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The Carolinian

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University of Dayton

The artificial intelligence boom in the United States is being matched by a data center building boom. There are more than 3,000 data centers in the U.S. and another 1,500 in development, according to a Pew Research Center analysis.

While President Donald Trump has promoted AI advancement, calling it crucial to economic and national security, polling shows that 7 in 10 Americans oppose the construction of AI data centers in their communities, citing higher utility bills, pollution, noise and the loss of green space. These centers, which hold computer servers that process words, images and lines of code for large language models such as Chat-GPT, also use high amounts of water and electricity.

There is growing opposition to the infrastructure surrounding them, too, particularly the transmission lines needed to power them, which often must cross land belonging to private citizens.

Where private citizens refuse to sell their land, companies are turn-



Can A Power Company Take Your Land For A Data Center?

ing to eminent domain, the government's inherent power to seize private property without a landowner's consent. But does a line built to serve a private data center qualify?

I'm a legal scholar who studies eminent domain issues, and I interpret today's disputes over seizure of property for the benefit of AI infrastructure as the latest incarnation of a long-standing debate about the limits of taking private property for public use.

Why is expansion needed?

Data centers have massive power needs that can stress electrical grids and threaten their reliability. In 2024 they accounted for more than 4% of the nation's total electricity use. Demand will grow as more are built. To meet this demand, power companies must build more transmission lines – and acquire land to put them on.

Across the U.S. – in states such as Georgia and Pennsylvania – power companies have looked to eminent domain to facilitate these goals.

What is eminent domain?

Power companies can approach landowners to purchase easements for transmission lines; if landowners refuse, the government might force a sale.

The government may take private land without consent if the seizure is for "public use" and if the landowner is given "just compensation," according to the takings clause of the Fifth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution.

While the federal government has the power to initiate eminent domain actions – also called condemnations – most are done by state and local governments.

Governments can also delegate this power to private entities or "common carriers," such as power and water companies, though every state has its own rules for whether and how these utilities can exercise

(See **DATA CENTER.**, P. 2)



STATE AUDIT CLEARS UP ONE ROCKY MOUNT UTILITY HEADACHE, DRAWS ATTENTION TO ANOTHER PROBLEM

CAROLINA PUBLIC PRESS - A recent state audit has calmed concerns that Rocky Mount residents were double-billed for utilities, but also drew attention to more than \$30,000 in total outstanding utility bills from two City Council members.

Rocky Mount provides utility services for more than 31,000 customers across the city as well as nearby areas of Nash, Edgecombe and Wilson counties. These services include electric, gas, water and sewer, the audit report said.

Some residents first raised questions about utilities in late 2025, when they received two bills within a month and thought they had been double-billed, the report said.

While the audit found that residents were not double-billed, it revealed that two City Council members — Charles Roberson and T.J. Walker — had racked up more than \$30,000 in total outstanding utility bills. Both council members have since paid off those balances.

This latest development comes as Rocky Mount has faced pressure from the state Local Government Commission to fix serious financial problems. While the city has made significant progress in its recovery efforts, the audit report emphasized the city still has "little margin for error," calling into question the current council's ability to lead the city through the remainder of its recovery.

The misplaced concern over double-billing stemmed from a large gap between meter reading and billing dates, which the city's Director of Business and Collections Services first discovered in December 2025 after staff layoffs, the report said.

The reason for the gap was "unauthorized and undetected modifications" to the meter reading and billing schedules, which led to meter readings occurring earlier and earlier each month, even though the city's policy is to schedule these readings for roughly the same week each month, the report said.

Proper billing practices are outlined by the North Carolina Utilities Commission, which instructs utilities to bill customers within roughly five days of the meter reading. While Rocky Mount's utilities technically don't fall under the jurisdiction of the commission, the city still tries to abide by its guidelines, the report said.

However, Rocky Mount was billing customers seven to 14 days after meter readings, even 30 days afterward in some cases. These delays had been going on as far back as January 2025, the report said. City Manager Elton Daniels said these kinds of delays can cause "corresponding fluctuations in the amount due on a customer's invoice."

To resolve the gap, the director decided to send an additional utility bill in either December 2025 or January 2026. The city made multiple efforts to help residents understand the reasoning for the additional bill including discussions at council meetings, meeting with customers in person and over the phone to discuss concerns, and posting information on the city website and social media pages, Daniels said.

Despite these efforts, some residents still thought they were being double-billed and went to the news media to share their concerns, the audit report said. When CPP asked how receptive residents seemed to be to the audit's findings, Daniels said that while the situation "understandably created frustration and uncertainty for citizens," the audit confirms no improper billing occurred.

City officials are still unsure who was responsible for making the schedule changes that caused the billing gap in the first place and reasons behind that change, the report said.

When CPP asked whether the city plans to investigate further who was behind the schedule changes that led to the gap and whether there are concerns it might happen again, Daniels said: "We will continue to implement improvements that strengthen our operations while maintaining our commitment to transparency, accountability, and quality customer service."

Outstanding payments

The audit found that council members Roberson and Walker each had their own outstanding payments. Roberson had 30 utility accounts that had a total outstanding balance of more than \$27,000 and hadn't made a payment in more than six months, the report said.

Walker had an outstanding balance on one utility account of more than

(See **ROCKY MOUNT UTILITY** P. 2)

(Reuters) - The Democratic Socialists of America, a left-wing political group, is now playing an influential role in the U.S. Democratic Party. But what, exactly, do Democratic Socialists stand for? And can they ever become a factor in mainstream politics?

Here are some facts about the group, according to their national party website:

GROWING INFLUENCE IN DEMOCRATIC PARTY

DSA was founded through the merger of two groups in 1982 but spent decades in obscurity until

2016, when independent Senator Bernie Sanders' unsuccessful bid for the Democratic presidential nomination highlighted disaffection with mainstream Democratic politics and consolidated the party's left wing.

Sanders calls himself a democratic socialist, but is not formally affiliated with DSA.

The group got a boost in 2018, when DSA member Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez won an upset Democratic primary for a New York-based House of Representatives seat. Ocasio-Cortez has since become an influential figure in the party and is seen as a

possible 2028 presidential candidate.

DSA members have won other high-profile races since then, notably New York Mayor Zohran Mamdani. DSA-backed candidates have won Democratic House primaries this year in New York City and Colorado, while DSA member Nithya Raman emerged as one of two finalists in the race for Los Angeles mayor.

DSA member Janeese Lewis George won the Democratic primary for Washington, D.C., mayor and is expected to be elected to a full term in November.

The organization now says it is the largest socialist organization in U.S. history, with more than 100,000 members.

DSA or its local chapters have endorsed 150 candidates at all levels of government this year, and the group claims 38 wins, opens new tab and 38 losses so far.

SOCIALIST VS. DEMOCRATIC SOCIALIST VS. COMMUNIST

President Donald Trump, a Republican, has characterized Mamdani and other DSA-backed candidates

(See **WHO ARE THE DSA.**, P. 2)

More Than One-Third of the North Carolina Jails Have Exceeded Capacity Just This Year

NC HEALTH NEWS - In North Carolina's largest jail, hundreds of people sleep on the floor on portable bed platforms.

As of July 16, 2,146 people were in custody in Mecklenburg County's uptown Charlotte jail — 242 people above the jail's capacity of 1,904. Pods designed for 53 people now routinely hold as many as 84, Sheriff Garry McFadden told NC Health News.

Mecklenburg isn't alone. As sheriffs and jail administrators across North Carolina monitor their daily population counts, many are confronting a similar problem: jails that are near or beyond capacity.

State data show that at least 36 jails — more than one-third statewide — have operated above capacity at some point so far in 2026, according to a NC Health News analysis of a July 14 confinement report showing the average monthly population in each county jail. Another 17 have come close, reaching at least 90 percent of capacity.

Statewide, the average monthly jail population reached at least 22,543 people in April, the highest monthly average since at least January 2024, according to NC Health News' analysis of data.

Sheriffs and jail administrators attribute the rising jail populations to many factors, including North Carolina's population growth, gaps in community mental health and substance use treatment resources that can land people in jail, and slow-moving court cases that can keep people in jail longer. They also point to Iryna's Law, which took effect in December and limits the use of pre-trial release for certain defendants, as further straining jail capacity by keeping more people in jail longer.

Scotland County Jail Administrator John Hunt told NC Health News the jail regularly holds about 180 people — well above its capacity of

109. Many cells with bunks designed for two people now house three people, with one sleeping on a mat on the floor. In recent months, Hunt said he's had to order more mats, uniforms and food to keep up with the growing population.

But there's only so much space. State data show Scotland County has the state's most overcrowded jail, averaging about 160 percent of capacity so far this year. Its average monthly population rose from 116 in January 2024 to 194 in June 2026.

The Robeson County Detention Center is also overflowing. Designed to hold 410 people, Maj. Ryan Howard told NC Health News on June 1 that the jail had a population of 508 people. Another 53 people connected to the county were being housed elsewhere — either in one of five other county jails with space or in state prison as a "safekeeper," which is someone who poses security risks or requires a higher level of medical or mental health care than counties can manage.

Robeson's jail has exceeded its capacity every month since at least January 2024, making it one of the most chronically overcrowded facilities in the state based on NC Health News' analysis of jail population data. So far this year, the jail has operated at an average of 123 percent of capacity.

"It's an everyday struggle," Howard told NC Health News.

Overcrowding isn't new for many jails. After jail populations dropped during the COVID-19 pandemic, they have steadily rebounded in many counties — stretching facilities to and beyond capacity.

"The numbers just keep going up," Hunt said about Scotland's jail population.

North Carolina has 98 jails operating across 93 counties, with a combined bed capacity of 25,838. Thousands of people cycle in and out



of them every year; some spend only a few days behind bars, while others remain for weeks, months or even years either awaiting trial or serving sentences.

The N.C. Department of Health and Human Services maintains an annual confinement report that tracks each jail's average monthly population, providing a snapshot of capacity and overcrowding.

During the first half of 2026, 26 jails averaged more than 100 percent of capacity. If the pace continues the rest of the year, that will be more than the 16 jails in 2025 that averaged over 100 percent occupancy.

Of the one in three jails that have exceeded capacity in at least one month in 2026, many weathered consecutive months of overcrowding. Nineteen jails have exceeded capacity every month in 2026 for which state data is available.

Some jails exceeded capacity by only a handful of people, while others housed dozens more than they

were designed to hold.

Luke Woollard, an attorney at Disability Rights North Carolina, has tracked jail populations and inspections for years to ensure that people with disabilities in local jails receive proper treatment. He told NC Health News he's increasingly concerned about overcrowding across the state, particularly with an uptick in jail deaths.

Woollard said a jail doesn't have to exceed its capacity to become unsafe. Another important factor to consider is staffing — a number not captured in the statewide confinement report.

"If you have a serious staffing shortage, you might as well be overcrowded," Woollard said. "Yes, to some degree, it is what the building can hold, but before that becomes a problem I would say really when we talk overcrowding, what we're talking about is safe staffing ratios."

(See **ONE-THIRD, NC JAILS**, P. 2)

Rocky Mount Utility Draws Attention — CONT. FROM PAGE 1

\$3,000 and hadn't made a payment since February, the report said.

After the billing gap was discovered in December, the city initiated a temporary pause on late fees and service disconnections for all utility customers due to potential financial difficulties from the additional bill, the report said. If any customers — including the council members — fell behind on payments, the pause meant they wouldn't be penalized or have their service disconnected.

However, the billing gap was discovered in December 2025, and these council members continued to not pay their bills through April 2026, the report said.

When CPP reached out to Roberson and asked how it reached this point, he explained that he's had multiple utility accounts for several years for city redevelopment projects which were on AutoPay. Before the billing problem, he removed his accounts from AutoPay because he couldn't determine how payments were being applied across his accounts.

"My questions were never about

avoiding payment," Roberson told CPP. "They were about the accuracy, transparency and accountability of the city's billing system. My goal has always been to help build a utility system that is efficient, reliable and works fairly for every customer."

Roberson also said he supported bringing in the state auditor to conduct an independent audit of the utility billing system.

The report argued that the lack of payments from council members suggested "they took advantage of this decision to further their own personal financial interests."

Roberson, on the other hand, said he respectfully disagrees.

"The temporary suspension of late fees and utility disconnections was a citywide administrative policy that applied to every utility customer," he said. "I did not vote to create that policy, I did not direct staff to implement it, and I received no preferential treatment, write-offs, or debt forgiveness."

"I believe the report establishes facts regarding account balances, but I do not believe it identifies evidence

supporting conclusions about my personal intent or motivation. I have respectfully asked the Office of the State Auditor to reconsider that language during the review process."

Council members did follow through on the auditor's recommendation that they pay their outstanding bills. Letters from the city obtained by CPP showed that Roberson — whose outstanding balance had grown to more than \$34,000 at that point — paid his bills and had a zero balance on his accounts as of June 9. Walker also paid his outstanding bills and had a zero balance as of June 16.

Carolina Public Press reached out to Walker's office for comment, but he did not respond prior to publication.

This isn't the first time a City Council member has been delinquent in their utility payments, according to a 2020 state audit.

Council member Andre Knight previously had an outstanding utility balance of more than \$47,000 that accumulated over two decades, starting as far back as 1999. Previous



ous city officials went against city policy by ensuring Knight's services weren't disconnected despite his lack of payment and ultimately wrote off the amount he owed, arguably giving him "preferential treatment," the 2020 report said.

When the state auditor recently followed up on the status of Knight's written off balance, it found there had been no change since 2020. Brianna Kraemer, deputy communications director for the state auditor, said that unlike the other two council members, Knight's outstanding balance is not active since it was written off.

"That said, the Auditor's Office is not abandoning its accountability efforts in Rocky Mount, and Council member Knight should not be let off the hook," Kraemer said.

More recently, Knight had more than \$300 written off from two utility accounts last year, though he paid the original balances owed afterward, the report said.

CPP reached out to Knight's office for comment, but he did not respond prior to publication.

Considering the recently discovered outstanding payments of the other council members, the auditor pointed to a "longstanding culture" among the City Council that "prioritized individual gain over the public interest," the report said.

The findings couldn't come at a worse time for the city, which is still recovering from a financial crisis first identified in a state audit earlier this year. As part of the city's response to increase revenue, it hiked utility rates by 15%, the report said.

"While such measures are likely necessary, they can be unpopular with the public, and therefore it is incumbent on the governing body to reinforce the public understanding of the City's commitment to its priority of sound management of public funds," the report said.

Who Are The Democratic Socialist of USA? — CONT. FROM PAGE 1

as "communist" in an attempt to link them to U.S. adversaries like the former Soviet Union.

Communism seeks to abolish private property and establish a classless society, though real-world attempts over the past century have fallen short of those goals.

In Europe, "democratic socialist" parties have used democratic means to establish robust safety nets and public control of major industries, while allowing for private property and markets.

DSA says it aims to go further than the European version of democratic socialism, while steering clear of the

economic aid and weapons sales to Israel and backs student efforts to push universities to divest from the country.

DSA has called for a full withdrawal by Israel from Arab lands, a "right of return" for those who have been displaced, and a "right to resist" Israeli occupation, though it does not say whether that amounts to support for militant groups like Hamas. The group called the October 7, 2023

for seniors to the entire U.S. population.

Free higher education and early childhood education

Universal rent control, and expanded public housing

Higher taxes on the wealthy, corporations, inheritances and private colleges

A 32-hour work week with no reduction in pay or benefits and stronger union protections

National Urban League's 50th Annual State of Black America Report

By Jordan Meadows

Staff Writer



The National Urban League released its 50th annual "State of Black America" findings during a press conference on Tuesday, where President and former Louisiana state Senator Marc Morial outlined economic, political, and social trends affecting Black communities.

Morial framed the report around a central question concerning opportunity and mobility in the United States.

"This year, we focus on a very sobering but important topic: We ask ourselves, 'Is the American dream dead?'" he said. "That's not a question we ask lightly, because we are passionate believers in the strength and the aspiration of the American dream."

He pointed to rising unemployment as one of the report's key indicators, noting a significant increase in recent years.

"Black unemployment, at this point, is now 7.8%, and it has substantially increased since its low of 4.7% just three years ago, in 2023," Morial said. "This is the highest Black unemployment rate in recent memory in a non-recessionary environment."

The report also details disparities in homeownership, which Morial said have widened over time, as the racial homeownership gap today is wider than it was before the Fair

Housing Act of 1968 was passed—a 30-point differential compared to white Americans.

Morial also addressed concerns about political representation and voting access, citing risks tied to legal and legislative changes.

"According to our calculation, the attacks on Black political power due to the undermining of the Voting Rights Act... have created risk for nearly 200 legislative seats held by African Americans," he said.

Morial continued to assert that roughly 21 million people could be disenfranchised if certain citizenship rules and voter suppression measures took place, including the Trump Admin's "Save America Act".

During the question-and-answer portion, Morial was asked whether voting patterns would be included

in the report. He indicated that the organization is continuing to analyze those trends as part of its broader research efforts, noting that the report is evolving and will include expanded data and findings over time as more information is compiled and released alongside its policy agenda.

He was also asked about the broader trajectory of progress for Black Americans across economic and political measures. In response, Morial described a mixed picture, pointing to both ongoing disparities and areas of growth, particularly when comparing to other racial groups in the country.

However, there were some upsides to the report.

"This year's State of Black America report includes our first-ever economic research on consumer buying

One-Third of NC Jails — CONT. FROM PAGE 1

As an example, Woollard pointed to the June 29 takeover at Bertie-Martin Regional Jail in Windsor, where some of the 88 incarcerated people overpowered the three correctional officers on duty — a typical level of staffing for the jail — and took two of them hostage. The jail has a capacity of 90, and state data shows that the average monthly population has remained below capacity this year. Based on the population count alone, Woollard said the jail wouldn't necessarily raise concern.

