston-Salem State University Lady Rams' remarkable NCAA Division II Tournament run came to a heartbreaking end March 16, falling 65-64 to No. 1 seed Indiana University of Pennsylvania in the Atlantic Regional Championship.

WSSU held a late 64-60 lead with under a minute remaining, but IUP responded with a clutch three-pointer in the closing seconds to take the win. The Lady Rams had one final chance but were unable to convert, ending their bid for a championship appearance.

Despite the loss, WSSU showed resilience throughout the game, battling back and forth after briefly trailing early. Coach Tierra Terry called the defeat emotional but emphasized the team's growth and fight, while players reflected on the experience as both tough and rewarding.

The loss caps off one of the most impressive seasons in program history, as the Lady Rams finished 28-4 after a dramatic turnaround from the previous year and captured their first CIAA championship.

### Beta Lambda Sigma Chapter of Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Inc. Launches 2026 Greater Impact Scholarship

Raleigh, NC — The Beta Lambda Sigma Chapter of Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Inc., in partnership with the BLS Charitable Foundation, is proud to announce the launch of the 2026 Greater Impact Scholarship, an initiative designed to support and empower young women pursuing higher education.

The Greater Impact Scholarship is open to young ladies graduating from high school in Wake County who plan to enroll in a four-year college/university or a community college beginning Fall 2026. This scholarship reflects the chapter and foundation's collective commitment to educational advancement, leadership development, and service within the community.

Eligible students are encouraged to apply beginning January 29, 2026, at 12:00 a.m. Applications must be submitted no later than March 29, 2026 at 11:59 p.m. Interested applicants can apply by scanning the QR code on promotional materials or by visiting <https://bit.ly/BLSGreater26>.

Through the Greater Impact Scholarship, the Beta Lambda Sigma Chapter and BLS Charitable Foundation continue their missions of fostering academic excellence and creating meaningful opportunities for future leaders. They look forward to supporting the educational journeys of deserving students across Wake County.

For additional information or questions regarding the scholarship, please visit the chapter website, follow the Beta Lambda Sigma Chapter of Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Inc. and BLS Charitable



## 2026 Women's Leadership Conference



The Greater Raleigh Chamber's 13th annual Women's Leadership Conference returned to the Raleigh Convention Center on March 17, bringing together more than 1,000 executives, entrepreneurs, and emerging leaders under this year's theme: Amplify Your Influence.

Throughout the day, attendees heard the stories of women who have expanded their reach, accelerated progress, and created meaningful pathways for others — and left equipped to write the next chapter of their own.

The 2026 conference theme celebrates women who are elevating

leadership, driving innovation, and transforming industries. Headlining the conference was Ali Ingersoll, a globally recognized keynote speaker, Ms. Wheelchair America, corporate consultant, and health equity advocate. Known for her sharp wit, applied neuroscience, and unforgettable

storytelling, Ali has advised Fortune 500 organizations and influenced landmark Medicare policy change. Her keynote, The Art of Moving Forward, equipped leaders with the mindset and tools to amplify their influence and embrace what's next even when the path is not clear.





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# Church

## Attitudes Toward Women Serving As Sr Pastors In Black Baptist Churches

By Louie Ross I

Special to The Carolinian

Rev. Gina Stewart made history in January 2024 by becoming the first woman to preach at the joint gathering of the major National Baptist conventions. The moment drew national attention and sparked conversation about the role of women in Black Baptist leadership. Rev. Stewart is a well-known Baptist leader who in 2021 also became the first woman president of the Lott Carey Baptist Foreign Mission Society, a major historic Baptist mission organization. In 2025, Rev. Tracey L. Brown became the first woman to preach at the annual meeting of the National Baptist Convention USA itself. These recent milestones demonstrate the gradual opening of convention platforms to women preachers in the more conservative Baptist Conventions.

The Black Baptist tradition represents one of the most common denominations among Black churches in the United States. These congregations exist within a complex landscape where churches may align with larger conventions or operate as independent bodies guided by local bylaws, deacon and trustee leadership, and congregational traditions. This church diversity creates varying practices regarding women's ordination and service as senior pastors.

The question of women's pastoral leadership in Black Baptist churches passes through multiple factors: biblical interpretation, social change, leadership philosophies, church governance structures, and historical context. Some congregations embrace more progressive views on women in ministry, while others maintain more conservative positions rooted in traditional interpretations

of scripture. Because Black Baptist churches tend toward congregational autonomy, practices vary significantly both across and within denominational families.

The Black church has historically occupied a central place in social, political, and cultural life. W.E.B. Du Bois recognized the Black church as a multifunctional institution serving purposes that included mutual aid, cultural expression, political mobilization, and spiritual formation. Within this tradition, the senior pastor holds a position of exceptional influence—one that shapes the congregation's theological identity, its engagement with community concerns, and its internal norms about who is qualified to lead.

The question of whether women should serve in this role—as senior pastor—has been a matter of considerable debate across American Protestantism. In some denominations, the issue has largely been settled in favor of inclusion; in others, particularly those with more traditional theological orientations, formal barriers remain. The Black Baptist tradition presents a particularly complex case because it encompasses a spectrum of denominations, from the more conservative National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc., to the more progressive Progressive National Baptist Convention (PNBC).

Each convention—and often individual local churches—makes decisions based on multiple factors, creating complexity in understanding attitudes regarding women as senior pastors. This decentralized structure can generate both conflict and frustration among church members, particularly given that women constitute the majority of participants in most Black Baptist congregations.



Generally, the Progressive National Baptist Convention, American Baptist Churches USA, Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, and Free Will Baptist Churches accept women as pastors, though actual numbers remain relatively low. More conservative conventions, including the National Baptist Convention USA, National Baptist Convention of America Inc., and National Missionary Baptist Convention of America, typically do not accept women as pastors. However, practices vary widely within conventions, and churches may shift toward more progressive policies over time.

The Southern Baptist Convention, with which a smaller number of Black churches affiliate, maintains strict prohibitions against women serving as pastors and has expelled churches that called women to pastoral leadership. This stance was demonstrated in the 2023 expulsion of Saddleback

Church, led by Rick Warren, after the congregation ordained women as pastors.

Several other Christian denominations—including Methodists, Pentecostals, Presbyterians, Lutherans, and Episcopalians—have more readily embraced women's ordination. However, even within these groups, individual churches may restrict women from pastoral roles. African American churches reflect this tension. Some predominantly Black denominations, such as the Church of God in Christ (COGIC), do not permit women to serve as pastors, though women may serve as evangelists and missionaries.

Theological and scriptural interpretations within Black Baptist churches have historically been the source of a range of attitudes regarding women's leadership roles. In many congregations, women have been restricted from the senior pastorate because of traditional interpretations of biblical teachings on gender, particularly passages such as 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 and 1 Timothy 2:11-12. Interpretations of these passages vary considerably.

Despite these restrictions, women have played vital roles in education (teaching Sunday School and Bible study), music ministry, and social outreach through missions and community services. Black women have consistently demonstrated greater representation and participation than men in Black church congregations. While women constitute a majority of church workers, they have been underrepresented in senior leadership positions.

This pattern reflects a broader tension within the Black church tradition: between its progressive commitments on issues of racial justice and its more conservative posture on questions of gender. The US Senator and pastor Raphael Warnock has observed that the Black church has tended to be strong on social justice while remaining comparatively weak on gender justice.

Using survey data from the Pew Research Center's "Faith Among Black Americans" study, it examines

the distribution of attitudes across several demographic, religious, and political variables. The main question was whether women should be allowed to serve as a senior pastor of a congregation.

The Pew Research Center surveyed 8,660 Black adults (2019–2020), including 2,663 Black Baptists. Baptists were the largest denomination (46%), followed by non-denominational churches (17%) and Pentecostals (11%).

Among Black Baptists, 88.3% supported women as senior pastors. Support was strong across both genders (89% of women, 87% of men) and highest among younger adults. Never-married individuals (92%) and those with a bachelor's degree or higher (90%) also showed slightly stronger support.

Religious behavior showed an inverse relationship: those who prayed less and attended church less frequently were more supportive, while frequent attendees and those who viewed religion as very important showed lower support. Politically, support was highest among liberals, followed by moderates and conservatives.

The findings show that nearly nine in ten Black Baptist respondents believe that women should be permitted to serve as the senior religious leader of a congregation. This suggests that formal barriers do not reflect the attitudes of most pew members.

The 12 to 27 percent of respondents who oppose women's pastoral leadership are concentrated among those most deeply embedded in congregational life. This means opposition is not simply marginal—it is present among influential members of the congregation.

This pattern creates tension for congregational change efforts. The institutional gatekeepers—deacons, trustees, pastoral search committees, and denominational leadership—are often drawn from those least supportive of women in senior pastoral roles.

This dynamic has been described as a "gatekeeper problem," where institutional processes empower those

who prefer the status quo.

For women who feel called to serve as senior pastors, the findings offer both encouragement and caution. Most of the people in the pews are supportive, but institutional power may not reflect that majority.

Scholars have identified strategies for navigating these realities, including building relationships with key leaders, mentorship, and engagement with supportive denominational networks.

Congregational education is also important. Teaching on biblical examples of female leadership can help shift perspectives over time.

Churches that have successfully transitioned to women's pastoral leadership can serve as models, offering practical insight into managing resistance and supporting new pastors.

Implications of this study also speak to broader questions about the Black church's role in leadership development. Excluding women from top positions limits both the church and the broader pipeline of Black leadership.

At the same time, the data suggest that community attitudes are more progressive than formal policies, creating pressure for change.

This study examined attitudes toward women serving as senior pastors using Pew Research Center data. The findings reveal broad support across the Black Baptist community.

The most consequential finding concerns religious engagement: those most deeply embedded in church life are the least supportive. This creates a structural paradox that requires attention to institutional processes.

Political conservatism also emerges as a factor, reflecting diversity within Black Baptist congregations.

The overwhelming majority of Black Baptists support women's pastoral leadership. The challenge is translating that support into institutional practice.

Pew Research Center bears no responsibility for the analyses or interpretations of the data presented here. The opinions expressed herein are those of the author.

## Practical Biblical Principles

WORTHY IS THE LAMB  
PART ONE

Read: Revelation 5:1-8

By John L. Caldwell, Pastor  
New Jerusalem Baptist Cathedral

The scene, in the eyes of John, who is told to come up here is one of God seated on the throne. John is immediately in the Spirit and is about to be shown what events are to come after John sends the seven letters to the seven churches warning each of them of their spiritual condition.

