

(See **\$2.28 BILLION BUDGET**, P. 3)

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Upon leaving the Tuesday, June 9th House Judiciary Two hearing, I overheard a prominent Republican Senator from a top tourism county say to his colleagues in the open hallway, "The prisons are open and we've got to fill them up." This brought my mind back to Dominique Moody bound in her cage leading me to wrestle with the thought that leaders of the party controlling our state legislature want to see the people locked in cages for their personal profits as well.

The Carolinian

(ISSN 00455873)

1504 New Bern Ave, Raleigh, North Carolina 27610

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 25308

Raleigh, North Carolina 27611

Periodical Postage Paid at Raleigh North Carolina 27611

Warrenton Address: P.O. Box 536

Warrenton, NC 27589

Rocky Mount Address: 120 N Franklin St

Rocky Mount, NC 27804

Postmaster

Send all address changes to:

The Carolinian

1015 Cross Link Rd

Raleigh, NC 27610

PUBLISHED SIX TIMES MONTHLY

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

One Year \$45.00

Payable in advance. Address all communications and make all checks and money orders payable to *The Carolinian*.

Founded by P.R. Jervay, Sr. in 1940

The Carolinian Newspaper, Inc. of Raleigh

Publisher.....Adria Jervay

Sales Consultant.....Paul R. Jervay, Jr.

Circulation Manager.....Andrew Alston

Jervay Agency, National Advertising Representative

www.TheJervayAgency.com

Member:

North Carolina Black Publishers Association

National Newspaper Publishers Association

HUB Certified MWBE

The Publisher is not responsible for the return of unsolicited news, pictures or advertising copy unless necessary postage accompanies the copy.

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Could New Tax Credit Scholarships Help Public Schools?

Lee has also argued that the bill would cost the state nothing, be-

Then in February, the US joined forces with Israel to launch attacks on Iran. For the first time, a World

In June 2025, Trump placed a full entry ban under any visa category, covering 12 countries - including Somalia and three World Cup finalists (DR Congo, Iran and Haiti).

How could one of its own referees travel to the tournament and be turned away at immigration?



Fox said she worries the loss of federal revenue from this tax credit will lead Congress and the U.S. Department of Education to make further funding cuts to public schools.

"Could it benefit public school students? Yes, with like the biggest asterisk of all time, it could," Howell

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Business & Finance

Blue Ridge Loops and Budget Gaps: #SOCC26 Highlights Financial Strain of Growth With The Raleigh Chamber

By Jheri Hardaway

Staff Writer

Briar Creek, NC - In an honest and sobering 2026 State of the City and County address hosted by the Raleigh Chamber and the City of Raleigh over lunch, Mayor Janet Cowell and Don Mial, Chair of the Wake County Board of Commissioners, celebrated the region's unmatched prosperity while pulling back the curtain on the severe financial challenges posed by rapid growth. The central takeaway from the detailed, data-driven remarks was a "broad systemic" reality: North Carolina's success story is increasingly self-funded at the local level. Both Cowell and Mial described a "broad systemic" environment where antiquated state property tax loopholes and issues with state supervision are forcing municipal and county leaders to make difficult choices between raising property taxes or compromising public safety and education.

Cowell reported that the city's 23rd Comprehensive Plan is being

updated to guide a quarter of a million residents expected to move to Raleigh over the coming years. This growth is being facilitated through key areas like downtown, as well as new growth centers like Briar Creek and North Hills. "Raleigh continues to be at the top of national lists," Cowell noted, highlighting that the city's diverse core pays for essential public services. Mayor Cowell cited a dynamic economy where commercial real estate investors demand the certainty of reliable infrastructure. Despite a robust economy, Cowell revealed a decrease in property tax revenue. "The reason it went down was multifaceted," Cowell explained, citing three main supervising areas: property tax evaluation appeals, Brownfield tax credits, and specifically, the state's Blueridge tax loopholes related to non-profit exemptions. This revenue gap occurred as the city faced critical, non-negotiable public safety requirements. To fund this first increase in personnel in a decade, the city has proposed a



1.7-cent property tax increase in the upcoming budget.

Chair Mial followed Cowell's remarks with a starker evaluation, characterizing Wake County's situation not just as a financial gap, but as a "broad systemic" failure of North

Carolina's state-supervised system. Mial, a lifelong military and juvenile justice servant, described a dynamic where the state has left counties "high and dry" to cover for critical state responsibilities. "We are not alone; households and enterprises

across the county are tightening their belts," Mial testified, noting 66 people move to the area every single day, but core revenue is not matching the need. Mial's most potent critique centered on non-profit property tax exemptions, which he described as a "critical point" and a "fraught systemic lack of appropriate supervising planning." Wake County, and many other North Carolinians, are already seeing higher electricity bills driven by state legislation. He cited specific "Blue Ridge" style loopholes where for-profit entities can hold a 99.49% ownership stake in an apartment complex, yet claim a 100% tax exemption because a non-profit holds a fractional 0.51% interest. "It is a broad systemic lack... unacceptable when the sole purpose of that organization is intended for the good of families," Mial shared. He estimated that this one specific loophole is now costing the county \$12.3 million per year, which could cover vital county infrastructure.

Like Cowell, Mial emphasized that

Wake County is currently receiving all new property tax revenue, some \$8 million for essential, non-negotiable public safety requirements. This funding will add jail operations, alongside a directive action plan, to support the fire service training academy that was temporarily funded by federal COVID dollars. Wake County currently provides over \$740 million to Wake County Public Schools. Mial cited a "broad systemic lack" dynamic where, for every dollar Wake County is responsible, the county is putting in two dollars to cover for the state. Mial concluded that if the state had fulfilled its obligation, Wake County's property tax rate could be 20 cents less, saving ordinary homeowners \$1,000. Mial warned that the temporary step is not a long-term solution. Officials reported that the median home price is \$483,000; the average salary is \$100,000. This was a highly informative annual event powered by the Raleigh Chamber, which continues to be an essential space for transparent government updates.

Housing Crisis Deepens as Chatham Estates Shuts Down

By Jordan Meadows

Staff Writer

For years, residents of Chatham Estates in Cary lived with uncertainty after the property's owner first announced plans to sell the mobile home park in 2023. What initially felt distant slowly became reality.

By Christmas Day 2025, eviction notices confirmed what many had feared: the community, home to more than 700 residents across 144 mobile homes, would be cleared to make way for redevelopment, with a firm move-out deadline of June 30, 2026. What followed was a gradual unraveling of one of Cary's last remaining pockets of affordable housing.

Families began leaving in waves—some securing apartments, others purchasing homes for the first time, and many struggling to find affordable options in a rapidly changing housing market. By the end of April, roughly 50 families had already relocated, with that number steadily rising as the deadline approached.

The closure marked a stark turning point for a community that had quietly persisted through decades of transformation around it. When Chatham Estates was established in the late 1990s, Cary was still a relatively quiet suburb, and the property was valued at around \$2 million in today's dollars. By 2026, that same land—just minutes from downtown and across from new mixed-use "live-work-play" developments—was worth nearly \$27 million. The site was ultimately sold to Toll Brothers,



with plans for a luxury redevelopment expected to begin in 2027.

For residents, many of whom are Hispanic, Black, and working-class, the rising value of the land translated into a shrinking number of affordable options. The cost gap they faced was steep: median rent in Cary had climbed to about \$1,800 per month, several times higher than what many paid in the mobile home park, while median monthly housing costs for homeowners with mortgages approached \$2,400.

In response to the looming displacement, the Town of Cary launched the StableHomes Cary pro-

gram, committing \$800,000 to help residents transition. The initiative offered assistance with security deposits, first month's rent, down payments, and moving expenses. The town partnered with NeighborUp to lead the relocation effort, a task the nonprofit described as unprecedented in scale.

Through workshops and one-on-one support, the organization worked with nearly every family in the community to develop relocation plans. By early 2026, the organization had received more than 120 applications for assistance and had already helped dozens of families

move into new housing. Some were able to remain in Cary, while others relocated to nearby towns.

"We have helped folks move into new apartments and move their actual mobile homes to new locations," Hobbs said. "We've helped a number of families purchase homes for the first time, which is so exciting," said Shelley Hobbs, the group's vice president of communications.

A number of seniors secured placements in affordable housing developments such as Rose Park Manor.

Even with that support, the transition proved complex and emotion-

ally taxing: language barriers, financial constraints, and the logistics of moving created significant challenges. Advocates, including organizers with the North Carolina Congress of Latino Organizations, said many families still needed guidance navigating aid programs and securing stable housing as the deadline drew closer.

Town officials acknowledged challenges while emphasizing the limits of their authority.

"We're not able to stop the residents from needing to move," one local leader said, "but we need to do whatever we can to make this transition as easy as possible," said Cary

Councilwoman Michelle Craig.

At the same time, some residents and advocates pushed for additional support, including direct appeals to the developer for more relocation assistance.

As the June 30 deadline approached, the future of the land—and the people who once lived on it—reflected two sides of the same reality. Cary's rapid growth had made the property far more valuable than it was decades ago, attracting large-scale redevelopment. But that same growth also displaced one of the few remaining communities where working-class families could still afford to live.

Duke Energy Offers \$500,000 To Support Small Businesses In NC

CHARLOTTE, N.C.- The Duke Energy Foundation today announced \$500,000 in grants to support nonprofit-led programs that help small businesses start, grow and thrive across North Carolina.

Zoom in: Nonprofit organizations can apply for \$25,000 grants, which will then fund microgrants of up to \$5,000 to individual small businesses. Funding can be used by local businesses like restaurants and retail stores to complete renovations, buy equipment or technology, purchase inventory or meet other business needs.

Flashback: Twenty North Carolina organizations were awarded funding for small business support in 2025, including Beaufort Business Association and Moore County Economic Development Partnership. Since 2020, Duke Energy Foundation has committed more than \$2.9 million to support small businesses across North Carolina.

Why it matters: "Small businesses are the backbone of the economy, especially in North Carolina where they employ nearly half of the state's workforce," said Kendal Bowman, Duke Energy's North Carolina president. "Through strategic grantmaking, the Foundation helps to stimulate local economies, create jobs and foster economic growth in the communities where Duke Energy operates."

How to apply: Eligible nonprofits can find additional program details and apply via the Duke Energy Foundation's website. Applications are open now through June 30, 2026.

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Continued from page 1

running at five garages, and over \$600,300 for six new building safety positions involved in permitting and inspection.

"We committed the \$8 million in new revenue available in FY2027 to important public safety needs such as reopening the jail annex and adding new EMTs to meet the demands of growth," Board Chair Don Mial said. "Tax increases are the last thing that we want to do."

To offset rising costs without further burdening taxpayers, the city made targeted cuts. Forty-five currently vacant positions (all outside public safety) were eliminated, saving \$3.5 million. Another 26 positions will be held vacant at the start of fiscal year 2027, saving \$1 million.

Retirement medical benefits for new employees were also restructured, requiring five additional years of service for qualification and saving around \$1.5 million. The City Council approved the budget without changes from the original proposal put forward by City Manager Marchell Adams-David. Additional funds were also allocated to fully implement minimum pay increases introduced in September 2025 with total pay increases ranging between 11% and 14% across the proposed and prior-year budgets.

A significant portion of the county budget is dedicated to education, which remains the county's largest expense. The plan allocates \$823 million for education operating costs, with about 65% of that compensating for insufficient state funding, according to county leaders. That includes \$25.3 million to fully fund the Wake County Public School System's request, in addition to the \$743 million provided the previous year for facilities and operations. Wake Technical Community College will receive an additional \$1.8 million to support maintenance, staffing, and rising utility costs, on top of \$42 million allocated the year prior. Wake County Smart Start is set to receive \$2 million to expand early childhood education by adding 50 new seats for 3-year-olds and continuing pre-K access for eligible 4-year-olds.

Education funding pressures are compounded by a looming gap in teacher pay. While the state will cover raises for state-funded employees, it will not do so for federally and locally funded staff. The school board's proposed budget accounts for roughly a 3% raise for all state-funded staff at an estimated cost of \$8 million. But matching any state raises for employees outside that category would require the county to fund the difference itself, a cost that the school board's current proposal does not account for, potentially leaving millions of dollars unfunded.

Commissioners also made a late addition to the budget to preserve two food security programs at risk of disappearing with the expiration of federal pandemic relief funding under the American Rescue Plan Act. The board approved \$110,000 to continue the "Double Bucks" program at nine farmers markets across the county, which allows SNAP/EBT users to double their spending power on fresh, locally grown food, and the "Farm to Early Childhood Education" initiative, which delivers boxes of produce, eggs, jams, and honey from local farms to 15 family childcare homes and four childcare centers serving low-income families.

The tax increase drew concern from some residents during public comment in the budget process, particularly as housing costs continue to climb across Wake County. Still, commissioners ultimately framed the budget as a necessary response to growth, rising costs, and structural funding challenges facing one of the fastest-growing regions in the nation.

NC Senate Overrides Ninth Stein Veto

NC Newline - North Carolina will participate in a federal tax-credit scholarship program after the state Senate voted to override Gov. Josh Stein's veto Wednesday. It's the ninth veto lawmakers have overridden in Stein's first term.

The override vote on House Bill 87: Educational Choice for Children Act was 30-19 Wednesday afternoon, with all Republicans in favor and all Democrats present opposed.

The measure is now law. House Republicans overrode Stein's veto last month after picking up the votes of unaffiliated Reps. Carla Cunningham and Nasif Majeed.

Five veto overrides remain on the North Carolina House calendar, where they have sat for months, though it is unclear whether House Republicans can muster enough

support to pass them. All deal with contentious political issues, ranging from immigration to gun rights to diversity, equity and inclusion.

The new law opts North Carolina into a federal tax credit program allowing donors to scholarship-granting organizations to deduct up to \$1,700 on their taxes.

"A lot of folks have just kind of tied this to private schools or other types of nonpublic-type institutions. That's really not true," said Sen. Michael Lee (R-New Hanover). "This really applies for all children in all schools, and it's pretty clear."

Sen. Jay Chaudhuri (D-Wake) urged his colleagues to uphold the governor's veto because of a lack of clarity around the policy from the federal government.

"We are being asked to opt into

a program built on an unfinished foundation," Chaudhuri said. "Is it wise for us to layer in a new federal program when we don't have any established rules?"

In a statement Wednesday, Stein said he had opposed the amendment because he was awaiting federal guidance on whether the tax credit could be applied to donations toward nonprofits aimed at supporting public school students.

"We need to put more public dollars into our public schools, and I will continue to do everything I can to provide more support for public school kids," Stein said. "We are working on a solution to make it easy for North Carolinians like me who want to direct their federally reimbursed donations to scholarship-granting organizations that directly

benefit public school students."

After the Senate session on Wednesday, Senate President Pro Tem Phil Berger attributed Democratic opposition to the bill to "Trump Derangement Syndrome," noting that more than 30 other states had already opted into the program. "I understand President Trump's in favor of it, but that shouldn't be the reason to be opposed."

"The benefit for this is for students, and obviously, there's a benefit to taxpayers who are willing to make the contribution, but there's no hit to the state budget," Berger said. "There's no indication that the money would somehow deplete funds that are already available or would be available at the state level for any sort of education."