Woollard said North Carolina has no statewide mandatory staffing ratio for jails, allowing staffing levels to vary across the state, particularly as some counties struggle to recruit and retain correctional officers.

Vivian Saunders, chairwoman of the Bertie-Martin Regional Jail Commission, told Bertie County commissioners on July 13 that three to four correctional officers working per shift to supervise the population is normal. She said the jail currently employs just 14 correctional officers.

Scotland County is also facing staffing pressures. Sheriff Ralph Kersey addressed his county commissioners on July 6, after the Bertie hostage situation, about his jail's dire staffing levels and the risks posed to staff and those in custody. He said his jail houses more than double the number at Bertie-Martin Regional Jail — yet has the same number of officers working each shift.

"Right now with four officers with 189 inmates, that's 62 inmates assigned to one person," Kersey told commissioners.

those who voiced concerns. Since the law took effect, McFadden said his jail population has swiftly climbed to the highest level he's seen since he became sheriff in 2018. The jail's population has climbed from its monthly average of 1,530 in November 2025 — the month before the law took effect — to an average of 2,016 by June 2026, an increase of about 32 percent.

McFadden acknowledged the law isn't solely responsible for driving the growth.

Six months ago, McFadden said, several housing pods sat empty. Now, not only is every pod full, many are overcrowded.

In response to what he describes as "unprecedented overcrowding," McFadden announced in May his plans to reopen Mecklenburg County Jail North — a 721-bed facility — later this summer. Jail North most recently housed juveniles before closing in 2022 because of staffing shortages at the county's adult jail.

Wake County Sheriff Willie Rowe said in a statement to NC Health News his jail population has also risen, exceeding the combined capacity of the county's two detention facilities, which have 1,574 beds.

In June, the monthly average population was 1,736 — 162 people above capacity. He attributes some of the population growth to more people being held in custody without bond due to stricter pretrial release rules under Iryna's Law. On Dec. 1, when the law took effect, about 198 people were held in custody without bond. By April 21, that number had more than doubled to 424.

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NextEra & Dominion Energy File Application To Merge

CleanTechnica —NextEra Energy and Dominion Energy — two of the nation's highest polluting utilities with record-high profits — submitted applications to the North Carolina Utilities Commission, South Carolina Public Service Commission, and the Virginia State Corporation Commission to merge into one single utility. The proposed merger fails public interest scrutiny.

While the proposed merger includes approximately \$10 per month in bill credits for 24 months for a typical 1,000 kWh residential customer, the customer “benefit” is still lower than Dominion’s proposed rate increase of \$17 per month it filed with the NCUC in May.

Beyond the temporary bill credits, the proposed merger does not improve residential customers’ experience: it doesn’t solve long-term affordability, there are no commitments to realize efficiencies in the merger that benefit customers, no commitment to retire aging and expensive coal plants, no limits on building new and increasingly expensive gas-burning power plants, no commitment to expand new energy efficiency programs or enhance existing programs, no requirement to accelerate clean energy investments, and no guardrails or protections for residential customers regarding the impacts of data centers on monthly utility bills.

Dominion Virginia claims it needs \$55 billion over the next



five years for capital costs, while Dominion South Carolina claims it needs \$8 billion over that same time. These costs are largely at-

tributable to data centers, not residential customers, and the proposed merger could increase the affordability crisis for customers

rather than helping. Changes to the merger proposal must include residential consumer protections, reduced reliance on gas and coal that come with volatile fuel prices, and significant clean energy and energy efficiency investments because they are affordable, fixed-price, and provide benefits to all customers.

Should the Commissions approve the applications, Dominion and NextEra will combine to form the country’s largest utility company, servicing 10 million customers across the Southeastern United States.

In response to the application, Mikaela Curry, Sierra Club Beyond Coal Campaign Manager in North Carolina, issued the following

statement:

“The North Carolina Utilities Commission has a responsibility to provide fair regulation of public utilities in the interest of the public, and this merger is neither fair nor in the public interest. We need utilities and decisions that prioritize serving communities and small businesses, the backbone of our state, not consolidation for the sake of serving energy-hungry data centers. Locking in coal retirements, clean energy investments, and consumer protections from data centers is the best way the NCUC can ensure long-term affordable energy and cleaner air for millions of hard-working families, not corporate consolidation that only benefits shareholders.”

NC’s Push To Improve Reentry Services

NC NEWSLINE - It is hard to imagine finding hope in a steel cargo container. But Shirlye Grandy sees life, fellowship and beauty in the metal box that sits on the Dix Park campus in Raleigh.

Grandy served nearly six years in the N.C. Correctional Institution for Women, but now holds the title of public arts project coordinator for Arise Collective, a Raleigh nonprofit dedicated to helping incarcerated women across the state.

Grandy told members of the N.C. Joint Reentry Council last week that her life was profoundly changed in 2019 when she joined a small group of women at NCCIW crocheting items to be donated and sold. The proceeds were used to help parents on the outside bring children to see those who were incarcerated.



year that a woman served behind bars.

Grandy recalled carefully crocheting six squares to mark her own sentence.

“My friend Faye Brown, who passed away from COVID, had 40,” Grandy told the reentry council.

When the 25-foot-long prison quilt was finished just before Mother’s Day 2021, other incarcerated women were invited to tie ribbons to the squares to recognize the children they left behind and the lives lost by family and friends while they were in prison.

According to research by The Sentencing Project, the U.S. has seen a 525% increase in the number of incarcerated women between 1980

and 2021, roughly twice the rate of increase for men. Eighty percent of incarcerated women are mothers.

Grandy lost her own mother during her incarceration.

Jennifer Jackson, chief executive officer for Arise Collective, says opportunity for the crocheters struck two years later when the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation and the Mellon Foundation issued a grant proposal to create permanent public art to tell the stories of historically marginalized communities.

“There’s a community of people who have been touched by incarceration across our state that has been hidden,”

said Jackson. “We made a pitch that they consider this a community, as we were defining it, as one that fit within their grant guidelines.”

The foundations selected Arise and the Stitching Stories Quilt to be reimagined and transformed for the public.

Four artists — Carlos González García, David Wilson, Eliza Redmann and Owens Daniels — spent the next three years transforming the crocheted quilt into a durable mosaic that captures the lives of the often-forgotten women. On the opposite wall of the shipping container, a mirrored wall portrays the original artists with the phrase, “We are you.”

The work will be displayed on the Dix Park campus until September when it will move to Wilmington.

The project is also an opportunity for the public to learn more about mass incarceration and the challenges that arise after leaving prison.

Each year, more than 18,000 individuals are released from North Carolina state prisons. Without a support network, 49% of those are rearrested within two years.

North Carolina is part of a national initiative to reduce the recidivism rate by 30% by 2030. Its goal is to improve reentry services that help people leaving prison find employment, health-care and housing. Formerly incarcerated people are up to 10 times more likely to experience homelessness than the general population.



CHANCELLOR KARRIE G. DIXON NAMED TO U.S. BLACK CHAMBERS’ 2026 POWER 50 “WOMEN OF INFLUENCE” CLASS

North Carolina Central University (NCCU) Chancellor Karrie G. Dixon has been named to the 2026 Power 50 “Women of Influence” class by U.S. Black Chambers Inc. (USBC), recognizing her vision and commitment to expanding opportunities for students, communities and future leaders.

Presented by American Airlines, the Power 50 ‘Women of Influence’ initiative celebrates women driving change across business, entertainment, media, finance, public service and philanthropy. This year’s theme, Women Who Lead the Movement, recognizes those who are creating pathways for success and shaping the future.

Since becoming NCCU’s chancellor, Dixon has guided the university through a period of historic growth. She is the first woman to serve as permanent chancellor at two University of North Carolina System institutions, and under her leadership, NCCU surpassed 9,000 students for the first time in its history. The milestone was driven by growth among online, adult and military-affiliated learners, as the university recorded the highest enrollment growth in the UNC System for two consecutive semesters: fall 2024 and spring 2025.

Dixon’s leadership has also accelerated NCCU’s rise as a hub for innovation and excellence. The university became the nation’s first historically Black college or university to establish an artificial intelligence institute, achieved its first clean audit in three years and maintained an affirmed Moody’s rating, milestones that show NCCU’s ability to innovate while strengthening its foundation for the future.

“I am truly humbled to be recognized as one of U.S. Black Chambers Inc.’s Power 50 Women of Influence,” said Dixon. “Every milestone in leadership is shaped by the people who walk alongside us, challenge us, support us and inspire us to keep moving forward. I am grateful to my mentors, colleagues, loved ones and the students who remind me every day why this work matters. I proudly accept this honor on behalf of NCCU and our Eagle community as we continue creating opportunities and preparing the next generation of leaders.”

Dixon’s “Women of Influence” classmates include U.S. Rep. Jasmine Crockett, filmmaker Cheryl Boone Isaacs, award-winning chef and television host Carla Hall, media entrepreneur Issa Rae, entrepreneur Serena Williams and more.

“The Power 50 Women of Influence represent excellence in every sense of the word,” said Ron Busby Sr., president and CEO of U.S. Black Chambers Inc. “This year’s honorees are visionary leaders, barrier breakers and change agents who continue to redefine what is possible.

DUKE ENERGY CAROLINAS REACHES AGREEMENT WITH NORTH CAROLINA PUBLIC STAFF

CHARLOTTE, N.C. -- After listening carefully to customer and stakeholder feedback, Duke Energy Carolinas and stakeholders have reached an agreement that will allow the company to continue building the infrastructure needed to reliably serve North Carolina while reducing the proposed rate increase by more than half.

The changes are reflected in a new agreement between the company and North Carolina Public Staff, the agency representing utility customers. Other parties to the agreement include Carolina Industrial Group for Fair Utility Rates, Carolina Utility Customers Association, North Carolina Sustainable Energy Association and Walmart, with others expected to join in the coming days.

Our view: "In light of the cost pressures our customers are facing, along with continued conversations with other stakeholders, we felt we had to do more," said Kendal Bowman, Duke Energy's North Carolina president. "We appreciate our stakeholders' engagement in finding a path that allows us to more cost-effectively serve the Tar Heel State. Our shareholders will also contribute \$10 million to low-income bill assistance and weatherization programs – over and above our existing funding – which will make a real difference for customers who need help the most."

The company agreed to pursue similar terms for its Duke Energy Progress customers.

Agreement summary:

- If approved by the North Carolina Utilities Commission (NCUC), the result is an average annual increase of 3.7% over two years.
- 9.8% return on equity and 53% equity component of the capital structure.
- New Multiyear Rate Plan (MYRP) refund rider will return money to customers, with interest, if planned infrastructure upgrades are not completed on time.
- Reduced customer costs for Belews Creek reliability upgrades due to federal funding.

Why it matters: Since the request was initially filed last November, customers have made clear they're struggling to pay their bills, and Duke Energy has responded.

"We've agreed to reduce rates even more than in our prior settlements, while still allowing us to make vital infrastructure investments to meet existing and future customer needs," said Bowman. "Our duty is to protect reliability at the lowest possible cost, and we believe this agreement achieves that balance."

What's next: NCUC will consider the agreements and make the final decision – if approved, new rates will go into effect Jan. 1, 2027.

Duke Energy Carolinas serves about 2.3 million households and businesses in central and western North Carolina, including Charlotte, Durham and the Triad, while Duke Energy Progress serves about 1.6 million customers in central and eastern North Carolina and in the Asheville region.

How To Claim The New \$1,000 Saver’s Match

By Pattie Ehsaei
Forbes Contributor

Starting in January, the federal government will begin depositing money directly into eligible workers’ retirement accounts — a first in U.S. policy. But millions of lower-income women are poised to miss the new Saver’s Match entirely because they don’t have an account for the funds to land in.

The Saver’s Match came out of the retirement law Congress passed in 2022, and it finally goes live next year. The idea is plain. You contribute to a retirement account. If your income qualifies, the government matches you, up to \$1,000 a year.

Now ask yourself a question. If a job offered you a dollar-for-dollar match on your 401(k), would you walk past it? A match is the closest thing to free money that exists in personal finance. Everyone in my world tells you to grab every dollar of it.

So why am I worried that the

women who need this most will never see a cent?

Why Millions Could Miss Out

To benefit from the match, you need a retirement account to catch it in. And millions of people, disproportionately women, do not have one. If your employer does not offer a 401(k), and plenty of the jobs women hold do not, you have nothing for the government to match into. An estimated 26 million eligible workers are in exactly that spot right now. No account. No match. The gift arrives and there is no mailbox to receive it.

This is the part that makes me want to grab women by the shoulders. The match is aimed at lower earners, the people it could help the most. Women are overrepresented in part-time work, in caregiving years spent off the clock, in the gig jobs that come with zero benefits. The design of this program almost guarantees that the people it was built to help are the people least likely to be positioned for it. You do

not get a second shot at a year of free money. Miss it, and that thousand dollars is gone.

What You Need To Do Before January

Here is what I want you to do, and I want you to do it before January, not after.

Open An Account

First, open an account. If your job offers a retirement plan, enroll and set even a small contribution. If it does not, open your own IRA. The government is setting up a portal to make this easier for people without a workplace plan, with low-fee options and no minimum balance, so not having one is no longer an excuse.

Check Your Eligibility

Second, confirm you qualify. This is built for lower and middle earners, and it phases out as you make more. If you file single, you get the full match at roughly \$20,500 of earnings, and it disappears by about \$35,500. Head of household runs about \$30,750 to \$53,250. Married filing jointly runs about \$41,000 to

\$71,000. Earn above the top of your range and you get nothing, so look up your number. Do not assume you make too much, and do not assume you make too little.

Contribute Enough To Capture The Full Match

Third, contribute enough to capture the full match. Here is the part people get wrong. The match is 50 cents on the dollar, up to the first \$2,000 you deposit. So to pull the full \$1,000, you have to contribute \$2,000 of your own money, not \$1,000. That is not spending. That is turning two dollars into three.

Claim What’s Yours

I built my whole platform on one idea. Waiting for someone to rescue your finances is how women stay stuck. Nobody is coming. But once in a great while the system actually leaves money on the table for you, and the only real harm is refusing to walk over and pick it up.

This is one of those times. Set the reminder. Open the account. Claim what is yours.

Nonprofit Affordable Housing Developer Closes On Financing To Renovate 50 Raleigh Apartments

RALEIGH, NC - Preservation of Affordable Housing (POAH) has closed on financing to renovate 50 affordable rental apartments in duplex apartment buildings on Garner Road in Raleigh, North Carolina. POAH purchased the property with support from Wake County with the goal to preserve existing affordability and prevent displacement of residents. The property was a former Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) project approaching the end of its 30-year affordability covenant. The Raleigh Housing Authority made Project Based Vouchers available to tenants to support the ongoing operations of the housing and ensure that rents remained affordable.

Given the age of the property and functional obsolescence of building systems and components, a comprehensive renovation was proposed by POAH, which was awarded funding from the City of Raleigh and Wake County to leverage 4% Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) along with tax-exempt bonds for the improvements.

“This is POAH’s first acquisition in North Carolina and we look forward to partnering with the City and County and local groups working to preserve this community and expand afford-



able housing in the state,” said POAH President/CEO Aaron Gornstein. “We also look forward to introducing a range of community-based services for residents that will help them advance their personal goals whether it’s finding a new job, completing a degree or gaining financial literacy and security.”

The project will include financing ranging from 4% Federal Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) allocated by the North Carolina Housing

Finance Agency; gap financing from the City of Raleigh and Wake County; permanent lending from Self-Help Ventures Fund and the Wake Affordable Housing Preservation Fund program; Raleigh Housing Authority tax-exempt bonds; LIHTC equity investment from National Equity Fund; and construction financing from First National Bank.

The Self-Help Ventures Fund is a nonprofit 501c (3) loan fund

capitalized with loans and grants from foundations, religious organizations, corporations and government sources. The fund manages Self-Help’s higher-risk business loans, real estate development and home loan secondary market programs. For over 40 years, the national Center for Community Self-Help and its affiliates have provided more than \$11 billion in financing to help more than 164,000 borrowers buy homes, start and grow businesses and strengthen community resources.

POAH is partnering with Hamel Builders, an experienced general contractor, for the project that will replace roofs, windows, doors, kitchens, bathrooms, flooring, appliances, light fixtures, and heating and cooling systems. Since the property is currently occupied, POAH will work closely with residents to coordinate the work and provide assistance in order to minimize disruption to them during the installations. Following the completion of construction, POAH will implement Community Impact initiatives through its property management company, POAH Communities, that will give residents access to services to ensure a stable tenancy and help them work towards financial, educational, career and health goals to improve the quality of their lives.

Fayetteville Newsmakers Event Highlights War Innovation

By Jheri Hardaway

Staff Writer

Fayetteville, NC - On Wednesday, July 15, Fayetteville State University's Rudolph Jones Student Center became the epicenter for critical regional discourse as it hosted the inaugural "Fayetteville Newsmakers" civic dialogue. Co-organized by The Assembly Network and the News Foundation of Greater Fayetteville, the editorially led forum brought together a formidable panel of state officials, local policymakers, and entrepreneurial leaders—including Fayetteville Mayor Mitch Colvin, Cumberland County Commission Chair Kirk deViere, and NC Department of Commerce Chief Deputy Secretary Kenny Flowers—to confront a vital question: "Where is our community's next economy coming from?" Over the course of two hours, panelists and community members engaged in a forward-looking exploration of strategies designed to diversify the region's economic footprint beyond its traditional retail and military pillars, focusing intensely on how to attract

high-wage external investment to secure a prosperous, multifaceted future for the Greater Fayetteville area.

With regional income trailing state and national averages, the editorially led civic dialogue highlighted a collective determination to diversify the local economy beyond its historical reliance on retail and military staples, pivoting toward high-wage external investments, technological innovation, and structural equity.