A Letter went out to the Loveless Church in Ephesus. A letter went out to the Persecuted Church. A letter went out to the Compromising Church. A letter went out to the Angels of the Corrupt Church in Thyatira, to the Dead Churches in Sardis, The Faithful Church in Philadelphia and the Lukewarm Church in Laodicea. The Angels mentioned here are the spiritual leaders or Candle lights (pastors) of the churches. If there is fog in the pulpit there will be smoke in the pews. These seven letters were meant to be a prelude to Christ returning to possess His Churches.

No one knows to this date when Christ will return. The critical issue is to be spiritual ready when He returns (Matthew 25:10). Time will not matter in Christ's return. Prior to Christ's return the "un-announced" Rapture will take place whereas, the "Messianic Church" filled only with Believers will be taken up to heaven. This event will be immediately followed by the "Seven Year" tribulation period. The first three and a half years of the seven years will be God's and His Son's time to pour out their judgement upon the earth. The second half of the seven years will be the worst part called the great Tribulation period all brought on by the anti-Christ who will pour out havoc upon God's people, the Jews, who have yet to claim Christ as the Messiah.

Before The Rapture takes place, God will have to remove the "Restraint" from the earth (The Holy Spirit) who restrains the devil (2 Thessalonian 2:7-8). This is done so as to reveal the identity of the anti-Christ and his coming.

Believe it or not God will be in the process of re-claiming His people (the Jews) through such great tribu-

lation just as He had promised His "newly appointed" servant, Abraham, He would do some two thousand years earlier (Genesis 12:1-3). God is about to show John that the appointed time has passed and He, God, is about to come and "make up" His jewels, so to speak, and bring His children home (John 14:2). The beginning of this home coming process starts with God commanding John to come up where He is and see what the future holds and what is to come.

John, being in the Spirit at this time, came face to face with the Almighty God of Creation. This experience was so overpowering to John that John could not describe or define the majesty of He who sat on the throne. The best John could do is to describe Almighty God in terms of beautiful and expensive stones, such as jasper, sardius stone, and emerald. And there was a rainbow around the throne. In addition, there were twenty-four additional thrones with twenty-four elders sitting and clothed in white robes; and they had crowns of gold on their heads.

From the throne came lightning, thundering, and voices just as there were when God first introduced Himself to the Israelites at Mt. Sinai, located at the western part of the Saudi Arabia desert. The thundering and lightning are God's call signs to get everybody's attention. There were also four living creatures, each having six wings, and were full of eyes around and within. And they do rest day or night, saying: Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty, who was and is to come! Then Everybody around the throne fell down and worshipped Him who sat on the throne (Revelation 4:9-10). "You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power; For You created all things, And by Your will they exist and were created." Revelation 4:11). What is often overlooked in the bible is the fact the angel's major reason for praising God throughout is for His act of Creation, which leads to His plans of bringing human beings into His creation (Genesis 1:26).

This scene is a beautiful prelude to the introduction of the Lamb at the "End Times," who paid the price of all of man's sin, and for all who would have come to Him. John's

eyes are now directed by the Spirit to focus on the scroll in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne. This scroll is written inside and on the back, sealed with seven seals. This scroll is the title deed to the earth. The question now is, "Who will and is able to claim this deed to the earth?" At this point in time, the devil is in firm control of the earth by reasons of the by-gone sins of men.

John then saw and heard a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, "Who is worthy to open the scroll and loose the seals? John saw no one in heaven or on the earth or under the earth who was able to open the scroll or even to look at it. John began to cry because no one was found who would be able to open and read the scroll—symbolizing the up and progressive-coming judgments upon the earth fostered by God and aided by Jesus Christ.

One of the elders told John not to cry anymore for the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed to open the scroll and loose its seven seals. John looked and he saw in the midst of the throne, and four living creatures and elders stood a Lamb as though it had been slain having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent out to all the earth. Then the Lamb came and took the scroll out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne.

Again, all around the throne fell down and worshipped the Lamb with a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. And they sang a new song, saying, "You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals; For You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood.

Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne, the living creatures and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice, "Worthy is the lamb who was slain To receive power and riches and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and blessings!" Before Christ broke the first seal, all the servants in heaven fell into worshipping the Lamb, who is the only One worthy to break the seals.

## SERMON of the WEEK



GOD'S GOT IT ALL IN CONTROL

Sermon by Mother Belinda Mckoy  
Scripture: "Fret not thyself because of evildoers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity. For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb. Trust in the Lord, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed. Delight thyself also in the Lord; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart. Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass." Psalm 37:1-5 KJV.

"We are living in a time where everything seems out of control: the price of food, the price of gas, the affordable housing, the government, our children, spouses, all out of control. It would not be bad if you thought there was a way to bring it all back

under submission, but we are learning that all the stopgaps to control the uncontrolled are no longer reliable.

Even though the world we now live in is out of control, we do not have to worry because God promised that he would never leave us or forsake us. God's Got It All In Control.

Psalm 37:1-2 "Fret not thyself because of evildoers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity. For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb."

Fret is to constantly or visibly be worried or anxious. Do not worry about the haters. The ones who do not mean you any good. Some people are just mean. They have a reprobate mind and cannot do it right even if they want to.

They are workers of iniquity. They are immoral people. There is nothing you can do about people who have no morals or integrity. We see the world trying to make a switch and get rid of all the good, moral, respectable, and God-fearing people and replace them with thugs, murderers, child molesters, and immoral people.

Do not worry about it because David said, "they shall soon be cut down like the grass and wither as the green herb." No matter what it looks like, God has a way. God's Got It All In Control. In His own time, he will fix it. Do not give up.

Psalm 27:14 "Wait on the Lord; be of good courage, and he shall

strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord."

God has it all in control, and he is going to do just what he said he would do. He can do exceedingly, abundantly, and above all measures. What are we going to do? Trust in the Lord and do good. Love our neighbors as ourselves. Do good to them that despitefully use us. We will dwell in the land and be fed.

When we know that God is able, we can relax when evil is all around. I know that sometimes it looks like you are not going to make it, but this same Psalmist said, "I once was young, but now, I'm old, and I have never seen the righteous forsaken nor his seed begging bread." God is in control.

God was in control for Abraham and Isaac with a ram in the bush. God was in control for Moses at the Red Sea. God was in control of the three Hebrew boys in the fiery furnace. God was in control for Daniel in the lion's den. God was in control of the woman with the issue of blood. God was in control of the blind man sitting by the pool.

He was in control when they crucified his son. He was in control on the third day when he rose. And he is in control right now.

Please visit [www.youtube.com/@lincolnparkholinesschurch1913](http://www.youtube.com/@lincolnparkholinesschurch1913) to watch this week's sermon on video. We invite you to Like, Subscribe, and Share your comments. We would love to hear from you.



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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.



## News Analysis: South Carolina State University Dealing With Fiery Controversies

By Hazel Trice Edney

A historically Black university in Orangeburg, S.C. is reportedly mired in controversy following two homicides and a shooting on campus. The campus newspaper, The Bulldog, reported canceled classes following a Feb. 12 shooting that killed two non-students and left one student injured and hospitalized.

“South Carolina State University is on fire!” says a statement sent anonymously to the Trice Edney News Wire. The official university spokesperson Sam Watson did not return a phone call for comment on issues outlined in the document. But at least one well-placed and credible campus insider, who would only speak anonymously, said the description is true and growing.

SCSU “is facing a convergence of crises that appear to extend far beyond isolated incidents,” the statement said. “Campus safety failures, governance disputes, declining student outcomes, and mounting questions about executive accountability now form a pattern that has sparked widespread concern on the campus of nearly 3,000 students.” The statement comes amidst continued concerns about safety on college campuses, especially racist threats to HBCUs.

It was only six months ago amid violent threats against campuses of historically Black colleges and universities that the NAACP and the United Negro College Fund issued statements renewing their concerns about threats of violence on HBCU campuses. Those concerns were expressed amid bomb and gun threats upon the anniversary of the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks.

“Today, multiple HBCU campuses received violent threats including bomb and shooting intimidation. These incidents mirror the wave of threats that began on Jan. 1, 2022, with more than 75 HBCUs receiving targeted acts of intimidation, impacting 51 different institutions and 77 days of classes being disrupted. In recent years, the threats have happened in 18 states and the District of Columbia, in 34 different congressional districts. Unfortunately, today’s events show this pattern continues,” stated a release from the UNCF Sept. 11, 2025. “HBCUs are being targeted at a rate higher than any other category of higher education institutions,” stated Lodriguez V. Murray, senior vice president for public policy and government affairs, UNCF.

These threats are often fearsome because they are mostly anonymous and from a familiar enemy on the outside. But what happens when a campus appears to be imploding with controversy between the powers that be within? That’s the question being asked by associates of SCSU.

Though sources say they are fearful to speak on the record, there are clear indications of smoldering controversies.

For example, the Faculty Senate unanimously voted 14–0 recently to declare “no confidence” in the Police Chief and the Vice President of Finance and Operations, citing their failure to ensure campus security in the wake of the shootings.

WISTV.com reports it obtained “a copy of a letter sent to SC State President Alexander Conyers from the school’s faculty senate dated Feb. 16. The letter, signed by Senate Faculty President and Chair Alexander Thierry, calls for the removal or resignation of SC State Police Chief Richard Johnson and Vice President of Finance and Operations Gerald Smith. It also states that the two received unanimous votes of no confidence from the faculty senate.”

There is also friction between the university and its affiliated SCSU Foundation.

The anonymous statement to this news wire says “a February letter from Foundation counsel, the Board of Trustees’ vote to terminate the Memorandum of Understanding was described as procedurally defective, alleging trustees were denied the opportunity to publicly debate the motion before voting. The same letter alleges that donor deposits intended for the Foundation were recorded as Foundation revenue but deposited into university-controlled accounts after changes were made within the institution’s gift-processing system. Although certain funds were later returned, the Foundation has formally requested a full audit of donor deposits processed during the relevant period.”

As the campus prepares for Spring Break next week, students and faculty will get a break; not just from classes; but from the smoldering controversies apparently plaguing the university.