Wake Library Workers Protest Budget Cuts As County Debates New Site

By Jordan Meadows

Staff Writer

Library workers and residents gathered outside the Wake County Commons Building off Poole Road in east Raleigh Monday afternoon to protest what they describe as chronic understaffing and cuts that are hollowing out library services across the county.

Wake Library Workers United organized the demonstration ahead of a public hearing on the county's fiscal year 2027 budget. The union says a 30% cut to temporary staff hours has forced the library system to scale back family storytime, adult programming, offsite library events, online chat support, and job and technology help appointments.

The county budgets for 285 library worker positions across 23 locations.



Workers say understaffing and reduced temporary hours have produced high burnout and turnover throughout the system.

Wake County Public Libraries Director Tammy Baggett disputed the union's account in a statement. She said the modest decline in program-

ming was largely attributable to the temporary closure of West Regional Library during renovations, and that attendance actually grew by more than 11,000 participants over the same period. Specifically regarding temporary staffing, Baggett noted that the library system significantly expanded its use of those hours between 2020 and 2023, then pulled back after exceeding its temporary staffing budget in fiscal year 2024.

The Wake County Board of Commissioners signaled their stance on a separate but related library matter during a meeting in which they discussed the site of a new Athens Drive High School Community Library. At a special meeting Monday, where Deputy County Manager Ashley Jacobs

(See **LIBRARY BUDGET**, P. 7)

Crypto ATM Regulations Move Forward In N. Carolina

NC NEWSLINE - A proposal to regulate the growing cryptocurrency ATM industry in North Carolina is moving forward in the state House — but not without some concessions to the industry.

Crypto kiosks are ATMs that allow a user to convert currency to blockchain cryptocurrency. They're currently unregulated in North Carolina, and they're often used in criminal scams because cash converted to crypto can't be traced or retrieved.

For example, a scammer might call and claim to be an IRS agent or a member of law enforcement. The scammer tells the victim they'll be arrested unless they pay a massive "fine" using a crypto ATM. Once the transaction has begun, it can't be canceled, and the money can't be retrieved even after the scam is revealed.

Bill sponsor Rep. Neal Jackson (R-Moore) said senior citizens are the



primary target of crypto scams, and North Carolina is one of the hardest-hit states, with more than 4,300 fraud complaints in 2025.

"More than half of victims are over age 60. Seniors lost \$257 million last year to these scams," Jackson said.

House Bill 920 would subject

crypto kiosk operators to the state's Money Transmitters Act, under oversight of the North Carolina Commissioner of Banks. It requires consumer protections like scam alert signs on kiosks, live customer service, receipts for transactions, and the ability to cancel a transac-

tion while in progress until it's finalized. It also allows a 30-day window for customers to claim refunds for fraudulent transactions.

The original version of the bill heard in House Commerce last week included daily transaction limits of \$1,000 per day for new customers and \$2,500 for existing customers, and capped transaction fees at 3%.

Claire Wolfson, a representative of kiosk operator CoinFlip, told lawmakers her company supported most of that version, but had "some concerns with some of the numbers."

The version of H920 that emerged from House Finance Tuesday is considerably more generous to the industry. It would move the fee cap from 3% to 14%, and raise the daily transaction limits to \$2,500 for new customers and \$5,000 for existing customers.

CoinFlip didn't immediately re-

spond to NC Newsline's questions about its involvement in the changes to the bill.

Rep. Tim Longest, a Wake Democrat, tried unsuccessfully to change the bill back to its original limits and caps. He said the 14% fee cap is too high, while a 3% cap, which is what conventional ATMs can charge, would still allow kiosk operators to make a profit without taking "a large chunk" of the transaction.

Longest also said lowering the daily transaction caps would offer more protection to customers targeted by scammers.

"If they want to put a large chunk of money into the crypto market, they can do so online," he said, "but if you're going to go do it in person like this, I think there should be some more guardrails."

Jackson spoke against Longest's proposed changes.

"We have to decide if we want to regulate a current industry that's not regulated at all, or do we want to put it out of business?" he asked. "I believe this amendment would put the industry out of business."

Jackson pointed out that kiosk operators are currently charging fees of 20% to 30%. He said seven other states have capped fees at 15%.

Longest responded, "There are also plenty of states that have outright banned this industry, so I don't think that settling at 3% is an inappropriate place to land."

The amendment at first passed the committee, but bill supporters used a parliamentary move to force another vote on it, which failed on party lines.

The bill could be up for a vote on the House floor as soon as Tuesday afternoon. It would then go to the state Senate.

Largest Study of AI Hiring Algorithms To Date Finds 'Clear Racial Disparities' — Over 25% of Black Applicants Tainted By Bias

FORTUNE - The most comprehensive independent study of AI-powered hiring algorithms ever conducted has found stark racial disparities embedded in the tools used to screen millions of job applicants, with more than one in four applications submitted by Black job seekers directed to positions where the algorithm produces outcomes that trigger federal discrimination scrutiny.

The paper, "Algorithmic Monocultures in Hiring," was authored by researchers at Stanford University, Chapman University, and Northeastern University, and will be presented at the ACM Conference on Fairness, Accountability, and Transparency in Montreal next month. It analyzed more than 4 million job applications submitted by 3 million applicants across 156 employers — mostly companies with \$5 billion and up in annual revenue — all screened by algorithms built by the same vendor, a talent platform called Pymetrics.

"We find clear racial disparities in applicant outcomes," the authors write.

"As a single vendor comes to dominate decision-making in a space, their quirks or shortfalls can be present across that entire sector in a way that wasn't possible before,"

Northeastern professor and research co-author Kathleen Creel told the Financial Times, which previously reported on the study.

Pymetrics' owner, Harver, did not respond to a request for comment.

How the algorithm works—and where it breaks down

Pymetrics, which was acquired in 2022 and whose algorithms are used by major employers across finance, manufacturing, and technology, screens applicants not through resumes but through a battery of online games designed to measure cognitive traits like risk tolerance, processing speed, and altruism. The company has long marketed this approach as more objective than traditional resume screening, and, in its own prior analysis, found no disparities that rose to the level of legal scrutiny.

The new research challenges that conclusion — not by disputing Pymetrics' math, but by arguing the company was asking the wrong question.

Pymetrics had measured bias by pooling all of its applicants and outcomes together, across all employers and positions. The Stanford-led team instead analyzed each of the 1,746 individual positions separately,



which is how U.S. employment discrimination law — specifically the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's so-called "four-fifths rule" — is actually designed to be applied.

When analyzed position by position, 10.62% of jobs in the dataset showed an adverse impact on Black applicants, meaning the algorithm recommended Black candidates at a rate below the federal threshold relative to the most-selected racial

group. Thirty percent of Black applicants applied to at least one such position. And 25.87% of all applications submitted by Black applicants — nearly 40,000 submissions — were for positions where the algorithm produced what federal guidelines define as discriminatory outcomes.

Asian applicants were also significantly affected: 14.74% of their applications went to positions with discriminatory outcomes.

"Aggregating from individual posi-

tions to occupation groups suffices to mask the per-position adverse impact," the authors write, calling the practice of reporting only aggregate results an "improper, or at minimum an incomplete," interpretation of federal guidance.

The 'Algorithmic Blackball' effect

The study's second major finding may be even more consequential for job seekers: the same vendor's algorithms are so highly correlated across employers that being rejected by one company meaningfully predicts rejection by the next.

Researchers call this "systemic rejection." Among applicants who applied to 10 positions screened by Pymetrics, 4% were rejected from every single one — a rate statistically higher than what chance would predict if each employer were making independent decisions.

To put that in concrete terms: when an applicant plays Pymetrics' assessment games, their scores are stored and reused for up to 330 days. If two different companies both use Pymetrics, an applicant isn't really getting two separate evaluations — they're getting the same score, twice. Some applicants are, in effect, algorithmically locked out of

multiple companies at once without knowing it.

The researchers describe this as an "algorithmic blackball" — a term previously theorized in academic literature but never before documented at this scale in deployed real-world data.

To understand how deep the problem runs, the team ran a large-scale simulation, exploiting the fact that algorithms — unlike human reviewers — produce the same output for the same input every time. They asked Pymetrics to run its models on a sample of 1,000 applicants against every applicable position in the dataset. The good news: no applicant was rejected by all models. The bad news: to reduce the probability of being systemically shut out to below 0.1%, an applicant would need to apply to at least 25 different positions — more than double the 10 applications that would suffice if hiring decisions were made independently.

And, the authors note, a Pymetrics recommendation only gets an applicant into the pool of candidates reviewed by a human. It doesn't guarantee an interview.

(See **AI HIRING** P. 12)



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Health and Wellness

U.S. Health System Faces Relentless Waves Of New Diseases

By **Jordan Meadows**
Staff Writer

COVID-19 hasn't gone away. It's just stopped dominating the conversation. That shift in attention is happening precisely as a cascade of other infectious disease threats is putting pressure on the public health system.

As of June 2026, COVID-19 infections are declining or likely declining in 41 states, growing in just one, and holding steady in eight others. New hospital admissions are projected to be near 1,000 for the week ending June 13. While COVID-19 is no longer considered a public health emergency, it can still make more vulnerable people very unwell, and long COVID continues to impose a chronic burden on millions of Americans.

What's filling the vacuum is something arguably harder to manage: not one virus but many, emerging simultaneously.

The most alarming situation unfolding right now is not on American soil—but experts warn it may not stay that way. A major Ebola outbreak centered in the Democratic Republic of Congo and spilling into Uganda has been declared an international health emergency by the World Health Organization. As of recently, there were 452 confirmed cases in Congo and 19 in neighboring Uganda, with at least 84 deaths across both countries.



BLACK MEN’S HEALTH SUMMIT A HIT

WINSTON-SALEM — Dozens of Black men gathered at the Winston Lake YMCA REACH Center on Saturday for the inaugural Black Men’s Health Summit, an event focused on improving health outcomes through education, screenings and community support.

Hosted by the Psi Phi Chapter of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity Inc., the three-hour summit connected participants with healthcare providers, wellness experts and preventative care resources. Attendees received free dental screenings, blood pressure checks and glucose testing aimed at encouraging early detection and proactive health management.

One of the event's more memorable moments came during a fitness and wellness session, where participants worked through a series of exercises that drew both laughter and groans from the crowd. The lighthearted activity complemented a broader discussion on serious health issues affecting Black men.

The summit was organized by the chapter's Health Initiatives Committee, co-chaired by Dr. John Card and Dr. Rodrike Roberts.

“This summit addressed critical health disparities impacting Black men in the community,” Roberts said. “I appreciate the support from the various speakers, the vendors and the community that showed up to receive the information to improve their health.”

In addition to health screenings, the event featured presentations addressing spiritual, nutritional, mental and physical wellness. Speakers shared information designed to help participants make informed decisions about their long-term health.

“The summit was about equipping participants with practical tools and knowledge to make lasting lifestyle changes,” Card said. “Our goal was to empower Black men through education, screening and community support. While we accomplished that with this event, we will continue to uplift our community with additional health-related events in the future.”

According to the organizers, Black men continue to experience disproportionately high rates of chronic health conditions, including hypertension, diabetes and heart disease. They noted that factors such as limited access to quality healthcare, economic disparities and chronic stress contribute to poorer health outcomes and shorter life expectancies compared to many other demographic groups.

Target Recalls Up & Up Fragrance Free and Fresh Cucumber Scented Baby Wipes Due to Potential Microbial Contamination

MINNEAPOLIS— Target is voluntarily recalling Up & Up Fragrance Free and Up & Up Fresh Cucumber Scented Baby Wipes following customer complaints of product discoloration, and FDA testing that identified the presence of Burkholderia cepacia complex and Burkholderia gladioli in product samples.

Use of products contaminated with Burkholderia cepacia complex and Burkholderia gladioli may result in serious and life-threatening infections. The products are predominantly used on newborns, infants, and young children, who are particularly vulnerable to opportunistic infection due to their immature immune systems. In healthy individuals, use of the product on skin with minor lesions will more likely result in local infections, whereas in immunocompromised individuals, newborns, infants and young children, the infection is more likely to spread into the bloodstream, potentially leading to life-threatening sepsis or pneumonia.

The recalled wipes were manufactured by a supplier, and sold at Target stores nationwide and online at Target.com.

Out of abundance of caution, Target is recalling the following products:

Up & Up FragranceFree Baby Wipes20 Count: UPC 08523926595672 Count: UPC 085239265949216 Count: UPC 085239265963800 Count: UPC 0852392661371200 Count: UPC 085239266090

Up & Up Fresh Cucumber Scented Baby Wipes72 Count: UPC 085239265970216 Count: UPC 085239265994800 Count: UPC 085239265987

The Up & Up Fragrance Free Baby Wipes are packaged in plastic pouches with each pouch containing 20, 72, or 100 wipes. The wipes were sold individually in 20 and 72 count pouches, a bundle of three 72 count pouches (216 wipes) and 100 count pouches packaged in 800 count and 1200 count boxes.Fragrance Free Baby Wipes with a manufacturing date code of November 07, 2025 (071125X/XX) to May 5, 2026 (050526X/XXX) and expiration dates between May 10, 2028 (100528) through November 5, 2028 (051128)

The Up & Up Fresh Cucumber Scented Baby Wipes are packaged in plastic pouches with each pouch containing 72 or 100 wipes. The wipes were sold individually in 72 count pouches, a bundle of three 72 count pouches (216 wipes) and 100 count pouches packaged in 800 count boxes.Fresh Cucumber Scented Baby Wipes with a manufacturing code of December 29, 2025 (291225X/XX) to December 30, 2025 (301225X/XX) and expiration dates between June 29, 2028 (290628) through June 30, 2028 (300628).

Consumers should immediately stop using the recalled products and return them to any Target store for a full refund. Consumers can contact Target Guest Relations at 1-800-440-0680 from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. CT daily for more information.



people have tested positive for mpox since January.

Perhaps the most underreported story is tuberculosis. TB cases have been rising nationwide since 2021, and in 2024 reached the highest level since 2011, with 10,347 reported cases nationally—up 8% from the year before. Preliminary 2025 data show a slight decline to 10,260 cases, though some states are reporting preliminary figures showing case counts grew between 10% and 20% from 2024 to 2025. New Hampshire saw its cases double in a single year. North Dakota was up 64%.

Meanwhile, local health departments are straining under the cost of containment. In Johnson County, the cost of contact tracing and quarantine work has surged from \$17,000 in 2020 to \$65,000 last year—and the state recently told the county it could no longer help cover it.

South Carolina is barely through

one of the worst measles outbreaks in American history. The state's outbreak, which began last fall, ultimately produced 997 confirmed cases before being declared over in late April—the largest U.S. measles outbreak since 1991. It was barely two months before a new case emerged: an unvaccinated adult in Hampton County who had traveled internationally. Health officials say eight people who may have been exposed are now in quarantine.

"The number of those in quarantine does not reflect the number actually exposed," said Dr. Linda Bell, who leads the NC health department's outbreak response. "An increasing number of public exposure sites are being identified with likely hundreds more people exposed who are not aware they should be in quarantine if they are not immune to measles."

In Texas, meanwhile, federal and state officials are scrambling to contain the New World screwworm, a flesh-eating parasitic fly confirmed for the first time in Texas since 1966. A second case was quickly detected just miles from the first, prompting Governor Greg Abbott to declare a state of disaster. Officials are deploying sterile fly dispersal programs, but some experts are skeptical they will be sufficient to halt the spread.