The forum opened with insights from Kenny Flowers, Chief Deputy Secretary of the North Carolina Department of Commerce, who emphasized that North Carolina's top-tier business rankings are the result of intentional, long-term planning. "We stay ready, so we don't have to get ready," Flowers noted, referencing the state's First in Opportunity strategic plan. He identified key growth sectors driving the state's modern innovation economy, including aerospace, advanced manufacturing, life sciences, healthcare, and artificial intelligence. However, Flowers noted that statewide success requires uplifting distressed

regions. Despite a metro core, Cumberland County remains classified as a Tier 1 county, a legislative designation marking it among the 40 most economically distressed counties in North Carolina. Rather than viewing this label as a permanent setback, Flowers framed it as a strategic avenue for resources. "Being Tier 1 means you qualify for more resources from the Department of Commerce," Flowers explained, pointing to building reuse programs, downtown economic development grants, and utility account funds designed to build local capacity. Flowers revealed that over the last five years, nearly 75% of North Carolina's job announcements occurred in Tier 1 and Tier 2 counties, fueled by nearly a billion dollars in rural infrastructure investments since 2018.

Following the state perspective, a second panel moderated by senior reporter Paul Wolverton directly addressed Cumberland County's localized economic friction. Wolverton introduced sobering benchmark data from 2024: while the national median household income stood at \$80,734



and the state average was \$72,388, Cumberland County lagged behind at \$61,291, with the city of Fayetteville sitting at \$58,407. Fayetteville Mayor Mitch Colvin acknowledged that while Fort Bragg (now Fort Liberty) serves as a monumental \$8.2 billion economic engine, local policy has historically

accommodated the base rather than leveraging its full potential.

"Probably 60-plus percent of the people in our community are employed by the government; federal, state, and local," Mayor Colvin stated. "We have not really diversified what that looks like. We need to convert a lot of that talent that leaves the military and let them become business owners, ensuring dollars stay in our local community instead of leaving for corporate retail headquarters."

Cumberland County Commission Chair Kirk deViere echoed this sentiment, emphasizing that building a modern economy requires stabilizing fundamental civic pillars. DeViere highlighted the county's aggressive \$610 million investment into school construction and maintenance, alongside a separate \$250 million to \$300 million allocation explicitly dedicated to expanding water and sewer infrastructure to rural municipalities. "Robert Van Geons [President of the FCEDC] can't recruit industry if we don't have the infrastructure in place," DeViere remarked.

The dialogue took a provocative turn during a presentation by Dr. John Hardin, Executive Director of the North Carolina Board of Science, Technology, and Innovation. Dr. Hardin defined innovation simply as "something new

that adds value," noting that the 2025 Nobel Prize in Economics empirically validated technological innovation as the primary driver of modern rising standards of living. Dr. Hardin challenged the region to lean aggressively into a "defense innovation economy," working directly with warfighters to solve complex logistics, healthcare, and energy issues. This struck a nerve with an audience member, Reverend Dr. Floyd Wicker Jr., who yelled "No!" The panelist acknowledged the disruption and allowed Dr Wicker a moment to voice concerns regarding the ethics of prioritizing defense spending over peace-seeking industries. Dr. Hardin and the panel clarified that military advancements yield critical "dual-use" civilian technologies, particularly in the biomedical and cyber sectors.

Commissioner deViere envisioned a "Pentagon South" corridor model that structurally links local assets ranging from the new downtown Defense Innovation Center to Fayetteville State University, Fayetteville Technical Community College, and the military's Joint Innovation Operations Center. Meanwhile, Mayor Colvin advocated for a dedicated, physical "innovation site" mirroring Huntsville, Alabama's success, where companies can cluster, collaborate, and accelerate commercial research.

The panel also addressed the highly debated arrival of modern data centers. While these facilities signal technological progress, Flowers and local officials acknowledged the structural strains they place on limited utility grids. The consensus focused on cautious optimization: welcoming high-value investments without creating environments where local governments run out of core resources.

Closing the forum, leaders agreed that the path forward requires deep institutional alignment. By fusing the academic talent of local universities with strategic infrastructure spending and state-backed small business grants, Fayetteville and Cumberland County aim to shed their economic distress and step firmly into the state's high-wage future.

Caution When Hiring Freelancers Online

RALEIGH — The North Carolina Department of Justice, North Carolina Board of Examiners for Engineers and Surveyors, and the North Carolina Board of Architecture and Interior Designers are warning consumers to be careful when they use freelancing websites such as Upwork, Fiverr, and Freelancer to hire professional engineering, surveying, architectural, or home design services. These popular platforms allow anyone to advertise their services but may not verify if they are properly licensed.

In some cases, bad actors have falsely claimed to be licensed, fraudulently used professional seal and signatures to appear legitimate, and then delivered substandard or unsafe work. When an unlicensed person

uses someone else's professional seal, it becomes nearly impossible for homeowners, contractors, or local officials to verify who performed the work or whether it meets safety standards.

"More people are turning to online platforms to hire professional services, and scammers are taking advantage of that," said Attorney General Jeff Jackson. "Always do your research before paying for services and verify licenses and credentials to make sure you're hiring a professional. Also, if subcontractors are doing work (particularly on large, municipal projects), make sure to verify the licenses and credentials of the subcontractors."

Hiring an unlicensed person to

perform work on your home puts you and your property at risk. Poorly prepared plans or inaccurate surveys can lead to costly construction errors, unsafe conditions, violations of local permitting requirements, and potential civil liability.

"Licensure exists to protect the public, and that protection breaks down when someone misuses another professional's seal," said Andrew Ritter, Executive Director of the North Carolina Board of Examiners for Engineers and Surveyors. "A professional license ensures that national and local minimum competency standards have been met. Before you hire someone you found online to design a structure, survey a property, or draw up a set of plans, take a few minutes to verify if they are licensed. Verification is free, it's easy, and it could save

you from a costly or dangerous mistake."

"The North Carolina Board of Architecture and Registered Interior Designers, after investigating an alarming number of cases involving scams and public harm related to these sites, strongly urges consumers to do their research and verify proper licensure of those claiming they are offering or rendering architectural services," said Cathe M. Monte Carlo, Executive Director of the North Carolina Board of Architecture and Registered Interior Designers. "The Board recommends contacting staff directly at 919-268-7293 or ncba@ncbarch.org to verify licensure as well as confirm the architect's contact information. The mission of the Board is to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the citizens of North Carolina."



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Parasitic Infections Likely Linked To Farming Practices

NC HEALTH NEWS - Cyclospora, a relatively unknown parasite, has been making headlines across the country as it's given thousands of people an unpleasant case of explosive, watery diarrhea. In North Carolina, state leaders report there have been at least 307 cases of the infection.

North Carolina Health News reached out to several experts here in North Carolina to get more context about the foodborne disease: State Veterinarian Carl Williams and infectious disease physician David Wohl from UNC Health.

As of July 20, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention lists a total of 5,100 suspected cases of Cyclospora nationwide. The CDC's update page reads: "This is substantially higher than the 249 cases reported nationally by this same time last year."

Donation Match for Food Bank NC Summer Campaign



By Jordan Meadows

Staff Writer

The Food Bank of Central & Eastern North Carolina is continuing its "Stop Summer Hunger" campaign through July 31 as officials warn of what they describe as the most severe hunger crisis in generations across the region.

The campaign, which focuses on addressing food insecurity during the summer months when school meals are unavailable, aims to provide 7 million meals to families across central and eastern North Carolina. As of mid-July, the organization reported surpassing 5 million meals toward that goal.

Food bank leaders say the need is being driven in part by the loss of access to school-based meals. When schools close, families must provide an additional 10 meals per week per child. Recent data shows more than 168,000 school-age children and teens in the region are experiencing food insecurity. Statewide, more than 607,000 people lack consistent access to nutritious food, according to the latest research cited by the organization.

The campaign includes a donation-matching component supported by corporate partners. While a one-day triple-match event took place last Thursday,, current donations are being double-matched up to \$100,000, increasing the number of meals that can be distributed through the network.

During the earlier match period, officials said a \$10 donation could help provide up to 90 meals.

Food bank officials say the current demand for assistance is comparable to levels seen during the Great Recession, citing a combination of economic pressures, including rising housing, food, and fuel costs, along with reductions in some state and federal support programs. Stricter federal work requirements tied to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits have also added strain to households and nonprofit providers.

The Food Bank of Central & Eastern North Carolina operates as a regional hub in a broader hunger relief network, serving 34 counties through a system of more than 700 partner organizations. These include food pantries, soup kitchens, shelters, and community meal programs. The organization distributes food from six regional warehouses located in Raleigh, Durham, Greenville, New Bern, the Sandhills, and Wilmington.

Local organizations working with the food bank say summer programming is critical for children who rely on school meals during the academic year.

Faith Lam, associated with a summer program in Greenville, said the absence of school cafeterias increases the need for community-based meal services.

"It's very important. It's crucial to some of our summer campers during the summer months. There is no cafeteria food that they will receive during the school year," Lam said. "So during the summer we are bridging that gap and filling that food insecurity need by providing fresh breakfast and hot lunches every single day."

In addition to food distribution, the organization provides assistance with SNAP applications and disaster relief services, including food and water distribution during emergencies such as hurricanes.

The food bank is part of Feeding America, a national network of more than 200 food banks, and participates in Feeding the Carolinas, a regional coalition focused on food access policy and coordination.

State lawmakers recently approved Senate Bill 257, which provides more than \$9 million in additional funding for the network, a move officials say will help support operations as demand continues to rise.

The organization is also preparing to open a new Food Lion Feeds Hunger Solutions Center in Durham, with a grand opening scheduled for Tuesday. The facility is expected to expand distribution capacity and support long-term hunger relief efforts in the region.

FDA APPROVES A FIRST-OF-ITS-KIND PILL TO CUT CHOLESTEROL IN HIGH-RISK PATIENTS



WASHINGTON (AP) — The Food and Drug Administration has approved a first-of-its-kind pill that can drastically reduce cholesterol in a way that's previously only been available with expensive, injectable drugs.

The drug from Merck was OK'd on Thursday for patients with artery-clogging cholesterol that persists even after taking statins, the standard medications for cutting heart attack risk. Merck will market its pill under the brand name Lipendra.

It's the first noninjectable medication that works by blocking a liver protein called PCSK9. That protein limits the body's ability to clear cholesterol from the blood, and biotech injectables targeting it have been available from Amgen and other drugmakers for more than a decade. But patient access has been stymied for years by high prices, insurance restrictions and limited prescribing by doctors.

Statins block some of the liver's production of cholesterol and are the cornerstone of treatment. But even at the highest doses, many people need additional help lowering their LDL, or bad, cholesterol enough to meet medical guidelines.

Merck, which has headquarters in Rahway, New Jersey, won approval based on two studies in high-risk patients who added the company's pill to their standard treatment, including statins. In one study of 3,000 patients, those taking Lipendra saw their levels of LDL cholesterol drop more than 55% after six months. In a second study, patients averaged a reduction of 59% compared with patients who received a dummy pill.

That benefit dropped only slightly over a year, and side effects — including dizziness and diarrhea — were similar between those taking the pill or a placebo, researchers found. One caveat: The pill must be taken on an empty stomach.

The FDA reviewed the drug under its program that promises ultra-fast reviews for promising medications that serve the public interest. The pathway was created by then-FDA chief Dr. Marty Makary, who resigned from the agency in May after months of pressure from drugmakers, patients and other outside groups.

Heart disease is the nation's leading cause of death, and high LDL cholesterol, which causes plaque to build up in arteries, is a top risk factor for heart attacks and strokes. While an LDL level of 100 is considered fine for healthy people, doctors recommend lowering it to at least 70 once people develop high cholesterol or heart disease — and even lower for those at very high risk.

The CDC's numbers are likely an undercount, however, given that in an update dated July 20, the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services reports 6,148 cases in that state alone.

No deaths have been reported related to the outbreak.

State Veterinarian Carl Williams told NC Health News that state health officials are updating case counts weekly.

(Note: These interviews have been edited for length and conversational flow.)

Carl Williams: We're updating our case counts weekly, and our last update was 307 cases. But when we update our case count on Tuesday (July 21), it'll go up from that.

NC Health News: At the end of last week, we heard that apparently this outbreak is being related to Taylor Farms lettuce. Do we think that is the only source, and the outbreak is related to the lettuce from that company?

Williams: What we suspect, based on previous years, is that there are multiple vehicles for Cyclospora beyond just the lettuce. And what we know is that the lettuce is what was implicated, especially in association with Taco Bell restaurants in the Midwest.

The large outbreak in Michigan, Ohio and a couple other states did implicate lettuce with a trace back to Taylor Farms, but that's not what we're seeing in North Carolina or the other states. We're seeing that it seems to be associated with a large number of products, and it's really hard to nail down a specific one.

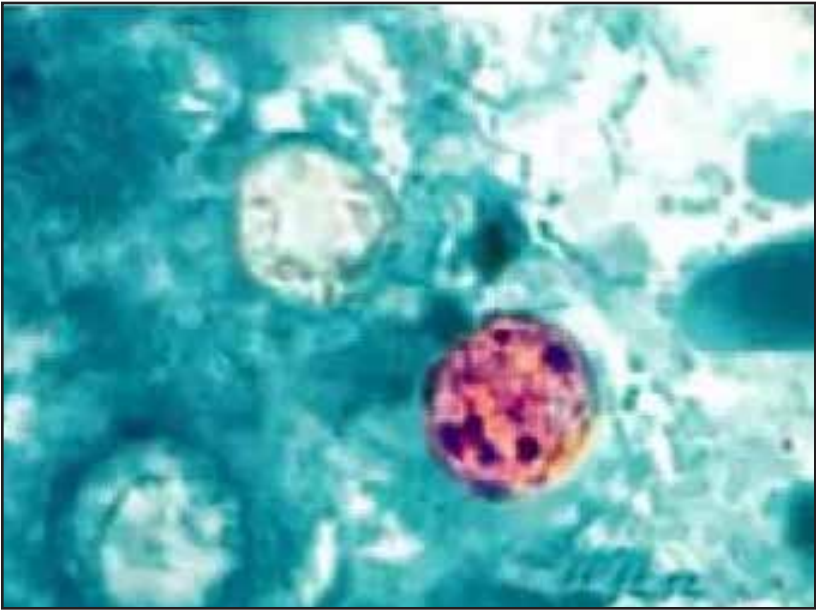
Our best guess is that there's probably multiple contaminated fresh fruits and vegetables that are contributing to this increase in cases that we're seeing in North Carolina and across the country.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration on Sunday withdrew its guidance about avoiding lettuce provided by Taylor Farms de Mexico, noting on its outbreak update website that, "Due to the complexity in detection of Cyclospora, FDA laboratory experts re-reviewed the sample results and have concluded that the finding does not represent true amplification and should be considered a false positive. Information about the sample has been removed from the July 18, 2026 update... As of July 19, 2026, there are no confirmed positive sample results for product testing for Cyclospora."

NCHN: Tell us a little bit about Cyclospora. I understand that it can be challenging to diagnose and then a little bit challenging to treat.

Williams: It's a parasite, and it's resistant to chlorine, and it's hard to get off of fresh fruits and vegetables.

Humans are the only known reservoir for it. There's no animal com-



ponent. The only reservoir is people, but it's not transmitted directly from person to person. Once the oocysts (spores) are shed in the feces, it takes up to a week for them to become infective. So it has to hang around in the environment and attach to a food product. It's not going to be something like Shigella that's directly transmissible from person to person.

What we've noticed in North Carolina and the United States is that it's really a summertime phenomenon. We see almost all of our cases in June and July, with very few outside of that window.

NCHN: So this is, what, someone pooping in a field? And then somehow or another, the lettuce gets contaminated with that soil. Is that what you're telling us?

Williams: It could be that. But in the past, outbreaks have been traced to surface water being contaminated with human feces, and then that water being used to either irrigate crops or to apply pesticides. So then, you can get, as opposed to just imagining an individual person having a bowel movement that might affect a very small area of a field. But if it's being sprayed across the entire field for irrigation, that is how, or one way, that it could be placed on all of these fruits and vegetables.

The FDA has a lot of good information on their website for farmers and producers.

It's very important where these

(See **PARASITIC INFECTION**, P. 12)

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Arts & Culture

"Africa to Carolina" Public Art Installation Is Unveiled

By Jheri Hardaway
Staff Writer

WINNABOW, NC - Amidst the heavy, sun-drenched air of the lower Cape Fear, history and art converged at the Brunswick Town Fort Anderson State Historic Site on Thursday, July 16. Dozens of community members, historians, and state officials gathered for the historic unveiling of the "Africa to Carolina" public art installation. Commissioned by the North Carolina African American Heritage Commission (NCAAHC) and funded through the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation's Inclusive Public Art initiative. The monument stands as the only public art piece in the region dedicated exclusively to commemorating the disembarkation point of enslaved Africans in North Carolina.

The outdoor ceremony, opened by NCAAHC Associate Director Natalie Rodriguez, empowered an overwhelming sense of ancestral reverence, grief, and cultural resilience. "We are gathered here now, not just to unveil a work of art," Rodriguez noted to the crowd, "but to honor stories, passion, and the people behind it."

The program formally commenced with a deeply moving libation ritual led by historian, performance artist, and seventh-generation Brunswick County descendant Tianne Parker West. Standing near the historic waters of Port Brunswick, Parker West offered prayers to the stolen souls who built the literal infrastructure of the county and state.

"Right now, I want to give honor to those who were stolen and enslaved here on this very sacred soil," Parker

West prayed. "Those who were forcibly stripped away from their families... may we never forget those who suffered tremendously and still were able to survive and even thrive."

