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Dedicated to the Spirit
and Service of God

The Carolinian

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When A Day At Work Turns Deadly: North Carolina Confronts the Cost of Workplace Accidents

For thousands of North Carolinians, going to work each morning means stepping into environments where a momentary mistake, equipment failure or unsafe condition can have life-changing consequences. Sometimes, the consequence is death.

That reality came into sharp focus this week in Apex, where a person died in what authorities described as an apparent construction accident at a work site on Humie Olive Road.

The circumstances surrounding the Apex death remain under investigation. But the incident raises a larger question for North Carolina: How safe are the state's workplaces, and what happens to workers and their families when safety fails?

The latest federal statistics show that workplace fatalities remain a significant problem in North Carolina. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 196 fatal work injuries were recorded in North Carolina in 2024, up from 177 in 2023. That represented a 10.7% increase in the number of fatal workplace injuries.

The numbers are not simply statistics. Each represents a worker who did not return home and a family forced to deal with the economic and emotional consequences of a workplace death.

Construction is particularly important when discussing workplace safety because workers can be exposed to falls, heavy equipment,



electrical hazards, collapsing structures, trenches, vehicles and other potentially deadly hazards.

Though we discuss workplace fatalities in terms of statistics, investigations and OSHA violations, the consequences are much more personal. A worker's death can eliminate a family's primary source of income while leaving behind a spouse, children or other dependents.

When a worker dies, government agencies investigate what happened. OSHA may investigate a workplace covered by federal or state occupational-safety requirements. Law enforcement may investigate whether a crime occurred. Employers may

conduct their own investigations.

Those investigations are important, but the more important question is whether the accident could have been prevented in the first place. An equally important questions is, was someone pressured to choose between getting the job done quickly and doing the job safely?

Those of you who follow our digital channel are aware of the concerns that were sent to us about the \$2 billion Johnson & Johnson construction build in Wilson, North Carolina. The Carolinian received photos, written correspondence about the potential dangers of unaddressed safety violations and remarks about

retaliatory actions on the site.

In a copy of the email correspondence that we received, a former safety contractor on that job site wrote about, "hundreds of gallons of Class 2 and Class 4 flammables stored inside the building..." He felt so strongly about the potential for injury that he emailed the global safety department for the company and drove all the way to Washington DC to hand delivery his report to the Department of Labor.

The Carolinian has called the North Carolina Department of Labor and the local OSHA division to get an update on these safety violation allegations. At the time of publication we had not yet received that update.

Workplace accidents also carry an enormous economic cost. For employers, an accident can mean medical expenses, workers' compensation claims, equipment damage, lost productivity, regulatory penalties and increased insurance costs.

For families, the financial impact can be devastating. No compensation system can replace a parent, or a spouse, or a child.

The death at the Apex construction site is still being investigated, and it would be premature to assign blame before investigators determine what happened. But the incident is a reminder that workplace safety cannot be treated as paperwork or a box to check.



The Institute for Artificial Intelligence and Emerging Research (IAIER) at North Carolina Central University (NCCU) now has a home. [Read more on page 7](#)



NCGOP SELECTS BALKCOM AS NC-11 CANDIDATE AFTER US REP. EDWARDS' WITHDRAWAL

The North Carolina Republican Party's 11th Congressional District Executive Committee selected state Rep. Jennifer Balkcom Monday night as a replacement candidate after incumbent U.S. Rep. Chuck Edwards withdrew following a U.S. House Ethics report.

The meeting took place less than a week after Edwards dropped out early Wednesday morning. Last Monday, the U.S. House Ethics Committee recommended his censure for inappropriate conduct toward two young women who worked in his office.

Several Republican state lawmakers from the area initially indicated interest in the seat, but most announced in recent days they'll seek reelection to their current districts instead. State Sens. Kevin Corbin, R-Macon, and Tim Moffitt, R-Henderson, as well as state Rep. Jake Johnson, R-Polk, all issued statements saying they're not interested in the seat.

That left Balkcom, a Republican from Henderson County, as the only state lawmaker in the running. Balkcom has represented District 117 in the state House since 2023. She initially endorsed Moffitt — her predecessor in the 117th — before he decided against running.

In a statement Sunday on social media, Balkcom said she hadn't "planned to go to Washington," but has learned that "when your community needs you, you don't sit on the sidelines; you step up."

Africa Becoming A 'Strategic Hub' For Chinese Expansion



By Jevans Nyabiage

South China Morning Post

For decades, resource-rich African nations operated on a straightforward pit-to-ship model whereby foreign operators extracted raw ore, loaded it onto cargo ships and exported it abroad, leaving producer countries with little to show for it.

Today, nations such as Zimbabwe, Namibia, Mozambique, Ghana and Guinea are dismantling that system — by banning exports of raw materials and enforcing local processing rules. These measures force international mining firms, including Chinese companies, to invest billions of dollars in domestic processing plants.

Now, instead of simply shipping out ore, Chinese firms are building local facilities to transform Zimbabwean lithium into its sulphate or carbonate forms, Guinean bauxite into alumina, and Mozambican graphite into battery materials.

According to Carlos Lopes, a professor at the University of Cape Town's Nelson Mandela School of Public Governance, the shift runs far deeper than resource processing. "China increasingly sees Africa as one of the few remaining large-scale spaces where industrial expansion, urbanisation, infrastructure deployment and consumer growth can still unfold simultaneously over decades," he said.

The continent was becoming less a peripheral supplier and more a strategic hub between fractured economic blocs, Lopes said, with Chinese firms more likely to localise where governments ensured policy clarity, reliable energy, domestic demand and regional scale.

"Bans on unprocessed exports will not necessarily deter investment," he said, adding that the African countries imposing the bans could actually improve investment quality by forcing longer-term commitments.

However, these policies were only successful when states possessed negotiating discipline and institutional coherence, Lopes warned — otherwise, bans risked becoming blunt instruments that fuelled smuggling, policy volatility and elite rent-seeking.

Zhejiang Huayou Cobalt subsidiary Prospect Lithium Zimbabwe began exporting its first consignments of lithium sulphate in April from its US\$400 million plant in Goromonzi, near Harare. This is helping Zimbabwe move higher up the value chain than the raw spodumene and petalite concentrates previously shipped to China ahead of a full export ban next year.

Huayou's plant has an annual capacity of 50,000 tonnes operating at 60 per cent, and is set to reach full capacity by next year. Other Chinese operators to have set up lithium processing facilities include Sinomine Resource Group at the Bikita mine and Chengxin Lithium Group at the Sabi Star mine.

During a tour of the facility last month, Zimbabwean Mines Minister Polite Kambamura hailed the production of lithium sulphate as a landmark for local beneficiation and clean energy storage. "We will rest only after we can produce ... lithium batteries and solar panels," Kambamura told reporters, noting plans to complete a lithium carbonate plant by August 2026.

Aly-Khan Satchu, a sub-Saharan Africa geoeconomic analyst, said it was a "no-brainer" for Chinese firms to set up manufacturing bases in Africa, arguing that in an increasingly adversarial Chinese-US relationship, "indi-

(See **CHINESE EXPANSION**, P. 2)

Business Loan Requirements: Nine Things You Will Need For Success

By Olivia Chen

Yahoo Finance

The best small business loans will require your business to meet a long list of requirements. Although every lender sets its own requirements, understanding basic eligibility criteria and necessary documentation can expedite the application process, saving you time and potentially improving your chances of approval.

1. Credit score

Lenders frequently check your personal credit score and your business credit score when you apply for a business loan. Your chances of approval are much stronger if you're considered a low credit risk — a personal credit score of 720+ or a business credit score between 80 and 100. In 2025, low credit risk borrowers were approved much more frequently than medium and high credit risk borrowers, according to findings from the 2026 Report on Employer Firms.

Banks and credit unions usually require personal credit scores of 670 or higher for business loans — for reference, Bank of America requires a 700 minimum personal credit score and Wells Fargo's requirement is 680. Online lenders, on the other

hand, offer more flexible criteria, providing options for bad credit business loans. Fora Financial, for example, offers business loans to borrowers with credit scores as low as 570.

Your business credit score matters, too

Similar to a personal credit score, your business credit score expresses your business's creditworthiness. Business credit reports may include information on the number of employees, account information, past payment history and amounts owed. The better your business credit score, the more likely your business is to receive a loan and, potentially, at a better interest rate.

2. Annual revenue

While revenue requirements vary by lenders, most will want to ensure your business has enough revenue to handle a new loan. There are options for startups or businesses with unpredictable cashflow, but lenders frequently require at least six figures — annual revenue starting at \$100,000 — before they will consider you for a business loan.

Some alternative options, like merchant cash advances or invoice factoring, will make approval decisions based on either monthly rev-

enue or total sales. While they may be easier to qualify for, they are extremely expensive and risky options that should be used only as a last resort.

3. Time in business

Many lenders require businesses to have been in operation for at least two years before approving a standard business loan. Only 48% of businesses under five years old were approved for financing in 2025, according to the 2026 Report on Employer Firms.

There are some exceptions to the rule. Lenders that specialize in startup loans may only require six months in business. And some specific loan types, like equipment loans, may have no minimum time in business requirements.

4. Industry

Businesses in profitable and stable industries are more likely to appeal to lenders. Conversely, many lenders have a list of industries they won't work with — gambling, adult entertainment and cannabis are frequently ineligible for traditional financing. Research your options, especially if you work in a specialized field, to see what lenders your business qualifies for.

5. Personal financial history

Lenders will often ask to see bank statements and tax returns from each owner to ensure your business can responsibly manage a small business loan. They also may require a personal guarantee, which makes you and any co-owners personally responsible for paying back a loan if your business is unable to pay.

When you apply, strong credit will serve as an asset when the lender reviews your application. If you have poor credit, you may not be able to secure a competitive rate on a business loan. Similarly, if you have previously taken on other debt and failed to repay it, it may be more difficult to secure funding. Many lenders won't approve your loan if you've had a bankruptcy in the last few years. In these cases, having a history of recent, on-time payments for a loan will serve as an asset when the lender reviews your application.

6. Business plan

A business plan explains to potential lenders what your business does, how it makes its money and how it will continue to succeed. Most importantly, a lender will want to know your plans for financing.

Most business plans will include

(See **BUSINESS LOAN**, P. 11)

Environmentalists Continue Pushing Back On Duke Energy's Rate Hike

NC NEWSLINE - Environmental activists and a Democratic state lawmaker are calling on Duke Energy to lower its rate hike request as the North Carolina Utilities Commission reviews its case.

Evidentiary hearings for Duke Energy Progress' rate case start this week before the Utilities Commission, which will determine how much the company can raise residential electric rates beginning next year.

Last week, Duke Energy announced it had reached a settlement with the Utilities Commission's Public Staff, a department that represents consumers in regulatory cases. They agreed to an average increase of 3.4% each year for the next two years for residential users. A standard residential customer consuming 1,000 kilowatt-hours per month could see an increase of about \$9.61 each month starting in 2027.

The utility originally requested a rate increase of 18% over two years, but lowered its request to 9.5% over two years after months of backlash.

"We greatly appreciate the diverse partnership represented in these agreements, from Public Staff to businesses and organizations who all came together with us to reach a more cost-effective path forward for our customers," Duke Energy spokesperson Bill Norton told NC Newsline in an email.



Even though the settlement is well below the utility's original request, environmental advocates say it's still too much.

Dan Crawford, senior director of public affairs at the North Carolina League of Conservation Voters, pointed out Duke Energy shareholders made huge profits in 2025.

"Poor, poor Duke. They're barely scraping by on \$5 billion in profits they made last year, and last week, they announced they're already on track to make even more this year," Crawford said sarcastically. "Clearly, they need this increase."

State leaders have taken action against the proposed rate increases. Last month, Attorney General Jeff Jackson said he wouldn't support the settlement, believing the rates can still come down. Gov. Josh Stein criticized the increase as well.

Crawford said he stands with Jackson in asking the Utilities Commission to deny Duke's request.

"Cut Duke's guaranteed profits. Stop raising our bills to pay for it," Crawford said. "Stand up for the people of North Carolina."

Prices for consumers have been rising across the board over the past

year, according to Terryn Hall, state director for the left-leaning group Climate Power.

Since the Trump Administration passed the "One Big Beautiful Bill" last year, Hall says costs for North Carolina families have gone up by \$2,032 per household through June 30 of this year, according to a recent study from Climate Power and the Center for American Progress Action Fund.

"The reality is North Carolina families cannot afford these rising bills," Hall said. "We say no to rate hikes. Our bills are just too high across the board."

Wake County Democratic Rep. Maria Cervania described the rate increase request as "untenable."

She said residential customers shouldn't be responsible for subsidizing the electricity costs for large and profitable corporations building hyperscale data centers.

Lawmakers passed a budget this year repealing the sales tax exemption on electricity for data centers, but there's still concern over other costs to upgrade the state's power infrastructure to accommodate the growth in demand that large data centers will bring.

"We deserve a modern grid capable of supporting our growing economy, but we also deserve electricity that families can afford," Cervania said.

‘It Just Means More’: Black College Gymnasts Competing

THE GUADIAN - It’s a February Friday night at the University of Georgia, but Stegeman Coliseum is alive.

Situated in the center of the sprawling southern campus in Athens, the towering arena has hosted Georgia Bulldogs basketball, volleyball and gymnastics teams for more than six decades. On 22 February 1964, Stegeman Coliseum hosted its first athletic event and, concurrently, its first win.

Six decades later, on 20 February 2026, then-19-year-old Nyla Aquino salutes the judges before a sold-out crowd of more than 10,000 spectators. The No 6-ranked Bulldogs are in the final stretch of a close battle with Southeastern Conference rival No 4 Florida, and Aquino needs to deliver. Settling into her opening pose, the sophomore nonchalantly smiles, winks at her teammates and begins.

Just three years before Stegeman Coliseum opened its doors, Aquino, a Black student athlete from Boston, would have had to fight to attend UGA. In 1961, the university admitted its first two Black students only after judicial order, and a mob of roughly 1,000 locals and Klan members rioted. Sixty-five years later, Aquino leads Georgia’s charge against Florida during Black History Month.

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later, Aquino leads Georgia’s charge against Florida during Black History Month.

As the crowd rustles, Hollywood Swinging by Kool & The Gang cuts through the noise and Aquino takes off. The NCAA All-American launches into a massive tumbling pass, nearing the rafters and landing with a stick, a smile, and a roar.

Aquino soars through her routine, every move exuding confidence. She leaps to a track by Lil Jon & The East Side Boyz, tumbles to DMX and hits her final pose to Jay-Z. As she salutes the judges, Stegeman erupts. Her teammates swarm Aquino with hugs and the crowd breaks into chants for a “perfect 10”. The arena is living, breathing – alive, all because of Nyla. She scores a 9.925 for the highest mark of the night.

Though Georgia fall just short of upsetting Florida, Aquino’s ovation doesn’t stop in Stegeman. Online, Aquino’s ode to Black culture took flight, collecting more than 3m views on ESPNW’s TikTok.

On the floor, Aquino is one of the University of Georgia’s brightest stars, leading the Bulldogs to a resurgent sixth-place finish at this year’s NCAA championships. But beyond the 60-year-old Coliseum doors and into the south, she faces a starkly different reality.

While Black athletes perform, tumble and win for the Southeastern Conference, state lawmakers fight to redraw district lines and strip diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) programs from the very universities they represent.

The SEC ‘just means more’

CHINESE EXPANSION

Continued from page 1

genising Chinese businesses in Africa and riding the wave of beneficiation is a win-win”.

He added that Chinese companies already had strong local knowledge and a first-mover advantage on the continent.

Similarly, Guinea has moved to curb raw mineral exports and enforce local processing. Beyond the colonial-era Fria plant operated by Russia’s Rusal, major firms have committed to billion-US dollar projects, with three modern alumina refineries under way, including projects by China’s Chalco and State Power Investment Corporation in Boffa, with Singapore’s Winning Consortium present in Dobali.