And in waters far from American shores, a hantavirus outbreak aboard the MV Hondius cruise ship has sent eighteen American passengers back to the U.S. for medical monitoring on potential human-to-human transmission of a virus typically associated with rodent contact.

North Carolina Public Health Veterinarian Dr. Carl Williams says the risk of infection in North Carolina remains extremely low: “We’ve only had one case identified in North Carolina, and that was in 1995. In the Southeast, it’s an extremely rare disease,” Williams said.

At the CDC, job cuts have been sweeping. At least 2,400 employees, roughly 18% of the agency's total staff, have been fired or resigned since January 2025. The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices—the body of doctors and scientists that develops the nation's vaccine recommendations—had all 17 of its voting members fired and replaced with political allies of HHS Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. The agency's only permanent director in the past year, Susan Monarez, lasted 29 days before being fired.

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Arts & Culture

Preservation NC Explores The Layered History Of Hillsborough

By Jheri Hardaway

Staff Writer

Hillsborough, NC - Historic Hillsborough is full of character, history, and life. The morning of our Hillsborough Ramble, the main street was flooded with signs defending democracy, calling for healing and love. These same sentiments were felt throughout the tour. This sweltering Saturday ramble, hosted by Preservation North Carolina (PresNC), brought history buffs and preservationists to the quaint, historic, and stunningly beautiful town of Hillsborough. Traveling to each location primarily on foot, the tour offered an intimate look at structural landmarks that have borne witness to our state's complex evolution from elite antebellum social circles and the foundational architecture of higher education to the brutal realities of Jim Crow and the seemingly unending fight for racial equity. Rather than sweeping the contradictions of the past under the rug, the tour served as a vivid reminder that history is built on stubborn facts. By analyzing the bricks, timbers, and oral histories left behind, the Ramble showcased how physical preservation keeps our true, unvarnished heritage vividly alive.

A memorable stop on the tour was Dickerson Chapel, a historic African American church led by Reverend Kerri A. Rigsbee that recently secured a major \$400,000 grant from the National Black Church Heritage Fund. While the sum sounds vast, church leaders noted that structural contracting for historic landmarks requires highly specialized craftsmen and premium, historically accurate supplies. Local advocates expressed hope that the massive project would champion economic diversity by deliberately utilizing qualified Black and minority contractors. The stop was profoundly enriched by the



testimony of Horace H. Johnson Jr., whose father served as Hillsborough's first Black mayor. Johnson shared a visceral, personal account of integrating the Orange County school system as a ten-year-old boy in the fall of 1966, three years before mandatory desegregation took full effect in 1969.

Johnson recounted the terrifying silence of walking into a hostile sixth-grade classroom at what was then Orange Junior High (now the county-owned Whitted Building). He detailed the systemic racism of a teacher who weaponized grading scales until a local white grocery cashier, Miss Apple, intervened after discovering Johnson's test answers were vastly superior to her son's, a classmate of Johnson who received an "A" despite inferior academic performance. Miss Apple made a point to inform Mr. Johnson of how his son's work was being unfairly evaluated based on his race. Decades later, a chance encounter at a local Walmart brought an apology from another former white classmate who revealed a horrific truth about the school's cooking class. The girl confessed that students had intentionally



contaminated Johnson's donuts with blue floor wax and urine. The hurt yet pride in his perseverance was evident as Johnson explained that none of this stopped his greatness. He went on to play college basketball and had a long career in New York City before returning home to tell his stories and inspire change in his home community. Johnson noted that many of his childhood tormentors went on to become prominent doctors and lawyers. "That's why they don't want to study the history—because we see who they are."

The Ramble next moved to Eagle Lodge No. 19, an architecturally stunning structure built in 1823 and the ninth-oldest active Masonic lodge in North Carolina. The lodge holds a unique place in regional history; chartered in 1791 under Governor William Davie, its early members laid the literal cornerstones for the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, including Old East, Old West, and South Building. The building's design features a heavily over-engineered superstructure, including massive timber tie beams cut at precise angles to support a historic astronomical observatory added to



the roof in 1832 by UNC President Joseph Caldwell, although it had to be removed due to leaks and other structural issues.

Inside the lodge room, where the Master's station is symbolically elevated above the floor, the conversation turned remarkably candid regarding the racial fractures of American history. For more than two centuries, the mainstream Masonic order in North Carolina remained completely segregated from Prince Hall Freemasonry, the historically Black branch of the fraternity. While the Grand Lodge of North Carolina and the Prince Hall Grand Lodge formally recognized each other in the early 2000s, area Masonic leadership openly acknowledged the lingering sting of that legacy. "From 1791 to 2000... I'm honestly quite ashamed of it," a lodge leader shared during the tour. "The past is the past, and I'm not going to hide it... But we can only go forward."

An additional notable stop of the Ramble brought attendees to the historic Coachman's Quarters at Burnside, a rare, surviving outbuilding that stands in stark contrast to rural plantation sites like nearby



Stagville. To run your hands along the structural walls of the quarters is to touch raw history; the exterior surfaces are covered in the literal fingerprints of the enslaved child laborers who formed and turned the clay bricks in the sun. The site is tethered to the legacy of Jesse Ruffin, an enslaved coachman for North Carolina Supreme Court Chief Justice Thomas Ruffin. Historical accounts paint Jesse as a fierce, defiant intellectual. William Kirkland, the antebellum owner of Ayr Mount, once formally requested that Chief Justice Ruffin ban Jesse from his land because the coachman was actively speaking to the enslaved population at Ayr Mount, encouraging them to demand their freedom. Family oral history dictates that on December 5, 1865, the day following the ratification of the 13th Amendment, Jesse accompanied Thomas Ruffin to the Hillsborough Courthouse. Upon learning that slavery had officially ended, Jesse rushed back to the quarters to announce the dawn of freedom to his community.

Jesse and his wife, Rebecca Norwood, continued to live on the land after emancipation, operating a suc-

cessful seed business. Today, the quarters and their massive adjacent carriage barn featuring twenty separate stalls for horses and mules are fully protected under a permanent preservation easement. The barn itself contains a remarkable architectural mystery: its massive timber frames are secured using "scarf joints," an intricate, highly specialized technique explicitly utilized in transatlantic shipbuilding. The presence of these joints strongly indicates that the building was framed by an enslaved master carpenter who possessed sophisticated, highly transferable maritime engineering skills. The property was lovingly preserved for decades by the late Gwen Reed, who lived inside the restored barn structure up until her passing at age 99 this past January. Her descendants are currently working to transition the historic site into a public museum, ensuring that the stories of Jesse Ruffin, Rebecca Norwood, and the skilled laborers who built Hillsborough are preserved forever.

We also ventured into some of North Carolina's most stunning mansions and historic churches. One of the homes on the tour belonged to a couple who wrote scripts for years for The Guiding Light. The row of Emmys was overshadowed by the gorgeous custom bookshelves and primary bedroom French doors that open up to the private pool and pool house. This house is actually for sale by Hodge & Kittrell Sotheby's International Realty. Out of all the PresNC Rambles I've attended, this one felt the most personal. The Hillsborough Ramble was mostly walking, which empowered more personal conversations and interactions. These special experiences cultivated by PresNC empower the relevance of historical properties and help all Americans process with structural evidence how vivid and important our collective history truly is.

Square to Square Street Festival Brings Summer Fun To Clayton

By Judaea Ingram

Special To The Carolinian

Children laughed as they raced between rides and activities, families enjoyed snow cones under the June sunshine, and Main Street buzzed with excitement as the Square to Square Street Festival returned to Downtown Clayton on Saturday.

The annual event transformed downtown into a vibrant community gathering space, drawing residents and visitors for a day filled with entertainment, local vendors, family activities, and summer fun. Stretching from Town Square to Horne Square, the festival served as an unofficial kickoff to the summer season while highlighting the strong sense of community that continues to define Clayton.

This year's festival marked a notable change for the longtime tradition. Previously connected to the town's Independence Day celebration, Square to Square moved to an earlier June date and daytime schedule. Town officials made the change to allow families to enjoy the festivities before the hottest part of summer while still preserving many of the activities residents have come to expect each year.

The event began with the popular Children's Bike Parade, where young

riders decorated their bicycles and wheeled vehicles before traveling down Main Street. Families gathered along the route to cheer on participants and officially begin a day packed with activities.

Throughout the festival, children could be seen enjoying rides, inflatables, and trackless train rides as they explored the downtown area. One of the busiest attractions was the mechanical bull, where participants tested their balance while spectators laughed and cheered them on.

Many families spent the afternoon moving between activity stations, games, and entertainment areas. Hula hoop performers, bubble artists, jugglers, and stilt walkers created excitement throughout the festival grounds, often drawing crowds of children eager to watch and interact with the performers.

The Poetry Fox provided one of the event's more unique experiences. Visitors had the opportunity to receive custom poems, adding a creative and personal element to the day's festivities. Nearby, face painting, balloon art, chalk activities, and games gave children additional opportunities to express themselves and stay engaged throughout the afternoon.

The festival also featured a variety of local vendors and businesses.



Booths lined portions of Main Street while attendees browsed products, spoke with business owners, and supported local entrepreneurs. The Clayton Farm and Community Mar-

ket joined the celebration, giving visitors another opportunity to shop local and connect with members of the community.

Food remained a major attraction

throughout the event. Families gathered around food trucks and treat vendors while many took advantage of complimentary refreshments. Free snow cones and watermelon slices provided welcome relief from the warm temperatures and became popular stops for attendees throughout the day.

A new addition to this year's event was the Silent Disco Dance Party. Participants wore wireless headphones and danced along to music while others watched and joined the fun. The attraction added a fresh element to the festival and reflected organizers' efforts to continue evolving the event while maintaining its family-friendly atmosphere.

Beyond the attractions themselves, the festival showcased the importance of community-centered events in a growing town. Throughout the day, families stopped to take photos, friends gathered to enjoy the activities together, and neighbors connected with one another in the heart of downtown Clayton.

The event's location along Main Street also helped bring attention to local businesses and organizations. By drawing visitors into the downtown district, Square to Square provided an opportunity for residents to explore shops, interact with vendors, and experience the community gath-

ering spaces that make downtown Clayton unique.

As the afternoon came to a close, anticipation built for one of the festival's most popular traditions. Children gathered near Main and Church Streets wearing swimsuits and eagerly awaiting the annual fire truck spray down.

When firefighters began spraying water into the crowd, children ran through the streams laughing and cheering. Parents watched from nearby as young attendees embraced the refreshing finale. For many families, the spray down represented the perfect ending to a day dedicated to community, fun, and the beginning of summer.

As children left soaked and smiling, the scene captured the spirit of the Square to Square Street Festival itself. More than just a collection of rides and activities, the event brought together families, local businesses, community organizations, and residents for a celebration of everything that makes Clayton feel like home.

With packed streets, enthusiastic crowds, and a successful transition to its new summer schedule, this year's festival demonstrated why Square to Square remains one of Clayton's most anticipated community traditions.

‘Ragtime’ Is Still Resonating With Audiences After 30 Yrs On Broadway

New York (AP) — It's been nearly 30 years since Stephen Flaherty and Lynn Ahrens wrote the music and lyrics for the musical “Ragtime,” an American epic tracking the intertwining lives of three families in New York at the turn of the 20th century.

Staged at Lincoln Center's Vivian Beaumont Theater, the musical is in its third run on Broadway — and earned 11 Tony nominations, including for best revival. It's resonating the most with audiences this time, they said. “Three is the charm,” Ahrens said.

“When we originally did it on Broadway, which was 1998, I think a lot of people, if not most people, were thinking about this piece as a period piece,” Flaherty said. “I think now, people are responding to it as a contemporary story.”

Adapted from the 1975 novel by E.L. Doctorow, the show's book is by the late playwright Terrence McNally. It depicts a wide swath of the American experience in New York at the turn of the 20th century, from Black Americans in Harlem to Jewish immigrants on the Lower East Side to the white upper-class residents of the suburbs of Westchester County.

The story that unfolds is fiction, but features historical figures like activist Emma Goldman, educator and leader Booker T. Washington, banker J.P. Morgan, auto founder Henry Ford and illusionist Harry Houdini. The show's breadth — encompassing immense tragedy as well as great optimism — and the depth of the actors' performances

has been bringing Broadway audiences to their feet, often mid-act.

It also has people returning. “They're like, ‘I'm coming back with my parents,’ ‘I'm coming back with my grandchildren,’ ‘I'm coming back with my grandparents,’ and it's not even like they have to see it. They want to experience it with them,” said Brandon Uranowitz, who had his own return to the show, decades after he acted as a child in the pre-Broadway production.

Now, he's nominated for best lead actor in a musical for playing the role of Tateh, a Jewish immigrant from Latvia. “I think it's sort of speaking to this generational reckoning that we're having with America and our national identity.”

“Ragtime” at the Tony Awards

The original production lost the best new musical Tony Award to “The Lion King,” but Ahrens and Flaherty took home the prize for best original score, McNally best book and William David Brohn best orchestrations in a competitive year. It also won Audra McDonald, the Tonys' most decorated performer, her third award. A 2009 revival received six nominations, but lost best revival to “La Cage aux Folles.”

This could be the year it finally wins a best show award: “Ragtime” is a front-runner for best musical revival, against strong competition from “Cats: The Jellie Ball” and “The Rocky Horror Show.” Among its other nods are nominations for all three leads, and for featured performers Nichelle Lewis and Ben Levi Ross.

Portraying a range of American



experiences

Joshua Henry, nominated alongside his costar for best lead actor, plays Coalhouse Walker Jr., a celebrated Black pianist at the center of his community in Harlem. Caisie Levy, nominated for her role of Mother, is the matriarch of a wealthy white family in a suburb outside New York City.

A cast of supporting characters, and a large ensemble, flesh out the lead trio's lives, relationships and eventual connections: Lewis plays Sarah, Coalhouse's beloved; Ross is Mother's Younger Brother and Colin Donnell her husband, Father; Shaina Taub is Goldman, the real-life activist.

Emotions in the first act peak during “Wheels of a Dream,” Lewis' iconic duet with Henry, which

draws standing ovations, mid-song, nearly every night.

“She is a person who represents women — especially women of color — who don't have a voice, women of color who are fighting to have a voice, women of color who find strength in other ways because we weren't allowed to have it,” Lewis said of Sarah. But above all, she said, the character represents the power of trust, love and hope as a buoying force.

That hope is also what propels Uranowitz's Tateh. “Despite everything he goes through, despite the rejection, despite the oppression, despite the othering, despite antisemitism,” it's what persists.

In the song “Journey On,” his character arrives in New York with his young daughter just as Mother's

husband, Father, leaves on an expedition to the North Pole.

“You depart on a ship from a country like this,” Tateh sings, watching Father leave. “Why on Earth would you want to be leaving?” The two men are perched on separate, moving staircases on a sparsely furnished stage, but sing from the same height, emphasizing the valley between their experiences.