Following the libation, North Carolina Poet Laureate Jaki Shelton Green took the podium to debut a transformative, lyrically rich poem woven directly from community listening sessions. Reciting the piece publicly for the first time, Green captured the raw geographical memory embedded in the coastal landscape. "The ocean is a storyteller, carrying the whispers of ancestors," Green structuralized, evoking the imagery of the Middle Passage, the labor of Carolina Gold rice cultivation, and the prayers of Islamic scholar Omar Ibn Said. "We are all the fruit they harvested inside fertile Carolina soil... We are here now, writing a new history. We are a new dust, a new dawn for our ancestors."

The physical monument is the collaborative masterwork of a renowned Durham-based public art team: multimedia sculptor Stephen Hayes, an assistant professor at Duke University, and placemaker David Wilson, a celebrated public artist and mentee of John Biggers.

Wilson detailed the profound creative journey, which began while Hayes was completing an art residency across the Atlantic in Senegal. Operating on a foundational bedrock of mutual trust, the duo navigated communication barriers to forge an authentic, community-centric design. They engaged directly with historians, local scholars, and descendants to ensure the final product resonated with the public.



"Stephen has a remarkable ability to transform history into something deeply human," Wilson explained. He credited the meticulous engineering of Cricket Forge, which fabricated the towering steel sculpture, and Vetro Glass, which molded the central glass hemisphere representing reflection, resilience, and hope. "The strength of steel and the transparency of glass reminds us that history can be enduring and illuminating. Public art belongs to everyone... it simply waits for you to come and engage with it."

Hayes stepped up briefly to echo that sentiment, expressing profound gratitude to the community for trusting them to guard a legacy facing ongoing threats of historical erasure. "This Africa to Carolina project does not stop here," Hayes asserted. "It becomes here with us, and it's going to continue telling the story."



In one of the event's most emotionally arresting segments, Michelle Lanier, Director of the North Carolina Division of State Historic Sites and founding Executive Director of the NCAAHC, took the stage. Lanier drew attention to a stylized headwrap, or gele, featured within the monument, calling it a traditional Yoruba symbol of adornment acting as "a refusal to be claimed as property." In an extraordinary moment of institutional continuity, Lanier stood alongside her successors, second director Angela Thorpe Mason and current director Adrienne Nirdé, marking a rare convergence of all three NCAAHC leaders since the 2023 opening of North Carolina Freedom Park which sits between the North Carolina General Assembly and our State Library.

To anchor the monument in primary source reality, Lanier read aloud



a transcribed list of historical names uncovered by historic site manager Jim McKee. These were real human beings documented in old port records who endured bondage on those exact grounds: Samson, Clarindo, Hannah, Santee Peter, Elisee, Thomas Peters, Hugh Sparrow, Bristol, London, Will Peter, and an enslaved woman known simply as Grace.

Current NCAAHC Director Adrienne Nirdé delivered a candid address regarding the modern socio-political hurdles facing Black historical preservation.

"As you can imagine, it has been a difficult season to continue moving forward the work of the African American Heritage Commission," Nirdé stated frankly. "Our history and our work is in jeopardy. Our funding and our staffing are being eliminated... Our morals and judgment as histori-

ans have also come under question."

Despite these systemic pressures, Nirdé praised her staff and local allies like McKee for forging ahead. She dismantled the long-held historical misconception that North Carolina was not a direct site of transatlantic disembarkation, citing records of at least a dozen voyages arriving straight from the West African coast (including Senegal, Sierra Leone, and the Gambia) between 1759 and 1787. Ballast stones, still visible in the Cape Fear waters today, mark the precise spots where those ships once docked.

Concluding the ceremony, Dr. Darin Waters, Deputy Secretary for the Office of Archives and History, shared reflections on his late mentor, pioneering historian Dr. John Hope Franklin. Dr. Waters recalled showing Dr. Franklin the initial legislation creating the commission in 2009, prompting the iconic scholar to immediately ask, "Do you have a budget?" Dr. Franklin well understood that without money behind the initiative it wouldn't move forward and our great scholar assisted in ensuring the financing behind this enduring venture. While modern budget battles remain torturous, Dr. Waters affirmed that the state's ongoing commitment to telling a comprehensive, true story remains unshakeable. Following the closing remarks, guests moved toward the work of art to absorb, touch, and experience the newly unveiled monument, cementing the day as a definitive milestone in North Carolina's cultural landscape. This is an essential element of our American heritage and a testament to collaboration.



Black History Oratorical Celebrates Mandela's 108th

In honor of the 108th birthday of Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela, the 2026 Black History Oratorical featured a moving presentation inspired by The Males Place's recent journey to South Africa.

Warrior Myles Guillaume portrayed Nelson Mandela, while Warrior Elias Ayers brought Steve Biko to life in a dialogue exploring courage, Black Consciousness, reconciliation, and the pursuit of justice. The performance celebrated the legacies of two of South Africa's greatest leaders while inspiring young people to lead with purpose, conviction, and unity.

By Jordan Meadows
Staff Writer

Book Harvest NC hosted its sixth annual Summer Block Party on Saturday at Durham Central Park, offering families across the region a free afternoon of books, live entertainment and community activities.

The centerpiece of the event was a collection of 15,000 free children's books available for kids from infants through high schoolers to take home and keep. The books are described as culturally inclusive and span the full range of childhood and adolescent reading levels. Families were encouraged to take as many as they want.

Beyond the book distribution, the afternoon featured live music, food trucks, magic performances by Happy Dan the Magic Man, custom poems written on request by the Poetry Fox, and activity booths from more than 40 local organizations and community partners, including Rooth PBS Kids, the Museum of Life and Science, the Bull City Wood-shop, Bull City Robotics and Weaver Street Market.

The block party is one of several initiatives run by Book Harvest, a Durham-based nonprofit founded



in 2011 that has provided more than three million books to children and families across North Carolina. The organization sends newborns home from hospitals with starter libraries, stocks outdoor book boxes in communities, maintains reading materials in laundromats, and sends pre-K and elementary school students into summer break with books to keep.

Book Harvest frames its work around the belief that getting books into chil-

dren's hands early is foundational to their long-term development.

"At Book Harvest, we know that literacy begins at birth, in the home, powered by parents and nourished by books," said Ginger Young, founder and CEO of Book Harvest.

Young announced a partnership last year with Blue Cross NC—also a Durham-based nonprofit—to distribute free Book Harvest children's books at community events for fami-

lies across the state.

The organization has also been expanding its statewide reach through its Books on Break program. Last summer, Book Harvest partnered for the first time with the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction's 21st Century Community Learning Centers, bringing the program to 66 partner organizations at more than 100 sites across 47 counties. The effort put 76,120 brand new books into the hands of 6,920 pre-K through fifth grade students, each of whom selected ten books to take home in a specially designed backpack that also included a bilingual parent resource sheet on shared reading practices.

Book Harvest NC surveys found that 92 percent of parents felt the program motivated their child to read more over the summer, and 58 percent reported that many of the books were read multiple times; 99 percent of parents said the summer program supported their child's learning. Student excitement around book ownership emerged as the single most prominent theme across all surveys, cited by 67 percent of parents and caregivers in open-ended responses.

This 19th-Century Diary Written By An Enslaved Maryland Man Is A Crucial Record Of His Life And Family History

Michelle Mehrtens
Smithsonian Magazine

In 1841, Adam Francis Plummer decided to keep a diary. Born into enslavement in 1819, he labored primarily at Riversdale House, a plantation owned by the Calvert family in Prince George's County, Maryland. It was there that a Black preacher named John Bowser taught him to read and write, a decision that would have likely cost them dearly if discovered.

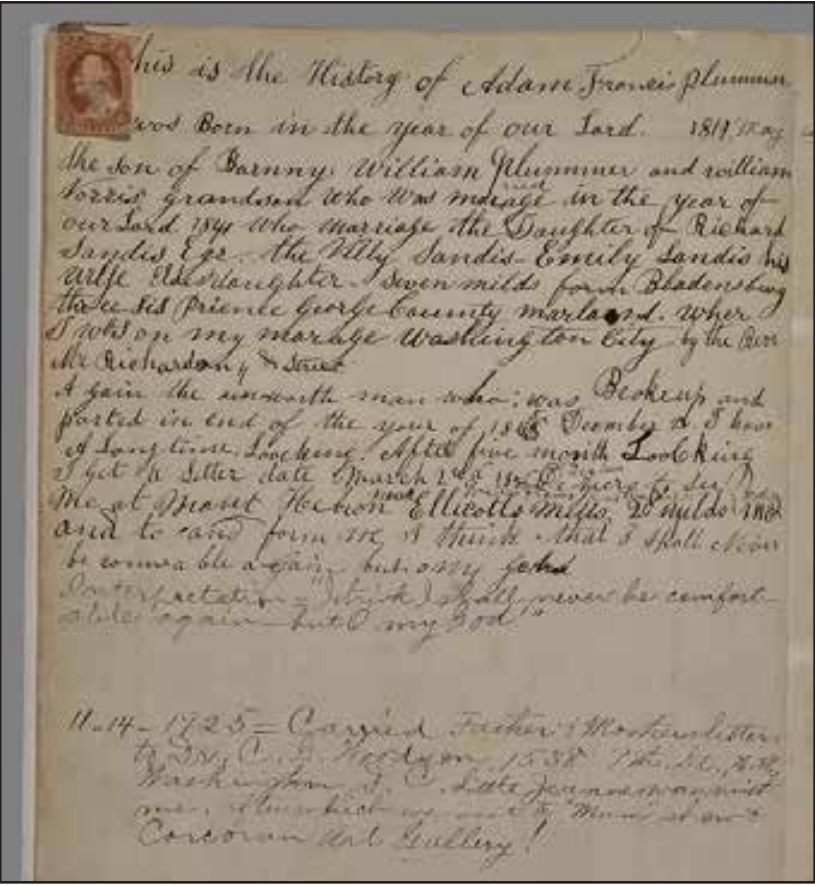
Plummer diligently journaled for more than 60 years, recording everything: birth dates, death dates, lists of household goods, debts owed and paid.

When his wife, Emily Saunders Arnold Plummer, and their eight children were sold to a plantation in Howard County, dozens of miles north, Plummer tried fruitlessly to locate their whereabouts. After several months, his wife contacted him. Plummer followed up with letters and stayed apprised of his family's movements.

In one entry, Plummer summarizes this difficult reality:

Brokeup and parted in the end of the year of 1855 December 22. I have a longtime looking. After five month looking I get a letter [from Emily] date March 2nd 1856 Deziers to see me at Mont Hebron Ellicotts Mills, 20 mids an to and form we of think that I shall never be commeable [comfortable] again but o my God.

Plummer later became plantation foreman of Riversdale House, a job he continued to work after his emancipation. By the 1870s, Plummer was able to purchase a ten-acre home-



stead, Mount Rose, near Hyattsville for his entire family.

When Plummer died in 1905, his daughter Nellie Arnold Plummer took possession of his diary and continued with her own entries. An educator with an eye for exactness, she also corrected her father's previous records and added personal commentary.

Nellie would later self-publish her own book, *Out of the Depths*; or, *The*

Triumph of the Cross, and celebrate her father's resilience. "But for his having improved that ONE opportunity to learn how to read and write, we would know very little of our family history," she wrote.

On May 30, the 185th anniversary of Plummer's first entry, the Smithsonian's Anacostia Community Museum debuted its newest exhibition, "We Make History." Interactive displays feature letters, photographs



and other historical records from the Washington, D.C. area. Plummer's leather-bound diary, donated to the museum in 2003 by Lucille Betty Tompkins-Davis, is the exhibition's centerpiece. Tompkins-Davis—a descendant of Plummer's brother-in-law, according to WAMU—chose to give the artifact to the museum after storing it for years in her Maryland attic. Currently, it is the only known example of a multigenerational

journal established by an enslaved person in the United States.

"We Make History" is an ode to the local community, an acknowledgement of how both big and small stories contribute to the nation's larger history. This type of "history-keeping" brings the past to life, humanizing everyday people and places, says Jennifer Sieck, who curated the new exhibition.

Sieck notes that it's "remarkable"

that Plummer was "so forward-thinking to record his experiences," including those of his family and the nearby Black population. Along with daily tasks and routines, he charted their moments of upheaval, describing their forcible separation and prolonged years of enslavement.

"It is not only a story of D.C. history, but also it's a story of American history," says Sieck.

In *Out of the Depths*, Nellie applauds her father's text, writing, "Next to his good example, we prize his 'Diary' as a legacy, indeed!" Born in 1860, Nellie learned to read and write from Plummer and later set her sights on higher education. She was the first woman to attend Wayland Seminary, a college for formerly enslaved people, and eventually became a teacher and principal in public schools around Washington for decades.

By the 1920s, Nellie decided to share her family's letters with the famed historian Carter G. Woodson, who originated "Negro History Week," a predecessor to Black History Month. Woodson published the Plummer correspondence in the *Journal of Negro History*. Soon after, in 1927, Nellie released *Out of the Depths*. Some relatives, including her twin brother, Robert, were apprehensive about publicizing the more painful details of their prior enslavement. Nellie, however, was determined to tell their story and had mortgaged the family's home to raise funds for publication.

Nellie sent copies of *Out of the Depths* to relatives countrywide, including whole boxes to towns she

(See *19TH-CENTURY DIARY* P. 9)

Community

Harnett Co. NAACP 5473B Is Active

By Jheri Hardaway

Staff Writer

Lillington, NC - Under the leadership of President Benita Harrington, the Harnett County NAACP 5473B has maintained a consistent and influential presence in local governance, with representatives attending meetings ranging from the Board of Elections to the County Commission. The branch's impact is evidenced by its high engagement levels, including a recent sold-out Martin Luther King Jr. Day breakfast featuring a keynote address by veteran NAACP leader Dr. Ben Chavis.

On July 15, the organization hosted a candidate town hall at the county government complex featuring Harnett County Sheriff candidates Aaron Meredith and Reggie Watson. The forum provided a transparent platform for the community to evaluate the candidates' law enforcement experience and visions for the county. Discussion focused on rural po-



licing priorities, community safety, and administrative accountability. President Harrington emphasized that safety is a universal right and created the session to ensure a fair, professional dialogue that addressed sensitive topics like training and

police misconduct while respecting candidate privacy.

Finally, in efforts to focus on the future, the Harnett County Youth Mental Health & Resilience Initiative has been launched. The Harnett County NAACP Freedom Branch 5473b

has been awarded a BUILD Grant to launch the Youth Mental Health & Resilience Initiative, a community-based program designed to address the urgent mental health crisis affecting young people in our county.

In recent years, Harnett County has experienced multiple tragic youth suicides, each rooted in a lack of accessible mental health resources, limited culturally competent support, and systems that too often criminalize rather than assist struggling youth. This initiative will create a coordinated, community-driven response that expands access to mental health education, early intervention, culturally responsive support, and advocacy for policy change. The project aligns directly with the NAACP's enduring commitments to health and well-being, education innovation, race and justice, and environmental and climate justice, while strengthening the branch's capacity to serve youth and families. Great things are happening in Harnett County.



Sunflowers Return to Peak Bloom at Dix Park

By Steve Worthly

Photographer

RALEIGH, N.C. — One of Raleigh's most anticipated summer traditions has returned as the sunflowers at Dix Park have reached their peak bloom, welcoming visitors to enjoy the vibrant seasonal display.

The annual sunflower field has become a favorite destination for residents and visitors alike, offering a picturesque backdrop for walks, photography, and family outings. With thousands of bright yellow blooms now open, this week marks one of the best times to experience the field at its most colorful.

Beyond their beauty, sunflowers are fascinating plants. Although they appear to be a single large flower, each sunflower is actually a compound flower, made up of hundreds of tiny individual flowers packed together in the center. Each of these miniature flowers has the potential to produce a seed. As the seeds mature, their combined weight can cause the sunflower's head to droop, giving the flower its familiar bowed appearance later in the season.

Visitors are encouraged to enjoy the display while respecting the fields by staying on designated paths and avoiding picking the flowers, helping preserve the experience for everyone throughout the blooming season.

Sheila Bowens-Bratts Named New Youth Home Director

Durham, N.C. - Durham County Government is pleased to announce the selection of Sheila Bowens-Bratts as the new director of the Durham Youth Home. Bowens-Bratts, a veteran juvenile detention professional, with nearly 30 years in youth rehabilitation, replaces former long-time Youth Home Director Angela Nunn who retired earlier this year.

"I am excited at the opportunity to work with Ms. Bratts in her new role as Youth Home Director," said Assistant County Manager Dwane Brinson. "Finding someone with vast experience and background, combined with an unwavering desire to care for our Youth Home residents, were top goals in the recruitment. That is exactly what we have found with Ms. Bratts. The future of our Youth Home is bright under her leadership."

Bowens-Bratts began her career as an entry-level Youth Counselor, where her ability to connect with young people and support them through challenging moments set the foundation for her long-term commitment to positive youth development. Since 1998, Bowens-Bratts has advanced through multiple leadership roles, earning recognition for her balanced approach to safety, accountability, and trauma-informed care.

Prior to the announcement of her new role, Bowens-Bratts served as a Senior Supervisor and later Assistant Director for the Durham County Youth Home. She played a key role in the planning and development of the new facility, which opened in February 2024, contributing her firsthand operational knowledge and insight into youth needs. She brings decades of experience into her role as Youth Home Director where she will oversee all operational and administrative functions of the department, ensuring that procedures, programming, and safety standards are aligned with best practices in juvenile care.



N Carolina's Last Surviving Freedmen's Schoolhouse Opens Its Doors Again

By Jordan Meadows

Staff Writer

The only freedmen's schoolhouse known to remain standing in North Carolina was formally dedicated in Smithfield, capping nearly a decade of preservation work and drawing community leaders, historians and descendants of the formerly enslaved people who built and attended the school more than 150 years ago.

The ceremony was held on June-teenth at First Missionary Baptist Church before a ribbon-cutting and public tours of the restored building, and was organized by the Historic Smithfield Foundation and the Johnston County Heritage Center. The keynote address was delivered by Dr. Crystal R. Sanders, a Johnston County native, Emory University associate professor of African American studies and a direct descendant of freedmen who attended the school.