The Guinean mines minister, Bouna Sylla, said in an interview in Conakry last year that the West African nation was shifting towards domestic processing, calling raw material exports economically unsustainable.

“We are the biggest bauxite producer in the world, but we don’t have a refinery,” Sylla said. The government is enforcing mining agreements to mandate local refining capacity, enabling Guinea to capture by-products like gallium lost during raw exports.

“We import aluminium while we produce the raw material. It’s not normal,” Sylla said.

The ultimate goal is local aluminium production, but success hinges on securing affordable power.

In Mozambique, Jinan Yuxiao Group invested US\$200 million through its subsidiary DH Mining Development to construct a major graphite processing plant in Nipepe, with an annual capacity of 200,000 tonnes. In April, Mozambique’s President Daniel Chapo visited Beijing, where the local processing of minerals was one of the key issues discussed.

A similar model is being replicated in Namibia, a uranium-rich nation whose president visited Beijing last month to court Chinese investment in local processing and value addition. President Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah’s delegation sought China’s support to develop local uranium processing and enrichment capabilities, building on facilities such as the Husab mine, operated by China General Nuclear Power Group.

Linda Calabrese, a senior research fellow at ODI, a London-based global think tank, said Chinese firms co-located processing near African resources because it made economic sense or because they were required to do so.

A second driver, she said, was “neutral hub” or tariff-arbitrage logic, whereby Chinese investment bypassed Western trade barriers. That space is narrowing, according to Calabrese, as the US tightens rules-of-origin tests and applies stricter scrutiny to facilities with significant Chinese ownership – with the European Union moving in a similar direction.

The onus is on African exporters to use this window to build industrial capabilities that attract future manufacturing investment before trade barriers harden further. “The most strategically interesting bet is Chinese investment oriented towards African and other emerging-market demand rather than re-export to rich countries,” Calabrese said.

She added that as intra-African demand scaled up through the African Continental Free Trade Area, “Chinese firms positioning themselves to serve that demand from African bases are making a longer-term bet that is less vulnerable to Western trade policy shifts.”



From Athens to Baton Rouge, the SEC has built something that doesn’t exist anywhere else in women’s college gymnastics: an undeniable culture.

“People who are SEC fans are usually diehard SEC fans,” Aquino reflects. That mentality extends to gymnastics. “You see a lot of loyalty coming from the fans [and] alumni ... no matter what sport they’re originally supporting or coming from, they are going to be diehard for you as well.”

All nine SEC programs rank in the national top 20 for attendance. This March, Arkansas set the all-time SEC attendance record with 15,512 fans. “I love competing at Arkansas,” Aquino tells me. “That energy, that connection, and that community is something that you really only get when you’re competing in the SEC.”

This culture also wins – a lot. Five of the eight teams at the 2026 NCAA championships came from the SEC, and 28 of the sport’s 45 all-time team titles (62%) belong to schools now in the conference. While the Oklahoma Sooners dominate the 21st-century title race, the sport’s winningest program is none other than Georgia.

For national title-contending recruits like Aquino, the choice of program had long been limited to the SEC, UCLA, Utah – or a program with a marginal shot at a national title. While Aquino was heavily courted by UCLA as a teen, the SEC’s southern draw pulled her in. “As I got older and my family was more in tune with the SEC, I knew that the SEC was somewhere that I really wanted to be.”

“There’s so much culture – who doesn’t want to be in the SEC, right?”

Dr Amira Rose Davis, assistant professor and historian at the University of Texas-Austin, understands

the appeal. Her cousin played women’s basketball at LSU, so she witnessed the cultural immersion firsthand. “There is a certain swag in the community ... there’s nothing like being on campus watching their fans turn out.”

She says the SEC’s culture is uniquely fitted to amplify women’s sports. “In SEC spaces, [sports] matter socially in the fabric of those communities in a different way,” Davis says. From gymnastics to basketball, SEC women’s sports draw the crowds and headlines that other conferences don’t.

“You’re merging a kind of inherently southern culture and fandom that draws from a huge cross section of the community.” The SEC doesn’t just “mean more”, to quote the conference’s long-running slogan – its schools “do it different”, Davis adds. However, doing it differently inevitably has drawbacks.

Conditional love
When Aquino’s floor routine went viral, overwhelming support flooded in. The performance to an all-Black musical lineup during Black History Month made waves in online communities. “She represented. Being unapologetically Black during OUR month in a predominantly white setting is so next level,” one user wrote.

Not everyone who showed up to Stegeman – or engaged on TikTok – joined the ovation. While Aquino, a young Black athlete, delivered a winning performance for her Georgia teammates, she also delivered for a demographically mismatched donor base.

“These flagship SEC schools run on boosterism and donated dollars,” Davis says. “Courting booster money means you are dealing with older alumni who might have very strong opinions about if you have hip-hop in

your gymnastics routine.”

While the online support was plentiful, it also offered counters. “75% dancing like we’re in a club. 25% actual gymnastics. I miss the old days when gymnastics was actually an art,” a user complained. Comments from anonymous users criticized Aquino’s choice of music and artistic expression.

On a night where Aquino delivered her team’s top score, her performance still received pushback. Should she or one of her Black teammates make a mistake, the outcome can be far worse. “No matter how well I do, someone’s going to be racist,” she says.

That reality has come to light across the SEC in recent years, as majority-Black athletes and teams deliver winning results for white donors. That dichotomy is contentious. “Anytime you have the demographics of a fanbase not necessarily matching up with the demographics of the athletic laborers, you set yourself up for some of these tensions,” Davis attests.

In 2018, a top Mississippi donor sent photos of Black women on Oxford Square to a former dean. The alum complained that the college town was being “overtaken by the wrong elements”, using derogatory language and arguing the image did not represent the traditional culture of the university or town. “Goddamn, this is literally like being in the Congo jungle,” the donor wrote, per the Mississippi Free Press.

At Texas, alumni threatened to pull funding in 2021 after Longhorn athletes disavowed the Eyes of Texas fight song. According to the Texas Tribune, the song was historically performed at campus minstrel shows and its title was linked to a saying from Robert E Lee.

“My wife and I have given an endowment in excess of \$1 million to athletics. This could very easily be rescinded if things don’t drastically change around here,” one donor wrote to the university. “Has everyone become oblivious of who supports athletics?”

These donors disparage the same athletes they bankroll. The Texas football team, which reached the College Football Playoff in 2023 and 2024, has a majority-Black roster. Of the nine Georgia gymnasts who made the All-SEC team this year, five are Black.

The disappearing scaffolding
While Aquino and Black athletes lead with pride on the floor and field, administrators struggle to offer support as they face mounting sociopolitical roadblocks. Davis has witnessed

the structural collapse. Presently, it feels like the scaffolding is collapsing around her.

In 2023, Texas Governor Greg Abbott signed Senate Bill 17, prohibiting public institutions of higher education from engaging in “specified diversity, equity, and inclusion activities”. In 2025, the Trump administration directed federal agencies to eliminate equity-related grants and DEI offices, pushing the Department of Justice to investigate universities’ diversity programs.

In just the past few years, UT-Austin has lost its Multicultural Engagement Center, the African and African Diaspora Studies department and countless supporting staff and administrative workers.

Full departments, resources, careers: gutted. Davis and her colleagues feel much the same. Also lost are relevant courses, cultural resources and support for the university’s Black athletes. While the courses often attract significant interest from Black students, the instructors’ syllabi face rapidly intensifying scrutiny. “They’re going through [our courses] with a fine-tooth comb,” she attests.

A simple stroll through campus from the Gordon-White Building, home to the Black Studies program, paints a sobering picture. “It feels like two different worlds,” Davis confesses. “It’s hard to walk through this campus and watch our department and other programs and services being taken away while they announce millions of dollars in investment to other corners of campus.”

When you reach Darrell K Royal-Texas Memorial Stadium, the contrast becomes blinding. While Davis and her colleagues face roadblock after roadblock, donors park rows of shiny vehicles to entice recruits. On the other side of town, historically Black Austin neighborhoods become further siloed from the institution at its center.

Though she pushes on, Davis and her colleagues across the nation feel suffocated. At the moment, the light at the end of the tunnel is dim. “It’s hard to imagine support systems ... they’ve been eradicated and I haven’t seen them rebuilt.”

An avid gymnastics supporter, Davis watched with excitement in 2022 as Fisk University in Nashville announced the nation’s first gymnastics program at a historically Black college or university (HBCU). The move made headlines, and two more HBCUs – Talladega College in Alabama and Wilberforce University in Ohio – soon forced programs of their own.

What Could Happen in the Nolan Wells Case

By Jheri Hardaway

Staff Writer

The tragic circumstances surrounding the death of Nolan Wells have sparked intense public outcry and urgent demands for legal accountability. In commentary addressing the investigation, community advocates, including Dr. Umar Johnson, have emphasized that every individual involved, whether directly responsible for

Nolan’s death or active in subsequent attempts to obstruct investigation efforts, must face the full severity of state and federal law.

If justice is served in this case, the legal consequences for those involved will depend on whether an individual participated directly in the act itself or assisted in concealing the crime after the fact. Based on the direct participation and federal hate crime laws, when an act of violence is committed by

multiple individuals or motivated by bias, federal prosecutors have distinct statutory tools to pursue severe penalties against direct perpetrators. Here are several penalties directly tied to the Nolan Wells case:

Matthew Shepard and James Byrd Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act (18 U.S.C. § 249): Under 18 U.S.C. § 249(a)(1), it is a federal offense to willfully cause bodily injury to any person because of their

actual or perceived race, color, religion, or national origin. When such a hate crime results in the victim’s death, or involves kidnapping or an attempt to kill, the statute carries a statutory maximum penalty of imprisonment for any term of years or life.

Emmett Till Antilynching Act (18 U.S.C. § 249 / 18 U.S.C. § 250): Enacted in 2022, this federal statute explicitly criminalizes acts of lynching. Under federal law, if two or more people conspire to commit a bias-motivated hate crime that results in death, severe bodily injury, or kidnapping, the offense is prosecuted as a federal lynching under 18 U.S.C. § 249(a) (5). A conviction carries a maximum penalty of up to 30 years in federal prison, in addition to potential life sentences under underlying homicide or hate crime charges.

Legal exposure extends beyond the primary actors. Individuals who did not participate directly in the fatal violent act but knowingly assisted in concealing evidence, aiding suspects, or misleading law enforcement face criminal liability as accessories:

Mississippi Code § 97-1-5 (Accessory After the Fact): Under Mississippi State Law (Miss. Code Ann. § 97-1-5), any person who conceals, receives, or aids a felon, knowing that the person committed a felony, with the intent to enable them to escape or avoid arrest, trial, conviction, or punishment, is guilty of being an accessory after the fact.

State Penalties for Violent Felonies: Under Mississippi Code Ann. § 97-1-5(1)(a)(i), if the underlying crime is a violent felony for which the maximum punishment is life imprisonment or 20 years or more (such as murder or manslaughter), an accessory after the fact faces up to 20 years in state custody.

If federal and state authorities determine that Nolan Wells’ death involved a coordinated group assault, hate-based motives, or a systematic effort by bystanders to destroy evidence and shield suspects, the criminal exposure ranges from 20-year state sentences for cover-up accomplices to mandatory life imprisonment for primary offenders under federal civil rights laws. Justice for Nolan Wells requires that every party along this chain, from direct participants to those aiding the silence, is held strictly accountable under these statutes. Only time will tell if justice is served.

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NCDOT PUBLIC MEETING: BERYL ROAD
EXTENSION TO ROYAL STREET AND
CROSSING CLOSURE IN WAKE COUNTY

STIP Project P-5736



RALEIGH - The public is invited to attend an informal, open house-style meeting hosted by the N.C. Department of Transportation to view and discuss maps and other information regarding the proposal to extend Beryl Road to Royal Street and close the existing rail crossing at Beryl Road.

The meeting will be held from **5 to 7 p.m. on Thursday, August 27, 2026**, at the **Method Community Center- Pioneer Building** located at **514 Method Road**. People may drop in at any time and ask questions and review project information. There will be no formal presentation.

The project would improve safety for motorists and increase rail transportation efficiency.

Project details, including maps of the proposal, can be found on the NCDOT project webpage <https://publicinput.com/beryl-road-extension>.

Interested parties may also submit comments by emailing beryl-road-extension@publicinput.com, calling 984-205-6615 and entering project code **10125**, or mailing to the address shown below by **September 27, 2026**.

By Mail:

Emily Richards

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Business & Finance

Who Were The Luddites? Their Legacy Is Still Rippling Through Politics, Cultural Commentary And Literature

THE CONVERSATION - American filmmaker George Lucas is one of the latest to indicate he's open to AI in the movie industry.

In a recent interview, the director said resistance to the technology was "very much like sitting here saying: 'Well, I believe the horse and the buggy is really where it's at. These cars, they break down, they need gas, there's all kinds of problems with them and pretty soon they'll be making them into tanks, and then they'll be killing people. It's terrible.'"

The Guardian story was headlined: "George Lucas likens AI sceptics to luddites clinging to horses and carts."

"Luddites" have sometimes stood in for enemies of progress: those destined to be swept aside in the forward march of history.

The label of "neo-Luddism" or "digital Luddite" is also being reclaimed by people concerned about labour conditions, society and democracy in an era of AI expansion twinned with personal profit.

But who exactly were the Luddites? They were a collective reaction to the traumas of the Industrial Revolution, in early industrial England.

Their legacy has been profound, as suggested by both negative and positive polemics related to them in intellectual and cultural commentary, art and literature and popular histories produced as digital technology continues to grow.

When trade unions were illegal

As the new political economy, fuelled by transatlantic slavery and colonial extraction, began to transform work practices in England and introduce new forms of mechanization, skilled artisans and weavers resisted. They sought to protect their livelihoods, their ways of life and

their communities.

Trade unions were illegal and the workers did not have political representation. Co-operative societies did not yet exist and state welfare was a distant dream. The only alternative to acquiescence was what historian Eric Hobsbawm memorably called "collective bargaining by riot."

Food riots, destroying machinery or setting fire to factories were in-your-face ways to get employers and local authorities to pay attention to their legitimate grievances.

When the English cartoonist Charles Williams depicted a veterinarian and a blacksmith violently attacking dandies on bicycles for undermining traditional horse-drawn transportation in 1819, the blacksmith's smashing with a mallet was a clear reference to the spasm of machine-wrecking earlier in the decade.

Williams's caricature came within a few years of the mass outbreak in Britain when the terms Luddism and Luddite became commonplace. Historians agree that the most famous episode of Luddism began in 1811 in Nottinghamshire in the English Midlands.

A group of stocking weavers formed a secret organization, purportedly led by a certain Ned Ludd, a fictitious figure also styled as Captain, General or King Ludd.

In the context of widespread economic misery caused by the war against Napoleon, the weavers blamed new, wide-frame knitting machines for stealing their jobs, reducing their earnings and making a bad situation worse. In targeted attacks, they smashed more than 1,000 of the stocking frames, and the property destruction then spread to the textile weaving and spinning districts of Lancashire and Yorkshire.

Fearing the revolutionary poten-



tial of this wave of violence — and that English plebeians might follow the French example and overthrow the old regime — the government cracked down hard. It sent in 12,000 troops to quell the riots, and members of Parliament voted overwhelmingly to make frame-breaking a hanging offence.

The ruling classes managed to restore order, despite sporadic outbreaks until 1816, punctuating their clampdown with exemplary hangings and sentences of transportation to Australia. Their determination to prevent revolution, protect property and enable unfettered economic expansion was patently clear. So do the Luddites deserve such a bad rap? As a historian who has examined industrial-era English history, along with many others, I say: absolutely not.

The Luddites were not blindly lashing out but sending a message; to some extent at least, that message was heard. Along with the political radicals and the labour campaigners over the course of the 19th cen-

tury, they took part in a prolonged struggle waged for rights, dignity and justice. That struggle partially succeeded, forcing the ruling classes to compromise rather than continuing to rely on brute force.