Like many of the characters, Father and Tateh (also “father,” in Yiddish) are nameless. The intention, Uranowitz said, is for aspects of Tateh's journey — from immigrant artist to successful movie-maker — to reflect the experience of Jewish Americans, and to resonate with people from other backgrounds as well. “If you pan out, which ‘Ragtime’ does so beautifully, it also holds just a capital ‘I’ immigration experience. And I think that's really important for people to see right now.”

Holding a mirror to the current moment

The musical feels so relevant to 2026 that audience members have asked director Lear deBessonet, also Tony-nominated, if the creative team rewrote the script for this production. Lyrics by Ahrens and dialogue by McNally about the discrimination and brutality that Black Americans and immigrants face can seem straight out of the current moment. There are also references to keeping the country “great,” and commentary on celebrity culture and the power of industry leaders.

But the text hasn't changed. “We,

in the audience, are hearing it differently,” deBessonet said. “There's something that actually, I think is very unifying about coming together with a community of our time to look at this other time, and to look at the promise and the wound of America right next to each other.”

A 2027 tour, with deBessonet and the Broadway run's creative team at the helm, will bring the show to a wider audience around the country.

“It does not feel like we're looking back. It feels like we're looking in a mirror at ourselves,” Flaherty said.

There is one small change, however. When “Wheels of a Dream” is reprised in the final number, the ensemble sings “Our son will ride on the wheels of a,” and then takes a long pause before a final, resonant, “dream.” The goal is not to prescribe a particular emotional response, but to allow viewers — and the actors themselves — space for their own interpretations.

“In that moment, every single actor, every artist on that stage is invited to fill that moment with whatever feels honest to them that night,” deBessonet said. “Sometimes you can really feel that there is exuberant hope in the air. And sometimes there is grief or rage or confusion,” she added.

Ahrens said it's been a “revelation” to see how audiences have responded to the production, before and after the 2024 presidential election — and throughout this Broadway run, which concludes on Aug. 2. “It's such a visceral thing,” she said. “I don't think we've ever experienced anything like it.”

Community

Cisco Connected Black Professionals For AI Ready Summit

Raleigh, NC – Cisco Connected Black Professionals (CBP) RTP, in partnership with the National Black MBA Association (NBMBA) Raleigh-Durham Chapter, proudly hosted the "AI Readiness Summit", bringing together more than 165 professionals, executives, entrepreneurs, educators, and emerging leaders for a day of learning, collaboration, and future-focused

conversations centered on artificial intelligence. The summit was designed to move beyond the headlines and hype surrounding AI, equipping attendees with practical insights on how to lead, learn, and leverage artificial intelligence in today's rapidly evolving workplace. The event kicked off with a keynote panel discussion, "Beyond the

Hype: How to Lead, Learn, and Leverage AI," with Cisco's Gretchen Sleeper, Senior Director, AI Orchestration and Capabilities, Cisco Systems; Kenyetta Hall, CEO, Katalyst HQ & Professor of Practice, Shuford Program for Entrepreneurship at UNC-Chapel Hill; Bobby McNeil, VP of Development, RDU Triad Chapter of NBMBA & Talent Acquisition Manager, Enac; and Professor Rich-

ard Tillies, Department Head, Computer Programming & Information Sciences, Wake Tech Community College; and moderated by Andrea Parker, Business Operations Analyst & AI Summit Event Curator, Cisco Systems where industry leaders explored the opportunities, challenges, and responsibilities organizations face as AI continues to transform business operations, workforce development,

and leadership practices. "Artificial intelligence is no longer a future conversation; it is a present-day leadership imperative," said Andrea Parker, event host and Chapter Advisor of Cisco Connected Black Professionals-RTP. "Our goal was to create a space where professionals could engage in meaningful dialogue, gain practical knowledge, and leave empowered to navigate

the future with confidence." Throughout the day, attendees participated in engaging discussions focused on AI adoption, workforce readiness, innovation, ethical implementation, career development, and organizational transformation. The summit emphasized the importance of ensuring diverse voices remain at the forefront of technological advancement and decision-making.

Missing Black Girl, 16, Found Hanging From Tree in N.C.

CHARLOTTE, N.C — A 16-year-old Black girl who had been missing since late April has been found dead hanging from a tree, according to police and media reports.

Juliana Nzita, who recently moved to North Carolina from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, was found earlier this month hanging from a tree near the United House of Prayer for All People Church in Charlotte, police said. Her death has been classified as a suicide.

Authorities said Nzita was reported missing on April 28, according to the North Carolina Beat, an independent local news outlet. Her family searched for her while online posts and tips spread across social media.

Area resident Kenneth Tolbert said he was near the church on May 8 when he spotted what appeared to be the body of a teenage girl hanging from a tree, the outlet reported. Tolbert said he alerted church members and police.

Tolbert reportedly provided video footage showing a small blue chair under a tree and a rope above, with the girl's feet still close to the ground. A church member reportedly said the area had been checked the day before and saw nothing unusual.

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department records confirmed Nzita was pronounced dead at 12:40 p.m. on May 8. The report documented the location and initial findings.

Investigators said they received no response from Nzita's family when contacted. The church reportedly released no public statement.

Black Truck Driver to Announce Lawsuit After NC Deputy Assaults Him in Viral Video

NORTHAMPTON COUNTY, NC - Don D. Long II, the 39-year-old Black truck driver whose assault by Northampton County Sheriff's Deputy Gregory Colson has gone viral on social media, will join his attorneys on Thursday, June 11, at 10:00 AM inside the Martin Street Baptist Church's Family of Life Center (1001 E. Martin Street, Raleigh, NC) to announce the filing of a lawsuit in connection with the unlawful use of force that left the commercial truck driver with permanent damage to his vision.

Video of the assault against Long has sparked wide outrage receiving over five million views across social media platforms since it was posted on Friday.

Long will make remarks during Thursday's news conference along with his attorneys including renowned national civil rights attorneys Harry Daniels, Chantel Cherry-Lassiter and Gerald Griggs.

The incident occurred on January 22, 2026 when Long arrived at the Northampton County Courthouse as required to appear for a court date. Upon entering the courtroom, he was stopped by Deputy Colson who attempted to prevent him from entering. Long asked to enter the courtroom expressing his concern that failure to appear as required could result in a bench warrant and possible arrest. Rather than addressing those concerns, Deputy Colson instead chose to exit the courtroom himself and discharge pepper spray directly into Mr. Long's eyes even though Long posed no threat and was simply trying to follow the court's instructions.

The Literary Arts Fund to distribute \$7.7 million in grants to 40 organizations

NEW YORK (AP) — Dozens of literary entities, from the presenters of the National Book Awards to an organization supporting North Carolina writers, have received grants from an endowment established last year to boost support for the U.S. independent and nonprofit book community.

The Literary Arts Fund, initiated by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and six other philanthropies, announced that \$7.7 million would be distributed among 40 organizations in 19 states. Recipients of grants ranging from \$40,000 to \$500,000 include the National Book Foundation, which oversees the National Book Awards; the North Carolina Writers' Network; Graywolf Press, Copper Canyon Press and other publishers; and the Minnesota Prison Writing Workshop.

The arts in general have faced cuts in federal support since President Donald Trump began his second term, although the fund was conceived before he took office. The fund's managers are expected to give out at least \$50 million over a 5-year period.

"Writers give voice to the human condition, helping us better understand ourselves and each other," Jen Benka, the fund's executive director, said in a statement. "And central to millions of readers having access to their stories and poems are literary arts nonprofits, which work tirelessly to ensure literature continues to have a vital presence in our culture. As these organizations and publishers face a lack of funding, we encourage leaders who value literature to join us in supporting writers, books, and reading."

LIBRARY BUDGET

Continued from page 3

presented a plan for a new library, five of the seven commissioners indicated support for a 2.6-acre Well Fed Community Garden site directly across the street from Athens Drive High School in Southwest Raleigh, over a 12-acre school system-owned site near Tryon Road and Yates Mill Road, roughly three miles away inside Cary town limits.

The decision will be funded by a \$142 million library bond voters approved in 2024. County staff negotiated a purchase agreement with Well Fed Community Garden owners Arthur and Anya Gordon for \$1.586 million, down from an initial asking price of \$1.8 million. The Well Fed site would serve 125,148 residents within a 10-minute drive, compared to 99,874 for the Tryon Road location, and offers stronger public transit access.

As Commissioner Tara Waters noted, the Tryon Road site has no bus stop, with the nearest GoTriangle stop two-thirds of a mile away.

Commissioners Susan Evans and Vickie Adamson backed the Tryon Road site, citing its size and room for future expansion. County guidelines call for four to five acres for a community branch and seven to eight for a site with expansion potential.

"We've had libraries that were simply too small for the communities they serve, and when there's no room to expand, we can't meet those needs," Adamson said. "Moving the library would place it on a larger site, but it would also reduce the number of residents within a 10-minute drive time," she added.

Evans, whose district covers both proposed sites, said she is thinking beyond the immediate neighborhood.

"I'm focused on how we serve the entire region that is Southwest Raleigh, Swift Creek, unincorporated area going down toward Lake Wheeler, all of that needs to be served by this library as effectively as possible, and we need to plan for the years to come," she said. "The pro for the Well Fed Garden site is it is in the existing community, it has walkability, it's close to the high school. But it is not the optimal size for what we would like to see, and it doesn't allow us any ability for expansion of the library ... That causes me some concern."

Commissioner Safiyah Jackson countered that the area is already ringed by regional libraries—Southeast Regional and Oberlin Regional in Raleigh, and Cary Regional and Eva Perry Regional in Cary—making a community-scale branch the right call.

"There is something to be said about a community library sitting in the middle of the regional libraries and presenting all of those residents with the option of having a quaint community library experience as well as the choice of a regional library," Jackson said. "We should be thinking about growth in this county ... but I don't get the sense ... that the growth in this area is putting pressure on these other libraries such that this one has to be regional to account for that much more growth."

The pending vote follows years of advocacy from Athens Drive residents who pushed to keep the library close to home. Several attended Monday's meeting and celebrated when commissioners tipped their hand.



Durham Mother Sues Property Owner Over Son's Death In Laundry Room

NC NEWSLINE - The mother of a Durham man who died of heart failure after he became trapped in the laundry room of her downtown apartment building has sued the property owner and management firm.

Debra Davies seeks compensatory damages for the estate of Jason Pulliam, who was 39 at the time of his death. Davies also asked the court to award her damages for the "infliction of emotional distress" caused by her son's death. According to the lawsuit, Davies suffered "severe emotional distress, mental anguish, grief, anxiety, loss of sleep, emotional suffering, and other psychological injuries" due to defendants' alleged "negligence."

The lawsuit, filed in Durham County Superior Court, claims an electronic door malfunctioned and would not open from inside the laundry room, preventing Pulliam from quickly receiving the care that might have saved his life.

"Had Jason or the other occupants of the laundry room been able to freely exit the room, or otherwise summon assistance, emergency personnel could have been alerted sooner and provided lifesaving care earlier," the lawsuit asserts.

The lawsuit contends the defendants "knew or reasonably should have known that residents and visitors utilizing the common areas of Ashton Place could suffer medical emergencies, fires, accidents, or other events requiring immediate egress from the laundry room or immediate access to emergency assistance."

Davies is represented by Howard Stallings Law Firm in Raleigh. Lee Rodio, the lead attorney in the case, declined to answer questions when reached Thursday.

"We'll let the allegations in the



complaint speak for themselves," Rodio said.

Davies' lawsuit names Downtown Home Improvement Corporation Inc. (DHIC), the Raleigh-based nonprofit developer of the 51-unit affordable housing complex for seniors, and Winston-Salem based Community Management Corporation (CMC), the firm DHIC hired to manage the property. Ashton Place Housing LLC and Ashton Place Managing Members, LLC are also named as defendants.

Jack Bayliss, an attorney with Caruthers & Roth, the legal firm that represents DHIC, said he had not seen the complaint. Bayliss declined to comment on the lawsuit.

Yolanda Winstead, DHIC's executive director, was unavailable for comment. Calls to CMC were not returned on Friday.

Winstead did discuss Pulliam's death briefly with NC Newsline in November: "Based on our investigation,

Ashton Place was not responsible for this unfortunate death that happened to occur on the premises," Winstead said.

Bayliss also told NC Newsline at the time that Ashton Place was not responsible for Pulliam's death.

"It's sad whenever a young person passes away like this, but Ashton Place doesn't have any responsibility for his death, and that's our position on the matter," Bayliss said. "You know, our sympathies go out to Ms. Davies, losing her son, but that's about all we have to say on the matter at this point."

Pulliam died in the Ashton Place laundry room in November 2024. A tenant told investigators at the time that Pulliam appeared "distressed and in need of assistance" when Pulliam entered the laundry room.

"As his [Pulliam's] condition deteriorated, it became apparent that emergency intervention was

urgently needed," the lawsuit said. "However, the laundry room door had become inoperable from the inside, preventing their escape."

According to Davies, her son had congestive heart failure dating to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The tenant who said she was trapped in the laundry room with Pulliam told investigators that she banged on the door and called for help, but that her efforts to get someone's attention were unsuccessful. Neither she nor Pulliam had brought cell phones to the laundry room.

"Unable to escape, unable to call for help, and unable to attract the attention of others in the building, she watched helplessly as Jason's condition continued to worsen," the lawsuit said. "According to the woman, all she could do was pray for this man she had never met who appeared to be dying before her eyes."

Eventually, two more residents entered the laundry room, but were not aware the door was malfunctioning, so they too became locked in the laundry room, the lawsuit said. One of them called 911, according to the lawsuit, but by the time police and first responders arrived, it was too late. They were unable to revive Pulliam.

Pulliam had spoken with his mother at 8:47 p.m. She was traveling from Greensboro and they made arrangements for him to pick her up from the train station. He was pronounced dead at 10:43 p.m.

The residents of Ashton Place and nearby Willard Street Apartments, both developed by DHIC and managed by Community Management Corporation, formed tenant unions in March to fight against what they contend are poor management and shoddy building maintenance.

Taste of Charlotte Draws Packed Crowds Uptown, Showcases City's Food Scene

By Judaea Ingram

Special To The Carolinian

CHARLOTTE, N.C. – Uptown Charlotte was filled with dense, steady crowds throughout the weekend as the Taste of Charlotte Festival returned, turning Tryon Street into a packed stretch of food vendors, music, and nonstop movement.

From midday into the evening, foot traffic rarely slowed. Groups of visitors moved shoulder to shoulder through the festival footprint, weaving between long lines, live music stages, and food booths as the smell of grilled dishes, desserts, and international flavors filled the air. At peak hours, sections of Uptown felt nearly gridlocked as attendees waited for samples and searched for their next stop.

The three-day festival, known as Charlotte's largest food festival, featured samples from local, regional, and national restaurants, alongside live entertainment and interactive activities. Admission was free, but guests purchased festival coins, either on-site or through a contactless app, to sample food, drinks, and select attractions.

That system encouraged variety, and many attendees used it to their advantage, moving from booth to booth to try small portions from as many vendors as possible.

"It is the best part of it," one attendee, Xavier, said. "You are not stuck with just one meal. You can try a little bit of everything in the city."

That idea defined much of the weekend experience. Visitors shared plates, compared favorites, and lined



up for everything from local barbecue and fried specialties to desserts and international dishes. The variety was one of the biggest draws, with many attendees treating the festival as a walking tour of Charlotte's food scene.