# Other Viewpoints

## Black, Irish, and Revolutionary

By Jheri Hardaway

Staff Writer

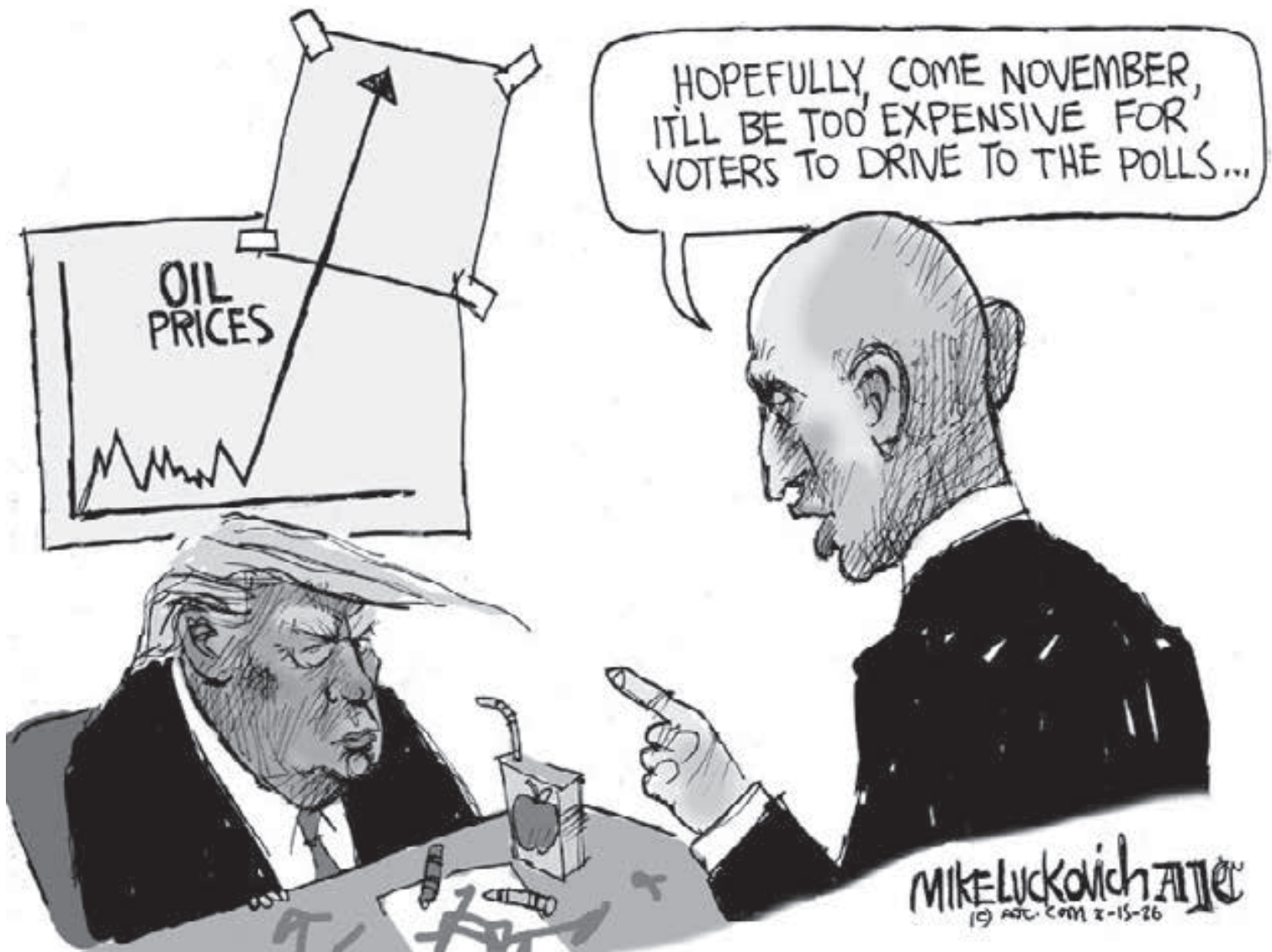
In celebration of St. Patrick’s Day, I am incredibly proud to share the story of my lineage, particularly my connection to my 7th Great-Grandfather, Colonel Dr. Benjamin Kilgore (1740–1810). As a direct descendant, I can proudly say that I am a Daughter of the American Revolution (DAR).

Benjamin Kilgore was a remarkable figure, a first-generation American whose family had emigrated from Northern Ireland. He was not just an early American but a dedicated fighter and officer in the American Revolution. His military service was significant; he began as a Captain and was actively involved in the struggle for independence. A harrowing moment in his service occurred in 1779, when he was captured by the British during the Siege of Charleston but managed to escape. However, Benjamin Kilgore was not a man to be detained for long. He managed to make a daring escape and successfully reached the safety of Charleston. His commitment to the cause was evident when, after losing his superior officers, he immediately stepped up and took command, demonstrating exceptional leadership and bravery under fire.

Following the war and his distinguished service, Colonel Dr. Benjamin Kilgore lost his first wife, Anna McCreary, due to a conflict with natives, which their only son, James (my ancestor), survived. Dr. Kilgore eventually settled in Kentucky, married Jane Ann Martha McDavid, a marriage that produced 12 children. Colonel Dr. Benjamin Kilgore passed away in 1810. His legacy was passed down through the generations, directly influencing my own family history. My father, in particular, was raised by his grandmother, Armanda Jane Kilgore.

This story is so much bigger than my family and me. This is a powerful tribute to our shared lineage, to American history. The story of Colonel Dr. Benjamin Kilgore is a perfect example of how “hidden” histories are often the most vital threads in the American tapestry. Expanding on this narrative involves looking at the complex, shared reality of American history and how these intersecting bloodlines shape a more unified understanding of who we are.

So no, I’m not seeking kisses for being Irish, I’m after clarity and the acknowledgement that we are all one. That the American story and the future of our country belong to We the People.



### AGED OUT OF A PAYCHECK

For many African American seniors in North Carolina, work is more than a paycheck—it’s dignity, independence, and the ability to support family across generations. Yet too many older workers, especially those of us over 40, find ourselves pushed out, laid off, or quietly replaced by younger, cheaper employees. And while age discrimination is illegal, the protections are not always as strong—or as simple—as people think.

Let’s break down what the law really says, who is protected, and where the gaps still leave too many older Black workers vulnerable.

The primary shield for older workers is the Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA), a federal law that protects people age 40 and older from discrimination in hiring, firing, layoffs, promotions, and pay. It applies to private employers with 20 or more employees, federal agencies, and most state and local government employers.

Under the ADEA, an employer cannot target older workers for layoffs simply because they cost more, have seniority, or don’t “fit the new culture.” They also cannot disguise age discrimination behind phrases like “fresh energy,” “new direction,” or “restructuring”—common language many of us have heard right before being shown the door.

But here’s the challenge: employers rarely admit age bias. Proving it often requires showing patterns—such as older workers being laid off while younger, less-experienced employees are kept or hired. That’s why understanding your rights is essential.

North Carolina does not have a broad, standalone age discrimination statute. Instead, it has the North Carolina Equal Employment Practices Act, which states that discrimination based on age (40+) is against public policy. However, this law does not create a direct claim for age discrimination the way federal law does. Instead, it supports wrongful termination lawsuits in state court.

This means that for most older workers in North Carolina, federal law (ADEA) is the main tool for fighting age-based layoffs.

If you work for the government, there may be: Different Rules, Different Rights

If you work for a state agency, county, or municipality, your rights depend on whether your job is covered by the North Carolina State Human Resources Act (formerly the State Personnel Act).

- If You ARE Covered by the State Human Resources Act, you have:
  - Just cause protections
  - Appeal rights if you believe a layoff was discriminatory
  - Access to internal grievance procedures
  - Protection under federal ADEA

These employees cannot be laid off arbitrarily. The agency must follow established procedures and cannot use layoffs as a disguise for age discrimination.

If You Are NOT Covered by the State Human Resources Act it’s a different story.

You do not have the same job protection or appeal rights. Your protections come primarily from:

- Federal ADEA
- Federal WARN Act (which requires advance notice for large layoffs) Nolo
- Local government policies, which vary widely

In other words two people doing similar work for the public can have very different rights depending on their classification.

And then there are Private Sector Workers

For private sector employees, the ADEA is the main protection. But remember:

- It applies only to employers with 20+ employees.
- North Carolina is an at-will state, meaning employers can lay you off for almost any reason—except an illegal one like age discrimination.
- You can file a lawsuit in state court for wrongful termination based on age discrimination, supported by the state’s public policy protections.

If you suspect age discrimination, document everything—emails, performance reviews, comments, and who was laid off versus who was kept.

- Age discrimination hits Black workers harder. We often:
  - Earn less over a lifetime
  - Have fewer retirement resources
  - Support extended family
  - Face both racial and age bias in the workplace

When layoffs target older workers, Black seniors are disproportionately harmed.

And in North Carolina—where many older African Americans work in government, healthcare, education, and service industries—the gaps in coverage matter. Workers not protected by the State Human Resources Act are especially vulnerable.

This is why you need to:

1. Know your rights. If you’re 40+, you are protected under federal law.
2. Request written layoff criteria. Employers must be consistent and cannot target older workers.
3. File quickly. ADEA claims must be filed with the EEOC before going to court.
4. Talk to an employment attorney early. Many offer free consultations.
5. Don’t ignore subtle signs. Comments about “slowing down,” “retirement plans,” or “new energy” can be red flags.

As African American seniors, we’ve spent decades building North Carolina’s workforce, communities, and institutions. We deserve fairness, dignity, and full protection of the law. Understanding your rights is the first step in making sure no employer—public or private—can quietly push you aside because of your age.



### IT’S WOMEN’S HISTORY MONTH

This month is Women’s History Month, and I am learning so much. I am especially inspired by women who stepped into their callings, no matter how the world tried to define them.

On Saturday, I attended a birthday celebration for Ms. Nettie Bryant, the mother of my Ligon High School classmate, Patrick Bryant. She turned 100 years old last week. I marveled as Pat shared that his mother had always said she would live to be 100, and she did. How did she know? According to her testimony, it was her close walk with God. Her faith, trust, and obedience carried her from one day to the next.

There are others as well. One woman at her church has also reached that milestone, and at First Baptist, there is someone who is now 103. Over the last ten years, I have witnessed so many people reach 100 and beyond that I could call the roll. While I am impressed by their longevity, what stands out even more is the life they lived. It is not just about age, but about faithfulness and a life not ruled by fear.

This month, I have learned about many women who refused to be limited by fear or by what the world predicted for them. We celebrate well-known women, politicians, leaders of large organizations, ministers, writers, poets, judges, lawyers, singers, and actresses. But I am equally inspired by the women whose names are not widely known, my own mother, aunts, in-laws, friends, classmates, teachers, and church members, too many to name.