As historian E.P. Thompson famously put it in his book *The Making of the English Working Class*, the Luddites need to be rescued "from the enormous condescension of posterity."

One of the few aristocrats to express sympathy for the Luddites was the poet Lord Byron. In his maiden speech in the House of Lords, Byron lamented that "absolute want" and "unparalleled distress" had provoked the riots and, rather than compassion or an attempt to remedy wrongs, all the government could propose was "dragoons and executioners."

Fellow poet Percy Bysshe Shelley reacted with similar rage. His 1813 poem *Queen Mab*, a paean to a utopian future, combined an attack on the state, organized religion and the soul-destroying capitalism of the

new machine age.

Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley, wife of Percy and daughter of feminist philosopher Mary Wollstonecraft, was also inspired by Luddism in her writing of the 1818 novel *Frankenstein*. Victor Frankenstein's creation, the Monster, like Ned Ludd, only became violent and destructive when horrendously mistreated.

The message was clear: technological progress was not necessarily in itself evil, but if the outcome was a vicious zero-sum game of winners and losers, then industrial capitalism was deeply inhumane and resistance was inevitable.

These were just the earliest writers who reacted to the Luddites. Notable later novelists tilling the same furrow included Charlotte Brontë and Samuel Butler.

Brontë's 1849 novel *Shirley*, set

in the Yorkshire textile district in 1811-12, combined sympathy for the plight of the workers with a criticism of violence and a call for paternalism from the mill owners.

Butler's 1872 novel *Erewhon*, the ultimate Luddite fantasy, featured a society that outlawed machines and destroyed inventions to prevent them from taking over and enslaving humanity.

Not blindly lashing out

The Luddites may have partly lost the battle in Regency England; the state and the propertied classes may have prevailed.

But it's a mistake to see them as no more than victims crushed by industrialization.

Caricatures of the Luddites as history's losers are simply false. We have not stopped talking about them ever since.

Federal Aid Now Available For Businesses Impacted By Drought

88.5 WFDD - Businesses impacted by the recent drought are now eligible for federal disaster assistance.

The U.S. Small Business Administration will offer low-interest loans beginning March 15, 2027.

Up to \$2 million in assistance will be available to small businesses, private nonprofits, faith-based organizations and small agricultural entities.

Eligible counties in North Carolina include Forsyth, Alleghany, Ashe, Stokes, Surry, Yadkin and Wilkes. In Virginia, loans will be offered to business owners in Carroll, Patrick, and Grayson counties.

Applications are available at sba.gov/disaster or by calling the SBA customer service center. The deadline is March 10.



The Moral Paradox of Extreme Wealth

THE CONVERSATION - In 2026 – up until July – Elon Musk's estimated wealth was growing by somewhere between US\$30 million and \$100 million an hour, making him, at least briefly, the world's first trillionaire. By comparison, the typical American worker earns between \$23 and \$56 an hour.

While Musk's wealth, even in the face of recent losses, is extreme, dramatic disparities have become commonplace. As of 2026, America had nearly 1,000 billionaires, whereas, according to the most recent federal data available, in 2024 roughly 10.6% of the population – or 35.9 million people – lived below the poverty line. The poverty line is the minimum level of income a person or family needs to be able to cover basic living needs, such as food, clothing and shelter.

Given the prevalence of such stark inequality, it would be easy to assume that most people accept it as fair – but they don't. As a psychologist who studies how people navigate moral problems, I suspect that one major challenge to effectively reining in extreme wealth is that doing so forces people to navigate between opposing moral demands.

The disconnect

In 2014, researchers used survey data from more than 55,000 people across 40 countries, asking what top executives and unskilled workers earn, and what they should earn. In the U.S. the average respondent – across income levels, education and political divides – said the ideal pay ratio would be about 7-to-1. At the time it was closer to 350-to-1, meaning that on average a CEO earned 350 times more.

In other words, Americans reported that the ideal was something far more equal. Yet they have generally been unlikely to support high taxation on wealth, redistribution or limits on wealth accumulation – though recent poll data suggests this may be changing.

Scholars have offered different explanations for this disconnect between what people say they want and what they are willing to do about it.

Some argue that people chronically underestimate the scale of inequality – in the 2014 study, Americans underestimated the actual pay ratio at the time as being only 30-to-1. Others argue that the primary driver of the disconnect is people's unwillingness to abandon their beliefs in merit – that wealth is the product of hard work, talent and risk.

Some also point to the fact that people can feel compelled to defend systems as essentially good, even when those systems produce harmful outcomes – a phenomenon known as "system justification." This is in part because of the psychological need to believe in a just world, where good people are rewarded and bad people are punished.

My own research on how people navigate competing moral demands suggests that one potential explanation lies in a critical tension that is generated by morality itself.

Morality's balancing act

Morality is always balancing between two things that pull against each other. On one side, morality is supposed to protect people from harm. When a community comes to see something as unreasonably harmful – drunken driving, child labor, smoking indoors – it moves collectively to prevent that harm, typically by regulating or forbidding the behavior and punishing those who do it.

On the other side, morality is supposed to protect people's personal autonomy and freedom, even when others in their community dislike or disagree with their choices. People have a moral right to make certain decisions for themselves, whether that is choosing a flavor of ice cream or deciding whether to have children.

On any contested issue, these moral demands pull in opposite directions. People must collectively decide whether the harm caused by an action justifies limiting individual freedom – for example, making it illegal to drive a car while impaired by alcohol. At other times, restricting choice might itself do greater harm, such as banning controversial books, rather than leaving people to choose what to read for themselves.

Consider libertarian morality, which leans heavily in the direction of protecting the space of freedom and individual rights. Libertarians defend their right

(See *THE PARADOX OF WEALTH*, P. 4)

The NC Labor Department Recovers Record \$3.7 Million In Unpaid Wages

By Jordan Meadows

Staff Writer

North Carolina Labor Commissioner Luke Farley announced Tuesday morning that his department recovered a record \$3.7 million in unpaid wages for workers over the past year, calling it the Department of Labor's greatest annual impact to date in enforcing the state's wage laws.

Farley announced the Historic Labor Building in Raleigh, where he was joined by Kisha Scotton, administrator of the department's Wage and Hour Bureau and vice chair of the National Wage and Hour Committee.

The recovered wages came from 2,199 substantiated complaints handled by the bureau's eight case analysts and fifteen investigators, with more complex cases routed to investigators for deeper review.

"Most businesses want to comply with the law," Farley said, "but when

workers are denied wages they've earned, we as a department will work on their behalf. Today's historic announcement is a reminder that the NC Department of Labor is committed to protecting workers, protecting responsible job creators, and that a full day's work receives a full day's pay."

Farley said the department's primary goal in wage disputes is not necessarily to fine employers but to correct the error, enforce the terms of the labor agreements in question, and get workers their money—though the department can and does file lawsuits when necessary to secure compensation. He encouraged workers who believe they haven't been paid properly to contact the department directly.

"The best way to get that help is to call us."

Scotton said her bureau tries to intervene before a wage dispute escalates into a formal violation.

"The NC Department of Labor is

here to help," she said. "Workers who believe they have not been paid properly should not assume there's nowhere to turn. The department is there to address issues even before they become violations."

The bureau enforces the North Carolina Wage and Hour Act, which governs unpaid wages, vacation pay, overtime, minimum wage compliance and youth employment protections. Investigators examine payroll deductions and other pay practices to confirm workers' gross wages comply with state law, cross-referencing actual hours worked, job responsibilities and scheduled shifts against compensation records, and rely on a combination of documentation, employer and employee interviews, and state law to determine whether wages were properly paid.

Farley's office said the extent of enforcement action in a given case often depends heavily on the employer's responsiveness once a complaint is filed.

Some US Adults Are Using AI For Financial Guidance But Few Trust It

NEW YORK (AP) — Some U.S. adults are using artificial intelligence for financial guidance, but it's far from the most trusted source of advice, according to a new Gallup survey conducted in partnership with Edward Jones, a financial services firm.

About 1 in 5 Americans who have sought financial advice in the past year turned to AI, the survey found. But among U.S. adults overall, only about 3 in 10 have "a great deal" or "some" confidence in its expertise for managing money, according to the survey, including just 3% who trust AI "a great deal."

The poll, which was conducted in the spring and looked at the views of adults who are at least 21, found a disconnect between the resources Americans trust for financial advice and the ones they actually rely on. About 8 in 10 U.S. adults have at least "some" confidence in financial advisers. But only about one-third of U.S. adults who sought financial advice turned to a professional financial adviser, with far more, 73%, saying they relied on their own internet research.

As the use of AI increases, financial experts say consumers should be cautious about fully trusting these tools. Using AI as a tool at the start of a learning journey and then combining this knowledge with other trusted sources can be the best way to engage with new and traditional



financial guidance tools, said Taha Choukhmane, associate professor at MIT's Sloan School of Management.

"I would encourage people to use AI to explain and define," Choukhmane said. "If you're interested in knowing what the stock market is, what the difference between a mutual fund and an index fund is. Using AI to explain these concepts can be very useful because it can empower people to get the most out of these methods."

Most Americans have sought financial guidance from at least one source in the past year, the survey found. In addition to those who said they used internet research, financial

advisers, or AI, 35% went to a parent, sibling, or relative, while 26% got information from news, media or social media. About 2 in 10 said they turned to a friend or an author, speaker, or influencer, and fewer relied on an employer or retirement plan provider, a robo-advisor or a teacher or professor.

Younger generations are more likely to say they've used AI for financial advice, while older adults are more likely to have turned to a professional financial adviser.

Affordability can often deter younger adults from hiring a financial adviser. While doing research online, asking family and friends and

using AI can have minimal costs, hiring a professional can require a bigger financial commitment. About a quarter of Gen Z and millennial adults who looked for financial advice in the past year went to AI, compared to 16% of Gen Xers and just 7% of baby boomers. But while only 14% of Gen Z adults and 21% of millennials who sought guidance turned to a professional financial adviser, that rose to 34% of Gen X adults and about half, 55%, of baby boomers.

Since AI interacts with specific user prompts, the advice can vary depending on how questions are asked. But asking general questions about personal finance can help people understand complex financial terms. Choukhmane also recommends asking AI to provide references to trusted sources to verify the information provided.

While AI can be utilized for research, some financial experts are skeptical about the legal responsibilities of the technology. Certified financial planners have a legal responsibility to give the most fitting advice while AI tools don't. Ultimately, the decisions a person makes based on AI advice are their responsibility.

"Fiduciary responsibility is very real," said Bobbi Rebell, certified financial planner and founder of Financial Wellness Strategies. "There's no AI that is a fiduciary. It doesn't really know your life; it's not asking you all the questions."

Rocky Mount Leaders Vote To Continue Utility Cutoffs Despite Deaths, Calls For Resignations

NCNewsline— Members of the Rocky Mount City Council voted Monday night against a proposal to halt utility cutoffs after a tense meeting at which angry constituents called for their resignations.

The decision came after a family of three and their dogs were found dead in their mobile home last week, shortly after their electricity was cut off by the city for lack of payment. The family was reportedly using a generator indoors for power, according to relatives.

About 300 other households have also been disconnected, city officials said at the meeting. State lawmakers of both parties said earlier Monday they're looking into that decision.

Rocky Mount resident Dorothy Cook was the first public speaker of many Monday night to criticize the council.

"Enough is enough. Y'all need to stop it. People don't need to die in order to survive here in Rocky Mount," Cook said. "The evil needs to be stopped."

Robert Lane said the current council gets the "historical high honor of being the worst group ever elected" to run the city. "I want to ask for your resignations, each one of you. None of you are above the other. If there's any shame, you should have it in the way you handled our business."

"When you disconnect a human being's electricity in the middle of a deadly heat wave, you are not engaging in administrative enforcement. You are issuing a sentence," said Nehemiah Smith. "When did we start trading an algorithm for common sense? Algorithms don't know what it means to gasp for air in a darkened, sweltering room."

Unlike in many North Carolina communities, electricity in Rocky Mount is supplied by a city-owned utility. The utility, which already



charges higher prices for power than other utilities, has had problems with billing mistakes and delays that have left some city customers owing thousands of dollars, facing disconnection, and unable to contact the utility by phone for help.

The utility delayed shutting off power for several months, but recently resumed disconnections. City councilmen defended that decision Monday night.

"It is hurtful to know that people lost their lives. It is also true that people intentionally did not pay anything on their utilities, and I'm not speaking about this family because I don't know the circumstance, but I know the buzz," said

Councilman Reuben Blackwell.

"Since October, November, we told everyone weeks before the cutoff occurred what was going to transpire," Blackwell said. "We didn't want to do it, but how do you extend services to some and not to all?"

Blackwell said state regulators had forced the city's hand in resuming disconnections, including the Local Government Commission and state Auditor Dave Boliek, who've been critical of the city's financial management as they oversee its recovery from near-bankruptcy.

"They told us when we have been subsidizing the cost of utilities, that the people need to pay the cost of utilities, so we had to increase the

cost of utilities," Blackwell said. "What utility system in North Carolina will keep your power on for two months, three months, four months, five months without payment?"

Councilmember Andre Knight said he couldn't agree to a moratorium without a better understanding of what it might cost the city, especially since an earlier moratorium on disconnections had just ended.

"When the auditor came, he told us what we had to do, and the LGC," Knight said. "You call the state auditor, the treasurer, and the LGC because if they would have come in and taken over. That's exactly what they would have done."

THE PARADOX OF WEALTH

Continued from page 3

to free choice with the same conviction other groups bring to preventing harm by restricting those choices. Both are responding to the same moral tension, but they resolve it in different ways.

For example, libertarians generally argue that owning guns, using illicit drugs and refusing vaccinations are individual rights that must be protected from the harm of infringement via regulation. There are others, however, who disagree – arguing that the harms caused by gun deaths, drug abuse and overdose, and the spread of preventable disease require regulation that constrains or prohibits completely people's freedom to choose.

At their core, these are disputes about where the line falls between a harm serious enough to warrant control and a freedom too important to override.

Navigating the balance

And this is where the issue of extreme wealth is located – sitting precisely on this moral fault line.

On one side, there is a moral claim that arguably lies at the heart of the "American Dream": People have the right to keep and enjoy what their own efforts, talent and willingness to take risks produces. They also have a right to make their own way in the world, without undue interference, based on their own abilities to do so. They should be free to decide what to do with the wealth they have earned, including leaving it to current and future family members after death.

On the other side, there are serious moral harms to be prevented. Past a certain point, wealth stops being only money and becomes a detrimental form of power over others: People like Elon Musk have the capacity to shape markets such as the SpaceX IPO, influence politics by donating hundreds of millions to campaigns, and control major platforms where public debate happens, such as Twitter, now X.

The gap that extreme wealth creates does not just mean some people have far more; it means a minority have the power to ensure that the majority has far less. And this is a significant harm that cannot go unaddressed.

While it is helpful to recognize the problem of extreme wealth as a potential imbalance between two equally important moral demands, that by itself does not tell us what the correct balance is or how to achieve it.

This dilemma is made more difficult by the fact that we experience and respond to certain kinds of moral threats more strongly than others. For example, imagining losing what belongs to you, what you have earned, is what researchers call "affectively immediate": It triggers strong negative emotions and a powerful sense of moral injustice. In turn, the experience of moral injustice heightens people's perception of risk, making it feel more serious. This combination captures people's moral attention and spurs them to action.

The harms of unfettered wealth accumulation, on the other hand, are difficult to experience in the same emotionally potent way. Just like people can directly experience the negative consequences of specific extreme weather events, but not of climate change, the dangers of extreme wealth itself cannot be directly experienced, though some of its consequences can be.