Sanders used her remarks to trace the arc from the brutal legal suppression of Black literacy before the Civil War to the fierce determination with which formerly enslaved people pursued education the moment they were free.

"White people who violated the law could be fined or imprisoned," Sanders told the audience. "Free Black people who violated the law could be fined, imprisoned, or publicly whipped. Enslaved people could be punished with 39 lashes on their bare backs."

Yet some learned anyway, Sanders said. "They were willing to risk everything to gain what slavery had robbed them of."

After emancipation, that determination only intensified.



Sanders cited John Alvord, the national superintendent of schools for the Freedmen's Bureau, who observed at the time: "Throughout the entire South, an effort is being made by the colored people to educate themselves. In the absence of other teaching, they are determined to be self-taught."

That was true in Smithfield. In January 1866, three white women from the Boston-based New England Freedmen's Aid Society arrived to teach in a school that formerly enslaved people had already built themselves. Within four months, the school burned to the ground. There were documented 631 African American schoolhouses destroyed across the South between 1864 and 1876.

"The destruction of these places of learning could have discouraged Black educational efforts," Sanders said. "But Black people in and around Smithfield refused to give up. The day after the fire, classes resumed in private homes."

A new school was built on town property.

The Freedmen's Bureau arrived in 1868, and construction of the current schoolhouse began that fall and was completed in the spring of 1869. The simple two-room building featured sliding pocket doors separating its two classrooms. Between 1867 and 1871, several white teachers affiliated with the American Missionary Association taught there.

Their surviving letters offer a window into what education meant to the community. In one letter from September 1868, teacher Susan Haines described elderly men and women walking miles to attend classes and worship services, often bringing their children and grandchildren.

"As I enter my schoolroom Sabbath mornings and see the men, women, and children gathered there, so eager to learn the Word of God, and remember that I am the only one to whom they can look for instruction, I feel that the harvest truly is great, but the laborers still few," Haines wrote.

Sanders great-great-grandparents, Wesley and Constantia Bell,

were both born into slavery; their four children were educated at the Smithfield school.

"Walking miles along muddy country roads, these children embodied the determination of African Americans to become an educated people."

The restoration was the result of nearly a decade of collaboration between the Historic Smithfield Foundation and the Johnston County Heritage Center. The foundation acquired the property in 2019 and began rehabilitation work in 2021. Funding came from private donors and a \$250,000 grant from the North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources, which was strongly advocated for by Rep. Donna White, a Republican from Johnston County.

"Our Historic Smithfield Foundation was created in 2017, and in 2019, we were able to acquire the title to the property," said Tony Johnson, director of the Johnston County Heritage Center. "We started doing rehabilitation work in 2021, right in the middle of the pandemic, and it's taken us another five years to actually get the certificate of occupancy and get it finished."

Of the 169 freedmen's schoolhouses that once existed in North Carolina, the Smithfield building is the only one known to survive. Its history had been largely forgotten for decades—the building was converted to a private residence around 1913, and its origins were not rediscovered until research for a Black history exhibit at the Johnston County Heritage Center in 2002 revealed that the structure likely predated a later principal's tenure and had been built by the Freedmen's Bureau.

The NC State Preservation Office confirmed in 2010 that the building dated from the 1860s.

The Woman Behind The Smile: Yvonne Francis' Journey

By Torrie Walker

Her Campus, Howard University

A customer walks into Walgreens expecting to pick up a prescription. Instead, they often leave with something else: a hug, a listening ear or a few words of encouragement.

For Ms. Yvonne "Nana" Francis, caring for people has never ended when the workday does. Whether raising four children, operating an in-home daycare for nearly 40 years, helping customers at the pharmacy or guiding her granddaughters, she has spent a lifetime showing up for others.

Born and raised in Overtown, a historic Black neighborhood in Miami, Ms. Francis grew up during segregation, where being biracial shaped many of her earliest experiences. Her father was white, her mother was Black, and as a child with blonde hair, she often became the target of teasing.

"My mom started dyeing my hair with coffee," Ms. Francis recalled.

Although her mother struggled with health issues, Ms. Francis found stability in the women who helped raise her. She credits her grandmother and, most notably, her godmother, Anne McRae, with teaching her compassion,

responsibility and faith. Those lessons became the foundation of her life.

Education quickly became one of her greatest passions. After schools were integrated, she attended summer classes and earned enough credits to graduate a year early.

"I always went to school, even during the summertime because I enjoyed education," she said.

Before graduating, however, life took an unexpected turn. At just 14 years old, Ms. Francis became a mother.

Her daughter attended her high school graduation, only a year and a half old. Today, that same daughter has earned both a bachelor's degree and an MBA and owns two businesses, accomplishments Ms. Francis views as proof that difficult beginnings do not determine where life will end.

Motherhood meant growing up quickly, but it never stopped her ambitions. She attended college for two years to study computer programming before choosing to devote herself to raising her family.

As her family grew, caring for others became her life's work. After raising four children, she opened an in-home daycare, where she spent nearly four

decades caring for children from families of many different backgrounds.

"I loved it," she said. "I had different cultures, different kids. I cooked for them, I bathed them, and when their moms and dads picked them up, they were clean."

By her late 20s, Ms. Francis faced another challenge. Diagnosed with heart disease, diabetes and asthma, she eventually weighed nearly 400 pounds. Walking became difficult, breathing became exhausting, and she relied on oxygen wherever she went.

"The girls kept saying, 'Nana, we want to go to Disney.' I told them, 'If Nana loses the weight and she's able to walk around the park, we'll go,'" she said.

Determined to keep that promise, Ms. Francis began exercising, walking and changing her lifestyle before undergoing weight-loss surgery. By the time of the procedure, she had already lost 45 pounds. She ultimately lost more than 180 pounds, reclaiming both her health and independence.

After more than 20 years away from the workforce, Ms. Francis returned to work because she wanted another opportunity to serve others.

"I wanted to give back to people,"

she said. "I didn't have help raising my kids, but I wanted to still help others and still be a support for them because it takes a village."

Today, she works as a senior pharmacy technician at Walgreens.

"Some of them are sad, some of them are hurting, some of them just need a hug," she said.

That desire to care for others was tested once again when tragedy struck her family. Two of her daughters, Kendra and Brittany, died just 35 days apart.

"I never questioned God why my daughters are gone."

Instead, Ms. Francis leaned on the faith that had sustained her throughout her life. Although the pain remains, she has found purpose in helping raise the granddaughters her daughters left behind.

"The smiles that I see from both of my granddaughters... those keep me going."

Today, one granddaughter attends Howard University while the other plans to attend the Savannah College of Art and Design after graduating from high school. Watching them pursue their dreams has become one of the greatest joys of her life.

Even after everything she has en-



not only the hardships she endured, but the faith that carried her through them.

"Life is always a test, and the test is always a testimony," she said. "I'm happy with how the cards of life have been dealt to me. I just have to learn how to win the game, and I'll do it with a smile."

dured, Ms. Francis chooses gratitude over bitterness, believing her life is defined not by loss, but by the people she has loved and the lives she has touched.

More than anything, she hopes her granddaughters will remember



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How Enslaved African Muslims Resisted Bondage Through Writing

(See **ENSLAVED MUSLIMS** P. 9)

The advertisement features a dark background. At the top, there are two black and white portraits of men in suits and ties, separated by a vertical double line. Between the portraits is the Haywood Funeral Home, Inc. logo, which includes a stylized dome graphic above the company name. Below the portraits, a dark horizontal band contains the text "Our family serving your family for 110 years" in white. At the bottom, a dark band contains the website, address, and phone number in white.

Editorials

Editorial Policy

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



THE GOLDEN YEARS

By Judykay Jefferson

COMMUNICATION 101, MAYBE

Communication is often described as a soft skill, but anyone who has tried to navigate differences across generation, culture, or gender knows it's one of the hardest skills we practice. It's not just about words—it's about worldview. Last week I attended our semi-annual "All-Hands" staff meeting. The morning presentation, delivered by a leadership specialist the agency has been working with since the beginning of the year was a definite snoozer. There were technology challenges, a question of relevance for the majority, and a lot of audible eye-rolling.

Throughout the morning, as I walked around in a desperate attempt to stay awake, I noticed an athletically built Black man in a cowboy hat, sitting in the back of the room. Although he had an approachable air about him, he was a stranger. Our work culture is to leave people alone unless they initiate engagement.

Turns out he was our afternoon speaker. He introduced himself as Dr. Alonzo Kelly, originally of Detroit, currently residing in Greenbay, Wisconsin. He had a pleasant voice, confident, easy demeanor, and was an extremely handsome bearded man. It was all good until he said he would be speaking for the next two hours.

Surprise! It was a really fast, painless two hours.

Dr Kelly, leadership specialist, had factored in our cultural restlessness, shortened attention spans, digital distractions, and genuine nagging demands on our time. Every few minutes he would initiate an exercise that required interaction from the audience. Our group is generally low-participation, and this was no different. The talkers, talked. The backrow Baptists remained silent. But in the week following I didn't hear one complaint from anyone. That's high praise for this group.

Even I was fully engaged, responsive, and retained a significant amount of his intended take-aways. Three of the most impactful for me were:

- Land the plane (get to the point quickly and clearly)
- Common words don't necessarily mean the same to everyone
- Build the possibility of misunderstanding into your communication style

Dr. Kelly's framework reminds us that people learn and engage through six modalities: read, write, listen, speak, think, and roleplay. Those modalities shape how we show up in conversation long before we ever open our mouths.

Generational differences make this visible. Five generations now work sidebyside, each shaped by distinct technologies, social norms, and expectations. Younger workers often communicate in rapidfire digital bursts, valuing immediacy and iteration. Older colleagues may prioritize clarity, deliberation, and the respect embedded in taking one's time. These aren't opposing values—they're different interpretations of what effective communication looks like. Kelly's reminder that "when someone speaks from their understanding, it's impossible to be wrong" is a powerful antidote to the generational blame game that dominates workplace discourse. He teaches that using qualifiers such as, "From my experience..." or "The way I see it..."

Culture adds another dimension. Kelly's own background—Detroit-born, raised in rural Wisconsin, a decade in the foster system, seminarytrained, and academically credentialed across multiple disciplines—illustrates how varied experiences shape communication expectations. In multicultural spaces, directness may be interpreted as honesty or aggression; indirectness may be seen as politeness or avoidance. The point isn't to declare one style superior. It's to recognize that every person arrives with a different "understanding," and that understanding is rooted in lived experience rather than universal truth.

Gender dynamics complicate communication further. Research consistently shows that women are socialized to prioritize harmony, relational cues, and collaborative framing, while men are often encouraged to value assertiveness, brevity, and decisiveness. Kelly reminds us that not everyone has been equally trained or rewarded. Gendered expectations shape who gets praised for speaking up, who gets penalized for being "too direct," and who gets interrupted before finishing a thought.

Kelly's most radical idea may be the simplest: "We can both be right." In a polarized era, that statement feels almost subversive. It reframes disagreement as information rather than threat. It challenges the assumption that communication is a contest to be won. And it invites us to stop insisting that our truth must automatically become someone else's.

If we want workplaces, communities, and families that function, we must adopt communication practices that honor difference rather than flatten it. Ask clearer questions, check assumptions, and—borrowing Kelly's phrase—learn to "land the plane" by stating what we want, what we need, and what we understand.

Communication isn't just about talking. It's about listening to the experiences that shaped the person talking. Bottom line: the conversation gets easier when we stop trying to win it.

The Bridget Long Case Gets OK To Move Forward In VA

By Karl Cameron

Contributing Writer

WASHINGTON DC—Rev. Isaiah Green, Jr. and his Civil Rights Group, Equal Treatment Now, Inc., which has supported Bridget M. Long since 2023 in her Civil Rights Employment Discrimination Retaliation Claim case, has gotten approval to move forward with the case at the Appellate Court in Richmond Virginia. Rev. Green conveyed his concerns regarding corrupt conduct that is continuously being perpetrated by Federal District Court personnel, including some clerks, to President Trump's Oversight Committee Personnel in a July 14th meeting. Green pointed out that Ms. Long's case had unlawfully been removed from the US Supreme Court Calendar by then US Federal Middle District Court Judge William L. Osteen, Jr.

The Oversight Committee Personnel's 30-minute meeting didn't go well in the beginning, because the idea was advanced that the Oversight Committee Chair was responsible only for the constituents from his state. However, Rev. Green pointed out that idea was incorrect under the law, and that the Oversight Committee Chair is obligated to all the citizens of the United States with concerns that impact their livelihoods.

Rev. Green went on to say, "I believe it was understood plainly in the meeting that the Trump Administration address the right now concerns of Black and Brown Taxpaying Citizens that need immediate redress for racial harmony in this country, and to make available the necessities that White People enjoy, and Black and Brown People are deprived of by law." When Green established this truth during the meeting, the Oversight Committee spokesperson came to the conclusion that the Trump Administration responsibilities did impact the lives of all Americans.

Rev. Green said the case was previously scheduled for trial as early as April 6, 2015, while President Barack Obama and Joseph R. Biden were in the White House. According to Rev. Green, this case has taken a toll on Ms. Long's health. He went on to say, "God would not fail her, and she is still breathing the breath of life in the midst of all of it."

ENSLAVED AFRICAN MUSLIMS

Continued from page 8

After the publication of his biography in 1734, which Bluett addressed to the nobility of England, Diallo gained his freedom and eventually lived out the rest of his life in Senegal. He died in 1773.

A Prince in bondage

One of the most striking stories of early Muslims in America is that of Abdul Rahman Ibrahima ibn Sori. A prince from West Africa, ibn Sori was enslaved in 1788, when he was 26 years old, 12 years after the signing of the Declaration of Independence. He would remain enslaved for the next 40 years.

Working as a field hand, without access to a Quran, ibn Sori took to tracing Arabic letters in the sand – a link to his home, faith and culture.

Newspaper publisher and editor Andrew Marschalk, intrigued by ibn Sori's royal lineage and ability to read and write in Arabic, agreed to help him send a letter to his African homeland. In 1826, ibn Sori penned what was actually Quranic verses from memory.

Marschalk sent ibn Sori's letter to U.S. Sen. Thomas Buck Reed along with a cover letter in which he mistakenly refers to ibn Sori – who grew up in the Futa Jallon region in modern-day Guinea – as a member of the Moroccan royal family. The letter caught the attention of various politicians and eventually landed in the hands of the Moroccan Sultan Abd al-Rahman ibn Hisham, who petitioned President John Quincy Adams for ibn Sori's freedom.

Thomas H. Gallaudet, an educator who founded the first American school for the deaf, ultimately documented ibn Sori's story in a pamphlet, "A Statement with Regard to the Moorish Prince, Abduhl Rahhahman," that was sold to raise funds for his and his family's freedom and return to their homeland.

While the funds raised allowed for ibn Sori and his wife Isabella's freedom, neither would return to Africa. Ibn Sori died of cholera shortly after gaining his freedom, and at least seven of his children remained enslaved in Mississippi.

Female Muslim slaves and why so little is known

Unfortunately, fewer women's stories have been documented.

Diouf has attempted to piece together what their lives might have looked like by searching historical records, including runaway notices for Muslim-sounding names, such as Fatu, Jenaba and Safiyata.

Diouf found that women were essential in preserving the Islamic identity of their people, even if their stories did not garner the same attention as some of the learned enslaved men whose stories we highlight here. They kept their Muslim-sounding names when possible. They were also charitable, giving to others what little they had, and did their best to share their Islamic faith and practices with their children.

Today, Muslim Americans hail from all parts of the globe. The largest demographic of Muslims in the U.S., almost 30%, consists of African Americans, some of whom trace their roots to these enslaved African Muslims.

Turning to America's early history highlights the long-standing presence of Muslims in America, many of whom helped build the nation and continue to do so today.

19TH-CENTURY DIARY

Continued from page 6

had never visited, commanding postmasters to pass along her work to all Arnolds and Plummers. Many of her descendants saved these valuable printings and affectionately referred to them as "The Book."

"A huge project for formerly enslaved people and, still, for descendants of formerly enslaved people today is reunification," says Sieck. "And so, part of what this book does is to connect—or reconnect—people."

The writings of Plummer and his daughter have become valuable historical accounts. During a 2003 interview with the Washington Post, Tompkins-Davis said that Plummer's diary introduced her "to a wonderful world of relationships that I wouldn't have been privy to if not for these extraordinary people who realized that writing things down would be so important for the next generations."

Jennifer Morris, an archivist at the Anacostia Community Museum, says that the institution recognized the importance in "preserving that story." "That's kind of what we are known for," she explains, "looking at those undiscovered stories."

When the museum received the diary, "it was extremely fragile and in vulnerable condition," Morris says. "The binding was broken in several parts, with detached covers."

With support from the Smithsonian Libraries and Archives, the museum successfully preserved Plummer's journal, not only fixing its physical structure but also setting it in the proper page order.