Vendors said that level of exposure is what makes the event valuable, especially for restaurants trying to reach new customers in a competitive market.

"You get nonstop traffic all day," one vendor said. "People are always trying something new, and even a small sample can bring them back later."

Beyond food, the festival featured three entertainment stages spread across Uptown, where live music and performances helped keep crowds circulating through the area. Families also filled kid-friendly zones, adding

to the constant movement across the festival footprint.

As the weekend continued, Uptown businesses outside the festival perimeter also saw increased activity. Nearby restaurants, coffee shops, and bars reported heavier foot traffic as visitors expanded their trips beyond Tryon Street.

"It was packed everywhere," one Uptown worker said. "Not just the festival, but the whole area felt busy the entire weekend."

The event also highlighted Charlotte's growing identity as both a culinary and cultural hub. As the city continues to expand, Taste of Charlotte has become one of the clearest examples of how large-scale events can reshape Uptown into a shared public space for food, entertainment, and community in-

teraction.

By the end of each day, the festival remained crowded well into the evening, with lines still forming at popular vendors and groups lingering near stages to finish their last tastings.

For many attendees, the appeal was not just the food itself, but the experience of trying so many different flavors in one place, surrounded by thousands of other visitors doing the same.

As Xavier said, the festival delivered exactly that.

"You just keep walking and trying new things," he said. "That is what makes it fun."

And for a weekend in Uptown Charlotte, that steady flow of food, people, and energy defined the entire experience.

Church

Defense Department Slashes Its Religious Designations List From More Than 200 Choices Down To 31 Options

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Department of Defense announced on Friday a significant reduction in the number of religious affiliations it officially recognizes.

The new list of 31 is down from more than 200 previously recognized traditions that troops could choose from. The list no longer includes atheists, Unitarian Universalists, pagans and Wiccans.

“This decrease in religious affilia-

tion codes is not designed to make any claims on the legitimacy of any faith or religious belief, nor is it intended to provide a list of ‘officially approved’ religions,” Pentagon spokesperson Sean Parnell said in a statement. “Rather, it is designed to allow chaplains to quickly look at the religious composition of their units and determine how they structure resources to best provide for warfighters of all faith groups.”

Parnell added the department val-

ues the free exercise of religion and chaplains facilitate service members’ “ability to freely exercise their religion of choice, or no religion at all.”

The list creates broad categories of some Christian traditions — Baptist, Presbyterian, Methodist — without specifying denominations within those traditions, which can span the theological and ideological spectrum.

Service members can choose to identify as “no religion,” “other religions” or

agnostic. Also included are Buddhism, Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, Sikhism, the Baha’i faith and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

The Unitarian Universalist Association, which was cut from the list, said in a statement, “This may make it more difficult for our uniformed UUs to access the spiritual care that they need.” The denomination said it is working on a strategic response to support UU service members.

Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth has infused his evangelical Christianity with his leadership of the Pentagon, hosting worship services for employees and often speaking of the United States as a Christian nation.

He first announced the impending changes to the faith categories in December, saying the large number of faith codes had become unmanageable.

“Secretary Hegseth is not ‘streamlining’ anything. He is elevating one narrow religious worldview from the top of the chain of command,” said the Rev. Paul Raushenbush, a Baptist minister and head of the progressive Interfaith Alliance. “The First Amendment does

not allow the government to create a hierarchy of faiths, and it certainly does not allow the Pentagon to decide which beliefs are worthy of recognition.”

The military is religiously diverse, and nearly 70% of troops identify as Christian, according to a 2019 congressional report. Almost a quarter of troops were listed as other, unclassified or unknown.

“As a member of a minority religion, I think it’s really important that we be counted,” said Irene Glasse, a pagan religious professional and Marine Corp veteran. “It erases us, and so many of us have served so proudly, so well, and so honorably.”

Church Of God In Christ & Thrivent Partner To Advance Financial Education Across US

MEMPHIS, Tenn. — The Church Of God In Christ, Inc. (COGIC), the largest Pentecostal denomination in the United States, today announced a multi-year partnership with Thrivent, a Fortune 500 financial services company that puts generosity at the heart of saving and investing. Building on years of collaboration, the new partnership brings together Thrivent’s purpose-based advice and generosity with COGIC’s national church network. Through this partnership, Thrivent will provide a virtual, faith-based financial education curriculum to COGIC members and provide charitable giving support, including matched giving and a future endowment, to strengthen stewardship across the denomination.

“At the Church Of God In Christ, we believe spiritual, physical and financial wholeness is the inheritance of every believer,” said Pre-

siding Bishop J. Drew Sheard, Church Of God In Christ. “Financial education and economic empowerment have been missing chapters in the story of too many of our families and congregations, so this partnership is a decisive and meaningful step toward changing that narrative. Alongside Thrivent, we will equip our 12,000-plus churches and our adherents with the knowledge, tools, and resources to make informed financial decisions today and for generations to come.”

“This partnership reflects Thrivent’s longstanding belief that everyone deserves a financial plan and is a meaningful example of why Thrivent exists — to empower lives of service and faith,” said Thrivent’s Chief Growth and Generosity Officer Carolyn Sakstrup. “COGIC shares our commitment to purpose, faith, stewardship and service to others. By elevating our

work together, Thrivent can deliver financial education and resources through a trusted, nationwide church network with deep community roots. Together, we will help church leaders and families plan stronger financial futures for generations.”

A collaboration built on shared values

The partnership is designed to make financial well-being as integral to church life as worship, service and fellowship, and includes:

- Thrivent will offer COGIC leaders a co-created virtual, faith-based financial education curriculum that will focus on the importance of stewardship and personal retirement planning. It also will tackle financial topics such as debt, saving and spending to help build a financial foundation that helps participants invest for the future and leaves a legacy. Church leaders

will see the curriculum first before it expands to congregants in 2027.

Thrivent will share financial education and purpose-based advice at COGIC conferences from the mainstage, through workshops and within one-on-one consultations.

Thrivent will support COGIC’s charitable efforts and match the denomination’s donations up to \$65,000 annually. Additionally, Thrivent will work with COGIC to create a future endowment fund to amplify generosity.

Removing barriers to financial well-being

COGIC recognizes the profound responsibility it holds to equip its members with the knowledge necessary to make informed, forward-looking financial decisions, especially for those who have historically faced systemic barriers to financial access and advancement. Through this partnership, Thrivent’s offerings of purpose-based advice, investments, insurance, and generosity programs will be provided to COGIC’s vast network of pastors, clergy, church administrators, and lay members. It will bring expanded access to financial education resources across communities that stand to benefit from them most.

Omegas Honor Community Leaders at Scholarship Gala

RALEIGH, N.C. — More than 250 guests gathered May 29 at Wake Chapel Church Life Enrichment Center for the 2026 Legacy of Leadership Scholarship Gala, hosted by the Iota Iota Chapter of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc., the Omega Founders Scholars Program, and the Triangle Uplift Foundation.

The event recognized community leaders for their contributions in advocacy, education, economic development, faith, media, public safety, and youth enrichment while raising funds for scholarships and mentoring programs that support local students.

“Our goal is to celebrate leaders who are making a difference while investing in the next generation through scholarships and mentorship,” said Chapter Basileus Tyler Vinson.

Former North Carolina Supreme Court Chief Justice Cheri Beasley received the Legacy of Leadership Award. Other honorees included Kelli Wilhelm (Advocacy), Raleigh Raised Development (Economic Development), LaToya Reed (Educational Development), Rev. Dr. Harry L. White Jr. (Faith), Gerald Owens (Multimedia), Deputy Chief Eddie M. Buffalo Jr. (Public Safety), and Melissa McDonald (Youth Enrichment).

The gala also featured musical performances by saxophonist Collin Williams and violinist Hannah Ashley, a sophomore at Trinity Academy and winner of the Omega Psi Phi Sixth District Talent Hunt competition.

In addition, two community organizations — the Kappa League, Wake Forest Chapter and Top Ladies of Distinction — received \$500 grants. Three youth mentoring programs were recognized for their service to area students. They were the Delta Carousel Program by the Raleigh Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., the EMBODI Program by Knightdale-Wake Forest Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. and the Youth Leadership Institute by the Chi Omega Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. in Knightdale.

Proceeds from the event will fund scholarships for Wake County high school students, support youth mentoring and leadership development initiatives, and expand college readiness resources.

“This is more than a gala,” said Program Chair Daniel Blackmond. “It is a pipeline of opportunity.”

SERMON of the WEEK



LINCOLN PARK EDUCATION DAY
By Bishop-Elect William "Billy" Eli Ratcliff
Text: Proverbs 4:7

"Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding." Today, I want to talk about "UNDERSTANDING WHAT AND WHO GOD IS, AND WHO AND WHAT WE ARE."

I have often heard it said that it will take an eternity to fully understand God. Therefore, I certainly will not attempt to explain everything about Him in one sermon. This scripture teaches the difference between information and understanding. Knowledge is having information; understanding is knowing how to use it.

As pastor, I pray that as we study God's Word, we will recognize truth and make sound moral decisions. Philippians 1:6 reminds us that the God who began a good work in us is faithful to complete it through the power of the Holy Ghost.

Who is God? He is the Supreme Creator and Sustainer of the universe. We know Him as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost—the source of all truth. Who are we? We are sinners saved by grace, created by God and

redeemed through Christ. That is why biblical education is more than learning facts. It shapes character, builds wisdom, and teaches us how to live according to God's will.

Yet not everyone chooses to pursue God. Psalm 14:1 says, "The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God." The danger is not a lack of intelligence but a rejection of God's authority. That is why I say, "Don't wait for the hearse to take you to church—go on and take yourself."

Many seek higher education but have no desire to serve anything higher than themselves. Some declare, "I am the master of my fate; I am the captain of my soul." Yet Romans 1:28 warns that continual rejection of God leads to a reprobate mind. Education alone does not guarantee wisdom.

So, I say to every graduate: You do not have to drink anybody's Kool-Aid, no matter the flavor or who is serving it. Keep saying no to the world and yes to God.

Here at Lincoln Park, we believe in God-powered Preaching, Sound Doctrine Teaching, Compassionate Reaching, and Hallelujah Praise because we know the Truth, and the Truth has set us free.

Frederick Douglass said, "Others may clear the road, but we must go forward or be left behind in the race of life." The Bible also tells us to "Study to show thyself approved." Each of you has God-given potential. Some are still discovering it, while others simply need the courage to reach for the stars.

Let me share a story.

An eagle's egg was placed in a chicken coop, where it hatched and grew up believing it was a chicken. Though it possessed eagle strength, vision, and potential, it accepted the limits of its surroundings. The other birds encouraged that thinking because they knew that if the eagle ever realized what it was, it would soar

above them.

One day the eagle looked up and saw another eagle flying high overhead. "I wish I could be like that," he said. The soaring eagle replied, "You are not a chicken, you are an eagle. Your talons were made for achievement, your eyes for distant horizons. Spread your wings and soar."

Today, I want every graduate to remember three things:

- Don't let your environment define your destiny.
- Don't be ashamed of the gifts God gave you.
- Never settle for the fence post when God created you to soar.

One final word to the graduates: Never forget who God is and what He has made you to be. Keep coming to God's house to discover who you really are.

The Devil will try to bully you, make you run from the church, make you "chicken out," or convince you that spiritual growth is not important. When that happens, spread your wings and wait on the Lord.

Here at Lincoln Park, we are not chickens—we are eagles. Even if some are still cackling and complaining, we have learned to spread our wings and wait on the Lord.

You may be sick, broke, busted, or disgusted, but keep learning to spread your wings and wait on the Lord. The Bible says, "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles."

I'm not a chicken, I'm an eagle. How about you?

To experience the full message, please visit www.youtube.com/@lincolnparkholinesschurch1913 and watch this week's Sermon. We encourage you to Like, Subscribe, and share your thoughts in the comments so we can connect and grow together in faith. We look forward to hearing from you.

Practical Biblical Principles

LIFE IS A GIFT
Read Luke: 12:22-31
By John L. Caldwell, Pastor

New Jerusalem Baptist Cathedral

This life I have is not my own. I have long realized life is a gift. It is a gift that is not my own. At times I thought that life was a ball game. A game which everybody can play. But I realized that everybody can't play ball. There are those who can't run, can't catch, can't throw, can't hit, and can't pitch. I short, if life is a ballgame, some people are not going to have a good life. Even if Jesus is waiting for you at the home plate, some still will not make it safely home.

Simply because one did not have the right stuff to play the game.

Another way of looking at life is to know that life is not a right. To see life this way changes our perspective. It will help us to focus more on being thankful. The life God gives us is God's gift to us. What we do with our lives, while we have it, is our gift back to God. What have you done with the life God has given you? Are you missing anything? Did you lose a dream like sand flowing through your fingers? What beauty did life bring you? Was it marriage? Your children, your family you grew up with? Your job? Your boy or girlfriend? What good has education added to your life? Anything? What has your church added to your life, anything? What has Jesus added to your life, anything?

When God gave us life, He didn't make a mistake. God had a purpose for our lives. Do you know what it is? While you are reaching for life, so to speak, your life's experiences can and will lead you to your purpose for living, providing you have said "yes" to God. To experience life in its fullness, one should not wait until one gets to the end of one's life to say "yes" to

God.

Just know God does not operate in our timeline. Therefore, He will hear our "yes" anytime in our lifetime, just as He did with the thief on the cross. All of God's creation has its purpose. The Psalmist in 127:1-5 tells us, "Unless God build the house, we labor in vain". This means It is God who puts the family together. However, it is the responsibility of the family to stay together.

The scripture is also saying, "Blessed is the man who has a house full of children for each child is a blessing from God." The fruit of the womb is a reward like arrows in the hand of a warrior. Happy is the man who has his quiver full of them." Arrows are the children, and the quiver (pouch) is the family size which holds the children. In short, one's first exposure to life and the happiness life brings is in the family. And if you don't feel blessed it may be because you fail to know your purpose in life.

This is why we are told to work out our soul's salvation in Philippians 2:12-13. We must learn what our purpose here upon earth is. Did the thief on the cross enjoy his life given the time he had left? Did the thief see life as a game? Was he able to play it well? Don't wait too long to say, "Yes" to God.

It is interesting that our Lord told us that we will have trouble in this life, Yet he told us to lean on Him. "Therefore, I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; nor about the body, what you will put on. Life is more than food, and the body is more than clothing.

Consider the ravens, for they neither sow nor reap, which have neither storehouse nor barn; and God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds?"

What determines whether life is good to you or bad? It is the choices

that one makes in life. The choices also depends upon the amount of quality information one is able to acquire during one's lifetime. Another important point is the source of the information one acquires. Where and what are the sources of information have you acquired? Can your source of information be trusted? Can you depend upon the information you have acquired in times of trouble? When in trouble can your source of information help bring sunshine into your life?

If you were to weigh your life on a scale today, which way will the scales tip? Toward lots of happiness or toward worry and sadness. There is nothing in between. If your scale is in balance what is it that is holding it in balance? Money — no; cars — no; night life — no; family, church, Jesus - you? On the other hand, if your scale is out of balance what is it that is tipping the scale? You fill in the blank.

Whatever is tipping your life's scale out of balance is not adding to your life. Chances are those things are taking and draining joy and happiness out of your life.