And while researchers have found that thinking about abstract moral harms such as climate change and extreme wealth can activate people's moral principles and orient them toward the larger social good, this by itself is typically not enough to motivate sustained action, especially when pitted against the sheer magnitude of the problem, which dampens our capacity to respond emotionally.

The challenge, then, is not to feel less protective of what people earn and their right to earn it. Rather, it is to actively promote public discussion that is grounded in an accurate understanding of how extreme wealth, while benefiting a few, can substantively harm everyone else.

If people can keep in mind that, despite our differences, we generally want a more equal society, then I believe perhaps it will be possible to strike a moral balance that better protects all of us from harm.



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Health & Wellness

Hospitals Say They Found A Tool To Help Reduce Childbirth Risks

By Andrew Jones

KFF

Hospitals across the U.S. are trying to reduce maternal deaths and complications after pregnancies using one small tool: a silicone wristband stamped with the declaration “I Gave Birth.”

The wristbands are part of a growing initiative first launched by North Carolina-based ECU Health as Congress sought to address the nation’s growing maternal mortality crisis during the covid pandemic. Since 2021, nearly 50 North Carolina hospitals and the state’s health department have begun distributing the wristbands, to give mothers and care providers a visual reminder of the life-threatening health risks after birth.

The Connecticut state health department; large health systems in Arkansas, Georgia, and Mississippi; and hospitals in at least 24 other states have also embraced the program. The wristbands are intended to make emergency workers aware of postpartum risks, ensure better treatment, and help lower maternal mortality rates in the U.S., where nearly 70% of pregnancy-related deaths happen after the day of delivery — and nearly 40% happen after the six-week mark.

This year, North Carolina plans to expand the initiative with part of the \$213 million it received through the Rural Health Transformation Program, a provision of President Donald Trump’s signature One Big Beautiful Bill Act, also known as HR 1.

Tamika Auguste, a physician and the board chair at the American College of Obstetricians & Gynecologists Foundation, praised the wristbands as a useful tool “to increase awareness and education around postpartum health.” But she and others who focus on maternal health said efforts

like the wristband campaigns are only part of what’s needed to combat the broader maternal mortality crisis in the U.S.

And they noted the wristbands’ popularity is emerging as Trump’s 2025 law is expected to reduce Medicaid spending by more than \$900 billion over 10 years, according to a Congressional Budget Office analysis. Medicaid, the federal-state program that covers healthcare for low-income families, pays for at least 40% of births nationwide.

Elisabeth Wright Burak, a policy researcher at Georgetown University’s Center for Children and Families, said Trump’s tax-and-spending law is stifling the momentum states had been gaining with maternal care since 2022. That’s when Congress allowed states to extend postpartum Medicaid coverage from 60 days to a year, which nearly every state did.

Now, those extensions could end up on the chopping block, Burak said, as states seek ways to manage Medicaid losses.

“There is no question that HR 1 risks setting the clock back for maternal health,” Burak said.

A report she co-authored in July warned that postpartum patients have more to worry about with the new law than simply cuts to Medicaid. States are also setting up systems that may not adequately track pregnant and postpartum enrollees who should be exempt from the law’s new work requirements, erroneously dropping them from coverage, Burak’s report said.

U.S. maternal mortality rates have risen and fallen over the past seven years, with 649 maternal deaths in 2024, according to the most recent Centers for Disease Control and Prevention data. Tennessee had the worst maternal mortality rate in the nation from 2020 to 2024, around 42 deaths per 100,000 births, according an analysis of CDC data by



the Congressional Research Service. North Carolina’s rate was about 29 in 100,000, with a national average of 23.

In its Rural Health Transformation Program application, North Carolina said the initiative creating

the “I Gave Birth” wristbands reduced postpartum readmissions by nearly a third at ECU Health Medical Center in Greenville, without elaborating. In online promotions, some hospitals have claimed the wristband campaigns can save lives, though

many have recently launched and their impact has yet to be studied.

“Additional research is needed to conclusively confirm the outcomes of such initiatives,” said Hannah Jones, a spokesperson for the North Carolina health department.

Hospitals provide a wristband to patients who have given birth and instruct them to wear it for weeks or months, hoping they’ll be reminded to check in with a physician if they feel chest pain, have headaches, or start bleeding. The accessory resembles the yellow Livestrong wristband, part of a cancer awareness campaign launched by cyclist Lance Armstrong’s foundation. A nurse also talks through postpartum risks with the patients, and they’re sent home with pamphlets and guidebooks on how to care for their new child and themselves.

“The bracelet itself is simply a reminder of, ‘Hey, I got education,’” said Jessica Noble, a nurse with East Carolina University-connected ECU Health who pioneered the initiative.

It’s also intended to alert first responders and other healthcare providers that a woman has recently given birth and to check for postpartum complications, such as low blood pressure, bleeding, or infections. Emergency department staff and EMS workers sometimes don’t have adequate training to recognize postpartum complications, research shows, which can be dangerous when those patients end up in an emergency room.

A Long Career of Caring: Congratulations, Dr. Mask

By Jheri Hardaway

Staff Writer

For years, I looked forward to the kind and welcoming medical advice on our local evening news. July 31st, 2026, marked the end of a more than three-decade career for the face of medical guidance and community health in Central North Carolina. Dr. Allen Mask has remained a single, steady, and reliable voice. As he enters a well-earned retirement, North Carolina marks the conclusion of an extraordinary dual career that seamlessly bridged clinical excellence with broadcast journalism, leaving an indelible imprint on public health across the state.



Born and raised in Hamlet, North Carolina, Dr. Mask’s path to medicine was paved by curiosity, resilience, and an early passion for storytelling. While pursuing his undergraduate degree in English at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, he initially gravitated toward broadcasting, working at local stations and discovering a talent for clear, empathetic communication. A pivotal interview with a Black physician inspired him to combine his communication skills with medicine, steering him toward the UNC School of Medicine and later a rigorous internal medicine residency at Harvard Medical School’s Massachusetts General Hospital.

In 1985, Dr. Mask established the Raleigh Urgent Care Center, providing accessible, high-quality primary and immediate care to patients off New Bern Avenue. Beyond his private practice, he served for decades as the official physician for the City of Raleigh, embodying a deep personal commitment to the well-being of local civil servants and community members alike.

Dr. Mask’s impact reached far beyond clinic walls when he joined WRAL-TV’s Health Team in 1993. Over the next 30 years, he became North Carolina’s longest-serving television doctor. Delivering thousands of weekday health reports, he translated complex medical research into practical, compassionate advice for families across the Triangle. Whether demystifying emerging treatments, advocating for preventative health, or guiding viewers through national health crises, Dr. Mask earned a rare level of trust across generations of viewers.

Dr. Allen Mask’s career stands as a testament to what happens when clinical expertise is paired with genuine dedication and love for the public good. His words continue on in the thousands of patients he treated, the viewers he educated, and the standard of community care he established for North Carolina.

Kellogg To Remove Artificial Dyes From Cereals By End Of This Year

AP NEWS - WK Kellogg said Thursday that it will remove artificial colors from all its cereals by the end of this year.

The change comes a year ahead of schedule. Kellogg said last August that it would remove synthetic dyes from its cereals by the end of 2027.

But the company said Thursday it has identified fruit- and vegetable-based juices that will give cereals like Froot Loops and Apple Jacks their distinctive colors. The Battle Creek, Michigan-based company said it has also invested in equipment that will allow it to transition to natural colors.

The company said it is also removing BHT, an artificial preservative, from the small number of cereals that still contain it.

“More and more consumers are looking for foods made with simple, recognizable ingredients and we are proud to meet those expectations even sooner than planned,” Kellogg’s Chief Growth Officer Doug VanDeVelde said in a statement.

Kellogg has faced pressure for years to remove artificial ingredients from its cereals, which it has already done in other countries like Canada. In 2024, dozens of people rallied outside Kellogg’s headquarters and delivered petitions with 400,000 signatures asking the company to remove artificial dyes and BHT.

That pressure has grown under President Donald Trump’s health secretary, Robert F. Kennedy Jr., who has urged food companies to phase out petroleum-based artificial dyes. Last August, Kellogg also signed an agreement with Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton saying it would “permanently remove toxic dyes” from its cereals by the end of 2027.

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Community

Black August Event Returns To Durham For Tenth Year

By Judaea Ingram
Special To The Carolinian

DURHAM, N.C. — August is more than the final stretch of summer for Black communities gathering across Durham. It is also a time to remember generations of resistance, reflect on Black history and imagine what comes next.

That history will take center stage as Black August in the Park returns to Durham for its 10th annual celebration Aug. 28-30.

The weekend will bring together Black artists, entrepreneurs, farmers, organizers and community members for a celebration centered on culture, community and collective reflection. The main Black August in the Park gathering is scheduled for Aug. 30 at Durham Central Park.

The event's official Instagram ac-

count, @blackaugustnc, describes this year's gathering as the 10th annual Black August in the Park and promotes a weekend of programming beginning Aug. 28. The All Blacks Parade will also open this year's celebration.

But Black August in the Park is rooted in a history that extends beyond one weekend in Durham.

Black August originated in California prisons in 1979 as a way for incarcerated Black organizers to commemorate Black freedom struggles and the lives of people who died in those movements. Over time, the observance expanded beyond its prison origins into a broader period of remembrance, political education and reflection on Black resistance.

The month also carries significance because of several major moments in Black history, including the Haitian Revolution, the Nat Turner



rebellion and other movements connected to Black liberation.

In Durham, that history has become part of a community gathering that combines education and

remembrance with music, art, food and celebration.

Black August in the Park is organized by the Black Farmers Market, a Durham-based organization focused on creating spaces where Black farmers, entrepreneurs, artists and community members can connect.

The City of Durham awarded the Black Farmers Market \$16,817 through its fiscal year 2026 Festival and Special Events funding program. The city's program supports events that promote arts, history and culture while contributing to Durham's communities and economy.

The event's growth comes with its own challenges.

During a February 2026 Durham Cultural Advisory Board meeting, Black Farmers Market founder Moses Ochola discussed the growth of Black August in the Park and the difficulty of maintaining the event's community-centered identity as it becomes larger.

According to city meeting records, Ochola described the festival as a

labor of love that has intentionally avoided over-commercialization. He also discussed the need for greater financial sustainability, staffing and partnerships as the event grows. One strategy under consideration is expanding the festival into a multiday event.

This year's weekend format represents a step in that direction.

The expansion also raises a question familiar to many community-based cultural events: how can an event grow while maintaining the values that made it meaningful in the first place?

For Black August in the Park, that question is connected to the purpose of Black August itself.

The observance has historically emphasized remembrance, resistance and self-determination. In

(See **BLACK AUGUST**, P. 9)

NCCU Opens Nation's First HBCU AI Institute Building

By Jordan Meadows
Staff Writer

North Carolina Central University cut the ribbon on Monday morning on a new \$7.2 million building for its Institute for Artificial Intelligence and Emerging Research, making it the first historically Black college or university in the country to establish a dedicated AI institute and the first North Carolina college to build a facility devoted specifically to the technology.

The roughly 5,000-square-foot building, at the corner of Fayetteville and Lawson streets in Durham, was funded through a mix of federal Title III grant funding and NCCU trust funds. Inside, a central collaboration space is surrounded by an AI Literacy Studio, a Machine Learning and Data Science Studio, a Robotics and Emerging Tech Lab, an XR Innovation Sandbox, an Ethics and Governance Classroom and an Innovation Atrium.

The institute itself opened in January 2025 with \$1 million in funding from Google.org and was formally approved by the NCCU Board of Trustees in December 2025, after a lengthy institutional review process.

"Today, we are establishing a framework, a blueprint and a



launching point for what ethical, responsible and human-centered artificial intelligence can look like in higher education and beyond," said Siobahn Grady, the institute's founding director, who holds a Ph.D. and whose academic path runs through three of North Carolina's HBCUs—undergraduate study in computer science at Winston-Salem State, a graduate degree in information science at NCCU, and a history-making stint at N.C. A&T before returning to Central to help build the institute.

"AI used to be something specifically just for computer scientists, but with AI tools now it's accessible to everyone," Grady said. "We want our campus community to have access to these tools, but also understand how they're developed, the biases involved in them; the pros, but also the harms that it may cause too."

NCCU Chancellor Karrie G. Dixon, who also holds a Ph.D., told the crowd of faculty, students, alumni and community members that the university's goal extends beyond simply teaching students to use AI

tools.

"Artificial intelligence is transforming nearly every industry," Dixon said. "We want to not only prepare students but help them shape AI."

Dixon added that the pace of the technology's adoption creates its own obligation for the university.

"Technology moves faster than trust," she said. "What we have to do strategically and intentionally is to educate our campus community on usage of AI in a responsible and ethical way... it shouldn't replace human judgment, creativity, or critical thinking skills."

Her comment referenced a recent study by the American Association of Colleges and Universities and Elon University, which found faculty worry AI could weaken students' critical thinking and erode academic integrity.

U.S. Rep. Valerie Foushee, D-N.C., was among several local and state officials on hand, alongside Durham Mayor Leo Williams and state Treasurer Brad Briner. Foushee framed the institute as a corrective to who typically drives technological innovation.

"Our future cannot be built by a few tech moguls and billionaires," she said. "The breakthroughs of to-

morrow will not just be from Silicon Valley and the largest universities."

She added that the institute would prepare students for high-demand careers, strengthen research partnerships, support entrepreneurs and expand access to emerging technology for communities she said have too often been left out of the innovation economy.

Starting in fall 2025, NCCU added an AI module to its mandatory Introduction to University Educa-

tion course for incoming freshmen, requiring all first-year students to complete introductory AI coursework. Beginning this fall, the university will offer a new AI minor through its Department of Mathematics and Physics, and faculty have access to seed grant funding to pursue AI-related research.

According to figures cited at the event, 208 programs nationally now offer a bachelor's degree in artificial intelligence.

Dr. Dolores Davis Paylor Was Honored for Volunteer Service



Dr. Dolores Davis Paylor, a retired educational administrator, received the Juanita Parnell Award for Outstanding Volunteer Service during Tau Gamma Delta Sorority's 61st Boule in Indianapolis. The award recognized her service through the sorority's Lambda Chapter.

Continuing her commitment to service, Davis Paylor will also volunteer at a local American Red Cross Blood Donation Center. With a critical need for blood, particularly Type O, she is encouraging other Greek organizations to answer the call by donating and volunteering.

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Church

Faith Leaders Unite in Prayer for Highway Patrol and Immigrant Communities

By **Jordan Meadows**

Staff Writer

Faith leaders from Christian, Jewish, Muslim, and other traditions gathered at Halifax Mall in downtown Raleigh on Friday morning for an interfaith prayer vigil in support of both North Carolina State Highway Patrol officers and immigrant communities affected by a new state law requiring law enforcement to cooperate with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

The vigil centered on Senate Bill 153, which the North Carolina General Assembly enacted over Gov. Josh Stein's veto on June 24.

Now codified as Session Law 2026-19, the law requires four state law enforcement agencies (the Department of Public Safety, the Department of Adult Correction, the State Highway Patrol and the State Bureau of Investigation) to enter into agreements with ICE. Those agreements authorize designated state officers to carry out federal immigration enforcement duties once handled exclusively by ICE agents.

The law also bars state public benefit agencies, including the Department of Health and Human Services and the Housing Finance Agency,

from providing Medicaid, housing assistance, or childcare subsidies to people residing in the state without legal status, and prohibits UNC System institutions from adopting sanctuary campus policies or restricting federal immigration enforcement on their campuses. It further waives local government tort immunity, meaning cities and counties that maintain sanctuary ordinances could be sued if someone in the country illegally commits a crime against a person or property within their borders.

Organizers described the hourlong vigil as neither an endorsement of the law nor a protest against Highway Patrol officers, but an expression of shared moral concern.