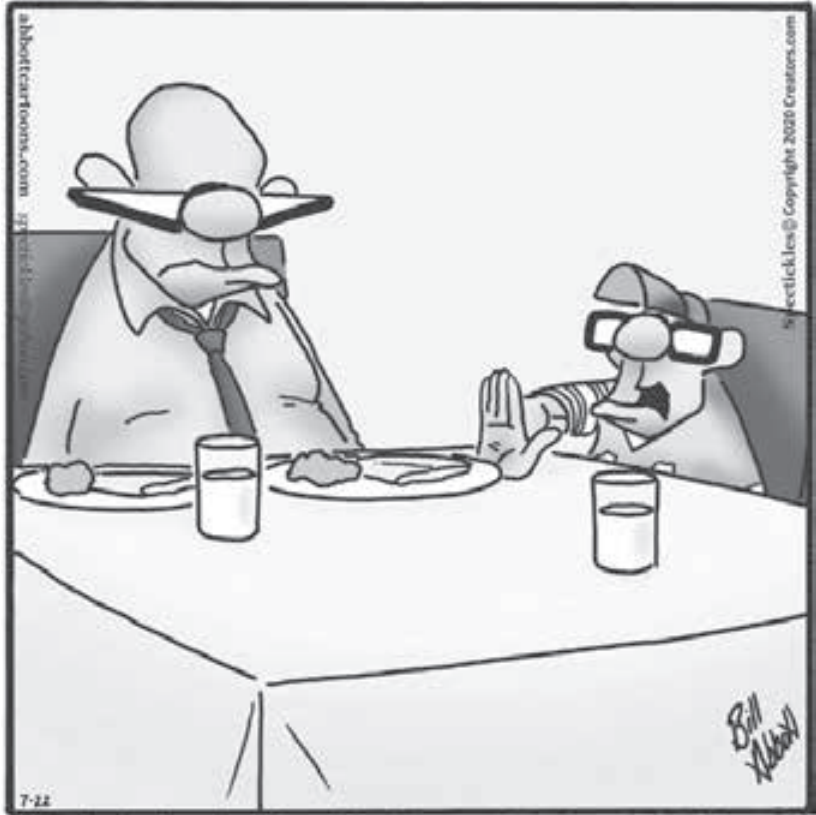
"We want visitors to know that everyone can make history," says Sieck. "We can all participate in making history, and it can be as simple as keeping a diary like Adam Francis Plummer did."



Now What? Pivoting After HUB

Due to sudden structural and budget shifts at the state level, the traditional North Carolina HUB certification pathway has drastically changed. For small, minority-, and women-owned businesses looking to grow through government contracting, the immediate question is: Now what?

On last Thursday morning, business owners and procurement professionals gathered on the campus of Wake Tech Morrisville for a Procurement Strategy Session to discuss recent changes to North Carolina's HUB certification process. Attendees learned about alternative procurement opportunities, regional resources, and strategies to help small, minority-, and women-owned businesses remain competitive in securing government contracts.



"Fish is brain food? Here, Dad, you'd better have mine, too."

Classifieds

WANTED WBE, MBE & DBE BIDS

for the following job:

Town of Winterville
Winterville-Powell Bill Paving

Project No: 2853-BE Pitt Co. Bid Date: July 28th

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.

FORECLOSURE

NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY

Special Proceedings No.
25SP0001105-310

Substitute Trustee: Philip A. Glass
NOTICE OF FORECLOSURE SALE

Date of Sale: July 15, 2026

Time of Sale: 2:30 p.m.

Place of Sale: Durham County
Courthouse

Description of Property: See
Attached Description

Record Owners: Jamilah Simon

Address of Property:

713 Quiet Woods Place
Durham, NC 27712

Deed of Trust:

Book : 9450 Page: 935

Dated: September 2, 2021

Grantors: Jamilah Simon, an
unmarried person

Original Beneficiary: State
Employees' Credit Union
CONDITIONS OF SALE:

This sale is made subject to all unpaid taxes and superior liens or encumbrances of record and assessments, if any, against the said property, and any recorded leases. This sale is also subject to any applicable county land transfer tax, and the successful third party bidder shall be required to make payment for any such county land transfer tax. It is the intent of the holder of the above Deed of Trust that the execution, delivery and recordation of a Trustee Deed to the holder as high bidder shall not merge with any superior Deeds of Trust held by the holder of the above Deed of Trust, and that the holder of said superior Deed of Trust shall continue to enjoy all rights and remedies set forth in said superior Deed of Trust, including the right to foreclose either by judicial action or under power of sale contained in the superior Deed of Trust.

The property to be offered pursuant to this Notice of Sale is being offered for sale "AS IS, WHERE IS." THERE ARE NO REPRESENTATIONS OR WARRANTIES relating to the title or to any physical, environmental, health or safety conditions existing in, on, at or relating to the property being offered for sale, and any and all responsibilities or liabilities arising out of or in any way relating to any such condition are expressly disclaimed.

A cash deposit of 5% of the purchase price will be required at the time of the sale. Remote bidding will not be accepted pursuant to North Carolina General Statutes Section 45-21.25 (a). Credit bids on behalf of the Noteholder will be accepted. Any successful bidder shall be required

to tender the full balance of the purchase price so bid in cash or certified check at the time the Substitute Trustee tenders to him a deed for the property or attempts to tender such deed, and should said successful bidder fail to pay the full balance purchase price so bid at that time, he shall remain liable on his bid as provided for in North Carolina General Statutes Section 45-21.30 (d) and (e). This sale will be held open ten (10) days for upset bids as required by law.

Residential real property with less than 15 rental units, including single-family residential real property: an order for possession of the property may be issued pursuant to G.S. 45-21.29 in favor of the purchaser and against the party or parties in possession by the clerk of superior court of the county in which the property is sold. Any person who occupies the property pursuant to a rental agreement entered into or renewed on or after October 1, 2007, may, after receiving notice of sale, terminate the rental agreement by providing written notice of termination to the landlord, to be effective on a date stated in the notice that is at least 10 days, but not more than 90 days, after the sale date contained in the notice of sale, provided that the mortgagor has not cured the default at the time the tenant provides the notice of termination. Upon termination of a rental agreement, the tenant is liable for rent due under the rental agreement prorated to the effective date of the termination.

Dated: 5/7/2026

Philip A. Glass, Substitute Trustee
Nodell, Glass & Haskell, L.L.P.

Exhibit A

BEING ALL OF LOT 6, BLOCK HB, THE TOWNES AT COUNTY CLUB HEIGHTS, ACCORDING TO THE PLAT OF SURVEY BY LINDA D. EDMUNDSON, P.L.S., ENTITLED, "PLAT OF SURVEY, THE TOWNES AT COUNTRY CLUB HEIGHTS," DATED DECEMBER 18, 2003 AND RECORDED IN PLAT BOOK 160, PAGE 257 OF THE DURHAM COUNTY REGISTRY, TO WHICH REFERENCE IS HEREBY MADE FOR A MORE PARTICULAR DESCRIPTION.

Subject to easements, restrictions and rights of way of record, and utility lines and rights of way in existence over, under or upon the above-described property.

PIN: 0804-64-7971

Property Address:

713 Quiet Woods Place,
Durham, NC 27712

July 16, 2026 and July 23, 2026

Submit your bid,
job and recruitment
advertising to
ads@caro.news

Classifieds

BAHAMA COUNTY

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
BAHAMA COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
Having qualified as Executor of the Estate of GWENDOLYN JEAN JUSTICE PERRY, deceased, late of the County of Bahama, North Carolina, this is to notify all persons, firms, and corporations having claims against the estate of said deceased to present them to the undersigned on or before October 23, 2026 or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery.
All persons indebted to the estate will please make immediate payment to the undersigned.
William J. Hopkins, Executor of the Estate of Gwendolyn Jean Justice Perry
P.O Box 3814
Chester, Virginia 23831
7/23, 7/30, 8/6, and 8/13/2026

CHATHAM COUNTY

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
CHATHAM COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
In the General Court of Justice,
Superior Court Division
Before the Clerk
File No.: 26E000387-180
THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 29th day of June, 2026, as Administrator of the Estate of MAUREEN S. O'DELL A/K/A MAUREEN ELIZABETH O'DELL, Deceased, of Chatham 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 2nd day of October, 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 2nd day of July, 2026.
Kathleen O'Connor, Administrator
c/o Ethan C. Timmins
Patrick Law, PLLC
3805 University Drive, Suite A
Durham, NC 27707
7/2, 7/9, 7/16, and 7/23/2026

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.: 26E000683-310
THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 13th day of April, 2026, as ADMINISTRATOR of the Estate of CHRISTY NICOLE REEVES, 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 23rd day of October, 2026, or this Notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to said Estate will please make immediate payment to the undersigned.
This, the 23rd day of July, 2026.
Pearl Bishop Reeves, Administrator
613 Holyle St.
Durham, NC 27703
7/23, 7/30, 8/6, and 8/13/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
In the General Court of Justice,
Superior Court Division
Before the Clerk
File No.: 26E000878-310
THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 16th day of July, 2026, as ADMINISTRATOR of the Estate of LUCY B. MCNEAL, 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 23rd day of October, 2026, or this Notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to said Estate will please make immediate payment to the undersigned.
This, the 23rd day of July, 2026.
Angela C. McNeal, Administrator
105 Kindlewood Drive
Durham, NC 27703
7/23, 7/30, 8/6, and 8/13/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
In the General Court of Justice,

Superior Court Division
Before the Clerk
File No.: 26E000876-310
THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 16th day of July, 2026, as EXECUTOR of the Estate of ALICE RUTH GARRETT, 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 23rd day of October, 2026, or this Notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to said Estate will please make immediate payment to the undersigned.
This, the 23rd day of July, 2026.
Dianne Ruth Garrett, Executor
3809 Ashley Cir.
Wilmington, NC 28403
7/23, 7/30, 8/6, and 8/13/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
COUNTY OF DURHAM
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 17th day of July, 2026, as Executor of the Estate of SUSAN BETH SPITZER, Deceased, of Durham County, North Carolina, does hereby notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against said Estate to exhibit them to the undersigned on or before the 24th day of October 2026, or this Notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to said Estate will please make immediate payment to the undersigned.
This, the 23rd day of July, 2026.
MADELINE SELTMAN, EXECUTOR
ESTATE OF SUSAN BETH SPITZER
c/o Jennifer Dalman, Attorney
Walker Lambe, PLLC
240 Leigh Farm Rd, Ste 100
Durham, North Carolina 27707
7/23, 7/30, 8/6, and 8/13/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
In the General Court of Justice,
Superior Court Division
Before the Clerk
File No.: 26E000859-310
THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 14th day of July, 2026, as Executor of the Estate of EDITH G. WRIGHT, 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 23rd day of October, 2026, or this Notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to said Estate will please make immediate payment to the undersigned.
This, the 23rd day of July, 2026.
Shirley Rhodes-Anderson, Executor
1 Christopher Court
Durham, NC 27704
7/23, 7/30, 8/6, and 8/13/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
In the General Court of Justice,
Superior Court Division
Before the Clerk
File No.: 26E000849-310
THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 13th day of July, 2026, as Executor of the Estate of MILO AGNES MCSHANE, 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 23rd day of October, 2026, or this Notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to said Estate will please make immediate payment to the undersigned.
This, the 23rd day of July, 2026.
Brian M. McShane, Executor
1298 Lakeview Dr.
Rochester Hills, MI 48306
7/23, 7/30, 8/6, and 8/13/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
File No: 26E000478-310
Having qualified as Administrator of the Estate of LINDA KING WATKINS, deceased, of 111 Hidden Springs Drive, Durham, NC 27703, 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 October 23, 2026, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery.
All persons, firms, and corporations indebted to the said estate will please make immediate payment to the undersigned.
This, the 23rd day of July, 2026.
Nicole Kubinsky, Administrator of the Linda King Watkins
c/o N. Vail Gardner, Esq.
Vail Gardner Law, PLLC
732 9th Street #621
Durham, NC 27705

7/23, 7/30, 8/6, and 8/13/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
File No: 26E000719-310
Having qualified as Administrator of the Estate of KENNETH ADAMS, deceased, of 280 South Mangum Street, Suite 130, 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 October 24, 2026, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery.
All persons, firms, and corporations indebted to the said estate will please make immediate payment to the undersigned.
This the 23rd day of July, 2026.
Jeffrey L. Austin, Administrator of the Estate of Kenneth Adams
c/o Law Office of Jeffrey L. Austin, PLLC
500 Westover Dr. #32043
Sanford, NC 27330
7/23, 7/30, 8/6, and 8/13/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
In the General Court of Justice,
Superior Court Division
Before the Clerk
File No.: 25E000357-310
THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 19th day of March, 2025, as Administrator of the Estate of MARIA TERESA TZOUMAS, 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 23rd day of October, 2026, or this Notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to said Estate will please make immediate payment to the undersigned.
This, the 23rd day of July, 2026.
Ignacio Tzoumas, Administrator
116 Millbrae Ln.
Chapel Hill, NC 27514
7/23, 7/30, 8/6, and 8/13/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
In the General Court of Justice,
Superior Court Division
Before the Clerk
File No.: 26E000813-310
THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 13th day of July, 2026, as Executor of the Estate of VIRGINIA BATTS CHORLEY, 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 23rd day of October, 2026, or this Notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to said Estate will please make immediate payment to the undersigned.
This, the 23rd day of July, 2026.
Kevin Scott Chorley, Executor
c/o Richard F. Prentis, Jr.
4 Consultant Pl.
Durham, NC 27707
7/23, 7/30, 8/6, and 8/13/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
Having qualified as Executor for the Estate of the late CATHERINE M. REYNOLDS of Durham County, North Carolina, the undersigned does hereby notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against the estate of said decedent to present them, in writing, to the undersigned at c/o Anne J. Randall, Kohut, Adams & Randall, P.A., P.O. Box 269, Wilmington, North Carolina 28402, on or before the 16th day of October 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 settlement with the undersigned.
This the 16th day of July, 2026.
Elizabeth Christina Reynolds, Executor of the Estate of Catherine M. Reynolds
Anne J. Randall
Kohut, Adams & Randall, P.A.
513 Market Street
Wilmington, NC 28401
PO Box 269
Wilmington, NC 28402
7/16, 7/23, 7/30, and 8/6/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
In the General Court of Justice,
Superior Court Division
Before the Clerk
File No.: 26E000288-310
THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 11th day of March, 2026, as Administrator of the Estate of CAROLYN MCCOY, 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 16th day of October, 2026, or this Notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to said Estate will please make immediate payment to the undersigned.
This, the 16th day of July, 2026.
Ronald McCoy, Administrator
518 Cecil St.
Durham, NC 27707
7/16, 7/23, 7/30, and 8/6/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
In the General Court of Justice,
Superior Court Division
Before the Clerk
File No.: 26E000799-310
THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 2nd day of July, 2026, as Administrator of the Estate of WILMER L. JOHNSON, JR., Deceased, of Durham County, North Carolina, does hereby notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against said Estate to exhibit them to the undersigned on or before the 16th day of October, 2026, or this Notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to said Estate will please make immediate payment to the undersigned.
This, the 16th day of July, 2026.
Ni-Keya Sharee Wright
Administrator
1309 Shiley Dr.
Durham, NC 27704
7/16, 7/23, 7/30, and 8/6/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
ALL PERSONS, firms, and corporations having claims against JACQUELINE LEE CROSS, deceased, of Durham County, N.C., are notified to exhibit the same to the undersigned on or before October 16, 2026, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of recovery. Debtors of the decedent are asked to make immediate payment. This the 16th of July, 2026. Miosha Lavette Cross, Administrator of the Estate of Jacqueline Lee Cross, c/o Amanda Honea, Attorney, 1255 Crescent Green, Suite 200, Cary, NC 27518.
7/16, 7/23, 7/30, and 8/6/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
File No.: 26E000718-310
Having qualified as Executrix of the Estate of William Ronald White, deceased, this is to notify all persons, firms, and corporations having claims against the Estate of William Ronald White to present them to the undersigned on or before the 9th day of October, 2026, or this Notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons, firms, and corporations indebted to said Estate, please make immediate payment.
This, the 9th day of July, 2026.
Charles B. White, Executor
c/o John W. Perry
Attorney for the Estate of William Ronald White
Post Office Drawer 2051
Durham, North Carolina 27702
Telephone: (919) 683-8685
7/9, 7/16, 7/23, and 7/30/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
In the General Court of Justice,
Superior Court Division
Before the Clerk
File No.: 26E000752-310
THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 30th day of June, 2026, as Executor of the Estate of LINDA LOUISE STONE, Deceased, of Durham County, North Carolina, does hereby notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against said Estate to exhibit them to the undersigned on or before the 9th day of October, 2026, or this Notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to said Estate will please make immediate payment to the undersigned.
This, the 9th day of July, 2026.
Leonard William Cheatham III, Executor
c/o Law Office of Anne Page Watson
3200 Croasdaile Drive Ste 403
Durham, NC 27705
7/9, 7/16, 7/23, and 7/30/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
In the General Court of Justice,
Superior Court Division
Before the Clerk
File No.: 26E000751-310
THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 30th day of June, 2026, as Executor of the Estate of MILDRED HAMBRIGHT TILLEY A/K/A MILLIE HAMBRIGHT TILLEY, Deceased, of Durham County, North Carolina, does hereby notify all persons, firms and corporations

having claims against said Estate to exhibit them to the undersigned on or before the 9th day of October, 2026, or this Notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to said Estate will please make immediate payment to the undersigned.
This, the 9th day of July, 2026.
Byran Tyson Ballard, Executor
c/o Law Office of Anne Page Watson
3200 Croasdaile Drive Ste 403
Durham, NC 27705
7/9, 7/16, 7/23, and 7/30/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
Having qualified as the Personal Representative of the Estate of MARILYN ADAMS DIEFENDERFER a/k/a MARILYN LOUISE DIEFENDERFER, late of Durham County, North Carolina, the undersigned does hereby notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against the estate of said decedent to exhibit them to the undersigned in care of the attorney for the estate, Sonya S. Linton, Magnolia Legal, 3001 Academy Rd., Sute 120, Durham, NC 27707, on or before the 9th day of October, 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.
Tracy Lyn Diefenderfer
Personal Representative
File #: 26E000717-310
Attorney for Estate:
Sonya S. Linton
Magnolia Legal
3001 Academy Rd., Sute 120
Durham, NC 27707
7/9, 7/16, 7/23, and 7/30/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
File No: 26E000509-310
Having qualified as Administrator of the Estate of HAROLD ROBERTS, deceased, of 280 South Mangum Street, 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 October 10, 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 9th day of July, 2026.
Jeffrey L. Austin
Public Administrator of the Estate of Harold Roberts
Law Office of Jeffrey L. Austin, PLLC
500 Westover Dr. #32043
Sanford, NC 27330
7/9, 7/16, 7/23, and 7/30/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
File No.: 26E000330-310
Having qualified as Executrix of the Estate of Gussie Thompson, deceased, this is to notify all persons, firms, and corporations having claims against the Estate of Gussie Thompson to present them to the undersigned on or before the 9th day of October, 2026, or this Notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons, firms, and corporations indebted to said Estate, please make immediate payment.
This, the 9th day of July, 2026.
Alice Goldston Farrar, Executor
c/o John W. Perry
Attorney for the Estate of Gussie Thompson
Post Office Drawer 2051
Durham, North Carolina 27702
Telephone: (919) 683-8685
7/9, 7/16, 7/23, and 7/30/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
In the General Court of Justice,
Superior Court Division
Before the Clerk
File No.: 26E000753-310
THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 29th day of June, 2026, as Executor of the Estate of NANCYE MITCHAM COBB, Deceased, of Durham County, North Carolina, does hereby notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against said Estate to exhibit them to the undersigned on or before the 9th day of October, 2026, or this Notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to said Estate will please make immediate payment to the undersigned.
This, the 9th day of July, 2026.
Andrea Melenda Cobb, Executor
c/o Bagwell Holt Smith P.A.
111 Cloister Court, Suite 200
Chapel Hill, NC 27514
7/9, 7/16, 7/23, and 7/30/2026