Do you think God gave Adam and Eve their lives without peace and joy? Those walks in the evening when God strolled along with the first human couple in that beautiful garden must have been heaven so to speak. That was life, until. You know Adam and Eve was family and this was where their lives began- with God. The same is true with us today, our lives begin with God. He blew His breath in us and we became living souls. Yes, He did while we were in our mother's womb.

Is life a gift to you or is life a ballgame? Can you play? Or just simply say "Yes" to God and let God pour the gifts of His Son into our lives. Just say "Yes" to God's gift of life.



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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.

The Story of the ~~Titanic~~ America

By Rodney Ross

Is it time for serious republicans to grow the courage to separate themselves from the Trump administration and Pete Hegseth.

During Trump's campaign for his first presidency, he did something unprecedented. He spoke directly to the African American community. Many of the establishment Democrats made the mistake of taking the African American base for granted and after decades of over promising and under delivering, especially in the black male population, they did the unthinkable and voted for Trump. The end result was him becoming the 45th president.

By the time his presidency ended, a 4-year smear campaign by his political opposition, as well as countless gaffs when a camera and microphone were put in Mr Trump's face, soured the relationship that never cemented between Trump and the African American base. Initially, his anti-establishment persona was appealing. Kind of like a wake up call to the Washington D.C. elites, to show the depths that America is willing to go to create meaningful change. But no one could have predicted the result of that choice.

Not convinced that Trump could bring in the change people hoped for, disenfranchised voters stayed away from the ballots. But another emerging group, the tik tok generation, who believed every piece of negative propaganda against Trump, showed up and made sure their voice was heard at the ballot. The result was an even worse 4 years, the DEI that ironically was ushered in during Trump began to erode swiftly as lobbying groups pressured everyone from Target to Budwieser beer to insure that the WASP base was no longer going to tolerate preferential treatment to anyone who was not them.

The democratic party failed it's base by forcing the idea of President Biden on the people and borderline making VP Kamala Harris seem disconnected and incompetent. To put this into perspective, they lost to Donald Trump a second time. This is a president who was impeached. Lost to Joe Biden, only to regain the power that The White House holds. V.P. Harris is a career, establishment Democrat. How do you lose to Donald Trump?

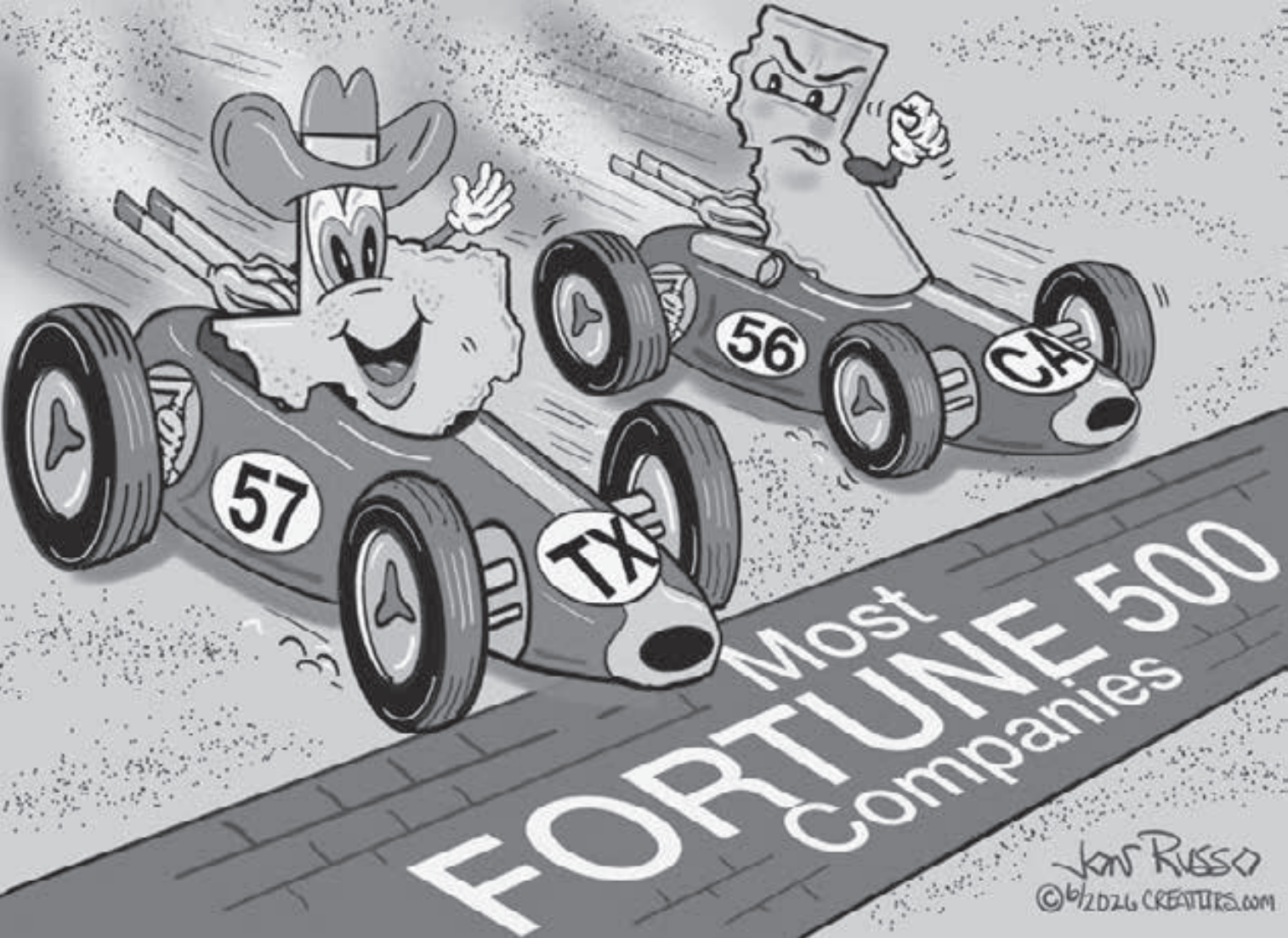
The answer is, same way Trump is losing control over the present. Not all politicians are tow the line for their party people. Some stand on business. When the party streams too far left or right of their core principles, and away from the people they're supposed to represent, there are a few who hold their peers accountable. Then there are those who simply play politics as usual. They vote with the “group think” mob. They never answer a straight question, and often ask for forgiveness instead of permission from the base they claim to represent.

Where does this leave you. As a minority you should be frightened. Right in front of your eyes, history is being rewritten and retold by a people who's history shows them as being anything but gregarious, equitable, or merciful to the base they outnumber. Opportunities within the establishments are drying up like the palatable water that seems to be more difficult to find. You are also not allowed to seek your own pathway free from the establishment. You are constantly reminded of their disdain and contempt for you, while you are not given the liberty to walk away. The fear is that if left unmonitored, you can metastasize and grow beyond what they can control when you realize there are no limits or borders. Thus, you are crippled intentionally. Your focus sways from progress to simply survive the month. Survive the week. Let's just get through today. This is the legacy of President Donald J. Trump, our 47th president.

Nothing has improved for the common person. The bigots who embrace our current chaos are like the passengers on the Titanic who thought for certain that those who looked like them would come and pull them out of the Atlantic. Instead, the elite watched and listened to their fellow man, drown, wale, and freeze to death when they had the ability to not save everyone, but save who they could according to their means. Imagine those last thoughts, I believe like you believe. I support what you support. I believe and support you, why are you letting me die, and in those moments they may realize that their untimely end was self afflicted. They believed and supported the lie instead of speaking up when they saw injustice and wrong. They used the elites buzz terms to validate an existence that in the end meant that they would suffer from the very system they built their life around.

Is this not where we are today? What is the way out before we hit that iceberg? We know where this ship is going and how the story ends. The block of ice that will damage the hull of this country can be avoided. But there are those who do not want to avoid the collision. In fact, they are the ones working to make sure we remain on this course. It is baked into the algorithm controlling the very pulse of the internet. It is shaping our opinions and perceptions in real time. The engineers of that reality do not look like you. They are foreign to this land. They do not share the same beliefs. They do not worship what you worship. Yet, they control what you decide to wear, how you style your hair, even what you purchase at the store. Your independent thoughts are anything but. This is why we are being disconnected from history. Because knowing where you come from gives you great insight into where you are going. This is why books are being removed from libraries, and are quietly becoming unavailable on Amazon and other online purchasing sites. They're being purged from the Library of Congress. The only way you might come across that book is if it was consumed by other countries, housed on shelves on other continents. Keep in mind, we can't even travel the world the same way we did just two administrations ago.

The question must be posed again, although redundant. What is the way out before we hit that iceberg? It is essential to maintain an independent voice. It was that pursuit of independence, and the ability to call out an unjust tyrannical system that formed this very nation 250 years ago. It comes at a cost that we have lost value in due to the very inflationary causes that influenced the original settlers to defect from British rule. The same kind of rule that regained control over this country, this economy, and its values. The British rule that we read about in history books is now called “shareholders.” Shareholders are in government. They tell Congress what bills to write, what to pass, and what to stall. They tell us how much purchasing power our earned dollar has. If we lift up the curtain of the shareholder, who will we see? Will we see a reflection of ourselves, or someone we do not recognize. Regardless, this year is shaping up to be a disastrous 250th year of this country's short existence and it appears that we have yet to hit the bottom. But it is coming, faster than we think. If we do not find the soul of this country and unite it, the fractured divide will leave us vulnerable to whoever the new conqueror will be. And what was once America, will get scrubbed from history like the contributions of all the nonwhites who were the necessary integral pegs that this country needed to build itself into a world superpower.



Living Life in it’s Entirety

By Jasmine Deloatch

I’m sure you have fallen into the loop of focusing too hard on a specific part of life that you are trying to improve. Funny it seems, but the more that you focus on that one area, the less you seem to make a difference in it. We tend to neglect the other necessary functions of life when we’re laser focused on growth in one area. Here’s why that can be unhealthy and what we can do to fix it.

Our life comes together like a puzzle. When we’re struggling in one area, it affects the entire puzzle board. We can be laser focused on eating healthy, but if we neglect our mental health and organization skills, stress will halt our goals and cause us to order and finish an entire pizza. We can be laser focused on our children and being a mother, but the deprivation of “me time” will cause us to become irritable and dysregulated and create an environment that’s unhealthy for the entire family. We can be laser focused on work and I think we all know how that goes.

The solution is to find a way to be well rounded. Focus on your life as a whole. Here’s your start to a life that feels complete.

Contribute small amounts of attention each day to everything that you value and want to improve. That could look like waking up and saying a prayer(religion), going for a 30 minute walk(physical and mental wellness), eating a quick and easy breakfast with your family like a smoothie and cheese and meat board or pre-boiled eggs and fruit(family time), call and check on your parents on the way to work(family check ins), take a 10 mi ute nap on your lunch break(wellness), pop a meal that you pre-prepped in the oven for your family at the end of the day and watch a tv show for 30 minutes while it cooks(family time), have a bedtime routine that includes self care that only takes 15 minutes(wellness), and finally take the last hour of the day to do something that you enjoy before being in bed in time to get 8 hours of sleep.

What we often do is the opposite of this. We’re on a healthy journey? We tend to wake up early, cook healthy food, exercise before work, get steps in during lunch, cook a full healthy dinner and we’ll even finish the day off with a gym class. We’re practically sleeping in our workout clothes. This type of fixation causes our work projects to go downhill, our family life to struggle and our self care and wellness as a whole to decline.

This doesn’t work because we neglect all other parts of our life and create an unbalanced lifestyle. But, with the right consistent routine that takes minimal effort and keeps us on track in all areas of life, that one area that we’d like to improve will have a steady increase, versus skyrocketing productivity, then a crash.



By Judykay Jefferson

ACCOUNTABILITY

On November 19, 1863, Abraham Lincoln delivered the Gettysburg Address opening with “Four score and seven years ago...” and ending with, “that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.” It was a novel idea then. I’m not sure it was meant as THE main qualification to hold public elected office. Just being a person selected by a majority of the voting people may not be enough.

Lately, I have been intrigued by the widespread dereliction of duty displayed by local elected officials and the audacity and fearlessness of those hired to manage the finances of our local governments. Let me explain.

Never have I ever been interested in audit findings. My eyes roll to the back of my head when having to read an accounting report and I have trouble staying awake during a presentation of financial reporting. I am not that girl. That is until I began reading the reports distributed by the North Carolina Office of the State Auditor. In the last year, I have read audit reports that reveal mismanagement and failed oversight at the least and out-an-out corruption and fraud in many cases. Recently, there were even criminal charges brought against a former town manager for spending taxpayer money on personal travel and purchases (including \$264 for stuffed flounder and fancy hotels) that was significant enough to be reported in the Wall Street Journal. Here’s the irony. We’re not talking Charlotte or Raleigh. We’re talking about Pilot Mountain, best known as the actual town portrayed on the Andy Griffith Show. This is the quintessential small town of friendly, quirky people. Like everything else, the fictionalized image is nothing compared to the reality of just plain theft of public resources. This guy was Town Manager from 2014 until 2020. Interestingly, beginning in 2016 he was also contracted by the Town of Ronda, NC, as financial consultant. How did that happen? He held that position until May 2026. The Mayor of Ronda said the OSA investigation had no bearing on the ending of his contract. He claimed he wasn’t aware of the Pilot Mountain investigation. Ronda is roughly twenty (20) miles from Pilot Mountain. Really?

The story goes that he spent the town’s public funding on food, family vacations, and even ammunition. Last month, the chickens finally came home to roost. A press release from NC OSA stated: “Following an investigation by the North Carolina Office of the State Auditor (OSA), the former Town Manager of Pilot Mountain has been indicted for a Class F felony under N.C.G.S. 14-92...” His illegal transactions totaled \$317,604 of 189 food-related transactions and \$1,576 of Door-Dash purchases, and a bunch of Visa Gift Cards.

Of course, this guy is not alone. Fraud and corruption run rampant in local government as does neglectful governance that allows this to

go on long term. So, back to my rant about government for and by the people. From where I’m sitting, we need to require more from candidates for public office than being a person of a certain age and living in a certain place. OR we need to require specific training related to fiscal management for those elected to be responsible for our public funding. REQUIRED, not OPTIONAL. They need to be certified by some entity to at least know what they’re reading and voting for or against. Is that too much to ask?

Incompetent staff can be fired but how do we hold incompetent, clueless elected officials responsible for their compliscent role in creating an atmosphere ripe for fiscal maleficence?

Truth is: it’s all our fault. We, the voters, put these people in jobs ill-equipped to adequately oversee public funding. We support the popular choice, the man or woman we know and like. We arm them with a vote and suffer when they use it to make fiduciary decisions based upon presentations by staff that may or may not make sense. No one has all the answers but we the people need our elected officials to at least know what questions to ask and possess the ability to understand the answers.

Final parting shot: It is harder to be a contestant for Miss America than to run for elected office. A Miss America contestant must meet nine (9) qualifications including age, residency, employment or student status. Age and residency plus a fee are required to be a candidate in state, local, and national elections. Make it make sense.



THE LIGHT AT THE END

I read a lot of books written by people who have had near-death experiences, and I find them encouraging. They affirm what I have come to believe: that there is more to our existence than physical life alone.