"This vigil is rooted in the shared values found across many faith traditions: to welcome the stranger, to love our neighbor, to seek peace, to pursue justice, and to care for the vulnerable. We are not gathered to debate policy. We are gathered to bear faithful witness to these enduring moral values and to pray that they will guide those entrusted with authority," said Ismael Ruiz-Millan, executive director of Durham-based Connectional Ministries for the North Carolina Conference of the United Methodist Church.

The gathering moved through a moral analysis of Senate Bill 153, an interfaith prayer for peace and justice, a communal confession, and prayers offered for both Highway Patrol officers and immigrant communities, including a bilingual community lament written by members of a Spanish-speaking congregation and prayed responsively in English and Spanish.

Organizers said the service closed by looking toward what communal flourishing and safety for all residents could look like, and included music such as "We Are Marching in the Light of God". Among the prayers offered was one specifically for Highway Patrol officers, asking for their protection on every roadside stop and for grace for those wrestling with the weight of their new duties, including officers who themselves have immigrant family members.

Pastor Athena Thomasson-Bless of Christ the King Lutheran Church in Cary said the vigil was meant to call people of faith to moral courage.

"We, clergy of many faith backgrounds, are holding this prayer vigil to call us all to moral courage as people of faith," she said. "We are praying with hope for a future where all can flourish in our communities. We pray for the safety and flourishing of State

Troopers who already have a great deal of responsibility and workload. We pray for the safety and flourishing of immigrants and refugees who deserve opportunities and protection. We come in prayer with courage and hope for a world where we honor and respect the sacred dignity and worth of all people."

The Rev. Joel Simpson, pastor of First United Methodist Church in Taylorsville, said many troopers did not seek the responsibilities the new law places on them.

"This law forces Highway Patrol to perform duties they never signed

up to do. Not only will we pray for their safety, we will pray for their hearts and conscience as this new law goes into effect so that they continue to see the humanity of all people and stay faithful to serving and protecting all drivers, especially the most vulnerable," he said.

Faith leaders also offered thanks for the contributions immigrant communities bring to North Carolina and lamented the fear that they said now keeps some neighbors from calling on those sworn to protect them.

The Rev. Liam Barr of Latino Ministries for the Episcopal Diocese

of North Carolina said the vigil reflected clergy from many traditions, nationalities and languages standing together.

"Together, we will embody a vision of the world God is calling forth: a world where all are free to find joy; where law enforcement are free to fulfill their calling by serving and protecting the image of God in every person; where our differences become occasions for celebration rather than division; and where we can live out the sacred truth that we belong to one another," he said.

Practical Biblical Principles

WHEN FIRE DIDN'T BURN

Read: **Daniel 3:1-7**

By John L. Caldwell, Pastor New Jerusalem Baptist Cathedral

This is a biblical story about faith which may well stretch beyond today's imagination. Today one cannot imagine the level of faith which was practiced by three of God's faithful servants, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego.

In times past we spoke of the faith of Stephen when he was being stoned to death. In one case we can say faith saved a person and in another we can say faith caused the death of a person. From God's viewpoint faith saved all who embraced it. From a spiritual standpoint, it appears like those who embrace Faith insulate themselves from all the hurt the world has to offer. In short, those in faith do not mind the hurt, because faith replaces the discomfort the world places upon you with the comfort of heaven. In short, a strong faith emboldens one to endure the discomforts and pain the world has to offer.

Would any of you today care to argue this point with Stephen or the three Hebrew boys. Their kind of faith is a principal of theology that may be difficult to understand or accept. Yet this is the kind of faith God wants us to achieve. With Jesus we can.

Any attack upon our faith is an attack upon God. Our faith comes from God. When we are born again, we are instantly given a measure of faith (Romans 12:3; 2 Corinthians 10:15). A measure of faith means we grow our faith by trusting more and more in God than ourselves. The story about the three Hebrew boys thrown in the burning fire challenges our faith today. Question: Will God protect us and do the same for us today, as He did for the Hebrew boys in the fiery furnace?

Today we may not face an actual fiery furnace in our lifetime. But many of our hard trials today bring doubts and fears which burns up our hopes and dreams in life and in doing so, emotionally burns us up. In some cases, it seems like suicide is the only way out. In the far east there are true stories about individuals who sets themselves afire because life has been disappointing for them and to them. In a sense, they do this in protest. Protesting life itself. Does God favor such conduct? No!

This is a story about faith verses ego. An ego that has the power to destroy and make one's life miserable. We speak here of King Nebuchadnezzar. This man will be one of the four rulers which will beat up on God's people because of their disobedience toward Him. The Babylonians, the Persians, the Greeks and lastly the Romans. The ten toes of mud and iron of the Romans image which were a part of the statue Daniel saw in his vision still hunts us today and has yet to finish its course in prophecy.

King Nebuchadnezzar's ego caused him to order statues of gold ninety feet tall with his features to be built throughout his kingdom. He wanted the world to know him. Not only to know him but to worship him. The king was seeking to unify all religions within his vast empire.

It took the Babylonians several years and three separate attacks on Jerusalem to transport the majority

of Hebrews into Babylon's captivity. The last phase of the captivity included young Daniel and his three friends.

It was the king's desire that all of his officials and overlords worship him.

King Nebuchadnezzar did a great job in polishing up those Hebrews who showed themselves to be at the top of the line in intelligence and deportment. Such were Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego.

From the get-go so to speak, Daniel and his friends held on to the faith they had acquired while in Jerusalem. This may well speak to the quality of their upbringing by their parents. It is difficult to believe that there were Jewish parents who did not teach their children the laws of Moses which came from God. This is still true today in Israel. All Jews know the laws of Moses, whether they follow them or not. Daniel and his friends were no exception. The question for today is to ask and explore, what made Daniel and his friends hold onto their faith while facing off with being deported to a foreign land and eventually facing the fiery furnace?

The answer, which is not often realized, is that God is on the other end of our faith. And it is God Who will determine how our faith will work on God's behalf. Faith, less we forget, is all about God getting the glory and honor out of our trials and tribulations, in addition to bringing us victory and closer to God. We as Christians often forget this point in theology. It is God who gets the front page and not man in all of our faith issues.

Daniel and his friends were made officials in Nebuchadnezzar kingdom. And because of their faith in the God of their fathers, they took this responsibility in stride and didn't let it go to their heads as some would do today.

Of course, the enemy of our faith could never allow this kind of faith to go un-challenged.

It was expected that all in the Babylonian empire to bow down and worship the golden statues of Nebuchadnezzar no matter where they were located in the Babylonian empire. For all practical purposes, Daniel and his three friends were considered Babylonian citizens. They were expected to conform to all of the laws in the kingdom. But they didn't. their faith in the God of Isreal wouldn't let them. Daniel and his friends represent Almighty God in this story. In reality, this is a story of God verses Nebuchadnezzar's ego and not a contest between the king and Daniel and his friends. God is using the faith of His servants to teach king Nebuchadnezzar a lesson as to who is really the "Boss" so to speak. This same lesson is soon to come to those in Washington, D.C.

The word soon got around to the king that there were three Babylonian officials, who refused to bow down and worship the gods and the golden statue when the trumpets sounded. Those who refused to bow down were Daniel's three friends, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego (Daniel 3:8-11). The king's rage called for these three men to be brought before the king and questioned (Daniel 3:13). Give your faith today, what would be your answer if you were caught in such a situation?

King Nebuchadnezzar call himself giving the three Hebrews another chance to live if they would bow

down and worship him when the next horn sounds (Daniel 3:15).

When you talk about somebody holding on to one's faith, we have it here.

If you don't fall down and worship me, I will immediately throw all three of you into my burning furnace. And who is the God who will deliver you from my hands?" Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego all answered the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar we have no need to answer you in this matter. If that is the case, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from your fiery furnace, and He will deliver us from your hand, O king. But if not, let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up." The response from the three Hebrews boys caused a fury in the king. This is God's promise to His people – not to spare them from the fire but to provide for them in the midst of it, be that escorting them into heaven or allowing them to live to see another day. Dr. David Jermiah once said," A man of God in the will of God is immortal (nothing can hurt him/her) until his/her work on earth is done. That is all any Christian needs to know about his or her future.

The king, in his anger, ordered the furnace to be heated seven times hotter than usual. He also ordered his strong men to tie up the three Hebrews with their clothing and hats on, so they would not be able to escape their destiny-the fire. It was expected that the clothing would accelerate the fire. The fire was so hot that the men who were in the process of throwing the Hebrews into the furnace were consumed by the very fire themselves. The Hebrews fell into the burning furnace.

All of a sudden Nebuchadnezzar's ego got the best of him and he couldn't sleep and wanted to see if the Hebrews were still alive in the great fire. He came to the furnace to see and lo and behold was he surprised and shocked to see that the three Hebrews were still alive in the fire and they had company. A Fourth man. This fourth man was described by the king, himself as the Son of God. What a revelation this must have been to the king. How did this heathen king recognize God's Son given his ego.

King Nebuchadnezzar immediately called for the three Hebrews, whom he called the servants of the Most High God, to come out of the fire. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego walked out of the furnace unharmed. This they did without any evidence of ever having been in a fiery furnace. All of the Babylonian officials present took notice of the fact that the fire did not harm these men of God in any way. They all recognized the fact that God had sent His Angels to protect them.

Then the king made a decree that everybody in his kingdom who speaks any ill words against 'Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego shall be cut to pieces, and they shall be made into ash heap. Because there is no other God who could deliver like this.

Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego in the province of Babylon. Talking about what a strong faith can do! It kept the burn out of fire. Today this is still true. God keeps the burn out of the lives of the faithful.

SERMON of the WEEK



NOTHING HAS CHANGED... GOD IS STILL THE SAME
By: **Bishop-Elect William "Billy" Eli Ratcliff**

The Sermonic Text reads: Hebrews 13:8: "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever."

To me, this verse is one of the most comforting promises in all of Scripture. It reminds us that while everything around us changes, our God never does. He is immutable — and that means He never changes.

We live in a world where almost everything changes. Prices change. Technology changes. Governments change—our Health changes. Even people change.

But if GOD was holy yesterday, He's holy today. If He was a healer yesterday, He's still a healer today. And if He made a way yesterday, He WILL make a way tomorrow.

I. The God of Yesterday Is Still the God of Today

Let's look back. Our founder, Bishop Eli Ratcliff Sr., went home to be with the Lord at the age of fifty, yet the same God sustained this church and those faithful members—many of whom were parents and grandparents of our current congregation.

Then on November 10, 1983, this church was destroyed by a massive fire. But the same God who brought my father through the flames, brought us through both literally and spiritually. Somebody needs to shout, "Same God!"

It wasn't easy for any of our pastors or leaders. The devil fought every one of them because he wanted them to quit before fulfilling God's purpose. But they—and this Spirit-filled church—endured because God never changed.

Malachi 3:6 declares, "For I am the Lord, I change not." The same God who shut the lions' mouths for Daniel still knows how to silence your critics. The same God who walked with the Hebrew boys in the fiery furnace still walks with us, His children, through our fires of life. Nothing has changed; God is still the same.

II. People Change... But God Never Does

People change. Friends, family, co-workers, even church folks change. But God never changes. YWMTS? That's why we've got to stay rooted, grounded, steadfast, and unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.

God never changes, and don't expect the devil to change either. His greatest desire is to change your mind about God's goodness, God's faithfulness, and God's promises. You've got to learn how to take the good with the bad, the bad with the good, the sunshine with the rain, and the beautiful with the ugly.

People will do ugly things. Some siblings may try to slay you. David's brothers doubted him before he faced Goliath. Joseph's brothers threw him into a pit before God promoted him to the palace. Sometimes your greatest opposition comes from people who know your name but don't know your calling. So don't waste your time... answering every critic.

If folks talk ugly, don't lose your character. If folks act ugly, keep your cool. The Bible says, "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." You can't control what people say or do, but you can control where you keep your mind. Can you say, "I woke up this morning with my mind stayed on Jesus?"

III. The Same God Who Brought You Through Before Will Bring You Through Again

Isaiah said God will give us beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness. Now that's the God we serve. When He shapes us, He strengthens us. When He corrects us, He develops us. When we're weak, His strength is made perfect in us.

The same God who opened the Red Sea still makes a way where there seems to be no way. The same God who opened the prison doors for Paul and Silas still knows how to set captives free. Aren't you glad He's still

healing, restoring, forgiving, saving, and giving second chances? Why? Because Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

Mean people will still be mean unless God changes them. Hateful people will still be hateful unless God changes them, and Liars will still lie. Nevertheless, don't focus on their hate mail or their attacks.

Furthermore, keep your mind stayed on Jesus. The God of yesterday, today, and forever has promised: "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." And if God be for us, He's more than the whole world against us! So, don't let the devil steal your praise; put on your garment of praise—it doesn't cost a dime. Just think about the goodness of Jesus!!!

Hasn't He kept His Word? Hasn't He opened doors? Hasn't He made a way? And can't He dry weeping eyes? He's still a Healer.... Still a Way Maker.... Still a Shelter in a storm...He's still keeping food on your table...Still putting peace in your mind...Still giving confidence when you've been criticized. And keeping clothes on your and your children's backs!

I don't know who's carrying ashes, but I do know that God is still giving out beauty. I don't know who's carrying sorrow, but He's still pouring out the oil of joy. I don't know who feels like giving up today, but God still knows how to lift you up.

Sadly, friends may disappoint you, but God is still the same! Family may walk away, but God is still the same! Your Money may get funny, but God is still the same! Doctors may shake their heads; God is still the same! The economy may change; I'm glad God is still the same!

How about you? The Crazy House—[Actually, I mean, the White House]—may change...But thanks be to God, He's still the same! Think about it: can you say, "Satan got mad, but I'm glad, because he missed the soul he thought he had!"

Jesus Christ is the same yesterday... today...and forever! Are you a witness? If He's been the same God all your life, wherever you are, give Him praise! Jesus Christ...the same yesterday...and today...and forever! If you know that's true, give God the praise He's worthy of!

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Lies And Chaos And Hate, Oh My!

By Sarah Wilson, Author

It’s hard to fathom, let alone describe, what is going on in the world today. It’s a multi-pile-up of crises. We are hit hourly with headlines about climate catastrophes, tumbling democracies and fertility rates, AI singularity and nuclear threat, increasing economic inequality, genocides, and the rise of techno-fascist and authoritarian rule. But why now? And why everything all at once? Well, historians tell us we are undergoing what every sophisticated civilization before us has, and that is complex systems collapse. The unraveling of all the complex systems that make up the complex system that is our civilization.

In the past 5,000 years, dozens of complex civilizations have existed: think of the Roman and Mayan empires or the Jing dynasty. Every one of them collapsed because they became too complex. They buckled under layers of bureaucracy, expanding cities and populations, resource and energy use, and chaos, like a house that can no longer hold all the extensions. All complex systems in nature exist within a finite vessel.

Various energy, futurist, economic, climate, and population modeling show that our extremely complex civilization is going the same way. It feels like everything is collapsing all at once because, well, it is. Most civilizations collapse, leaving little trace, around the 330-year mark. Our civilization—the post-industrial civilization that kicked off once we discovered and perfected the use of fossil fuels—is roughly 270 years old.

A lot of people are feeling overwhelmed by the state of the world. It’s totally understandable if these thoughts are causing you exhaustion, anxiety, or depression. This emotional experience is itself another factor of collapsing civilizations: they’re characterized by leaders stoking chaos and trying to overwhelm and distract everyday citizens.

The Romans threw bread and circuses. Today, in the U.S., the Trump administration’s adviser Steve Bannon is instructing us to be flooded with distracting, maddening, polarizing misinformation. As Hannah Arendt wrote of the Nazi period, the constant lying was not aimed at making people believe a lie but ensuring that no one believes anything anymore. That’s what we’re seeing happening in much of the world today. Leaders are overwhelming and distracting us from their efforts to enforce problematic policies.