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
In the General Court of Justice,
Superior Court Division
Before the Clerk
File No.: 25E001332-310
THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 16th day of October, 2025, as Executor of the Estate of HELEN W. HUDSON, 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 2nd day of October, 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 2nd day of July, 2026.
Jilliene Joyner, Executor
10 Peridot Place
Durham, NC 27703
7/2, 7/9, 7/16, and 7/23/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
COUNTY OF DURHAM
NOTICE OF SERVICE OF PROCESS BY PUBLICATION
In The General Court Of Justice
Superior Court Division
Before The Clerk
Resolution Capital Group vs. Margaret D. Young, et al.
To Ingrid Bullock:
Take notice that a pleading seeking relief against you has been filed in the above-entitled action. The nature of the relief being sought against you is as follows: Petition to Partition or Sell Property in Lieu of Partition.
You are required to make such defense to such pleading not later than August 18, 2026 and upon your failure to do so the party seeking service against you will apply to the court for the relief sought.
This the 9th day of July, 2026.
Daron D. Satterfield
Satterfield Law, PLLC
307 Meadowlands Drive, Suite 101
Hillsborough, NC 27278
7/9, 7/16, and 7/23/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
File No.: 26E000257-310
All persons, firms, and corporations having claims against RUDOLPH ANTHONY TEMPESTA, deceased of Durham County, are hereby notified to present them to Alexander B. Tempesta, Administrator of the decedent's estate, on or before October 2, 2026, in care of the undersigned Attorney at their address, 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 above Administrator, Alexander B. Tempesta, c/o Crystal Richardson, The Law Office of Crystal M. Richardson PLLC, 3980 Premier Drive, Suite 110, High Point, NC 27265. This, the 2nd day of July, 2026.
7/2, 7/9, 7/16, and 7/23/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
Having qualified as Administrator of the Estate of CAROLYN ANN KEITH, late of Durham County, North Carolina, the undersigned does hereby notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against the estate of said decedent to present them to the undersigned attorney for the estate on or before October 2, 2026, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons, firms and corporations indebted to the said estate are requested to make immediate payment to the undersigned.
This the 2nd day of July, 2026.
Kimberly J. Bass
Administrator
Adam G. Kerr
Kerr Law, PLLC
PO Box 10941
Greensboro, NC 27404
Telephone: (336) 808-5028
Fax: (336) 464-2819
7/2, 7/9, 7/16, and 7/23/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
File No.: 26E000754-310
THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 30th day of June, 2026, as Executor of the ESTATE OF GERALD DEVON ARTIS, 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 5th of October, 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.

DURHAM COUNTY

This, the 2nd day of July, 2026. SHEREESE BANKS VICK FKA AMANDA BANKS, EXECUTOR ESTATE OF GERALD DEVON ARTIS c/o Jennifer Dalman, Attorney Walker Lambe, PLLC Post Office Box 51549 Durham, North Carolina 27717 7/2, 7/9, 7/16, and 7/23/2026

NASH COUNTY

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA NASH COUNTY NOTICE OF SERVICE OF PROCESS BY PUBLICATION In The General Court Of Justice District Court Division File No. 26CV002374-630 EDITH ELIZABETH BULLOCK, Plaintiff, v. MICHAEL ANTHONY BULLOCK, Defendant. TO: MICHAEL ANTHONY BULLOCK 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 an Absolute Divorce. Plaintiff seeks a Judgment of Absolute Divorce based upon the parties having lived separate and apart for more than one year pursuant to N.C.G.S. § 50-6. Plaintiff also requests to resume the use of her maiden name, Bailey, and for such other and further relief as the Court deems just and proper.

You are required to make defense to such pleading no later than forty (40) days after the first publication of this Notice. Upon your failure to do so, the Plaintiff will apply to the Court for the relief sought. This the 23rd day of July, 2026. Edith Bailey Bullock, Plaintiff 6572 Pine Street Bailey, NC 27807 7/23, 7/30, and 8/6/2026 STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA NASH COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS Having qualified as the Personal Representative of the Estate of SHARONNE TINETTE MORGAN, late of Nash County, North Carolina, the undersigned does hereby notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against the estate of said decedent to exhibit them to the undersigned in care of the attorney for the estate, Margaret Davis, Magnolia Legal, 3001 Academy Rd., Sute 120, Durham, NC 27707, on or before the 2nd day of October, 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. Shayna D. Jamison Personal Representative File #: 25E000233-630 Attorney for Estate: Sonya S. Linton/Margaret Davis Magnolia Legal 3001 Academy Rd., Sute 120 Durham, NC 27707 7/2, 7/9, 7/16, and 7/23/2026

ORANGE COUNTY

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA ORANGE COUNTY NOTICE TO CREDITORS In The General Court of Justice, Superior Court Division Before the Clerk File No.: 26E000248-670 THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 2nd day of July, 2026, as Executor of the Estate of FRANCES HELMS LOWDER, Deceased, of Orange 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 16th day of October, 2026, or this Notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to said Estate will please make immediate payment to the undersigned. This, the 16th day of July, 2026. Lori L. Hoopes, Executor c/o Averett Family Law 101 Conner Drive, Suite 402 Chapel Hill, NC 27514 7/16, 7/23, 7/30, and 8/6/2026 STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA, ORANGE COUNTY NOTICE TO CREDITORS Having qualified as the Personal Representative of the Estate of JOHN PETER STRECK, late of Durham County, North Carolina, the undersigned does hereby notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against the estate of said decedent to exhibit them to the undersigned in care of the attorney for the estate, Margaret Davis, Magnolia Legal, 3001 Academy Rd., Sute 120, Durham, NC 27707, on or before the 9th day

of October, 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. Jessica Streck Ortolano Personal Representative File #: 26E000747-310 Attorney for Estate: Margaret Davis Magnolia Legal 3001 Academy Rd., Sute 120 Durham, NC 27707 7/9, 7/16, 7/23, and 7/30/2026

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA, ORANGE COUNTY NOTICE OF SERVICE OF PROCESS BY PUBLICATION In the District Court Division File No. 26CV000038-670, Galvez v. Lopez To: SAUL TOHALA LOPEZ Take notice that a pleading seeking relief against you has been filed in the above-entitled action. The nature of the relief being sought is for child custody. You are required to make a defense to such pleading no later than August 18, 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, ALONDRA JIMENEZ GALVEZ, will apply to the court for the relief sought. This, the 9th day of July, 2026. Yvonne Armendaráz, Esq. Attorney for Plaintiff Armendaráz Law Office, PLLC 6110 Lake Wheeler Road Raleigh, NC 27603 Office: (919) 656-1524 Yvonne@armendarizlaw.com 7/9, 7/16, and 7/23/2026

WAKE COUNTY

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA WAKE COUNTY NOTICE TO CREDITORS In The General Court of Justice, Superior Court Division Before the Clerk File No.: 26E000775-910 THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 11th day of June, 2026, as Administrator of the Estate of WILLIAM MICHAEL REESE, SR., Deceased, of Wake County, North Carolina, does hereby notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against said Estate to exhibit them to the undersigned on or before the 23rd day of October, 2026, or this Notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to said Estate will please make immediate payment to the undersigned. This, the 23rd day of July, 2026. Deborah Williams-Reese, Administrator c/o Monks Law Firm, Steve Monks, attorney Monks Law Firm 6613 Speight Circle Raleigh, NC 27616 7/23, 7/30, 8/6, and 8/13/2026 STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA WAKE COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS Having qualified as Administrator of the Estate of MELVIN RESPERS deceased in Wake County, this is to notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against said Estate to present them, duly verified, to the undersigned at 133 Kalmath Dr., Garner, NC 27529 on or before the 23rd day of October 2026, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to said Estate will please make immediate settlement with the undersigned. This is the 23rd. day of July 2026. Shondell Resperts, Administrator 133 Kalmath Dr., Garner, NC 27529 File # 25E002777-910 7/23, 7/30, 8/6, and 8/13/2026 STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA WAKE COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS Having qualified as Personal Representative of the Estate of LINDA GAIL FISH, deceased, late of WAKE County, North Carolina, the undersigned does hereby notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against the estate of said decedent to exhibit them to the undersigned at: 300 PINEHURST AVENUE, SOUTHERN PINES, NORTH CAROLINA 28387, on or before the 21st day of OCTOBER, 2026 or this Notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons, firms and Corporations indebted to the said estate will please make immediate payment to the undersigned. This the 23rd day of July, 2026. STEPHANIE FISH JENKINS PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE FOR THE ESTATE OF LINDA GAIL FISH JAMES H. JENKINS Thigpen and Jenkins, L.L.P. Attorney for Estate 300 Pinehurst Avenue Southern Pines, North Carolina 28387 PUBLICATION DATES: JULY 23, 30, AUGUST 6, & 13, 2026

NOTICE OF SERVICE OF PROCESS BY PUBLICATION SHE'DASIA DURHAM & CEDRIC WILLIAMS IN THE GENERAL COURT OF JUSTICE DISTRICT COURT DIVISION FILE NO: 26-JA-000029-060 STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA COUNTY OF BEAUFORT IN RE: N.A.W., minor child. TO: SHE'DASIA DURHAM & CEDRIC WILLIAMS, mother and father of a African American Male child born on or about February 10, 2026, in Orange County, North Carolina.

TAKE NOTICE that a Juvenile Summons and Petition has been filed for the above-described juvenile, who is alleged to be neglected. You must prepare and file with the Clerk of Superior Court of Beaufort County a written answer to the petition within 30 (THIRTY) days of the first date of publication of this summons, the 23rd day of July 2026. You must also serve a copy of the answer on the petitioner or its attorney. The Beaufort County Department of Social Services has alleged that the above named juvenile is in need of protective services. The Court will conduct a hearing to determine whether the juvenile is in need of protective services. Notice of the date and time and location of the hearing will be mailed to you by the petitioner after you file an answer. If you fail to file an answer, the relief sought will be granted. The petitioner will apply to the court for the relief demanded in the petition. You have a right to be represented by counsel. If you want a lawyer and cannot afford one, the Court will appoint you one. Matthew W. Jackson Attorney for the Petitioner, Beaufort County DSS 632 West Fifth Street Washington, NC 27889 Dates of publication: 07-23-2026, 07-30-2026, & 08-06-2026 STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA IN THE GENERAL COURT OF JUSTICE DISTRICT COURT DIVISION COUNTY OF WAKE FILE NO. 26CV008674-910 LAURISSA S SOILS, Plaintiff, v. KENNETH D POINDEXTER, Defendant.

NOTICE OF SERVICE OF PROCESS BY PUBLICATION TO: KENNETH D POINDEXTER TAKE NOTICE that a pleading seeking relief against you has been filed in the above-entitled action. The nature of the relief being sought is as follows: Complaint for Child Custody regarding the minor child born to the parties. You are required to make defense to such pleading not later than forty (40) days from the date of the first publication of this notice, which is scheduled for September 1, 2026, and upon your failure to do so, the party seeking service against you will apply to the court for the relief sought. This the 23rd day of July, 2026. Laurissa Soils, Plaintiff Pro Se 919-771-6952 laurissa.soils@gmail.com 7/23, 7/30, and 8/6/2026 STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA WAKE COUNTY

NOTICE OF SERVICE OF PROCESS BY PUBLICATION In The General Court Of Justice District Court Division File No. 25CV030363-910 VONGRETCHEN POUGH, Plaintiff, v. TONY SAWANDEE POUGH, Defendant. TO: TONY SAWANDEE POUGH TAKE NOTICE that a pleading seeking relief against you has been filed in the above-entitled action. The nature of the relief being sought is Child Custody and Visitation of the minor child, Touré Xavier Pough, born August 13, 2013. You are required to make defense to such pleading no later than forty (40) days after the first publication of this Notice. Upon your failure to do so, the Plaintiff will apply to the Court for the relief sought. This the 23rd day of July, 2026. Vongretchen Pough, Plaintiff 102 Futrell Way Smithfield, NC 27577 7/23, 7/30, and 8/6/2026 STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA WAKE COUNTY

NOTICE OF SERVICE OF PROCESS BY PUBLICATION In The General Court Of Justice District Court Division File No. 26CVD006916-910 JEANNE MUTESI, Plaintiff, v. SOLOMON MUGIRAKAMARO, Defendant. TO: SOLOMON MUGIRAKAMARO 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 an Absolute Divorce. The Complaint also states that two minor children were born of the marriage: Ella Kaze Mugirakamaro, born March 15, 2010, and Eliana Mugirakamaro, born April 29, 2012. You are required to make defense to such pleading no later than forty

(40) days after the first publication of this notice. Upon your failure to do so, the Plaintiff will apply to the Court for the relief sought.

This the 23rd day of July, 2026. Jeanne Mutesi, Plaintiff 1672 Singing Bird Trail Wake Forest, NC 27587 7/23, 7/30, and 8/6/2026 STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA WAKE COUNTY NOTICE TO CREDITORS In the General Court of Justice, Superior Court Division Before the Clerk File No.: 26E001966-910 THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 30th day of June, 2026, as Executor of the Estate of GERALD HUBERT KNOTT, Deceased, of Wake County, North Carolina, does hereby notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against said Estate to exhibit them to the undersigned on or before the 16th day of October, 2026, or this Notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to said Estate will please make immediate payment to the undersigned.

This, the 16th day of July, 2026. George Andrew Knott, Executor 308 Ortega Rd. Raleigh, NC 27609 7/16, 7/23, 7/30, and 8/6/2026 STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA WAKE COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS In the General Court of Justice, Superior Court Division Before the Clerk File No.: 26E000271-910 THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 23rd day of March, 2026, as Administrator of the Estate of LYNNETTE MOORE, Deceased, of Wake County, North Carolina, does hereby notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against said Estate to exhibit them to the undersigned on or before the 16th day of October, 2026, or this Notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to said Estate will please make immediate payment to the undersigned. This, the 16th day of July, 2026. Shannon Whitney, Administrator 4902 Little Bud Lane Raleigh, NC 27610 7/16, 7/23, 7/30, and 8/6/2026 STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA WAKE COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS In the General Court of Justice, Superior Court Division Before the Clerk File No.: 25E003336-910 THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 11th day of May, 2026, as Administrator of the Estate of DONALD RAY HUGHES, Deceased, of Wake County, North Carolina, does hereby notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against said Estate to exhibit them to the undersigned on or before the 16th day of October, 2026, or this Notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to said Estate will please make immediate payment to the undersigned. This, the 16th day of July, 2026. Destinee Angelica Hughes Administrator 12 Gardenia Drive Savannah, GA 31407 7/16, 7/23, 7/30, and 8/6/2026 STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA WAKE COUNTY

NOTICE OF SERVICE OF PROCESS BY PUBLICATION In The General Court Of Justice District Court Division File No. 26CV012659-910 MARCUS SINGLETON, Plaintiff, v. LATOYA SINGLETON, Defendant. TO: LATOYA SINGLETON 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 Absolute Divorce. You are required to make defense to such pleading not later than forty (40) days after the first date of publication of this notice. Upon your failure to do so, the Plaintiff will apply to the Court for the relief sought. This the 16th day of July, 2026. Marcus Singleton 200 W. Davie Street Raleigh, NC 27601 7/16, 7/23, and 7/30/2026 STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA WAKE COUNTY

NOTICE OF SERVICE OF PROCESS BY PUBLICATION In The General Court Of Justice District Court Division File No. 26CV006916-910 KIERA ROGERS, Plaintiff v. MARGO JACKSON AND UNKNOWN FATHER, Defendants. TO: MARGO JACKSON AND THE UNKNOWN FATHER OF KENDRA JACKSON 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 permanent custody of the minor child, Kendra Jackson. Plaintiff seeks an award of permanent custody and such other relief as the Court deems just and

proper. You are required to make defense to such pleading no later than forty (40) days after the first publication of this notice. Upon your failure to do so, the Plaintiff will apply to the Court for the relief sought. This the 16th day of July, 2026. Kiera Rogers 800 Tree Green Lane Wake Forest, NC 27587 7/16, 7/23, and 7/30/2026

NOTICE OF SERVICE OF PROCESS BY PUBLICATION: NORTH CAROLINA, WAKE COUNTY. In the General Court of Justice, District Court Division, File#26SP000437-910 [Adoption Proceeding]

TO: UNKNOWN FATHER. TAKE NOTICE that a Petition for Adoption was filed on 2/24/26, with the Clerk of Superior Court for Wake County, Raleigh, NC, in the above-referenced special proceeding. The Petition relates to a male child, C.L.B., conceived in or about November 2017 and born to Carrie Lynn Branham on 8/30/2018, in Raleigh, NC. You are required to make defense to such pleading with the Wake County Clerk of Court no later than 8/25/26, which is 40 days from the first publication of this notice to participate in and receive further notice of this proceeding. IN THE EVENT YOU FAIL TO RESPOND, THE CLERK OF SUPERIOR COURT WILL ENTER AN ORDER ALLOWING THE ADOPTION TO PROCEED WITHOUT YOUR CONSENT. Any parental rights that you may have will be terminated upon the entry of the decree of adoption. This, the 16th day of July, 2026. Ashley Treible, Attorney for Petitioners, P.O. Box 58058, Raleigh, NC, 27658, 919-794-7511, ext. 9 7/16, 7/23, and 7/30/2026 STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA WAKE COUNTY

NOTICE OF SERVICE OF PROCESS BY PUBLICATION In The General Court Of Justice District Court Division File No. 25CVD007590-910 JAMES STREET, III, Plaintiff, v. STACI BYRD, Defendant. TO: STACI BYRD 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 permanent custody of the minor child.