I have read the stories in the Bible and pondered the meaning of immortality, the references to the first Adam, and the passages where people expected Elijah to return, only for Jesus to say that he had already come and they did not recognize him. I have also been shaped by my own experiences during twenty-five years of working with families of different races, backgrounds, and struggles. Along the way, I have been encouraged and inspired by many of the people who have crossed my path.

All of this has convinced me that life is not the struggle we often perceive it to be. Rather, it is a soul's journey through learning experiences and choices. We choose whether to be accepting or rejecting, joyful or depressed, optimistic or fatalistic. We choose how we will travel through this experience. And at the end of the journey, I believe we evaluate what we have learned and move on to even greater understanding.

For me, there is always light at the end of the tunnel. God’s work, as recorded in the Bible, is truth if we are open to understanding it and willing to move forward in that truth.

Last week, I was impressed by the stories of two children, both African American and both only eleven years old.

One was a young man I had never heard of before, named Eugene Bullard. After witnessing his father nearly lynched by an angry white mob, Eugene ran away from home at the age of eleven. By sixteen, he had stowed away on a ship headed for Scotland and eventually made his way to France, where he joined the military.

One day, while sitting in a café in Paris discussing his dream of becoming a military pilot, a white soldier told him he was dreaming because there were no Black aviators. Eugene reportedly replied, "That's why I want to be the first." The soldier bet him \$2,000 that he could not do it. Eugene Bullard collected the money. By age twenty-two, he was flying combat missions over France and eventually received fifteen military decorations.

How does an eleven-year-old find the courage to leave home and pursue such a path? This was not the twenty-first century. This was long before most opportunities existed for someone like him. Then there was Nina Simone, born Eunice Waymon. At eleven years old, she refused to begin a piano recital until her parents, who had been forced from their front-row seats to accommodate a white couple, were returned to their rightful places. She stood her ground.

Where did that courage come from? Where did the determination come from that she carried throughout her entire life? I believe it came from God.

The same God who gave a young girl the confidence to challenge injustice is still at work today.

Meanwhile, President Trump has canceled funding for Catholic charities that support homeless children because of disagreements with church leadership. Yet those children will continue to be fed because compassionate people continue to do God's work.

The Epstein files still have not revealed all the names people expected to see released, and survivors continue to demand answers. The Louisiana Senate has passed laws that criminalize homelessness, pushing vulnerable people further into the shadows. They do not seem to realize that homelessness is not a crime. The real crime is failing to care for one another.

And yet, even with all of this darkness, there is light. Nelson Mandela survived twenty-seven years in prison and emerged to become president of South Africa.

Trump's voter suppression bill failed in the Senate. Efforts to redirect funds to January 6 participants have stalled. There is still darkness, yes. But the light is moving forward too. We need to see it. We need to embrace it. I believe we were not made for this time. Rather, this time was made for us.

So let us open our eyes and see. Let us open our ears and hear. Let us open our mouths and speak.

And let us keep moving toward the light at the end.

Classifieds

CHATHAM COUNTY

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

CHATHAM COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

ALL PERSONS, firms and corporations having claims against KAY CANNON ALFORD, deceased, of Chatham County, NC, are notified to exhibit the same to the undersigned on or before September 4, 2026, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of recovery. Debtors of the decedent are asked to make immediate payment. This the 4th day of June, 2026. Neill Edward Alford Jr., Executor, c/o Bagwell Holt Smith P.A., 111 Cloister Court, STE 200, Chapel Hill, NC 27514.

6/4, 6/11, 6/18, and 6/25/2026

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

CHATHAM COUNTY

NOTICE OF SERVICE OF PROCESS BY PUBLICATION

In The General Court of Justice, District Court Division
File No: 26CV000351-180

To: SEGUNDO GUEVARA EUCEDA, Defendant.

Take notice that a pleading seeking relief against you has been filed. The nature of the relief being sought is for child custody. You are required to make defense to such pleading no later than July 1st , 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, FRANCIA MAIDELYN FUENTES MALDONADO, will apply to the court located at 40 E Chatham St, Pittsboro, NC 27312 for the relief sought.

This, the 21st day of May, 2026.

Aneta Paval

Paval Law Offices, PLLC

Telephone: (919) 410-6690

5/21, 5/28, 6/4, and 6/11/2026

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

CHATHAM COUNTY

NOTICE OF SERVICE OF PROCESS BY PUBLICATION

In The General Court of Justice District Court Division
File No: 26CV000546-180

To: JULIO CESAR HERNANDEZ-MADRID, Defendant.

Take notice that a pleading seeking relief against you has been filed. The nature of the relief being sought is for child custody. You are required to make defense to such pleading no later than July 1st , 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, NUVIA YANETH PINEDA-MEJIA, will apply to the court located at 40 E Chatham St, Pittsboro, NC 27312 for the relief sought.

This, the 21st day of May, 2026.

Aneta Paval

Paval Law Offices, PLLC

Telephone: (919) 410-6690

5/21, 5/28, 6/4, and 6/11/2026

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.: 26E000590-310

THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 19th day of May, 2026, as Executor of the Estate of CHARLES V. HAMRICK, Deceased, of Durham County, North Carolina, does hereby notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against said Estate to exhibit them to the undersigned on or before the 11th day of September, 2026, or this Notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to said Estate will please make immediate payment to the undersigned.

This, the 11th day of June, 2026.

Matthew G. Hamrick, Executor

2238 Cherry Top Drive

Fuquay Varina, NC 27526

6/11, 6/18, 6/25, and 7/2/2026

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE OF SERVICE OF PROCESS BY PUBLICATION

In The General Court of Justice, District Court Division
File # 25CV013818-310

[CHILD CUSTODY PROCEEDING] de LEÓN BARRIOS, Plaintiff v. CASTILLO AVILA, Defendant.

To Jaiiron Castillo Avila:

TAKE NOTICE that a pleading seeking relief against you has been filed in the aboveentitled

action. The nature of the relief being sought is legal custody of the minor child Roberto Castillo de

León, born 8/29/2014, be granted to Plaintiff. You are required to make defense to such pleading no later than July 22, 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 11th day of June, 2026.

Katherine S. Moye of JusticeMatters, Inc., Attorney for Plaintiff
P.O. Box 58058, Raleigh NC, 27658
919-794-7511, Ext. 018.

6/11, 6/18, and 6/25/2026

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE OF SERVICE OF PROCESS BY PUBLICATION

In The General Court of Justice Superior Court Division
File No. 25CV003530-310

JULIAN HALL and GRACE HOUSING, LLC, Plaintiffs v. ABSOLUTE CONSTRUCTION GROUP, LLC; MECHANICS & FARMERS BANK; THE HARRIS COLLABORATIVE, PLLC; and JOHN DOE, Defendants

TO THE DEFENDANTS:

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 set forth in the Complaint filed in this action.

You are required to make defense to such pleading within forty (40) days after the first date of publication of this notice, or the Plaintiffs will apply to the Court for the relief sought.

This the 11th day of June, 2026.

Gregory Reynald Williams

The Law Offices of Gregory

Reynald Williams, PLLC

2232 Page Road, Suite 203

Durham, NC 27703

6/11, 6/18, and 6/25/2026

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

In The General Court of Justice, Superior Court Division
Before the Clerk
File No.: 26E000133-310

THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 9th day of February, 2026, as Executor of the Estate of TILDEN HAZARD MONTANT, Deceased, of Durham County, North Carolina, does hereby notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against said Estate to exhibit them to the undersigned on or before the 4th day of September, 2026, or this Notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to said Estate will please make immediate payment to the undersigned.

This, the 4th day of June, 2026.

John Douglas Trimper, Executor

c/o Bagwell Holt Smith P.A.

111 Cloister Court, Suite 200

Chapel Hill , NC 27514

6/4, 6/11, 6/18, and 6/25/2026

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

File No: 26E000361-310

Having qualified as Public Administrator of the Estate of ERIK VONBRUNN, deceased, of 414 E. Main St., Durham County, Durham, NC 27701, the undersigned does hereby notify all persons, firms, and corporations having claims against the estate of said decedent to exhibit them to the undersigned in care of the attorney for the estate on or before September 5, 2026, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery.

All persons, firms, and corporations indebted to the said estate will please make immediate payment to the undersigned.

This the 4th day of June, 2026.

Jeffrey L. Austin

Public Administrator

Law Office of Jeffrey L. Austin,

PLLC

500 Westover Dr. #32043

Sanford, NC 27330

6/4, 6/11, 6/18, and 6/25/2026

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

In The General Court of Justice, Superior Court Division
Before the Clerk
File No.: 26E000450-310

THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 15th day of April, 2026, as Administrator of the Estate of JETHRO BARBER, Deceased, of Durham County, North Carolina, does hereby notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against said Estate to exhibit them to the undersigned on or before the 4th day of September, 2026, or this Notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to said Estate will please make immediate payment to the undersigned.

This, the 4th day of June, 2026.

Diane Cleo Barber, Administrator

926 Jerome Rd.

Durham, NC 27713

6/4, 6/11, 6/18, and 6/25/2026

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

File No: 26E000653-310

Having qualified as Ancillary Administrator of the Estate of WILLIAM F. MARTIN, JR., deceased, of 6818 Iron Gate Dr., Bahama, NC 27503 and 1203 Jamestown Rd. Unit H2, Williamsburg, VA 23185, the undersigned does hereby notify all persons, firms, and corporations having claims against the estate of said decedent to exhibit them to the undersigned in care of the attorney for the estate on or before September 5, 2026, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery.

All persons, firms, and corporations indebted to the said estate will please make immediate payment to the undersigned.

This the 4th day of June, 2026.

Jo-Ann Wagner, Ancillary Administrator

c/o Jeffrey L. Austin

Law Office of Jeffrey L. Austin, PLLC

500 Westover Dr. #32043

Sanford, NC 27330

FOR PUBLICATION: The Carolinian

6/4, 6/11, 6/18, and 6/25/2026

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

In The General Court of Justice, Superior Court Division
Before the Clerk
File No.: 26E000432-310

THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 19th day of May, 2026, as Executor of the Estate of LLOYD FRANKLIN REDICK, Deceased, of Durham County, North Carolina, does hereby notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against said Estate to exhibit them to the undersigned on or before the 4th day of September, 2026, or this Notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to said Estate will please make immediate payment to the undersigned.

This, the 4th day of June, 2026.

Kathryn Anne Young, Executor

2913 Gretmar Drive

Durham, NC 27705

6/4, 6/11, 6/18, and 6/25/2026

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

ESTATE OF JEFFERY

RICHARD MITALY

FILE NO. 26E000616-310

ALL PERSONS, firms, and corporations having claims against Jeffery Richard Mitaly, deceased, of Durham County, N.C., are notified to exhibit the same to the undersigned on or before September 4, 2026, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of recovery. Debtors of the decedent are asked to make immediate payment. This the 4th of June, 2026. Marlene Mitaly f/k/a Marlene Renee Muller, Administrator of the Estate of Jeffery Richard Mitaly, c/o Amanda Honea, Attorney, 1255 Crescent Green, Suite 200, Cary, NC 27518.

6/4, 6/11, 6/18, and 6/25/2026

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

In The General Court of Justice, Superior Court Division
Before the Clerk
File No.: 25E000608-310

THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 7th day of May, 2025, as Executor of the Estate of JAMES BRADLEY SMITH, Deceased, of Durham County, North Carolina, does hereby notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against said Estate to exhibit them to the undersigned on or before the 4th day of September, 2026, or this Notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to said Estate will please make immediate payment to the undersigned.

This, the 4th day of June, 2026.

Alysia M. Smith, Executor

6710 Banks Rd.

Mebane, NC 27302

6/4, 6/11, 6/18, and 6/25/2026

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

In The General Court of Justice, Superior Court Division
Before the Clerk
File No.: 26E000584-310

THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 11th day of May, 2026, as Executor of the Estate of WILLIAM DOUGLAS WYATT, Deceased, of Durham County, North Carolina, does hereby notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against said Estate to exhibit them to the undersigned

on or before the 4th day of September, 2026, or this Notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to said Estate will please make immediate payment to the undersigned.

This, the 4th day of June, 2026.

Virginia Woods Wyatt, Executor

4300 Rocky Creek Drive

Durham, NC 27704

6/4, 6/11, 6/18, and 6/25/2026

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE OF SERVICE OF PROCESS BY PUBLICATION

In The General Court of Justice Superior Court Division

File No. 26CV006018-310

YESENIA CAROLINA ORTIZ GUTIERREZ, Plaintiff v. JOSE MARIO SOLORZANO MORALES, Defendant

TO: JOSE MARIO SOLORZANO MORALES

TAKE NOTICE that a Complaint has been filed against you in the above-entitled action. The nature of the relief being sought is an Order of Permanent Custody of your minor child, Gloria Guadalupe Solorzano Ortiz.

You are required to file an Answer, including any defenses to this pleading, within forty (40) days after the first date of publication of this Notice with the Clerk of Superior Court of Durham County. Upon your failure to do so, the Plaintiff will apply to the Court for the relief sought in the Complaint.

This the 4th day of June, 2026.

Yesenia L. Polanco-Galdamez, Attorney for Plaintiff

Polanco Law, P.C.

411 Andrews Road, Suite 130

Durham, NC 27705

(919) 294-8032

6/4, 6/11, and 6/18/2026

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

DURHAM COUNTY SMALL CLAIMS

In The General Court of Justice, District Court Division

FILE NO: 26CV004754-310

Phaeton Motorwerks, Plaintiff v. Owner of Carolina Prewound Motors

1528 S Miami Blvd Nov 2024, Defendant

TO: Owner TAKE NOTICE that a Small Claims action has been

filed against you by Phaeton Motorwerks regarding a motor

vehicle left for repairs and not claimed. You are required to appear

before a Magistrate in Durham County as follows: Date: Friday July

10, 2026 Time: 2:00 PM Location: 3rd Floor Magistrates Durham

County Courthouse 510 S. Dillard Street Durham, North Carolina

If you fail to appear and defend against the claim, judgment may be entered against you. This the

1st day of June 2026. Phaeton Motorwerks 4122 Bennett Memorial

Dr STE 101 Durham NC 27705 Harriett70@hotmail.com

6/4, 6/11, and 6/18/2026

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE OF SERVICE OF PROCESS BY PUBLICATION

In The General Court Of Justice District Court Division

In re: BOYD KEYES, 26SP 0238-310

TO: The unknown father of a baby girl born January 1, 2026, in Gastonia, Gaston County, North Carolina. Respondent TAKE NOTICE that a Petition for Adoption was filed on the 5th day of March 2026, with the Clerk of Superior Court for Durham County in Durham, North Carolina, in the above-entitled special proceeding. The Petition relates to a female child born on January 1, 2026, at Caromont Regional Medical Center in Gastonia, Gaston County, North Carolina. The birth mother's name is Ashley C. High. She is a 17-year-old African American woman with brown naturally curly hair and brown eyes who is 5'6" tall. The child was conceived on or about April 11, 2025, in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina.