Planting conspiracies and general social media pot-stirring are classic chaos-making tactics. Remember in the lead-up to the 2016 U.S. election when those conspiracies surfaced about Hillary Clinton running a child sex trafficking racket under a pizza shop in Washington, D.C.? Well, it was soon revealed that this conspiracy mill was being stoked by hackers and trolls operating out of Russian bot factories run by the Kremlin’s Internet Research Academy.

These same bots were simultaneously feeding anti-Trump mayhem into America’s social feeds. Why would they spread rumors about both sides? The answer is chaos. As the director of the Alliance for Securing Democracy said of the phenomenon, chaos is now the point.

Once we realize that chaos has become the point, we can galvanize against it. We can choose not to add to the chaos by simply not reacting in panic and not being distracted or overwhelmed. Instead, we commit ourselves to staying sane and focused on preserving democracy wherever we can, resisting problematic AI laws and regaining control of our own attention.

What I’m describing might strike you as terrifying and hopeless, but we’re actually talking about the death of a system that can no longer serve us: The neoliberal, extractivist, colonialist civilization we’ve existed in for 270 years. While it might have served a lot of us for a while, it is now causing a lot of pain.

To keep it going entails using 40,000 child slaves in the Congo to extract cobalt for our iPhones and other technologies that we can’t live without now. It requires burning untold amounts of fossil fuel and crossing planetary boundaries. Indeed, we just crossed the seventh of the nine boundaries as I was editing this book. It’s causing our kids to develop anxiety disorders and species to go extinct while people are losing their jobs to AI. And besides all of this, it’s a system of complex systems predicated on a very flawed notion of infinite growth on a finite planet. That was never going to hold. We were always going to hit a limit eventually.

Viewed through this lens, what’s going on might be a good thing. It might lead to a more equitable, humane future—a new system that works better for us. The American philosopher, the late Jonathan Lear, fleshes out what he calls a radical hope. Lear describes radical hope as an honest reckoning that entails moving forward in the face of “unbearable loss and with no rational justification for hope, just the hunch that we are onto something important about being human.” In many ways, what we are going through could also be viewed as a homecoming.

The collapse of complex systems could also be described as a simplification or undoing of everything that has been growing, expanding, complexifying, and becoming more interconnected and messier. It looks like electrical grid failures that will force us to live more analog with maps and paper address books. It will also look like less taxes to maintain cities and infrastructure. It will look like fuel prices going up so we’ll have to cut our car use. We’ll probably have food restrictions because the trade routes are cut or at least limited. This predicament has already become familiar to many of us.

One very dynamic salve is to get accustomed to simplicity before the system takes us there. Go analog wherever you can and learn some basic emergency survival skills, or perhaps invest in a push bike. Is becoming a prepper the fix? Or buying land outside the city, stockpiling, and growing our own food the answer? It’s a question I get asked often.

Studies of intentional communities around the world show that fewer than five percent last longer than five years because, to survive, these communities require between 100 and 150 people working full-time, growing food, maintaining water systems, and protecting the whole lot. These studies show that the most effective route for all of us is to simplify our lives and do it in a way that strengthens the community we already live in.



THE FIGHT CONTINUES

Over the weekend, I heard a few minutes of Rev. Al Sharpton’s radio show. I’m not always an Al Sharpton fan but when he’s right, he’s right. His main point was that complaining won’t bring about change. No argument here. At our age, we’ve seen first-hand how not voting doesn’t help. Burying our heads in the sand doesn’t help. Even prayers without works doesn’t help. Regardless of which side you’re on, the only way to make your voice heard is to get in the game. VOTE!

Historically, WE mistakenly concluded that the need to coalesce for basic human rights had reached its expiration date. We took for granted that the fight for our civil rights had been permanently won. Wake up call: nothing is permanent except death and taxes! Now, more than ever, we need to tap into the collective experiential wisdom of those who have been there, done that rather than the click-baited rhetoric of social media influencers to come together and demand to be seen and heard. In other words, instead of relegating marching, meeting, and block voting to “back in the day,” we need to use the technology available to us to bring together our communities, agree on an agenda, and VOTE for those who operate in our best interest.

I’ve lived in North Carolina long enough to know that our midterms rarely arrive quietly. They roll in like summer storms—loud, charged, and capable of reshaping the political terrain overnight. As I look toward this year’s contests, I’m struck by how much the state has changed and how much its voters have changed with it.

Turnout tells the story first. In the 2026 primary, Democrats accounted for 576,299 votes, Republicans 461,175, and unaffiliated voters 472,658—a reminder that unaffiliated North Carolinians now form the largest bloc in the state NCSBE +1. Their rise has been steady and unmistakable: unaffiliated registration has climbed to nearly 40%, outpacing both major parties and reshaping the electorate’s center of gravity. That shift alone makes this midterm feel different. It’s not just a red/blue contest anymore; it’s a test of who can speak to voters who increasingly reject party labels.

Demographics deepen the picture. Younger voters—those aged 18–25 and 26–40—turned out at 6.64% and 9.83% respectively in the 2026 primary, far below older groups NCSBE. Yet national polling shows Gen Z leaning heavily Democratic (D+26) and Millennials splitting evenly between the parties. That tells me two things: younger voters have power, and they’re not using it consistently. If they show up in force this fall, they could alter outcomes across the state.

Race and ethnicity remain defining factors. White voters turned out at 21.96%, Black voters at 20.76%, and Hispanic voters at 8.48% in the 2026 primary NCSBE. These gaps matter because North Carolina’s political coalitions are built on them. Black voters remain the most reliably Democratic group, while white voters lean Republican. Hispanic and Asian voters—smaller but growing populations—are increasingly courted by both parties.

As for pivotal races, North Carolinians will choose a U.S. senator, all 14 U.S. House members, and the entire General Assembly. With unaffiliated voters surging and partisan margins tightening, nearly every congressional district feels competitive. The General Assembly, long dominated by Republicans, could see meaningful shifts if turnout patterns break from the past. I’m watching suburban districts around Raleigh and Charlotte most closely; they’ve become bellwethers for the state’s political mood.

And then there’s social media—our modern town square, chaotic and unavoidable. Predictions suggest platforms like TikTok and Instagram will play an outsized role in mobilizing younger voters, especially those aged 18–40, who consume political information differently than older generations. National surveys show this group is more likely to encounter political content online than through traditional news, and more likely to share it. Whether that translates into turnout is the question campaigns are scrambling to answer.

As I think about North Carolina’s midterms, I keep returning to this: the state is competitive because its people are complicated. We’re not easily sorted, not easily predicted, and certainly not easily swayed. But we are decisive—when we show up. And this year, more than ever, showing up might be the most powerful thing any of us can do.



OUT OF CONTROL

Have you ever seen those movies about zombies taking control of the country? I must admit that is not my preferred television or movie watching, but I’m beginning to see why my late friend Thomas Jarrett would call me from time to time and say, "Dot, you've got to watch this episode. This is going to happen. It's beginning now." I don't think I've ever begun to see the analogy as clearly as I do now.

As much as I don't like to admit it, I'm beginning to question whether our Republican-dominated Congress and Senate aren't beginning to look a little like *The Walking Dead*. I'm thinking they are more like vampires than zombies, but the analogy is similar. Both bite and infect other people, their eyes go dead, they move in groups and they seek to devour others.

Patricia Dee said this on Facebook this week: In a country

where ordinary citizens had the courage to give their lives to bring down a plane headed for mass tragedy on Flight 93, is it conceivable that elected Republicans can't summon the courage to challenge an out-of-control president? It's as though they don't live in the same world as the rest of us. They were elected by the people to represent the people—all the people—but they seem to believe they went to Congress to live off the taxpayers, ignore the president's lies, not notice when he's sleeping and agree with whatever he wants.

When they voted for the attorney general, they knew that she was selected to carry out the wishes of the president rather than create justice in America for its citizens. When they chose Robert Kennedy, they chose him, as unqualified as he is, to do the president's bidding when it comes to health care. Imagine if he had been in charge of our health care during COVID. How do we know what that might have looked like? Because of his beliefs about vaccines. People and children are dying from measles and cases of contagious diseases have risen.

Now, can it be that they support deregulation and, along with Trump, start dismantling programs with good statistics that are improving the trajectory of preschoolers as they enter school? It is as though if something is working, they are complicit in closing it down. The good of the American people never seems to be in the forefront of their minds.

A Supreme Court justice has expressed dismay that she now wears a bulletproof vest and has to have bodyguards to protect her children, yet her votes on gun control have been consistent. She's against it. Often a leader's best quality is empathy because it makes them servant leaders, able to put themselves in the place of their constituency. I don't see much of that when I look at what Republicans in office are doing now.

As someone posted on Facebook recently, Nimrata Nikki Randhawa ran as Nikki Haley. Piyush Jindal ran as Bobby Jindal. Rafael Edward Cruz ran as Ted Cruz. Meanwhile, Ilhan Omar ran as Ilhan Omar, Zohran Kwame Mamdani ran as Zohran K. Mamdani, and Dr. Abdul El-Sayed is running as Dr. Abdul El-Sayed, and MAGA accuses Democrats of identity politics. Every MAGA accusation is a confession.

I submit that zombies may once have been humans, but they are not now humane, and one day the Republican Party may finally see their leader as a liar and a hypocrite. When that confessional comes, I would not want to be in the room.

BLACK AUGUST

Continued from page 7

Durham, those ideas can be expressed through a community gathering where people can learn about Black history while supporting Black businesses, artists and creators.

That combination is particularly significant in a city with a long history of Black entrepreneurship, education, activism and cultural institutions.

Black August in the Park also creates an opportunity for younger generations to encounter Black history outside of a classroom.

Instead of only reading about movements and figures from the past, young people can participate in conversations about what those histories mean today and how they can shape their own communities.

The event's 10th anniversary provides an opportunity to reflect on how much the gathering has grown while considering where it goes next.

According to the event's promotional materials, thousands of people have participated in Black August in the Park over the past decade. The continued growth of the event reflects an ongoing interest in spaces where Black culture and community can be celebrated on their own terms.

As Durham continues to grow and change, events like Black August in the Park offer a place for residents to connect with both the city's present and its history.

The celebration is not simply about looking backward. It is also about remembering the people and movements that came before, creating space for the people who are here now and thinking about what future generations will inherit.

This year's 10th annual Black August in the Park will bring those ideas together in Durham Central Park, where history, culture and community will share the same space.

For a new generation, Black August can be both a reminder of where they come from and an invitation to decide where they go next.



Classifieds

DURHAM COUNTY

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
In the General Court of Justice,
Superior Court Division
Before the Clerk
File No: 26E000912-310
Having qualified as EXECUTOR of the Estate of JOHN CARWILE RANDALL, deceased, late of Durham County, North Carolina, this is to notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against said Estate to exhibit them to the undersigned on or before the 13th day of November, 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 13th day of August, 2026.

Jason Stewart Randall, Executor
c/o Marion Law Office, PLLC
2741 University Drive
Durham, NC 27707
8/13, 8/20, 8/27, and 9/3/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
Having qualified as Personal Representative of the Estate of EVELEAN LEE LAWSON (26E000920-310), late of Durham County, North Carolina, the undersigned does hereby notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against the estate of said decedent to exhibit them to the undersigned at PO Box 40, Hampstead, NC 28443 on or before November 18, 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 13th day of August 2026.

Kim Lawson
Personal Representative
c/o Shingleton Law, PLLC
PO Box 40
Hampstead, NC 28443
8/13, 8/20, 8/27, and 9/3/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
File No: 26E000761-310
Having qualified as Administrator of the Estate of DEBBIE MAYES, deceased, of 4900 N. Roxboro St., Apt. 525, Durham County, Durham, NC 27704, 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 November 14, 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 13th day of August, 2026.

Jeffrey L. Austin, PLLC
Public Administrator of the Estate of Debbie Mayes
500 Westover Dr. #32043
Sanford, NC 27330
8/13, 8/20, 8/27, and 9/3/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
In the General Court of Justice,
Superior Court Division
Before the Clerk
File No: 26E000407-310
Having qualified as ADMINISTRATOR of the Estate of AUDREY MAE JUDD FERRELL, deceased, late of Durham County, North Carolina, this is to notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against said Estate to exhibit them to the undersigned on or before the 13th day of November, 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 13th day of August, 2026.

Ava Lynette Judd, Administrator
2810 Lutz Lane
Durham, NC 27703
8/13, 8/20, 8/27, and 9/3/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
In the General Court of Justice,
Superior Court Division
Before the Clerk
The undersigned, having qualified as Executor of the Estate of ANGEL J. MIYARES, of Durham County, North Carolina, does hereby notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against said estate to present them to the undersigned on or before November 14, 2026 be

pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons, firms or corporations indebted to said estate will please make immediate payment to the undersigned.

This the 13th day of August, 2026.

Jamie Miyares Botta, Executor of the Estate of Angel J. Miyares
711 Quiet Woods
Durham, NC 27712
c/o James R. Hundley
Wyatt Early Harris Wheeler LLP
1912 Eastchester Drive, Ste 400
High Point, NC 27265
8/13, 8/20, 8/27, and 9/3/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
In the General Court of Justice,
Superior Court Division
Before the Clerk
File No: 26E000748-310
Having qualified as EXECUTOR of the Estate of NANCY JOY CHAPMAN, deceased, late of Durham County, North Carolina, this is to notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against said Estate to exhibit them to the undersigned on or before the 13th day of November, 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 13th day of August, 2026.

Eugene Frank Mack, Executor
4815 Revere Road
Durham, NC 27713
8/13, 8/20, 8/27, and 9/3/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
In the General Court of Justice,
Superior Court Division
Before the Clerk
File No: 26E000912-310
Having qualified as EXECUTOR of the Estate of JOHN CARWILE RANDALL, deceased, late of Durham County, North Carolina, this is to notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against said Estate to exhibit them to the undersigned on or before the 13th day of November, 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 13th day of August, 2026.

Jason Stewart Randall, Executor
c/o Marion Law Office, PLLC
2741 University Drive
Durham, NC 27707
8/13, 8/20, 8/27, and 9/3/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
NOTICE OF SERVICE OF PROCESS BY PUBLICATION
DISTRICT COURT
FILE NO.: 25CV011432-310
BRENDA CUEVAR CORDON v. GEOVANNY MORALES RIVERA
TO: GEOVANNY MORALES RIVERA
TAKE NOTICE that a pleading seeking relief against you has been filed in the above-entitled action. The nature of relief being sought is: Absolute Divorce.

You are required to make defense to this pleading not later than forty (40) days from the date of first publication and upon your failure to do so the party seeking service against you will apply to the court for the relief sought.

This is the 13th day of August 2026.

Eric M. Williams, Attorney at Law
2402 S. Miami Blvd., STE 104,
Durham, NC 27703.
(919)-246-7928
ewilliamslawfirm@gmail.com
8/13, 8/20, and 8/27/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
The undersigned, having qualified as Executor of the Estate of JASON COLCHAMIRO-SMART, Deceased, late of Durham County, North Carolina, does hereby notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against the estate to exhibit them to the undersigned at the offices of Munson Law Firm PLLC, P.O. Box 1811 Pittsboro, NC 27312, on or before the 6th day of November, 2026, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to the estate will please make immediate payment.

This 6th day of August, 2026.

JULIA VISGAUSS, EXECUTOR
ESTATE OF Jason Colchamiro-Smart
8/6, 8/13, 8/20, and 8/27/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
In the General Court of Justice,
Superior Court Division
Before the Clerk
File No: 25E001308-310
Having qualified as

ADMINISTRATOR of the Estate of ANA MARITZA MORALES CASTRO, deceased, late of Durham County, North Carolina, this is to notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against said Estate to exhibit them to the undersigned on or before the 6th day of November, 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 6th day of August, 2026.

Hailey Isabella Morales Moreno
Administrator
3501 Sidneys Way
Durham, NC 27703
8/6, 8/13, 8/20, and 8/27/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
File No: 26E000814-310
Having qualified as Executor of the Estate of PATTY JEAN NEAL, deceased, of 918 Ferncrest Drive, Durham County, Durham, NC 27705, 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 November 7, 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 6th day of August, 2026.