Recently, I learned about Charlotta Bass, who purchased the California Eagle newspaper and used it to expose lynching and injustice. The Ku Klux Klan attempted to silence her, but she stood her ground, even meeting them with a pistol. They left her alone.

I also learned about Perleen McClinton, who contracted polio at age two and used a wheelchair her entire life. After her husband was killed while she was pregnant, she raised her son alone. But she did not stop there. She fought to make the world more accessible for people with disabilities, long before the Americans with Disabilities Act was signed. She helped bring about the first wheelchair ramp at a federal courthouse in Pensacola, Florida.

There are countless other stories. A woman who fought wrongful termination after 24 years of work and won. Two sisters, one deaf and one blind, who went on to earn advanced degrees. These stories remind us that many of the limitations we accept are rooted in fear, not truth.

I am persuaded that if God has given us an assignment, we must carry it out with the belief that no weapon formed against us will prosper. Fear may ask, “What about those who were harmed or martyred?” Faith responds that even their lives were not in vain. When placed in God’s hands, their stories still prosper.

Someone recently shared a video of a 97-year-old woman who described a near-death experience in which she believed she was sent back with a message about love, justice, and truth. Whether one accepts such accounts or not, the central message aligns with what Scripture has long taught. The Bible reminds us that God’s vision of humanity includes all people. At the Mount of Transfiguration, the disciples saw a glimpse beyond this world. Paul wrote of seeing things too wonderful to describe. These moments suggest that God, in His wisdom, sometimes allows us to see beyond what we think we know.

If we believe we can limit women, Black people, or any group through policies rooted in division or fear, then we are listening to the wrong voices. No one can override God’s purpose.

As we continue to learn these stories, especially those of people who were once overlooked or rejected, we are reminded of a powerful truth. We can challenge the belief that we are limited. We can live fully into the declaration, “I am somebody.”

Be blessed today. Know that you are blessed and always have been.



# Classifieds

## DURHAM COUNTY

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
DURHAM COUNTY

### NOTICE TO CREDITORS

In the General Court of Justice,  
Superior Court Division  
Before the Clerk

File No.: 26E000085-310

Having qualified as EXECUTOR of the Estate of JEAN HOWELL REESE, deceased, late of Durham County, North Carolina, this is to notify all persons, firms, and corporations having claims against the Estate to present them to the undersigned, in writing, at the address shown below, on or before June 22, 2026 or this Notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery.

All persons indebted to the decedent or the Estate are requested to make immediate payment to the undersigned. This the 19th day of March, 2026.

Cheryl Messer, Executor  
3324 Bellmont Mt. Herman Rd. Lot 8

Burlington, NC 27215

3/19, 3/26, 4/2, and 4/9/2026

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
DURHAM COUNTY

### NOTICE TO CREDITORS

In the General Court of Justice,  
Superior Court Division  
Before the Clerk

File No.: 25E000948-310

Having qualified as EXECUTOR of the Estate of FRANCES LOUISE HARRIS, deceased, late of Durham County, North Carolina, this is to notify all persons, firms, and corporations having claims against the Estate to present them to the undersigned, in writing, at the address shown below, on or before June 22, 2026, or this Notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery.

All persons indebted to the decedent or the Estate are requested to make immediate payment to the undersigned. This the 19th day of March, 2026.

Joyce Harris, Executor

7508 Russell Rd.

Durham, NC 27712

3/19, 3/26, 4/2, and 4/9/2026

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
DURHAM COUNTY

### NOTICE TO CREDITORS

In the General Court of Justice,  
Superior Court Division  
Before the Clerk

File No.: 22E000620-310

Having qualified as ADMINISTRATOR of the Estate of JUDITH S. FORD AKA JUDITH SPENCER FORD, deceased, late of Durham County, North Carolina, this is to notify all persons, firms, and corporations having claims against the Estate to present them to the undersigned, in writing, at the address shown below, on or before June 22, 2026, or this Notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to the decedent or the Estate are requested to make immediate payment to the undersigned.

This the 19th day of March, 2026.

Connie K. Ford, Administrator  
c/o Law Offices of Kenneth J. Steinberg, P.A.

3215 Guess Road, Suite 110

Durham, NC 2770

3/19, 3/26, 4/2, and 4/9/2026

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
DURHAM COUNTY

### NOTICE TO CREDITORS

In the General Court of Justice,  
Superior Court Division  
Before the Clerk

File No.: 25E000192-310

Having qualified as EXECUTRIX of the Estate of ANTHONY WARASH, deceased, late of Durham County, North Carolina, this is to notify all persons, firms, and corporations having claims against the Estate to present them to the undersigned, in writing, at the address shown below, on or before June 22, 2026, or this Notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to the decedent or the Estate are requested to make immediate payment to the undersigned.

This the 19th day of March, 2026.

Candance J. Warash, Executor  
Law Offices of Kenneth J. Steinberg, P.A.

3215 Guess Road, Suite 110

Durham, NC 27705

3/19, 3/26, 4/2, and 4/9/2026

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
DURHAM COUNTY

### NOTICE TO CREDITORS

In the General Court of Justice,  
Superior Court Division  
Before the Clerk

File No.: 24E000229-310

Having qualified as EXECUTRIX of the Estate of ROBERT R. WILLIAMS, SR., deceased, late of Durham County, North Carolina, this is to notify all persons, firms,

and corporations having claims against the Estate to present them to the undersigned, in writing, at the address shown below, on or before June 22, 2026, or this Notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to the decedent or the Estate are requested to make immediate payment to the undersigned.

This the 19th day of March, 2026.

Shirley D. Williams, Executrix  
Law Offices of Kenneth J. Steinberg, P.A.

3215 Guess Road, Suite 110

Durham, NC 27705

3/19, 3/26, 4/2, and 4/9/2026

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
DURHAM COUNTY

### NOTICE TO CREDITORS

In the General Court of Justice,  
Superior Court Division  
Before the Clerk

File No.: 26E000332-310

Having qualified as ADMINISTRATOR of the Estate of MABEL OLIVIA ROYAL, deceased, late of Durham County, North Carolina, this is to notify all persons, firms, and corporations having claims against the Estate to present them to the undersigned, in writing, at the address shown below, on or before June 22, 2026, or this Notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to the decedent or the Estate are requested to make immediate payment to the undersigned.

This the 19th day of March, 2026.

Myra Lovelle Royal, Administrator

305 Starling Lane

Durham, NC 27713

3/19, 3/26, 4/2, and 4/9/2026

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
DURHAM COUNTY

### NOTICE TO CREDITORS

In the General Court of Justice,  
Superior Court Division  
Before the Clerk

File No.: 26E000290-310

Having qualified as EXECUTOR of the Estate of BABETTE GOODMAN BLAUG, deceased, late of Durham County, North Carolina, this is to notify all persons, firms, and corporations having claims against the Estate to present them to the undersigned, in writing, at the address shown below, on or before June 22, 2026, or this Notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to the decedent or the Estate are requested to make immediate payment to the undersigned.

This the 19th day of March, 2026.

Amy Oates, Executor

259 Duck Pointe Dr.

Roxboro, NC 27572

3/19, 3/26, 4/2, and 4/9/2026

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
DURHAM COUNTY

### NOTICE TO CREDITORS

In the General Court of Justice,  
Superior Court Division  
Before the Clerk

File No.: 26E000282-310

Having qualified as ADMINISTRATOR of the Estate of ERIC RASHARD BANKS, deceased, late of Durham County, North Carolina, this is to notify all persons, firms, and corporations having claims against the Estate to present them to the undersigned, in writing, at the address shown below, on or before June 22, 2026, or this Notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to the decedent or the Estate are requested to make immediate payment to the undersigned.

This the 19th day of March, 2026.

Bonswa D. Banks, Administrator

c/o Floyd B. McKissick, III, Esq.

McKissick & McKissick

835 N Mangum Street

Durham, NC 27701

3/19, 3/26, 4/2, and 4/9/2026

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
DURHAM COUNTY

### NOTICE TO CREDITORS

In the General Court of Justice,  
Superior Court Division  
Before the Clerk

File No.: 26E000263-310

Having qualified as EXECUTOR of the Estate of LINDA BARNETT, deceased, late of Durham County, North Carolina, this is to notify all persons, firms, and corporations having claims against the Estate to present them to the undersigned, in writing, at the address shown below, on or before June 22, 2026, or this Notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to the decedent or the Estate are requested to make immediate payment to the undersigned.

This the 19th day of March, 2026.

Vanessa Barnett-Loro, Executor

4100 Thetford Rd.

Durham, NC 27707

3/19, 3/26, 4/2, and 4/9/2026

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
DURHAM COUNTY

### NOTICE TO CREDITORS

In the General Court of Justice,  
Superior Court Division  
Before the Clerk

File No.: 26E000262-310

Having qualified as

ADMINISTRATOR of the Estate of ELIZABETH OLDHAM MESSER, deceased, late of Durham County, North Carolina, this is to notify all persons, firms, and corporations having claims against the Estate to present them to the undersigned, in writing, at the address shown below, on or before June 22, 2026, or this Notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery.

All persons indebted to the decedent or the Estate are requested to make immediate payment to the undersigned.

This the 19th day of March, 2026.

William Robert Oldham, III, Executor

c/o Ethan C. Timmins

Patrick Law, PLLC

3805 University Drive, Suite A

Durham, NC 27707

3/19, 3/26, 4/2, and 4/9/2026

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
DURHAM COUNTY

### NOTICE TO CREDITORS

ESTATE OF WALTER JOSEPH

PSOTER AKA WALTER J. PSOTER

FILE NO. 26E000234-310

ALL PERSONS, firms, and corporations having claims against WALTER JOSEPH PSOTER aka WALTER J. PSOTER, deceased, of Durham County, N.C., are notified to exhibit the same to the undersigned on or before June 19, 2026, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of recovery. Debtors of the decedent are asked to make immediate payment. This the 19th of March, 2026. Jodi A. Psoter, Executor of the Estate of Walter Joseph Psoter aka Walter J. Psoter, c/o Amanda Honea, Attorney, 1255 Crescent Green, Suite 200, Cary, NC 27518.

3/19, 3/26, 4/2, and 4/9/2026

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
DURHAM COUNTY

### NOTICE TO CREDITORS

In the General Court of Justice,  
Superior Court Division  
Before the Clerk

File No.: 25E001330-310

Having qualified as ADMINISTRATOR of the Estate of JOHN HENRY WALLER, JR., deceased, late of Durham County, North Carolina, this is to notify all persons, firms, and corporations having claims against the Estate to present them to the undersigned, in writing, at the address shown below, on or before June 15, 2026, or this Notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery.