TAKE NOTICE that you are required to make defense to such pleading no later than forty (40) days after the date of the first publication of this notice which is the 14th of July 2026 exclusive of such date. Upon your failure to do so, the Petitioners will apply to the Court for relief sought in the Petition. Any parental rights that you may have will be terminated upon the entry of the decree of adoption. This the 4th, 11th, and 18th, of June 2026. Milan T. Pham, Attorney for Petitioners NC Bar # 27599 NicholsonPham PLLC, 113 Broadway Street, Durham, North Carolina 27701.

6/4, 6/11, and 6/18/2026

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE OF SERVICE OF PROCESS BY PUBLICATION

In The General Court Of Justice District Court Division

FILE NO.: 26CV005523-310

Nilda Catalina Carias Mendez v.

Oscar Raul Osorio Asencio

To: Oscar Raul Osorio Asencio

Take Notice that a Complaint has been filed against you in the Civil Action described above, in the General Court of Justice, District Court Division, by the Plaintiff herein, the nature of which is as follows: The Complaint seeks an Order of Permanent Custody of your minor child, Oscar Osorio Carias. You are required to file an Answer including any defenses to this pleading within forty (40) days from the date of first publication of this Notice with the Clerk of Court of Durham County. If you fail to do so, you may not receive further notices, and the plaintiff will seek the relief sought herein.

Publication begins This is the 4th day of June 2026.

Yesenia L. Polanco-Galdamez,

Attorney for Plaintiff

411 Andrews Road, Suite 130

Durham, NC 27705 (919) 294-8032

Published June 4, June 11, and June 18, 2026.

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

In the General Court of Justice, Superior Court Division
Before the Clerk
File No.: 26E000146-310

THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 20th day of May, 2026, as Administrator of the Estate of ISAAC HARRIS AMADOR, Deceased, of Durham County, North Carolina, does hereby notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against said Estate to exhibit them to the undersigned on or before the 29th day of August, 2026, or this Notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to said Estate will please make immediate payment to the undersigned.

This, the 28th day of May, 2026.

Emerson Bernabe Amador

Administrator

208 Lenox Ave., #238

Westfield, NJ 07090

5/28, 6/4, 6/11, and 6/18/2026

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

DURHAM COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

In the General Court of Justice, Superior Court Division
Before the Clerk
File No.: 25E001313-3

Ag Grow Culture

What To Know About The New World Screwworm Fly & Its US Reappearance

AP NEWS - The New World screwworm fly is threatening the \$113 billion U.S. cattle industry for the first time in more than half a century, as officials race to eradicate a deadly flesh-eating parasite not seen in Texas since 1966.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture announced two new cases Monday, including the first outside Texas in a dog from just across the state line in Lea County, New Mexico. A calf hundreds of miles away in La Salle County, Texas, brought the total reported cases to four.

Texas is home to \$17 billion worth of cattle, making it the industry's No. 1 state.

Screwworm flies were an annual warm-weather scourge for cattle ranchers from at least the 1930s through the 1960s, when the U.S. eradicated the pest by breeding sterile male flies and dropping swarms of them from planes to mate with wild females.

The deadly flies were detected in Mexico late in 2024 after years of being contained at the southern end of Panama.

Here is what to know about the fly, the threat it poses and the response:

Being unusual makes the flies a threat

The New World screwworm fly in the Western Hemisphere and its Old World cousin in Africa and Asia are unusual among flies because their larvae, or maggots, eat live flesh and fluids instead of dead material. Females lay their eggs in open wounds and mucous membranes after mating only once in their monthslong lives.

The screwworm gets its name from the maggots' habit of burrowing — or screwing — into a wound, according to the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

Any warm-blooded animal, in-



cluding wildlife, pets and occasionally even humans, can be infested.

Livestock are vulnerable because of how they're handled, Lee Haines, an associate research professor of biological sciences at the University of Notre Dame, said in an email Thursday. Standard practices with cattle can break the skin, including shearing and dehorning, or even moving them in and out of corrals can cause scrapes and cuts. Birth would also make a mother and calf vulnerable, she said.

Stephen Diebel, a Texas rancher and president of the Texas & Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association, added that even wounds "as small as a tick bite," can put cattle at risk.

Death can result if an infestation is not treated, though a dozen treatments have been approved for use in a variety of species. In decades past, ranchers had tens of millions of dollars in losses — potentially billions in today's dollars.

But agriculture officials were quick

to note that the fly does not infest food, and U.S. Agriculture Secretary Brooke Rollins said it's unlikely to damage beef production -- welcome news given that consumers are already facing record prices.

Where in Texas is screwworm coming back?

The infestation was discovered in a single 3-week-old calf in La Pryor, Texas, about 100 miles (161 kilometers) southwest of San Antonio and 50 miles (80 kilometers) from the U.S.-Mexico border.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture on Friday announced a second confirmed case in a one-month-old calf in Zavala County, Texas, only 5.6 miles (9 kilometers) from the first case.

On Monday, the USDA announced two more infections, one in La Salle County not far from the earlier outbreaks, but the other hundreds of miles to the northwest in Andrews County.

Officials sounded alarms for nearly

2 years

Federal and state officials and cattle industry leaders have been sounding public alarms about the fly's movement through Mexico and toward the U.S. since a case was confirmed in southern Mexico in November 2024.

Officials had considered the pest eradicated from Central and North America nearly two decades before an outbreak in Panama prompted a state of emergency there early in 2023, according to the joint U.S.-Panama program established in 1994 to stop the parasite. Cases jumped to Costa Rica and Nicaragua later that year.

Edward Burgess, a University of Florida entomologist who studies the fly, said it reproduces quickly and is carried across wide areas by its hosts, namely wild animals such as deer. Outside of Panama, he said, programs that produced and released sterile flies have largely shut down.

"It's hard to stay ahead of it because of how fast that fly is able to move and regenerate," Burgess said.

Outside the US, thousands of animals and hundreds of humans have been sickened

As of June 3, the parasite had sickened more than 171,700 animals and 2,070 people across Central America and Mexico, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. There have been 10 human deaths, the CDC says.

Starting in May 2025, Rollins closed border entries to livestock and on Thursday she credited that move with delaying the fly's arrival in Texas by a year.

Rollins has argued that the Mexican government has not done enough to control animals moving within the country, a suggestion Mexican authorities have rejected.

Sankofa Farms Founder Kamal Bell Selected As Harvard Loeb Fellow

DURHAM — Kamal Bell, founder of Sankofa Farms and a graduate of North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University, has been selected as a Loeb Fellow by the Harvard Graduate School of Design, becoming the first Aggie to receive the prestigious fellowship.

Bell's journey began through community gardening efforts at Faith Community Church and has since grown into a nationally recognized commitment to food justice, agricultural education and community development.

A two-time graduate of North Carolina A&T, Bell earned a Bachelor of Science in Animal Science in 2014 and a Master of Science in Agricultural Education in 2015. In 2016, he founded Sankofa Farms with a mission to combat food insecurity and expand access to healthy, sustainable food in underserved communities



throughout Durham and rural Orange County.

Under Bell's leadership, Sankofa Farms has become a model for community-based agriculture, combining food production, education and economic empowerment initiatives to address disparities in food access. The Loeb Fellowship recognizes leaders from around the world whose work is creating positive social impact in communities. Bell's selection highlights both his individual accomplishments and the growing influence of community-driven agricultural solutions in North Carolina.

Members of the Beloved Community Center praised Bell's achievement, noting that his leadership, vision and dedication continue to inspire others while helping create a stronger and more equitable future for communities across the region.

USDA Designates Five North Carolina Counties As A Natural Disaster Area

This Secretarial natural disaster designation allows the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) to extend much-needed emergency credit to producers recovering from natural disasters through emergency loans. Emergency loans can be used to meet various recovery needs including the replacement of essential items such as equipment or livestock, reorganization of a farming operation, or to refinance certain debts. FSA will review the loans based on the extent of losses, security available, and repayment ability.

According to the U.S. Drought Monitor, these counties suffered from a drought intensity value during the growing season of 1) D2



Drought-Severe for 8 or more consecutive weeks or 2) D3 Drought-Extreme or D4 Drought-Exceptional.

Impacted Area: North Carolina, South Carolina, and Virginia

Triggering Disaster: Drought (Fast-Track)

Application Deadline: February 1, 2027

Primary Counties Eligible:

- North Carolina: Chatham, Durham, Granville, Scotland, and Wake

Contiguous Counties Also Eligible:

- North Carolina: Alamance, Franklin, Harnett, Hoke, Johnston, Lee, Moore, Nash, Orange, Person, Randolph, Richmond, Robeson, and Vance

- South Carolina: Marlboro
- Virginia: Halifax and Mecklenburg

USDA Offers Disaster Assistance To Agricultural Producers In VA

Richmond, VA, June 8, 2026 - Agricultural Operations in Virginia have been significantly impacted by recent drought. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has technical and financial assistance available to help farmers and livestock producers recover from this adverse weather event.

"We know current drought conditions are adversely impacting crops, land, water supplies and livestock, creating financial and emotional strain for the farmers and ranchers we serve," said Farm Production and Conservation Under Secretary Richard Fordyce. "I encourage producers to stay in close contact with their local USDA Service Center to report

losses and damages and learn more about the many program options we have available to assist them in building drought resiliency and navigating drought recovery."

USDA Disaster Assistance

Livestock producers who suffered grazing losses for covered livestock due to drought on privately owned or cash leased land may be eligible for the 2026 Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP). To participate in LFP, producers must own, cash or share lease, or contract grow eligible livestock; provide pasture or grazing land to eligible livestock on the beginning date of the qualifying drought; and certify that they suffered a grazing loss due to drought.

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) maintains a list of counties eligible for LFP and makes updates each Thursday.

Producers who have a risk in the pasture or hay crop must submit an acreage report to the FSA for all grazing land for which a grazing loss is being claimed. The next deadline for annual acreage reporting in Virginia is July 15, 2026. LFP applicants who lease acres must be able to support their application with either a written lease or an Annual Lease Certification (form CCC-855).

Producers must submit an LFP application for payment and supporting documentation no later than March 1, 2027, for 2026 losses.

Meanwhile, the Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees, and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP) provides eligible producers with compensation for above normal costs of hauling water and feed to livestock as well as transporting livestock to forage or other grazing acres. Producers are required to submit a notice of loss and application for payment to their local FSA office no later than March 1, 2027, for 2026 calendar year losses.

ELAP also assists commercial apirarists who experience a loss of feed due to drought conditions that may need to purchase short-term feed to sustain the honeybees until additional natural feedstock becomes

Classifieds

WANTED WBE, MBE & DBE BIDS

for the following job:

Division Five Letting

DE00408

Granville Co.

Bid Date: June 24th

These projects may involve some or all of the following aspects of construction: construction survey, clear and grub, trucking, drainage, milling, paving, incidental concrete, fence and guardrail, signs, structures, traffic control, utilities, signals, pavement marking, erosion control and seeding.

Bids can be emailed to stw.quotes@stwc corp.com

Please contact S. T. Wooten at 252-291-5165,

Fax 252-243-0900 no later than 5:00 p.m. the day before the bid date.

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

Celebration of African American Music Month

Raleigh, N.C. — June is a month of many celebrations across our nation. The North Carolina African American Heritage Commission (NCAAHC) is excited to kick off the month with African American Music Month, originally known as Black Music Month, which was established by President Jimmy Carter through a presidential proclamation in 1979. The Commission is proud to highlight this important month as we advance our mission to promote the rich arts and culture of our state.

NCAAHC has a longstanding commitment to supporting and presenting at local and statewide events, including the Ocean City Jazz Festival, Charlotte Hawkins Brown Heritage Day, Dreamville Festival, Rhiannon Giddens' Biscuits and Banjos, and musical performances at North Carolina Freedom Park. The Commission recognizes the vital role music has played in shaping the African American experience in North Carolina. We also honor the great artists who paved the way—icons like Roberta Flack, Maceo Parker, Nina Simone, Percy Heath, Mary Cardwell Dawson and many more who have shaped North Carolina's musical legacy. Our state's impact on music resonates not only locally but across the nation.

NCAAHC is also proud to steward the African American Music Trails of North Carolina. For at least a century, African American musicians from North Carolina have played key roles in the development of several forms of American music, including jazz, rhythm and blues, funk, and gospel. The cultural trail also includes the Kinston Music Park, dedicated in 2014 to celebrate the important contributions of eastern North Carolina musicians. The park features vibrant artwork, listening stations, and an outdoor stage for performances.

North Carolina was one of the first states in the nation to celebrate its music heritage by researching and developing music trails. In 2013, after establishing the Blue Ridge Music Trails of Western North Carolina in the early 2000s, the North Carolina Arts Council developed the African American Music Trails of Eastern North Carolina to honor some of the most transformative figures in the history of jazz, gospel, and popular music.

AI HIRING

Continued from page 4

The concentration problem

The findings land at a moment when the AI hiring industry has become highly concentrated. As of May 2023, over 60% of the Fortune 100 and eight of the 10 largest U.S. federal agencies used HireVue's algorithms, according to the paper. The authors warn that this concentration creates systemic risks beyond bias — if a single dominant vendor goes offline or is found to be producing discriminatory outcomes, hiring at thousands of employers could be disrupted simultaneously.

"By consolidating part of the hiring decision process across distinct employers, hiring algorithms impact collective adverse impact rates and patterns of systemic rejection," the authors write.

Policy implications

The study arrives as regulators in both the U.S. and Europe are actively grappling with how to govern AI hiring tools. New York City passed Local Law 144 in 2021, the first legislation directly targeting algorithmic hiring — but the authors found that its existing government guidance appears to instruct auditors to pool data across positions and employers, exactly the aggregation method they argue masks disparities.

In Europe, the EU AI Act designates hiring algorithms as high-risk AI systems by default, with compliance requirements taking effect August 2, 2026 — just weeks away.

The authors make four policy recommendations: measure adverse impact at the position level; strengthen cross-employer market surveillance; monitor risks from algorithmic concentration; and create legal pathways for independent researchers to access hiring algorithm data, similar to provisions in the EU's Digital Services Act that compel large platforms to share data with academics.

The last point carries an implicit warning. This study was only possible because Pymetrics voluntarily provided its data under an agreement that guaranteed the researchers' independence. The authors acknowledge their findings could inadvertently discourage future data sharing by vendors who would prefer their algorithms remain opaque.

"Independent research is necessary to illuminate otherwise-opaque hiring algorithms," they write. Without it, the racial disparities documented in this study — affecting tens of thousands of applicants across some of America's largest companies — might never have come to light.

available.

Additionally, eligible orchardists and nursery tree growers may be eligible for cost-share assistance through the Tree Assistance Program (TAP) to replant or rehabilitate eligible trees, bushes or vines. TAP complements the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) or crop insurance coverage, which covers the crop but not the plants or trees in all cases. For TAP, a program application must be filed within 90 days of the disaster event or the date when the loss of the trees, bushes or vines is apparent.

FSA also offers a variety of direct and guaranteed farm loans, including operating and emergency farm

loans, to producers unable to secure commercial financing. Producers in counties with a primary or contiguous disaster designation may be eligible for low interest emergency loans to help them recover from production and physical losses. Loans can help producers replace essential property, purchase inputs like livestock, equipment, feed and seed, cover family living expenses or refinance farm-related debts and other needs.

Additionally, FSA offers several loan servicing options available for borrowers who are unable to make scheduled payments on their farm loan programs debt to the agency because of reasons beyond their control.