Theresa C. Neal
Executor of the Estate of Patty Jean Neal c/o Law Office of Jeffrey L. Austin, PLLC
500 Westover Dr. #32043
Sanford, NC 27330
FOR PUBLICATION: The Carolinian
8/6, 8/13, 8/20 and 8/27/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
COUNTY OF DURHAM
IN THE GENERAL COURT OF JUSTICE
SUPERIOR COURT DIVISION
BEFORE THE CLERK
ESTATE FILE: 26E000681-310
IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE
OF: Wilmot H. Losee, Jr., DECEASED
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
Having qualified as Executor of the Estate of Wilmot H. Losee, Jr. (the "Estate"), of Durham County, North Carolina, the undersigned hereby notifies all persons, firms, and corporations having claims against the Estate of Wilmot H. Losee, Jr. to present them to the undersigned on or before the 9th day of November 2026, in care of the undersigned's attorney at the address stated below, or this Notice will be pleaded in bar of recovery. All persons, firms, and corporations indebted to the decedent, or the Estate shall please make immediate payment to the Estate of Wilmot H. Losee, Jr., care of the undersigned attorney at the address stated below.

This 6th day of August 2026.

Geoffrey A. Losee, Executor
Estate Wilmot H. Losee, Jr.
c/o Rountree Losee LLP
P. O. Box 1409
Wilmington, NC 28402-1409
Telephone: 910-763-3404
Facsimile: 910-763-0320
By: /s/ Michael A. Becker
8/6, 8/13, 8/20, and 8/27/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
ESTATE OF TOBY DUCHAN
FILE NO. 26E000883-310
ALL PERSONS, firms, and corporations having claims against Toby Duchan, deceased, of Durham County, N.C., are notified to exhibit the same to the undersigned on or before November 6, 2026, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of recovery. Debtors of the decedent are asked to make immediate payment. This the 6th of August, 2026.

Joshua Greenstein, Executor of the Estate of Toby Duchan, c/o Amanda Honea, Attorney, 1255 Crescent Green, Suite 200, Cary, NC 27518.

8/6, 8/13, 8/20, and 8/27/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
The undersigned having qualified as Executor of the Estate of CLIFTON LENEAR DEARING, Deceased, late of Durham County, North Carolina, this is to notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against the Estate to Exhibit them to the undersigned at the office of IDOL LAW, PLLC, PO Box 51759, Durham, North Carolina 27717, on or before the 9th day of November, 2026, or this Notice will be in bar of their recovery.

All persons indebted to the Estate will please make immediate payment.

This is the 6th day of August, 2026.

Ronnie Lenear Dearing, Executor, Estate of Clifton Lenear Dearing, Deceased
Robert A. Idol, Esquire
IDOL LAW, PLLC
Attorney at Law
PO Box 51759
Durham, NC 27717
(919)401.5151
8/6, 8/13, 8/20, and 8/27/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
Having qualified as Executor of the Estate of GWENDOLYN JEAN JUSTICE PERRY, deceased, late of the County of Durham, 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 30, 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
7/30, 8/6, 8/13 and 8/20/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
In the General Court of Justice,
Superior Court Division
Before the Clerk
File No.: 26E000696-310
THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 9th day of June, 2026, as Executor of the Estate of CHARITY NAOMI JONES, Deceased, of Durham County, North Carolina, does hereby notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against said Estate to exhibit them to the undersigned on or before the 30th day of 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 30th day of July, 2026.

Wilma Carolyn Jones, Executor
662 Wallace Fork Rd.
Roanoke Rapids, NC 27870
7/30, 8/6, 8/13, and 8/20/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
In the General Court of Justice,
Superior Court Division
Before the Clerk
File No.: 26E000898-310
THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 21st day of July, 2026, as ADMINISTRATOR CTA of the Estate of ELLEN WILKINS RAY, Deceased, of Durham County, North Carolina, does hereby notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against said Estate to exhibit them to the undersigned on or before the 30th day of 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 30th day of July, 2026.

Chris Ray, Administrator of the Estate of Ellen W. Ray
1400 Hunters Ridge Road
Canton, NC 28716
7/30, 8/6, 8/13, and 8/20/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
All persons, firms and corporations having claims against RONALD STEPHEN WATKINS, deceased, of Durham County, are hereby notified to exhibit them to the undersigned on or before the 28th 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 30th day of July, 2026.

Tonya L. Minor Watkins
Administrator of the Estate of Ronald Stephen Watkins
c/o M. Bryan King
Haitchcock, Barfield, Hulse & King, PLLC
Attorneys for Estate
Post Office Drawer 7
Goldsboro, NC 27533
(919) 735-6420
7/30, 8/6, 8/13, and 8/20/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
In the General Court of Justice,
Superior Court Division
Before the Clerk
File No.: 26E000801-310
THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 10th day of July, 2026, as EXECUTOR of the Estate of WINIFRED D. NORTON, Deceased, of Durham County, North Carolina, does hereby notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against said Estate to exhibit them to the undersigned

on or before the 30th day of 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 30th day of July, 2026.

Mitsi Utley Norton, Executor
3102 Carpenter Road
Durham, NC 27703
7/30, 8/6, 8/13, and 8/20/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
In the General Court of Justice,
Superior Court Division
Before the Clerk
File No.: 26E000099-310
THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 20th day of April, 2026, as ADMINISTRATOR of the Estate of DIANNE ELIZABETH TIMBLIN, Deceased, of Durham County, North Carolina, does hereby notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against said Estate to exhibit them to the undersigned on or before the 30th day of 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 30th day of July, 2026.

James Graham Lewis, Administrator
4 Linkside Ct.
Durham, NC 27703
7/30, 8/6, 8/13, and 8/20/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
In the General Court of Justice,
Superior Court Division
Before the Clerk
File No.: 26E000885-310
THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 21st day of July, 2026, as EXECUTRIX of the Estate of FRANK DAVID ALMENDAREZ, Deceased, of Durham County, North Carolina, does hereby notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against said Estate to exhibit them to the undersigned on or before the 30th day of 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 30th day of July, 2026.

Twila slater, Executrix
c/o Richard F. Prentis, Jr.
4 Consultant Pl.
Durham, NC 27707
7/30, 8/6, 8/13, and 8/20/2026
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

DURHAM
COUNTY

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

EDGECOMBE
COUNTY

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
EDGECOMBE COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
RE: THE ESTATE OF DAPHINE BROWN – 23E000401-320
Having qualified as Administrator of the Estate of DAPHINE BROWN, deceased, Edgecombe County, North Carolina, the undersigned does hereby notify all persons, firms, and corporations having claims against the estate of said deceased to exhibit them to the undersigned on or before the 4th day of November, 2026, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. This the 6th ay of August, 2026.

Alicia Dickens, Administrator
DSR Legal, PLLC
PO Box 51596
Durham, NC 27717
8/6, 8/13, 8/20, and 8/27/2026

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: 25E000730-670
Having qualified as EXECUTOR of the Estate of BETTY COLEMAN WILLOUGHBY, deceased, late of Orange County, North Carolina, this is to notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against said Estate to exhibit them to the undersigned on or before the 30th 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 30th day of July, 2026.
Roger Dale Page, Executor
4313 Page Road
Morrisville, NC 27560
7/30, 8/6, 8/13, and 8/20/2026

MECKLENBURG
COUNTY

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
IN THE GENERAL COURT OF JUSTICE COUNTY OF MECKLENBURG SUPERIOR COURT DIVISION FILE NO.: 26CV011824-590 Danielle Michelle Davis and Latonya Houston, Plaintiffs Vs. Ciani Adimu Vega, Defendant To: Ciani Adimu Vega, above named Defendant: Take notice that a pleading seeking relief against the Defendant Ciani Adimu Vega and naming you as a Defendant has been filed in the above entitled action. The nature of the relief being sought is as follows: Compensation in excess of \$25,000.00 for bodily injuries and property damage stemming from a motor vehicle accident that occurred on 12/10/2025.

You are required to make defense to such pleading not later than September 15, 2026, said date being 40 days from the first publication of this notice and upon your failure to do so the party seeking service against you will apply to the court for the relief sought. This the 17th day of July, 2026. WILLIAM H. HARDING ATTORNEY FOR PLAINTIFF 9115 HARRIS CORNERS PKWY SUITE 220 CHARLOTTE, NC 28269 TELEPHONE: (704)509-3090 STATE BAR NO.: 40623 August 6, 2026, August 13, 2026, and August 20, 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: 26E002866-910
Having qualified as ADMINISTRATOR of the Estate of LATONYA SEANNE ROBINSON, deceased, late of Wake County, North Carolina, this is to notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against said Estate to exhibit them to the undersigned on or before the 13th day of November, 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 13th day of August, 2026.
Virginia Leonard, Administrator
4303 Halliwell Drive
Raleigh, NC 27606
8/13, 8/20, 8/27, and 9/3/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
WAKE COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
In the General Court of Justice,
Superior Court Division
Before the Clerk
File No: 25E003933-910

Having qualified as ADMINISTRATOR of the Estate of YVONNE ALANA CHEEK, deceased, late of Wake County, North Carolina, this is to notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against said Estate to exhibit them to the undersigned on or before the 13th day of November, 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 13th day of August, 2026.
James Cheek, Administrator
4813 Stubby Hall Court
Wake Forest, NC 27587
8/13, 8/20, 8/27, and 9/3/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
WAKE COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
In the General Court of Justice,
Superior Court Division
Before the Clerk
File No: 26E000939-910

Having qualified as ADMINISTRATOR CTA of the Estate of MARY ELIZA BOBBITT, deceased, late of Wake County, North Carolina, this is to notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against said Estate to exhibit them to the undersigned on or before the 6th day of November, 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 6th day of August, 2026.
Kayolyn Person, Administrator CTA
1313 Rhea Drive
Garner, NC 27529
8/6, 8/13, 8/20, and 8/27/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

WAKE COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
In the General Court of Justice,
Superior Court Division
Before the Clerk
File No: 26E001585-910
Having qualified as EXECUTOR of the Estate of MARY L. EVANS, deceased, late of Wake County, North Carolina, this is to notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against said Estate to exhibit them to the undersigned on or before the 6th day of November, 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 6th day of August, 2026.
Veronica Evans-Johnson, Executor
9 Cynthia Court
Durham, NC 27704
8/6, 8/13, 8/20, and 8/27/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
WAKE COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
In the General Court of Justice,
Superior Court Division
Before the Clerk
File No: 26E002326-910

Having qualified as EXECUTOR of the Estate of ELIZABETH LEE IMBURG, deceased, late of Wake County, North Carolina, this is to notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against said Estate to exhibit them to the undersigned on or before the 6th day of November, 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 6th day of August, 2026.
Danny Robert Pugh
c/o Ethan C. Timmins
Patrick Law, PLLC
3805 University Drive, Suite A
Durham, NC 27707
8/6, 8/13, 8/20, and 8/27/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
WAKE COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
In the General Court of Justice,
Superior Court Division
Before the Clerk
File No.: 26E002170-910

THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 15th day of July, 2026, as ADMINISTRATOR CTA of the Estate of ANNE GRAY FUTRELL, Deceased, of Wake County, North Carolina, does hereby notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against said Estate to exhibit them to the undersigned on or before the 30th day of 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 30th day of July, 2026.
Claude K. Futrell, II, Administrator
CTA
c/o Marion Law Office, PLLC
2741 University Drive
Durham, NC 27707
7/30, 8/6, 8/13, and 8/20/2026

NOTICE OF SERVICE OF PROCESS BY PUBLICATION
NORTH CAROLINA COUNTY OF WAKE In the General Court of Justice, District Court Division, File 26CV008358-910 [EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION] JUDY OBANDO MORENO, Plaintiff v. JUAN VARGAS PEREZ, Defendant. TAKE NOTICE that a pleading seeking relief has been filed in the above-entitled action. The nature of the relief sought is Equitable Distribution and Post Separation Support. A hearing date of 9/11/26 has been scheduled. You are

required to make defense with the Wake County Clerk of Court no later than 00/00/26. Upon your failure to do so, Plaintiff will apply to the Court for the relief sought. This, the 30th day of July, 2026.
Judy Moreno, PO Box 58058, Raleigh, NC 27658.

7/30, 8/6, and 8/13/2026
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 Respers, 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

regular bills and payroll numbers. A lender will want to confirm you have enough cash flow to manage a new loan payment. Even if your business is profitable, it doesn't mean you can handle more debt. A lender will consider your debt-to-asset ratio when you apply. This tells lenders how much of your revenue is paid towards your current debts. The higher the figure, the harder it may be to qualify for a small business loan. Debt-service coverage ratio (DSCR) may be used to compare a company's cash flow against debts. When a business applies for a loan, lenders use this information to assess risk and determine if the business has the capacity to repay the loan. The ratio varies from lender to lender, but a DSCR of 1.25 or higher

is ideal. 9. Business documentation Finally, there are a few pieces of documentation most lenders will require you to submit when you apply for a business loan. These include: Profit and loss statements Proof of ownership Business licenses and registration Employee identification number (EIN) Balance sheets Business insurance Payroll records Driver's license or other photo ID Commercial lease agreement The exact documentation, like every part of the application, depends on the lender you work with. As you move through the application process, your lender should provide you with the exact list of documents it needs to evaluate your eligibility.

For traditional term loans and Small Business Administration (SBA) loans, a proposal is key. A loan proposal is similar to a business plan and may be included in one. The loan proposal should outline: Why your business needs funding How your loan funds will be used Your business's ability and plan to repay the loan How funding will benefit your business

It isn't a requirement for every type of loan — and not every lender will want to see one. But you should still have one prepared when you are ready to apply. 8. List of debts and obligations You will need to list your business's debts and other financial obligations as part of a business loan application. This includes other loans you may have, business credit cards,

and renewable generation; and core infrastructure including transportation and water systems. "We are proud of our long history supporting the American economy. As America marks its 250th year, this initiative reflects our confidence in the country's future and the investments that will shape it," said Jim DeMare, Co-President of Bank of America.

Progress will be measured based on eligible activity in primary market lending, investing, capital markets and advisory transactions, consistent with

the bank's methodology for its \$1.5 trillion ten-year sustainable finance goal. The bank stated the initiative aims to create tens of thousands of jobs across construction, manufacturing, technology and operations sectors. Bank of America reported investing nearly \$40 million in 2025 in more than 730 workforce development partners, which the bank said helped connect more than 90,000 people to employment opportunities.

The effort will be led by Bank of

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

Classifieds

SR. SCIENTIST II (ARD)

Avista Pharma Solutions Inc. d/b/a Cambrex seeks Sr. Scientist II (ARD) in Durham, NC to execute analytical methods & provide general analytical support. Reqs: Bach degree in Chem, Toxicology, Pharmacology, or rel field + 6 yrs exp in same or rel role; Alt: Master degree + 4 yrs exp in same fields. Frgn deg equiv OK. Resume to april.collazo@cambrex.com; ref. Sr. Scientist II (ARD)

Balfour Beatty metcon

CONSTRUCTION JOINT VENTURE

NOTICE TO SUBCONTRACTOR
BIDDER PRE-QUALIFICATION REQUEST
FOR THE
Raleigh-Durham Airport Authority Aviation Parkway / National Guard Interchange - Phase 1

Balfour Beatty Construction is seeking to pre-qualify civil roadway, electrical, signage, and utility contractors to submit bids for the furnishing of labor, material, and equipment for the following project: RDU Aviation Parkway Interchange - Phase 1. Balfour Beatty Construction has been selected as the Construction Manager at Risk (CMR) for the project and will receive bids from and contract with the principal contractors for the execution of the work. The preliminary budget for this phase is approximately \$9,000,000. The Small Business (SB) goal for this project is to be determined and will be published with the Bid Manual.