You are required to make defense to such pleading not later than forty (40) days after the first date of publication of this notice. Upon your failure to do so, the Plaintiff will apply to the Court for the relief sought.

This the 16th day of July, 2026. James Street III, Plaintiff 623 Pony Club Circle Cary, NC 27519 7/16, 7/23, and 7/30/2026 STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA WAKE COUNTY

NOTICE OF SERVICE OF PROCESS BY PUBLICATION In The General Court Of Justice District Court Division File No. 26CVD006758-910 VONDA M. KITTRELL, Plaintiff v. SHAWN M. SKETERS, Defendant TO: SHAWN M. SKETERS 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 an Absolute Divorce.

You are required to make defense to such pleading not later than forty (40) days after the first date of publication of this notice, and upon your failure to do so, the Plaintiff will apply to the Court for the relief sought.

This the 16th day of July, 2026. Vonda M. Kittrell, Plaintiff 3121 Marclony Way Raleigh, NC 27610 7/16, 7/23, and 7/30/2026 STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA WAKE COUNTY

NOTICE OF SERVICE OF PROCESS BY PUBLICATION In The General Court Of Justice District Court Division File No. 26CV009055-910 YOLANDA M. JACKSON, Plaintiff v. BEYONCA L. JACKSON and UNKNOWN FATHER, Defendants TO: BEYONCA L. JACKSON AND THE UNKNOWN FATHER OF BRAYLON NASIR JACKSON 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 custody of the minor child, Braylon Nasir Jackson. The Plaintiff seeks temporary and permanent custody of the minor child.

You are required to make defense to such pleading not later than forty (40) days after the first date of publication of this notice. Upon your failure to do so, the Plaintiff will apply to the Court for the relief sought. This the 16th day of July, 2026. Yolanda M. Jackson, Plaintiff 2812 Wellington Ridge Loop Cary, NC 27519 (919) 530-7933 7/16, 7/23, and 7/30/2026 STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

WAKE COUNTY NOTICE OF SERVICE OF PROCESS BY PUBLICATION In The General Court Of Justice District Court Division File No. 26CV004395-910 MARINE FEDERAL CREDIT UNION, Plaintiff, v. NICHOLAS Z. PHILLIPS and JEANNETTE L. NTONI, Defendants.

TO: JEANNETTE L. NTONI Take notice that a pleading seeking relief against you has been filed in the above-entitled action. The nature of the relief being sought is as follows: Money owed, which is more completely described in the Complaint for Wake County File Number 26CV004395-910, to collect the money owed.

You are required to make a defense to such pleading no later than August 24, 2026, which is forty (40) days from the first date of publication. Upon your failure to do so, the party seeking service against you will apply to the Court for the relief sought.

This the 16th day of July, 2026. MEWBORN & DESELMs, ATTORNEYS AT LAW By: Brett J. DeSelms Michael Tuton Attorneys for Plaintiff 829 Gum Branch Road, Suite C Jacksonville, NC 28540 Telephone: (910) 455-9755 Publication Dates: July 16, July 23, and July 30, 2026 STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA WAKE COUNTY

NOTICE OF SERVICE OF PROCESS BY PUBLICATION In The General Court Of Justice District Court Division File No. 26CV012733-910 CALETHEA VINSON, Plaintiff v. GENEVA MIZELLE and UNKNOWN FATHER, Defendants TO: GENEVA MIZELLE AND THE UNKNOWN FATHER OF THE MINOR CHILD

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 custody of the minor child.

You are required to make defense to such pleading not later than forty (40) days after the first date of publication of this notice. Upon your failure to do so, the Plaintiff will apply to the Court for the relief sought.

This the 16th day of July, 2026. Calethea Vinson, Plaintiff 3200 Stream Side Rd. Raleigh, NC 27613 7/16, 7/23, and 7/30/2026 STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA WAKE COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS In The General Court of Justice, Superior Court Division Before the Clerk File No.: 25E001436-910 THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 2nd day of July, 2026, as Administrator of the Estate of MARY LOUISE JOHNSON, Deceased, of Wake County, North Carolina, does hereby notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against said Estate to exhibit them to the undersigned on or before the 9th day of October, 2026, or this Notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to said Estate will please make immediate payment to the undersigned. This, the 9th day of July, 2026. Amanda Johnson, Administrator 8939 S Sepulveda Blvd STE 110 Box 27 Los Angeles CA 90045 7/9, 7/16, 7/23, and 7/30/2026 STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA WAKE COUNTY

NOTICE OF SERVICE OF PROCESS BY PUBLICATION In The General Court Of Justice District Court Division File No. 26CVD000677-910 Kiera Rogers, Plaintiff v. Margo Jackson and Unknown Father, Defendants TO 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 custody of the minor child.

You are required to make defense to such pleading not later than forty (40) days after the first date of publication of this notice. Upon your failure to do so, the Plaintiff will apply to the Court for the relief sought. This the 9th day of July, 2026. Kiera Rogers, Plaintiff 800 Tree Green Lane Wake Forest, NC 27587 7/9, 7/16, and 7/23/2026



Ag Grow Culture

Campbell Faces Community Pushback Over River Park Clear-Cutting Plan

By Jheri Hardaway

Staff Writer

Buies Creek, NC - On a webpage dedicated to ending Campbell University's River Park Clear-Cutting Plan, a citizen shared the following: "I remember walking through the woodlands of Campbell University's River Park, a place that seemed to hold history under its canopy. Those 380 acres along the Cape Fear River were where I, along with countless others, learned to read a landscape, connect with nature, and understand what environmental stewardship actually looks like in practice." That living classroom is now under threat. A controversy is brewing at Campbell University as students, alumni, and local residents mount a campaign to halt a proposed plan to clear-cut a significant portion of the university's 380-acre River Park.

The university's proposal involves clear-cutting 226 acres of 40-year-old mixed forest and selectively harvesting remaining bottomland hardwoods along the Cape Fear River. The decision has sparked intense debate, with critics arguing that the environmental and educational cost of the project far out-



weighs the projected financial returns.

For many within the Campbell community, the park is not merely undeveloped land; it is a vital "living classroom." According to advocates, the park is currently utilized by at least ten academic courses, providing a unique environment for hands-on learning in biology, ecology, and environmental science. Environmental concerns are

also mounting. Preservationists warn that the plan could displace 118 documented bird species and destroy decades of ecological maturity that cannot be easily recovered.

"Campbell has always stood for faith, education, and service to community," said a spokesperson for the grassroots coalition #SaveCURiverPark. "This decision reflects none of those values."

The coalition is demanding that Campbell University take immediate steps to protect the site, including:

- Halt all clearing activities: An immediate stop to the clear-cutting and selective harvest plan.
- Collaborate with faculty: Engagement of the university's own environmental science, ecology, biology, and public health faculty to develop a comprehensive, sustainable management plan.
- Preserve access: Reopening the park for use by students and the broader community.
- Explore conservation: A commitment to pursue permanent conservation alternatives, such as land trusts or easements, to preserve the forest's educational and ecological value long-term.

As the movement gains traction, proponents of the park are urging stakeholders to recognize that the land offers more long-term value as an educational model than as a source of short-term timber revenue. Those interested in following the campaign or supporting the petition can find more information at [SaveCURiverPark.org](#) or by following the hashtag #SaveCURiverPark.



J&J Martin Farm Hosted An Educational Farming Community Field Day

MT OLIVE, N.C.—J&J Martin Farm Produce hosted a community-oriented farm field day on July 16. This event blended education and agriculture through hands-on, engaging workshops designed for farmers, teachers, and people looking to expand their knowledge.

"The most exciting thing for us with this field day is having people come to the farm and not only learning how we do things, but seeing it as well," Jeanette Horn, co-owner of J&J Martin Farm Produce, said. "We don't get to do demonstrations all the time, so it'll be great to work with people who want to learn."

As one of the few black-owned Century Farms in the country, the Martin family takes pride in educating the community. J&J Martin Farm Produce has a partnership with NC A&T to grow and market specialty crops, which will be the primary focus of this field day. Various other topics were covered in workshops as well, including canning and crop preservation, social media and marketing for small businesses, tractor and equipment demonstrations, and more.

"Teaching and outreach has become a much bigger portion of what we do," Joyce Bowden, co-owner of J&J Martin Farm Produce, said. "[Teaching] has always been a part of our mission here at J&J and we've really been able to accomplish that in the last few years."

Asian cucumbers, bitter melon, red ripper peas, and Cherokee purple tomatoes are just some of the specialty crops grown at J&J Martin Farms. Many of these items were on display for samples and as part of the included farm-to-table lunch held after the event.

"I really wanted people to focus on our specialty crops during this event," Bowden said. "It's wonderful that we grow unique things and I wanted to highlight that as much as possible and show people the benefits of fresh produce."

Parasitic Infection

— CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

fruits and vegetables are grown that the farmers adhere to good practices for septic systems, septic field placements, as well as using clean surface water for irrigation and pesticides and things like that, because these are all ways that the product could become contaminated at the source.

I think that's an important distinction because restaurants [associated with the outbreak] aren't really doing anything wrong. They're getting product that's contaminated, but they obviously don't know it. You can't see it, and unlike ground beef or chicken, which we cook to kill pathogens, there's generally no "kill step" for fresh fruits and vegetables. Your tomatoes

are served raw, they're sliced up and put on the hamburger. The hamburger is safe because it's been cooked, but the tomato, it's not going to be cooked, right? Or the cilantro, or the parsley, or whatever it is.

That's one of the reasons that it gets really tricky to figure out what specifically is associated with transmitting Cyclospora.

NCHN: When you have a bacterial outbreak, you can do DNA testing and maybe identify the source, but I understand that's harder to do with Cyclospora. Why is that?

Williams: In North Carolina and in most states, we can do whole-genome sequencing for things like

Shiga toxin producing E. coli or salmonella right at our state public health laboratory. But Cyclospora, because it's a parasite, number one, it has a much larger genome, so there's a lot more genetic material to go through and only the CDC does it. Everything needs to be shipped to the CDC, but they can do the molecular analysis and they can identify clusters for us based on genetically relatedness. It just takes longer.

What we've heard from the CDC is that this year, in particular, their lab is overwhelmed, and they're probably going to implement some type of a strategy to prioritize cases for sequencing. But they've not specifically

told us yet. All the states have a weekly call with them [on Mondays] so they might tell us more.

NCHN: Is it correct that the CDC stopped tracking Cyclospora last year?

Williams: It's been reportable in North Carolina for years, and it's been notifiable to the CDC. It's still something we have always reported to the CDC.

The CDC website notes that reporting on Cyclospora by states became optional in 2025. Previously, reporting on Cyclospora had been required since 1997. Multiple media outlets reported last year that the federal agency has cut back on foodborne illness surveillance.

Sports

Former Winston-Salem State Standout Cooke Continues Chasing NBA Dream

By Judaea Ingram

Special To The Carolinian

LAS VEGAS — Every summer, the NBA Summer League becomes a proving ground for players fighting to earn a roster spot and extend their professional careers. For former Winston-Salem State University standout Javonte Cooke, it has become another opportunity to prove that talent from historically Black colleges and universities belongs on basketball's biggest stage.

Cooke, who has continued to build his professional career through the NBA G League after being waived by an NBA team earlier this year, delivered another impressive Summer League performance, reminding scouts and front offices why he remains a player worth watching. His confidence and ability to impact the game on both ends of the floor reflected the determination that has defined his basketball journey since leaving Winston-Salem State.

While many Summer League participants are recent first-round draft



picks, Cooke represents a different path to professional basketball. Undrafted players and G League veterans often use the annual showcase to compete for training camp invitations, two-way contracts and opportunities overseas. For Cooke, every possession is another chance to demonstrate he belongs at the next level.

His recent performance against his former Summer League organization carried added significance.

Facing familiar coaches and decision-makers, Cooke played with poise and confidence, showcasing his athleticism, defensive effort and scoring ability in one of his strongest outings of the summer.

The performance comes after a season filled with challenges and perseverance. Earlier this year, Cooke earned an NBA opportunity following his success in the G League before later being waived. Rather

than allowing the setback to define his career, he returned to the court with the same determination that helped him reach professional basketball in the first place.

That resilience has become one of the defining characteristics of Cooke's career.

Before reaching the professional ranks, Cooke starred at Winston-Salem State University, where he developed into one of the program's top players. His success at the Division II HBCU demonstrated that elite talent can emerge from programs outside the nation's traditional basketball powerhouses.

His continued pursuit of an NBA roster spot also reflects the growing visibility of HBCU athletes in professional basketball. While players from Power Four conferences continue to dominate the NBA Draft, more HBCU standouts are earning opportunities through the NBA G League, Summer League and international competition, proving that professional talent exists across every level of college basketball.



Courage Loses Game, Winning Streak Ends

By Steve Worthy

Photographer

CARY, N.C. (July 11, 2026) — The North Carolina Courage fell 2-0 against the Washington Spirit at First Horizon Stadium at WakeMed Soccer Park. The loss ended the Courage's four-game winning streak, which was the team's longest winning streak since the 2023 season. With the loss, the Courage's record now sits at 6W-4L-3D.

Washington Spirit midfielder Leicy Santos scored the first goal of the match in the 38', assisted by defender Kate Wiesner. Shortly after, Washington forward Trinity Rodman scored the Spirit's second goal, assisted by Tara Rudd, in 45'+3' to close out the first half.

Ashley Sanchez found the back of the net off a free kick in the second half, but the goal was called off by VAR.

Following the match, the Courage inducted Crystal Dunn into the Club's Ring of Honor. Dunn played for the Courage from 2018 through 2020 and was instrumental in helping the team win back-to-back doubles in 2018 and 2019. Additionally, Dunn was a member of the NWSL Best XI in 2018, as she helped the Courage establish one of the greatest seasons in league history.



CARRYING ON THE LEGACY—Black College Golf Coaches Assoc. met in Charlotte, NC this month. Here they stand for a picture in front of the Charlie Sifford statue. Pictured from L to R: Charles Penny II, Antoin Brown, Philip Smith, Jr., William Watkins, Andre Springs, President of the BCGCA, Dr. Jamila Johnson, E. Lee Coble, Bobby Pope, and William Ware.

Congress Is Only Way To Discourage ‘Blatant’ Tampering In College Football

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (AP) — It's been six months since Clemson head coach Dabo Swinney called out Ole Miss for engaging in what he called "blatant" tampering to lure away transfer linebacker Luke Ferrelli.

He has heard nothing back despite providing an alleged timeline, evidence and receipts to the NCAA.

Swinney said Thursday he doesn't regret pointing the finger at Ole Miss head coach Pete Golding and general manager Austin Thomas. And he again pushed for change and accountability on Thursday for what he called "rampant" tampering in college football.

"We're probably gonna need some congressional help for that," Swinney said during the Atlantic Coast Conference's preseason football media days. "There has to be some type of order put in place. The tampering is a problem. So there needs to be consequences or you just say to heck with it, don't worry about it, and let's just call it like it is — the wild, wild West."

Swinney suggested fines, suspen-

sions and even firings should be considered to discourage tampering, which has been a frequent topic of concern in multiple sports.

"There is lots of things that can be put in place," Swinney said. "(Tampering) is rampant because there hasn't been consequences and I don't know there has been much fear of consequences. So you've got to get some order."

Golding defended Ole Miss in April, explaining there are "two sides to every story" referring to Ferrelli, who abruptly transferred to Ole Miss 20 days after beginning classes and team meetings at Clemson in January.

Ferrelli played last season at Cal before originally transferring to Clemson.

In March, Southeastern Conference commissioner Greg Sankey called NCAA language covering tampering rules "archaic," but stopped short of urging the oversight body to halt tampering investigations.

Sankey said the new landscape in college sports calls for the rules lan-

guage to be changed.

ACC Commissioner Jim Phillips on Wednesday urged coaches and administrators to go public with information if they see potential tampering.

Other ACC coaches have expressed support for Swinney for speaking out. "I agree with Dabo," Louisville coach Jeff Brohm said. "He should have been upset. To me that type of tampering shouldn't happen. It goes back to there needs to be more guardrails. There needs to be a system in place where there's consequences for doing things you're not supposed to do, and that's not in college football right now."

Brohm said it's one of the reasons he wants to see the Protect College Sports Act passed in Congress.

The bill that top lawmakers and athletic leaders have described as the best hope to stabilize college sports cleared a key vote in the Senate Commerce Committee in June following weeks of input from schools, conferences and athletes.

It is currently in the Senate for a vote.