All persons indebted to the decedent or the Estate are requested to make immediate payment to the undersigned.

This the 12th day of March, 2026.

Maxine Graham, Administrator  
c/o Floyd B. McKissick, III, Esq.

McKissick & McKissick

835 N Mangum Street

Durham, NC 27701

3/12, 3/19, 3/26, and 4/2/2026

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
DURHAM COUNTY

### NOTICE TO CREDITORS

In the General Court of Justice,  
Superior Court Division  
Before the Clerk

File No.: 25E001469-310

Having qualified as ADMINISTRATORS of the Estate of RICHARD FERGUSON JR., deceased, late of Durham County, North Carolina, this is to notify all persons, firms, and corporations having claims against the Estate to present them to the undersigned, in writing, at the address shown below, on or before June 15, 2026, or this Notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery.

All persons indebted to the decedent or the Estate are requested to make immediate payment to the undersigned.

This the 12th day of March, 2026.

Allie Williams and Ramonica C. Cannon, Administrators

c/o Floyd B. McKissick, III, Esq.

McKissick & McKissick

835 N Mangum Street

Durham, NC 27701

3/12, 3/19, 3/26, and 4/2/2026

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
DURHAM COUNTY

### NOTICE TO CREDITORS

In the General Court of Justice,  
Superior Court Division  
Before the Clerk

File No.: 25E001562-310

Having qualified as ADMINISTRATOR of the Estate of MARVA LOUISE BURNETT, deceased, late of Durham County, North Carolina, this is to notify all persons, firms, and corporations having claims against the Estate to present them to the undersigned, in writing, at the address shown below, on or before June 15, 2026, or this Notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery.

All persons indebted to the decedent or the Estate are requested to make immediate payment to the undersigned.

This the 12th day of March, 2026.

Germaine Burnette, Administrator

5306 Rose Garden Lane

Durham, NC 27707

3/12, 3/19, 3/26, and 4/2/2026

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
DURHAM COUNTY

### NOTICE TO CREDITORS

26E000229-310

All persons, firms, and corporations having claims against CHARLES ALVIN COOK, deceased, late of Durham County, NC, are notified to exhibit the same to the undersigned on or before the 15th day of June, 2026, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of recovery. Debtors of the decedent are asked to make immediate payment.

This the 12th day of March, 2026.

Jennifer S. Cook, Administrator CTA  
c/o Hemphill Gelder, PC

PO Box 97035

Raleigh, NC 27624-7035

3/12, 3/19, 3/26, and 4/2/2026

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
DURHAM COUNTY

### NOTICE TO CREDITORS

In the General Court of Justice,  
Superior Court Division  
Before the Clerk

File No.: 26E000136-310

Having qualified as EXECUTOR of the Estate of KATHERINE WILLIAMS AUSTIN, deceased, late of Durham County, North Carolina, this is to notify all persons, firms, and corporations having claims against the Estate to present them to the undersigned, in writing, at the address shown below, on or before June 15, 2026, or this Notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery.

All persons indebted to the decedent or the Estate are requested to make immediate payment to the undersigned.

This the 12th day of March, 2026.

Mary Moorefield Gravitt, Executor

1110 Stallion Court

Summerfield, NC 27358

3/12, 3/19, 3/26, and 4/2/2026

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
DURHAM COUNTY

### NOTICE TO CREDITORS

All persons, firms and corporations having claims against JOHNSIE DAVIS EGERTON, DECEASED, are notified to exhibit the same to the undersigned on or before June 10, 2026, or this notice along with the appropriate general statute will be pleaded in bar of recovery. Debtors of the deceased are asked to make immediate payment. This the 12 day of March, 2026. All correspondence should be to the Estate of Johnsie Davis Egerton, c/o Florence A. Bowns, Attorney, P.O. Box 51263, Durham, NC 27717.

3/12, 3/19, 3/26, and 4/2/2026

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
DURHAM COUNTY

### NOTICE TO CREDITORS

ESTATE OF PANDORA FRAZIER  
26E000261-310

All persons, firms, and corporations having claims against the Estate of Pandora Frazier, deceased, are hereby notified to present said claims to the undersigned Co-Executors of the estate on or before the date required by law, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery.

All persons indebted to the estate are requested to make immediate payment to the undersigned.

This the 12 day of March, 2026.

Teresa Crumpler, Co-Executor

1423 Copper Creek Dr.

Durham, NC 27713

Diane Voss, Co-Executor

1825 Old Red Mountain Rd.

Rougemont, NC 27572

3/12, 3/19, 3/26, and 4/2/2026

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
DURHAM COUNTY

### NOTICE OF SERVICE OF

PROCESS BY PUBLICATION  
In the General Court of Justice,  
District Court Division

File # 26CV000431-310

[CHILD CUSTODY PROCEEDING]

WEATHERSPOON, Plaintiff v.

SEALS and ANTONIO, Defendants.

To Guillermo Martinez Antonio:

TAKE NOTICE that a pleading

seeking relief against you has been

filed in the above entitled action.

The nature of the relief being

sought is as follows: that legal

custody of the minor child Abigail

Grace Martinez Seals, born on

6/12/2010, be granted to Plaintiff.

You are required to make defense

to such pleading no later than April

21, 2026, said date being forty (40)

days from the first publication of

this notice. Upon your failure to

do so, the party seeking service

against you will apply to the Court

for the relief sought.

This, the 12th day of March 2026.

**DURHAM COUNTY**

**NOTICE TO CREDITORS**  
In the General Court of Justice,  
Superior Court Division  
Before the Clerk

File No.: 25E000176-310  
Having qualified as ADMINISTRATOR of the Estate of AUDREY JACKSON LUCAS, deceased, late of Durham County, North Carolina, this is to notify all persons, firms, and corporations having claims against the Estate to present them to the undersigned, in writing, at the address shown below, on or before May 27, 2026, or this Notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery.

All persons indebted to the decedent or the Estate are requested to make immediate payment to the undersigned. This the 26th day of February, 2026.  
Torhi Klayette Jackson  
Administrator  
117 Holiday Court  
Greenville, NC 27834  
2/26, 3/5, 3/12, and 3/19/2026  
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
DURHAM COUNTY

**NOTICE TO CREDITORS**

The undersigned, having qualified as Executor of the Estate of EDWIN LEE MORRIS, Deceased, late of Durham County, North Carolina, does hereby notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against the estate to exhibit them to the undersigned at the offices of Munson Law Firm PLLC, P.O. Box 1811, Pittsboro, NC 27312 on or before the 26th day of May, 2026, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to the estate will please make immediate payment.

This 26th day of February, 2026.  
BARBARA MORRIS, EXECUTOR  
ESTATE OF EDWIN LEE MORRIS  
2/26, 3/5, 3/12, and 3/19/2026  
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
DURHAM COUNTY

**NOTICE TO CREDITORS**

26E000105-310  
Having qualified as Executor of the Estate of JOHN KEITH SPITZNAGEL AKA JOHN K. SPITZNAGEL, late of Durham County, North Carolina, the undersigned does hereby notify all persons, firms and corporations having claim against the estate of said decedent to exhibit them to the undersigned c/o Guido De Maere, P.A. at 100 Europa Drive, Suite 160, P.O. Box 3591, Chapel Hill, NC 27515 on or before the 26th day of May, 2026, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons, firms and corporations indebted to said estate will please make immediate payment to the undersigned.

This the 26th day of February, 2026.  
Jean S. Hetherington, Executor of the Estate of John Keith Spitznagel aka John K. Spitznagel  
Attorney for the Estate:  
Guido De Maere, P.A.  
P.O. Box 3591  
Chapel Hill, NC 27515-3591  
2/26, 3/5, 3/12, and 3/19/2026  
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
DURHAM COUNTY

**NOTICE TO CREDITORS**

Having Qualified as Executor of the Estate of BRENDA PITTS, deceased, late of Durham County, North Carolina, this is to notify all persons, firms, and corporations having claims against the estate of said deceased to exhibit them to the undersigned on or before the 26 day of May, 2026, or this Notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to said estate will please make immediate payment.

This the 26 day of February, 2026.  
Rashidah Bryant  
10 Pumpkin Place  
Durham, NC 27703  
Attorney for Executor  
Karen R. Carnegie  
300 George Washington Hwy N  
Chesapeake, VA 23323  
2/26, 3/5, 3/12, and 3/19/2026  
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
DURHAM COUNTY

**NOTICE TO CREDITORS**

In the General Court of Justice,  
Superior Court Division  
Before the Clerk  
File No.: 26E000187-310  
Having qualified as EXECUTOR of the Estate of BARBARA ANN MCKENZIE, deceased, late of Durham County, North Carolina, this is to notify all persons, firms, and corporations having claims against the Estate to present them to the undersigned, in writing, at the address shown below, on or before May 27, 2026, or this Notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery.

All persons indebted to the decedent or the Estate are requested to make immediate payment to the undersigned. This the 26th day of February, 2026.  
Leah Friedman, Executor  
8 Stillwater Park  
Durham, NC 27707  
2/26, 3/5, 3/12, and 3/19/2026

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
DURHAM COUNTY

**NOTICE TO CREDITORS**

Having qualified as Administrator of the Estate of JOAN ANN WORTH, Deceased, late of Durham County, North Carolina, the undersigned individual hereby gives notice to all persons, firms, and corporations having any claim against the Estate of Joan Ann Worth, Deceased, to present such claims to the Administrator, c/o Samantha J. Hovaniec, Brooks, Pierce, McLendon, Humphrey & Leonard, L.L.P., Post Office Box 1800, Raleigh, North Carolina 27602 on or before May 26, 2026, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons, firms, and corporations indebted to Joan Ann Worth, Deceased, are requested to make immediate payment to the undersigned Administrator.

This the 26th day of February, 2026.  
Jean M. Shanahan, Administrator of the Estate of Joan Ann Worth  
Samantha J. Hovaniec, Attorney  
Brooks, Pierce, McLendon,  
Humphrey & Leonard, L.L.P.  
Post Office Box 1800  
Raleigh, North Carolina 27602  
2/26, 3/5, 3/12, and 3/19/2026

**GUILFORD COUNTY**

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
GUILFORD COUNTY

**NOTICE TO CREDITORS**

In the General Court of Justice,  
Superior Court Division  
Before the Clerk

File No.: 25E002482-400  
Having qualified as ADMINISTRATOR of the Estate of JERRARD WHITTED, deceased, late of Guilford County, North Carolina, this is to notify all persons, firms, and corporations having claims against the Estate to present them to the undersigned, in writing, at the address shown below, on or before June 15, 2026, or this Notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery.

All persons indebted to the decedent or the Estate are requested to make immediate payment to the undersigned.  
This the 12th day of March, 2026.  
Marnisha Drake, Administrator  
83 Walker West Rd.  
Fayetteville, NC 28312  
3/12, 3/19, 3/26, and 4/2/2026

**ONslow COUNTY**

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
ONslow COUNTY

**SUMMONS**

Rule 204(c)(3)(B). Summons – Publication.

To: Gavin Phillip Chronister  
You have been sued by Taylor Kollmann, the Petitioner, in the Sixth District Magistrate Court Court in and for Bannock County, Idaho, Case No. CV03-25-03001.

The nature of the claim against you is Petition for Divorce.  
Any time after 21 days following the last publication of this summons, the court may enter a judgment against you without further notice, unless prior to that time you have filed a written response in the proper form, including the Case No., and paid any required filing fee to the Clerk of the Court 624 East Center, Pocatello, Idaho 83201 and (208) 236-7351 and served a copy of your response on the Petitioner's attorney Tiffany Johnson, 1505 Sierra Dr Pocatello ID 83201, at Tiffany@johnsonlawidaho.com Phone: (208)-269-8779

A copy of the Summons and Petition can be obtained by contacting either the Clerk of the Court or the attorney for Petitioner. If you wish legal assistance, you should immediately retain an attorney to advise you in this matter. Dated: 2/6/2026  
Bannock County Magistrate Court  
By Gayla Syphus, Deputy Clerk  
2/26, 3/5, 3/12, and 3/19/2026

**ORANGE COUNTY**

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
ORANGE COUNTY

**NOTICE TO CREDITORS**

FILE NO. 26E000076-670  
The undersigned, having qualified as Executor of the Estate of LINDA ANN DESROSIERS, Deceased, late of Orange County, North Carolina, does hereby notify all persons, firms, and corporations having claims against the estate to exhibit the same on or before 6/17/26, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. Debtors of the decedent are asked to make immediate payment.

This is the 19th day of March, 2026.  
Julie Warwick, Executor

c/o Attorney Heather Hazelwood  
PO Box 61182  
Durham NC 27715  
3/19, 3/26, 4/2, and 4/9/2026  
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
ORANGE COUNTY

**NOTICE TO CREDITORS**

In the General Court of Justice,  
Superior Court Division  
Before the Clerk

File No.: 24E001765-670  
Having qualified as EXECUTOR of the Estate of JAMES WC PENDERGRAFT, deceased, late of Orange County, North Carolina, this is to notify all persons, firms, and corporations having claims against the Estate to present them to the undersigned, in writing, at the address shown below, on or before June 8, 2026, or this Notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery.

All persons indebted to the decedent or the Estate are requested to make immediate payment to the undersigned.  
This the 5th day of March, 2026.  
James Scott Pendergraft, Executor  
103 Prince St.  
Carrboro, NC 27510  
3/5, 3/12, 3/19, and 3/26/2026

**WAKE COUNTY**

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
WAKE COUNTY

**NOTICE OF SERVICE OF PROCESS BY PUBLICATION**

In the General Court of Justice,  
District Court Division  
File No.: 20CVD013438-910

IN THE MATTER OF: WILLIAMS AND WILLIAMS v. WILLIAMS AND UNKNOWN FATHER  
To: Unknown Father of M. M. W, a male child born of Morgan Brittany Williams on 09/23/2016 in Wake County, NC.

Take notice that a pleading seeking relief against you has been filed in the above entitled action. The nature of the relief being sought is child custody. You are required to make defense to such pleading within 40 days of service on or before April 28, 2026. If you fail to respond, the party seeking service against you will apply to the court for the relief sought. This, the 19th day of March, 2026. You should provide a copy of any response to the attorney for the Plaintiffs at Melissa Stuckey, McNeil Law Firm, PLLC; 226 W. Millbrook Road, Raleigh, NC 27609, 919-803-6778.  
3/19, 3/26, and 4/2/2026  
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
WAKE COUNTY

**NOTICE TO CREDITORS**

In the General Court of Justice,  
Superior Court Division  
Before the Clerk

File No.: 26E000411-910  
Having qualified as ADMINISTRATOR CTA of the Estate of JOSANDRA MOUNT, deceased, late of Wake County, North Carolina, this is to notify all persons, firms, and corporations having claims against the Estate to present them to the undersigned, in writing, at the address shown below, on or before June 15, 2026, or this Notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery.

All persons indebted to the decedent or the Estate are requested to make immediate payment to the undersigned.  
This the 12th day of March, 2026.  
Daryl Tracy Mount  
Administrator CTA  
c/o Marion Law Office, PLLC  
2741 University Drive  
Durham, NC 27707  
3/12, 3/19, 3/26, and 4/2/2026  
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
WAKE COUNTY

**NOTICE TO CREDITORS**

In the General Court of Justice,  
Superior Court Division  
Before the Clerk

File No.: 25E004272-910  
Having qualified as CO-ADMINISTRATORS of the Estate of HOPE YVETTE RAILEY HOUSE, deceased, late of Wake County, North Carolina, this is to notify all persons, firms, and corporations having claims against the Estate to present them to the undersigned, in writing, at the address shown below, on or before June 15, 2026, or this Notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery.

All persons indebted to the decedent or the Estate are requested to make immediate payment to the undersigned.  
This the 12th day of March, 2026.  
Geneva Mizelle, Co-Administrator  
3200 Stream Side Road, Apt 33  
Raleigh, NC 27613  
Cornelius Railey, Co-Administrator  
905 North Fayetteville Ave.  
Dunn, NC 28334  
3/12, 3/19, 3/26, and 4/2/2026  
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
WAKE COUNTY

**NOTICE TO CREDITORS**

In the General Court of Justice,  
Superior Court Division  
Before the Clerk

File No.: 25E004660-910  
Having qualified as EXECUTOR of the Estate of CAROLYN DOLAN SMITH, deceased, late of Wake County, North Carolina, this is

to notify all persons, firms, and corporations having claims against the Estate to present them to the undersigned, in writing, at the address shown below, on or before June 15, 2026, or this Notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery.

All persons indebted to the decedent or the Estate are requested to make immediate payment to the undersigned.

This the 12th day of March, 2026.  
Leo Walter Smith, Executor  
c/o Jeffers Law Firm  
PO Box 761  
Raleigh NC 27602

3/12, 3/19, 3/26, and 4/2/2026  
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
WAKE COUNTY

**NOTICE TO CREDITORS**

All persons, firms and corporations having claims against GWYNNETH GAYLE BROOKS STANBACK, DECEASED, are notified to exhibit the same to the undersigned on or before June 10, 2026, or this notice along with the appropriate general statute will be pleaded in bar of recovery. Debtors of the deceased are asked to make immediate payment. This the 12 day of March, 2026. All correspondence should be to the Estate of Gwynneth Stanback, c/o Florence A. Owens, Attorney, P.O. Box 51263, Durham, NC 27717.  
3/12, 3/19, 3/26, and 4/2/2026  
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
WAKE COUNTY

**NOTICE OF SERVICE OF PROCESS BY PUBLICATION**  
In the General Court Of Justice  
District Court Division

Small Claims  
File No. 25CV046643-910

LENORA MITCHELL, Plaintiff v. JEFF WILLIAMS, Defendant  
TO: JEFF WILLIAMS

Take notice that a pleading seeking relief against you has been filed in the above-entitled action in the General Court of Justice, District Court Division, Wake County, North Carolina. The nature of the relief being sought is as stated in the Complaint filed in this action.

You are required to appear before a magistrate in Wake County District Court, located at 316 Fayetteville Street, Raleigh, North Carolina, on April 6, 2026 at 9:30 a.m., and answer the complaint or otherwise respond. If you fail to appear and defend against the claim, judgment will be entered against you for the relief demanded in the complaint.

This the 12th day of March, 2026.  
Lenora Mitchell, Plaintiff  
1023 Tarford Place  
Knightdale, NC 27545  
3/12, 3/19, and 3/26/2026  
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
WAKE COUNTY

**NOTICE OF SERVICE OF PROCESS BY PUBLICATION**  
In the District Court Division  
File No. 25CV046587-910

MARCIAL V. TORRES TO SILVANO DOMINGUEZ TORRES: Take notice that a pleading seeking relief against you has been filed in the above-entitled action. The nature of the relief being sought is for child custody. You are required to make a defense to such pleading no later than April 21, 2026, said date being at least forty (40) days from the first publication of this Notice, and upon your failure to do so, the Plaintiff, LUCERO GOMEZ MARCIAL, will apply to the court for the relief sought.

This, the 12th day of March, 2026.  
Yvonne Armendariz, Esq  
Attorney for Plaintiff  
Armendariz Law Office, PLLC  
6110 Lake Wheeler Road  
Raleigh, NC 27603  
Office: (919) 656-1524  
Yvonne@armendarizlaw.com  
3/12, 3/19, and 3/26/2026  
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
WAKE COUNTY

**NOTICE OF SERVICE OF PROCESS BY PUBLICATION**  
In the General Court of Justice,  
District Court Division

File No.: 20CVD013438-910  
IN THE MATTER OF: WILLIAMS AND WILLIAMS v. WILLIAMS AND UNKNOWN FATHER

To: Unknown Father of M. M. W, a male child born of Morgan Brittany Williams on 09/23/2016 in Wake County, NC.

Take notice that a pleading seeking relief against you has been filed in the above entitled action. The nature of the relief being sought is child custody. You are required to make defense to such pleading within 40 days of service on or before April 28, 2026. If you fail to respond, the party seeking service against you will apply to the court for the relief sought. This, the 19th day of March, 2026. You should provide a copy of any response to the attorney for the Plaintiffs at Melissa Stuckey, McNeil Law Firm, PLLC; 226 W. Millbrook Road, Raleigh, NC 27609, 919-803-6778.  
3/19, 3/26, and 4/2/2026  
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
WAKE COUNTY

**NOTICE TO CREDITORS**

In the General Court of Justice,  
Superior Court Division  
Before the Clerk

File No.: 23E001810-910  
Having qualified as ADMINISTRATOR of the Estate of LARRY STACY BROCK, deceased, late of Wake County, North Carolina, this is to notify all persons, firms, and corporations having claims against the Estate to present them to the undersigned, in writing, at the address shown below, on or before June 8, 2026, or this Notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery.

All persons indebted to the decedent or the Estate are requested to make immediate payment to the undersigned.

This the 5th day of March, 2026.  
Ruthie Goodson Brock  
Administrator  
5525 Woodpond Ct.  
Raleigh, NC 27610

3/5, 3/12, 3/19, and 3/26/2026  
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
WAKE COUNTY

**ESTATE OF:**

SHERRI JACKSON BOYKIN  
FILE NO. 26-E-000264-910

All persons, firms, and corporations having claims against SHERRI JACKSON BOYKIN, deceased, of Wake County, North Carolina, are notified to exhibit the same to the undersigned on or before June 5, 2026, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons, firms, and corporations indebted to said estate will please make immediate payment to the undersigned.

This is the 5th day of March, 2026.  
Michael A. Boykin, Executor of the Estate of Sherri Jackson Boykin  
4108 Batiste Road  
Raleigh, NC 27613

3/5, 3/12, 3/19, and 3/26/2026  
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
WAKE COUNTY

**NOTICE TO CREDITORS**

In the General Court of Justice,  
Superior Court Division  
Before the Clerk

File No.: 25E002872-910  
Having qualified as ADMINISTRATOR of the Estate of CARLY JEAN GEISEL, deceased, late of Wake County, North Carolina, this is to notify all persons, firms, and corporations having claims against the Estate to present them to the undersigned, in writing, at the address shown below, on or before June 8, 2026, or this Notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery.

All persons indebted to the decedent or the Estate are requested to make immediate payment to the undersigned.

This the 5th day of March, 2026.  
John Raymond Geisel, Administrator  
231 Kinvara Ct.  
Wake Forest, NC 27587

3/5, 3/12, 3/19, and 3/26/2026  
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
WAKE COUNTY

**NOTICE OF SERVICE OF PROCESS BY PUBLICATION**

In The General Court of Justice  
District Court Division

**Classifieds**

**PAYING CASH AND BUYING OLD CASSETTE TAPES CALL MARVIN 919-268-7476 OR EMAIL ME AT WYCHEMARVIN4@GMAIL.COM**

**ATTENTION: DBE's, MBE's, SBE's, WBE's BID REQUEST-BARNHILL CONTRACTING COMPANY**

Barnhill Contracting Company will be bidding on the RDU Runway 5L-23R Replacement-Lumley Road Relocation Project, RDU Airport, NC 27560, Wednesday, April 1st, 2026 @ 2:00pm. This project includes opportunities on, but is not limited to hauling, clearing & grubbing, pipe install, ABC, milling, construction surveying, work zone services, pavement markers, and temp silt fence.

Barnhill Contracting Company will host a Prebid meeting on Thursday, March 20, 2026, at 9:00 am. Complete plans and specifications and contract documents will be open for inspection at our Rocky Mount office located at 800 Tiffany Blvd, Suite 200, Rocky Mount, NC 27804.

If you have any interest in this project, we would appreciate your quote on the items that you may be interested in performing no later than 12:00 Noon on Tuesday, March 31st, 2026. We will accept quotes on any portion of this project, large or small. Please contact Stephen Daniel, sdaniel@barnhillcontracting.com, in our Rocky Mount office at (252) 823-1021, FAX (252) 977-7512 at any time (collect calls will be accepted). We would appreciate hearing from you at your earliest convenience.

All firms or persons interested in bidding on any portion of this project or supplying materials for any portion of this project, please contact us.

Attn: Mr. Thomas B. Shannon  
**AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER**

FILE NO. 25CV033406-910  
LESTER COBBS, Plaintiff v. DENISE DARNELLE COBBS, Defendant

TO DENISE DARNELLE COBBS: TAKE NOTICE that a pleading seeking relief against you has been filed in the above-entitled action. The nature of the relief being sought is as follows: Complaint for Absolute Divorce.

You are required to make defense to such pleading no later than forty (30) days after the first date of publication of this notice, exclusive of such date, and upon your failure to do so, the party seeking service against you will apply to the Court for the relief sought.

This, the 5th day of March, 2026.  
Lester Cobbs, Plaintiff  
11201 Tidewater Lane, Apt 112  
Raleigh, NC 27614  
3/5, 3/12, and 3/19/2026  
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
WAKE COUNTY

**NOTICE OF SERVICE OF PROCESS BY PUBLICATION**  
In The General Court of Justice  
District Court Division

FILE NO. 25CV019679-910  
BRENDA EBERT, Plaintiff  
VS JAMES EBERT, Defendant  
TO JAMES EBERT:

TAKE NOTICE that a pleading seeking relief against you has been filed in the above-entitled action. The nature of the relief being sought is as follows: Complaint for Absolute Divorce.

You are required to make defense to such pleading no later than forty (30) days after the first date of publication of this notice, exclusive of such date, and upon your failure to do so, the party seeking service against you will apply to the Court for the relief sought.

This, the 5th day of March, 2026.  
Brenda Ebert, Plaintiff  
2820 Sylvester St.  
Raleigh, NC 27610  
3/5, 3/12, and 3/19/2026  
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
WAKE COUNTY

**NOTICE OF SERVICE OF PROCESS BY PUBLICATION**  
In The General Court of Justice  
District Court Division

FILE NO. 25CV045564-910  
IZABELLE M OROZCO HERWICK, Plaintiff VS LUIS SUASTEGUI GARCIA, Defendant

TO LUIS SUASTEGUI GARCIA: TAKE NOTICE that a pleading seeking relief against you has been filed in the above-entitled action. The nature of the relief being sought is as follows: Complaint for Absolute Divorce.

You are required to make defense to such pleading no later than forty (30) days after the first date of publication of this notice, exclusive of such date, and upon your failure to do so, the party seeking service against you will apply to the Court for the relief sought.

This, the 5th day of March, 2026.  
Izabelle Marie Orozco Herwick  
Plaintiff  
714 Copperline Dr.  
Garner, NC 27529  
3/5, 3/12, and 3/19/2026

## NC SCHOOL DEVICES

Continued from page 2

device use simply because “technology” and “learning” have become seemingly synonymous.

“The learning today is so dependent on computers and devices in the schools, so it would be a bigger lift to disentangle schools from relying so heavily on these devices than it would be to pass something like cellphones bans,” he said.

“We would encourage schools not to defer on this too much. There’s not a lot of time to waste.”

Some private schools are already there — not due to funding but rather as a quest for, in the words of Thales Academy, freedom from digital dependency.

Thales is a network of private schools that teaches a classical curriculum at more than 10 campuses across the state, as well as two in Virginia and Tennessee. The school announced in December it was removing “devoted digital devices” from its high school classrooms after it saw enhanced critical thinking, heightened lesson engagement and strengthened human relationships in its junior high students after first scaling back use among those grades.

“While there are certainly benefits to be found in digital devices, the benefits we see for our students when we remove dedicated iPads from the classroom far surpass the benefits of the devices’ utility,” the announcement read.

“... As we have heard overwhelmingly positive feedback from our junior high families and teachers about the change this year, we hope that our high school families and teachers will experience the same next year as we help our students move away from digital dependency toward a foundation more firmly rooted in human interaction and connection and the development of our most powerful human devices.”

This differs greatly from Thales’ approach to technology just a few years ago. A webpage no longer available on the site stated as recently as 2021 the school assigned students an iPad for daily use on and off campus.

“iPads are used throughout the school day, providing an avenue for collaborative and innovative learning. Technology is engrained in the Thales Academy education model, with Apple TVs in every classroom and computer labs outfitted with Apple iMacs to complement the iPad and create a seamless transition between devices for enhanced learning,” the site previously read.

“Students gain competent technical skills throughout their time at Thales Academy and graduate prepared to take on an ever-progressing technology filled world.”

Even as schools pull back on device reliance — whether out of necessity or in a deliberate return to analog practices — that can still look like educational innovation, Glazewski said.

“Such that you can have devices in classrooms and not see much innovation happening, you can have limited devices in classrooms and see a lot of innovation,” she said.

“From my perspective, innovation really happens at the intersection of pedagogy, resources and student engagement. With that in mind, sometimes a resource for innovation is a device, but sometimes it’s the way that a teacher is bringing pedagogy and local resources and field trips and speakers and all the richness of a full classroom experience to bear for students.”

Although technology might not be needed for innovation, and educators have valid concerns about their students being overexposed to screens during and after school, Glazewski does worry about digital divides growing as a result of financial burdens and changes in trends.

As educators weigh different priorities and educational trends change over time, leaders should be aware of how the shifts affect students with various backgrounds.

“We want to give special attention to where we may be inadvertently creating new digital divides in the context,” she said. “I like to really point to, ‘How are decisions being made? Are some students experiencing lower access at higher rates than other students? And if so, what does that look like?’

“Because we want to make sure that there’s equal opportunity for all students to experience the benefits of rich pedagogical, exciting, engaging classrooms without and ensure that all students get to experience that, and that there is not a particular group that is experiencing harm more than others.”

# How Apartheid, European Racism And Pelé Helped Cultivate A Culture Of Diversity In American Soccer

THE CONVERSATION - North America’s most diverse professional league kicks off on Feb. 21, 2026, as Major League Soccer returns after a winter break.

The league, commonly known as the MLS, long prided itself as a standard-bearer for racial and national diversity: With players representing around 80 countries across six continents competing for teams. Members of racial minorities make up 63% of players and 36% of head coaches, according to the latest diversity scorecard from the University of Central Florida’s Institute for Diversity and Ethics in Sport.

As a soccer scholar and author of the book “Soccer’s Neoliberal Pitch,” I know that this diversity is in part by design and has deep roots. Indeed, the MLS had, as a model of diversity, an earlier attempt to get Americans to embrace the “beautiful game”: the North American Soccer League, or NASL.

The fall and rise of the NASL Most often remembered for bringing Pelé to the U.S., the NASL was arguably the first serious attempt to develop a truly professional “major” soccer league in the country. It ran from 1968 to 1984 and peaked in popularity the mid-1970s.

With minimal audiences at the gates and a TV contract that was scrapped early on because of dismal ratings, the league struggled early on. A full dozen of the 17 inaugural teams folded after the first year, leaving just five competing in the second season. Growth was slow — by 1973 there were nine teams, and games had an average attendance of about 6,000 fans.

Most team owners and league commissioner Phil Woosnam believed the NASL needed more sizzle to appeal to an American market. To that end, the league decided to make a number of alterations. Rules were tweaked to increase the number of goals, and more traditional American sports add-ons — tailgating and cheerleaders, for example — were encouraged to help improve the atmosphere.

But the impulse to alter both the substance and meaning of the game had mixed results, at best. Although the NASL was able to enlarge its audience among a subset of fans through these stylistic distractions, others felt alienated by the focus on razzmatazz.

As Newsweek reported at the time, first-generation immigrants — the demographic expected to make up the supporting base — stayed away. Polls revealed that these traditional soccer supporters perceived the quality



of play in the league to be so inferior that they weren’t interested in attending games.

Likewise, European players often found the innovations of the NASL off-putting. After playing his first game for the Portland Timbers, Pat Howard — a former player for the English team Everton — found himself thinking, “What kind of football is this? I mean, there were blinking cavalry charges up the wings, ducks behind the goal, firecrackers going on.”

A study commissioned by the NASL convinced the league that it would have to increase the skill level of the game if it hoped to grab the largest possible viewership. And that is when the story of the league’s diversity really takes off.

A league of nations

The New York Cosmos, owned by Warner Communications, was one of earliest NASL teams to reach out to



## Classifieds

### FY 2026-2027 ANNUAL ACTION PLAN PUBLIC MEETINGS & PUBLIC HEARING

The City of Raleigh Housing and Community Development Department will hold two public meetings and one Public Hearing to gather input on the draft Annual Action Plan (July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2027).

#### Public Meeting #1:

Tuesday, March 17th, 2026 – 6:00-7:00 PM

Chavis Community Center – Reception Hall

505 Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd, 27601

#### Public Meeting #2 (Virtual):

Thursday, March 19th, 2026 – 6:00-7:00 PM

Visit the City’s website (Community Development Reports and Documents section) for the meeting link.

#### Public Hearing (pending City Council authorization):

Tuesday, April 7th, 2026 – 7:00 PM

City of Raleigh Council Chambers, Raleigh Municipal Building

222 W. Hargett St, Raleigh, NC 27601

These sessions provide an opportunity for residents to share input on housing and community development priorities affecting low- and moderate-income households. Public feedback will inform the development of the final FY 2026-2027 Annual Action Plan, which guides the City’s use of federal and local funds, including the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), HOME Investment Partnerships (HOME), and Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) funds, as well as related local funds. The draft Plan is available on the City’s website for a 30-day review and comment period through April 15th.

To speak at the public hearing, please sign up by 5:00 PM on the Friday before the hearing. Visit the City of Raleigh Public Hearings web page for more information. You may also call the Clerk’s office at 919-996-3040 to sign up.

Written comments may be submitted by email to [housing@raleighnc.gov](mailto:housing@raleighnc.gov).

#### Accessibility and Language Services

Interpreter services (including American Sign Language) and accommodations for persons with disabilities or limited English proficiency are available at no cost with advance notice. Please allow at least five (5) business days for arrangements. Requests may be submitted via the City’s Public Hearings web page or by contacting the City Clerk’s Office.

For additional information, please email [housing@raleighnc.gov](mailto:housing@raleighnc.gov) or call 919-996-4330.

laws in South Africa, Black and white players were prohibited from playing one another. To Black South Africans, the NASL represented a chance to escape the racism of their homeland.

Patrick “Ace” Ntsoelenge was one of many Black South Africans who viewed the NASL as being the only route toward international fame. Fellow Black South African Webster Lichaba, who played in Atlanta in the early 1980s, relished his treatment in the U.S.: “You were allowed to eat in any restaurant; you went into any club if you wanted to; you stayed in any area you wanted to. ... It was different, a different lifestyle altogether. You were treated as an equal.”

Kaizer Motaung, who played for the Atlanta Chiefs and later returned to South Africa to found the successful Kaizer Chiefs football club, noted: “America was an eye-opener for me. I am in a foreign country, but here are Black people holding high positions being respected worldwide.”

And it wasn’t only Black South Africans who made the move. Apartheid resulted in a sporting boycott of South Africa, preventing the country from playing in international games. As such, the NASL represented an opportunity for white South Africans to play in front of a wider audience.

As soccer scholar Chris Bolsmann has noted, both Black and white players later went back to South Africa, energized to act against apartheid and confident of their ability to succeed in joint struggles against racism.

While some overseas players returned home after their playing careers ended, others stayed to help the grassroots game in the U.S. Trinidad and Tobago goalkeeper Lincoln Phillips, who played for the Baltimore Bays, went on to coach Howard University’s men’s soccer team — the first from a historically Black college or university to win an NCAA soccer championship in 1974 — and later helped found the Black Soccer Coaches Association, an organization designed to help move Black coaches up the administrative ladder in soccer.

A lasting soccer experiment

While the North American Soccer League never turned soccer into a religion in the U.S. and was not without its own race issues — not least the gap in wages between predominantly European elite players and cheaper African and Caribbean players — it nonetheless leaves a legacy of diversity in U.S. soccer that continues today. As soccer author Ian Plenderleith has argued, the NASL was the first soccer experiment of “mixing several ethnic backgrounds” into one team.

## ADVERTISEMENT FOR BIDS

### CDBG PROJECT

Town of Fountain  
6777 West Wilson Street  
Fountain, NC 27829

Separate sealed BIDS for the construction of 2024 CDBG Infrastructure Sewer Project Contract No. 6 - South Lynch Street Pump Station Renovation will be received by the ENGINEER at Town Hall, 6777 West Wilson Street, Fountain, NC 27829 until 2:00 PM, April 21, 2026, and then at said office publicly opened and read aloud.

The CONTRACT DOCUMENTS may be examined at the following locations:

Fountain Town Hall, 6777 West Wilson Street, Fountain, NC 27829

McDavid Associates, Inc., 3714 North Main Street, Farmville, NC 27828-049

Dodge Data and Analytics, 2860 South State Highway 161, Suite 160, #501, Grand Prairie, TX 750527361  
(View online at [www.construction.com](http://www.construction.com))

ConstructConnect, Attn: DPC, 30 Technology Parkway South, Suite 100, Norcross, GA 30092  
(View online at [www.constructconnect.com](http://www.constructconnect.com))

Construction Journal, 400 SW 7<sup>th</sup> Street, Stuart, FL 34994  
(View online at [www.ConstructionJournal.com](http://www.ConstructionJournal.com))

Builders & Contractors Exchange, Inc., 1118 Azalea Garden Road, Norfolk, VA 235025612  
(View online at [www.bceva.com](http://www.bceva.com))

Physical copies of the CONTRACT DOCUMENTS may be obtained at the office of McDavid Associates, Inc. located at 3714 North Main Street, Farmville, NC 27828-0049 upon a non-refundable payment of \$100.00 for each set.

This project is being funded in whole or in part by the Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG). All Federal CDBG requirements will apply to the contract: BIDDERS on this work will be required to comply with Section 109 and E.O. 11246 which prohibits discrimination in employment regarding race, creed, color, sex, or national origin. BIDDERS must comply with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Davis Bacon Act, Anti-Kickback Act, and Contract Work Hours and Safety Standards Act. The Town of Fountain is committed to and supportive of efforts to effectively maintain and/or increase the use of Small and Minority/Women-Owned Business, Veteran-Owned Business, and Historically Underutilized Businesses (HUB) contract participation for Construction Projects, services (including professional and consulting services) and commodities purchases, AND increase contract participation to offer employment, training and contracting opportunities in accordance with Section 3 of the Housing and Urban Development Act of 1968 (24 C.F.R. Part 135).

No contract may be awarded to any contractor that is debarred, suspended or otherwise ineligible to participate in Federally assisted contracts or programs. Any contract awarded to a prime contractor or subcontractor that is found to be ineligible for award must be terminated immediately. Prior to contract award, prime contractors are to be actively registered, with no exclusions, with SAM.gov and not on NC Debarred Vendors list, to determine eligibility/debarment status.

The total CDBG program is funded with \$775,000 in CDBG funds which represent 100% of the total CDBG program costs. The total CDBG funding amount of \$775,000 is a governmental disclosure required by the CDBG program and not the proposed construction cost for contracts referenced by this advertisement.

This project is subject to the Build America, Buy America Act (BABA) requirements under Title IX of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (“IIJA”), Pub. L. 117-58. Absent an approved waiver, all iron, steel, and construction materials used in this project must be produced in the United States, as further outlined by the Office of Management and Budget’s Memorandum M-22-11, Initial Implementation Guidance on Application of Buy America Preference in Federal Financial Assistance Programs for Infrastructure, April 18, 2022.

NOTE: Iron and Steel is the phased approach to BABA that HUD implemented, manufactured products do not apply.

The OWNER reserves the right to reject any and all BIDS. BIDDER shall be properly licensed under Chapter 87, General Statutes of North Carolina.

Small, minority, women, veteran-owned, Historically Underutilized Business (HUB), and Section 3 (low income) businesses and labor surplus area firms are encouraged to submit BIDS.

This PROJECT is subject to the good faith efforts and goals for participation by minority businesses required by G.S. 143-128.2. The OWNER has adopted a verifiable ten percent (10%) goal for participation by minority businesses in the total value of the WORK.

BIDDERS shall, within the time frames specified in the BID documents, submit all required affidavits and documentation demonstrating that the BIDDER made the required good faith effort in compliance with G.S. 143-128.2. Failure to file all required affidavits and documentation within the required time frames is grounds for rejection of the BID.

Prospective BIDDERS who have been found guilty of discrimination within the last two (2) years are debarred from bidding.

A pre-Bid conference will be held at 11:00 AM on March 31, 2026 in Fountain Community Building, 6865 West Wilson Street, Fountain, NC 27829. Prospective BIDDERS are encouraged to attend this pre-bid conference as part of their good faith efforts.

This information is available in Spanish or any other language upon request. Please contact Letha Hines at (252) 749-2999 or at 6777 West Wilson Street, Fountain, NC 27829 for accommodations for this request.

Esta información está disponible en español o en cualquier otro idioma bajo petición. Por favor, póngase en contacto con Letha Hines al (252) 749-2999 o en 6777 West Wilson Street, Fountain, NC 27829 de alojamiento para esta solicitud.

The Fair Housing Act prohibits discrimination in housing based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, family status, and disability.

The OWNER is an EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER.

March 19, 2026

Steven Williams

Mayor

Town of Fountain