Similar project experience will be considered during prequalification. Anticipated Bid Date will be October 6, 2026. This is not a request for bid, however, only subcontractors who have completed a prequalification package, and been deemed prequalified for this project, will be considered for a bid on this project. Submittals for prequalification forms may be hand delivered, mailed, or submitted electronically. Deadline for prequalification submission is 14 days prior to Bid Date. The CMR and Authority reserve the right to reject any and all Pre-qualifications. The contracting method will be through Competitive Bid in accordance with Chapter 143 of the NC General Statues. For further information or questions, please contact Ben Halpin at 919-218-5244, or by email at: bhalpin@bbus.com or RDUprequal@bbus.com

Updated prequalification documents can be accessed through the Balfour Beatty plan room under "RDU Aviation Parkway Interchange - PREQUALIFICATION" at the link below:

https://app.buildingconnected.compublic/5430e7a75cdc2e0300dd757d

Mailed or hand delivered submittals shall go to the following address:

Ben Halpin
1009 National Guard Drive
Baltour Beatty Office Trailer
Morrisville, NC 27560

Business Loan—CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

basic information about your business and industry. You can work with a business advisor or a Small Business Development Center (SBDC) to shape your business plan.

Your business plan will likely need to have a few sections, including: Executive summary Company description Market analysis Organization and management information Service or product line descriptions Marketing and sales information Funding request Financial projections

Smaller lenders and nontraditional lenders may only need to see proof that you have sufficient revenue and cash flow to handle the loan, no matter how your business plans on using it.

7. Loan proposal

B of A Pledges \$250B For US Infrastructure Financing

CHARLOTTE, N.C. - Bank of America just announced a plan to mobilize and deploy \$250 billion toward U.S. infrastructure development over 18 months, running from January 1, 2026 through July 4, 2027, according to a press release statement.

The Critical Infrastructure Finance Initiative will provide financing, investment and advisory solutions across three categories: digital infrastructure including data centers and semiconductors; energy and power infrastructure such as conventional

Politics & Election News

Today's Democrats Have A Working-Class Voter Problem

THE CONVERSATION - Since 2016, when Donald Trump shattered the Democrats’ blue wall by winning working-class voters across the Midwest, a cottage industry has sprung up on the left dedicated to answering a single question: How can Democrats win back the working class?

The answers come in different forms.

Sometimes it is veteran Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders, railing against “the oligarchs.”

Or it’s Connecticut Sen. Chris Murphy, who after the 2024 election declared, “Democrats must reclaim our identity as the party of the working class.”

Or a new generation of candidates – tattooed veterans, mechanics, bartenders – whose biography is supposed to do the political work that policy has not.

Graham Platner, the Maine Senate candidate who had become the left’s latest blue-collar savior until he ended his campaign in the wake of a sexual assault allegation, put the theory in its most unguarded form.

“We are in a form of class war,” he says. “And if the Democratic Party is going to have a future with working people, it needs to pick the side of working people.”

The most recent high-profile progressive candidate to embrace those working people: Abdul El-Sayed, whose economic populism helped him win the 2026 Michigan Democratic Senate primary. Called a “working class” champion by the United Auto Workers, El-Sayed performed best in wealthier, higher-educated areas of the state. His opponent, Haley Stevens, drew more support from Detroit and working-class communities.



Still, El-Sayed’s victory has led to a familiar refrain: Somewhere out there is a latent working-class majority, held together by shared economic grievances, waiting to be politically reassembled to vote for Democrats. The New Deal did it – “economic populism” can do it again.

I’m a political scientist who has written extensively about rural and working-class communities. I believe it is an open question whether these reformist Democrats are really interested in understanding working-class voters on their own terms. Because working-class voters, as they tell us themselves, are not simply waiting to be activated by the right program, messenger or phrase. “Fight the oligarchy” probably isn’t going to do it.

Working-class voters have a worldview. For 50 years, it has been growing less compatible with the Democratic Party’s – not because working-class voters changed, but because Democrats did.

Working-class identity

Since the early 1950s, the American National Election Studies has asked respondents whether they think of themselves as members of the working class. This article uses my analysis of that data.

While a larger proportion of the electorate has obtained a college degree and household incomes have risen, the share of Americans who consider themselves working class has remained remarkably stable: roughly 35% of voters for the past 70 years, 38% in 2024.

Working-class identity is more durable and culturally grounded than a description of who isn’t a billionaire. It’s a specific way of looking at the world.

Conventional definitions of the working class often miss how people understand their own place in society. In the 2024 American National Election Studies, for example, 21% of those who identify as working class

have a college degree, only 5% belong to a private-sector union, and 37% own stocks. Conversely, most Americans without a college degree do not identify as working class.

Working-class voters have never been a predominantly Democratic group – not even at the height of the New Deal coalition. Based on the American National Election Studies self-report measure, the working-class share of the Democratic coalition peaked around 56% in 1960 and has fallen more or less continuously since, sitting at just about 30% today.

Meanwhile, the share of working-class voters who identify as Democrats has been declining for half a century: A majority did so in 1958, but not since.

Working-class voters have not become Republicans. Only in 2020 and 2024 – the first time in the survey’s history – did more working-class voters identify as Republican than Democrat, and even then by narrow margins.

The data shows a politically homeless working class: estranged from the Democrats, not captured by the Republicans, stuck in the middle with diminishing attachment to either party.

Economic abandonment

What drove them out?

A segment of the progressive left has a ready answer: Democrats abandoned working-class voters economically – on trade, wages and industrial policy. Working-class voters responded rationally. Fix the economics and the coalition comes back.

Trade is the strongest argument. In 1988, roughly 74% of both Democrats and working-class voters groups favored limits on imports to protect

American jobs.

By 2024, only 26% of Democrats favored limits, while 54% of working-class voters continued to do so.

Unlike most Democrats, many working-class communities do not see globalization in their interest. Running alongside the trade gap is a widening divide over values that no tariffs can fix.

What fairness requires

In 1984, Democrats and working-class voters broadly agreed that treating people more equally would mean fewer social problems. A divergence opened after 2008 and accelerated after 2016, with Democrats now 28 points more likely than working-class voters to think we should worry more about equality.

In 1986, half of mainstream Democrats and a slightly smaller percentage of working-class voters agreed with the idea that Black Americans don’t succeed because they don’t try hard enough. By 2024, Democratic agreement had collapsed to 13%. Working-class voters also declined, to 32%.

That gap is not primarily a story about rising working-class racial resentment. It’s about the Democratic Party’s rapid post-2008 shift toward a worldview that places far greater explanatory weight on structural barriers and far less on individual effort and personal responsibility.

Working-class voters, who historically understood their own lives through a framework of hard work and earned reward, did not shift so dramatically.

Alignment becomes division

On cultural questions, the pattern persists: Working-class voters did not move right in reactionary revolt. Democrats moved left.

In 1986, similar levels of Democrats and working-class voters agreed with the statement “This country would have many fewer problems if there were more emphasis on traditional family ties.” By 2024 a 25-point

gap emerged.

On whether religion is an important part of their life: a near-zero gap through the early 1990s, but 17 points by 2024. On abortion, a 3-point gap in 1980 became 30 points in 2024. Whether immigration levels should be increased, the two groups were virtually identical in 2000 – around 8% support. By 2020 Democrats were at 48%, working-class voters at 24%.

Even where working-class voters nominally agree with a Democratic policy goal, they don’t trust the institution asked to deliver it – a distrust decades in the making.

How the ‘system’ plays

In 1958, working-class voters and Democrats were within 5 points of each other on whether government wastes a lot of tax money. By 2024 that gap reached 27 points – not because working-class voters lurched toward anti-government extremism, but because mainstream Democrats became dramatically more trusting of government as an instrument of social change.

Working-class voters are 17 points more likely than Democrats to say people like them have no say in what government does. In 2024, 88% of working-class voters and 75% of Democrats said government is run by a few big interests. Both groups agree the system is captured.

Yet the Democratic policy response, invariably, is to expand the system.

On support for expanding government – from healthcare to jobs to environmental programs – Democrats and working-class voters have diverged dramatically since the 1980s. By 2024, there were approval gaps of between 20 and 30 points on providing government health insurance, environmental spending and a guaranteed jobs program.

On every major plank of the progressive economic agenda, Democrats are now substantially to the left of the workers they claim to champion.

The People’s Cookout: A Civic Gathering

By Jheri Hardaway

Staff Writer



One thing we do well as a people is create a vibe. This past Saturday, The Triangle Collective successfully created a positive and prosperous vibe for leaders to connect, learn, and grow. In an era when grassroots organizing demands both conviction and connection, The People’s Cookout stood out as a powerful demonstration of unity and civic strength. More than a gathering, the event served as a vibrant nexus where community members, organizational leaders, and civic advocates converged with a shared intent: to transform collective fellowship into measurable bipartisan civic power.

With a goal of unifying faith, culture, and leadership, the true measure of the cookout’s impact lay in the breadth of its attendance. Representatives from all Divine Nine fraternities and sororities joined forces alongside local faith communities,

tially.

By bridging historic community pillars from church congregations to collegiate and alumni Greek-letter organizations, the gathering underscored a fundamental truth: community empowerment begins by meeting people where fellowship already thrives.

Beyond the spirit of togetherness, the event offered actionable strategy. Supported by resource materials distributed in partnership with the North Carolina Black Alliance, attendees were equipped with tangible tools designed to elevate nonpartisan voter engagement across regional networks.

The focus remained resolute throughout the event:

1. Network Activation: Leaders pledged to mobilize their respective memberships, families, and immediate neighborhoods ahead of upcoming electoral cycles.
2. Resource Distribution: Practi-

cal guides and voter education materials were shared to ensure organizations can lead seamless outreach initiatives in their local districts.

3. Sustained Dialogue: The cookout cultivated an environment where civic duty was framed not as a periodic requirement, but as an ongoing community commitment.

Elected officials and candidates from both sides of the aisle were invited. The enthusiasm generated at The People’s Cookout wasn’t confined to a single afternoon. Participants left with concrete commitments to carry this momentum forward to empower voters, educate neighbors, and ensure that community voices remain central to local policy and governance. By uniting purpose with presence, The People’s Cookout proved that sustained civic progress relies on the collective strength of an engaged, informed, and organized public.

SC Puts Black Voters in the Driver Seat for '28

ATLANTA TRIBUNE THE MAGAZINE — The Democratic Party’s decision to designate South Carolina as the first 2028 presidential primary offers Black voters a historic opportunity. This shift means Black voters will play a leading role in determining which presidential candidates gain momentum and which campaigns falter before most Democrats have the chance to cast their primary votes.

The Democratic Party’s decision to elevate South Carolina as the first 2028 presidential primary provides Black voters with an historic opportunity.

Black voters will play a leading role in determining which presidential candidates gain momentum and which campaigns collapse before most Democrats even have a chance to vote in the primary.

Candidates seeking the 2028 nomination will now have to organize in Black communities early. They will need relationships with local leaders, churches, civic organizations, historically Black colleges and universities, small businesses and rural communities.

Their records will be scrutinized on voting rights, health disparities, education, economic mobility, criminal justice and the survival of Black institutions.

Black voters will vote based on which candidate speaks directly to their concerns, rather than on a political calculation about who is most electable after Iowa and New Hampshire have already picked over the candidates.

With South Carolina, Democrats are now moving the nominating calendar closer to Black voters who are actually the party’s center of gravity.

This decision reflects nearly two decades of election results showing Southern Black voters have been central to selecting Democratic presidential nominees despite being placed later in the nominating process.

Barack Obama’s 2008 Iowa caucus victory established that a Black candidate could win in a predominantly



white state. But Black South Carolinians solidified the coalition that actually carried Obama to the nomination and ultimately the presidency.

More than 530,000 votes were cast in the state’s Democratic primary. Obama received approximately 295,000 votes, or 55 percent, compared with about 141,000 votes, or 27 percent, for Hillary Clinton. John Edwards, a former senator from neighboring North Carolina, finished a distant third.

The delegate result was nearly as decisive. Obama won 25 of South Carolina’s pledged delegates, Clinton won 12, and Edwards won eight. In other words, Obama left South Carolina with more delegates than his two leading opponents combined.

Exit polling explains how he did it. Black voters constituted roughly 55 percent of the primary electorate, and nearly eight in 10 supported Obama. He also won Black voters across age, income and educational groups, demonstrating that his appeal extended far beyond younger or more affluent African Americans.

Eight years later, Black voters in South Carolina delivered an even more lopsided result for Clinton.

In the 2016 primary, Clinton won approximately 272,000 votes, or 73.5 percent, while Bernie Sanders

received about 96,000 votes, or 26 percent. Clinton won 39 pledged delegates to Sanders’s 14, giving her almost three-fourths of the state’s available pledged delegates.

Black voters accounted for roughly six in 10 participants in that primary. Exit polls found that Clinton won close to nine in 10 of them. Sanders performed substantially better among white voters and younger voters, but those advantages could not overcome Clinton’s strength with the state’s much larger Black electorate.

By the end of the primary season, Clinton had secured more than 1,800 pledged delegates even before automatic delegates were included in the count. Like Obama, Clinton’s coalition was built through commanding victories among Black voters in the South.

Joe Biden arrived in South Carolina in 2020 with a campaign on the brink of failure. He had finished fourth in Iowa, fifth in New Hampshire and second in Nevada. Before South Carolina, Biden had won only 15 pledged delegates across the first three contests.

Then Black voters changed the race.

Biden won all 46 counties and captured 39 of South Carolina’s 54 pledged delegates. Exit polls found

Survival And Fighting Fear

By JudyKay Jefferson

Special To The Carolinian

When I look at the country right now, I don’t see apathy—I see a sour, watchful mood that borders on exhaustion. Americans are not shrugging at politics; they’re bracing. Pew Research Center recently found that about seven in ten adults are dissatisfied with the way things are going in the United States, and most believe the nation’s best days are behind us. Pew Research... That’s not just pessimism; it’s a verdict on how government, the economy, and our elections feel in everyday life.

Economically, the numbers tell a similar story. In Pew’s 2026 State of the Union analysis, only 28% of Americans say national economic conditions are excellent or good, while 72% call them fair or poor. People may hear about growth and low unemployment, but they judge the economy by rent, groceries, and medical bills—and too many feel like they’re running harder just to stay in place.

Layered on top of that is the Trump Administration’s second-term agenda, which has become a kind of stress test for our democracy. A major multi-wave survey from the University of Wisconsin–Madison’s Center for Communication and Civic Renewal reports broad public opposition to several Trump policies, including ICE immigration raids, pressure on media and universities, and restrictions on abortion pills by mail. wisc.edu +1 The same study finds a “dark national future” mood: Americans are significantly more likely than in 2024 to say things are going to get worse, and two-thirds believe U.S. democracy is weakening each year. wisc.edu

Civil rights groups have been blunt about what they think this means. The National Urban League’s latest “State of Black America” report argues that Trumpera changes to the Justice Department’s Civil Rights Division, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, and voting laws are pushing Black Americans further away from the American Dream than at any point since the Civil Rights Movement. AP News Their warning is simple: policies that target Black communities ultimately destabilize prospects for poor and workingclass Americans of all backgrounds.

Reactions to this agenda fall into a few clear camps. One reaction is fear—especially around civil rights, reproductive freedom, and voting access. People see rollbacks and court appointments as deliberate attempts to narrow who counts and who gets to decide. Another reaction is defiance: advocacy groups are doubling down on litigation, organizing, and coalitionbuilding, trying to turn courtroom wins into durable policy rather than temporary reprieves. AP News A third reaction, particularly among some supporters, is relief; they view these moves as restoring “order,” reinforcing traditional values, and curbing what they see as elite or coastal overreach.

That tension is part of why an upcoming march on Washington—organized by a coalition of civil rights, votingrights, and economicjustice groups—is drawing serious attention. Organizers project well over 100,000 participants, aiming to put bodies, stories, and demands in front of a government they believe has grown too comfortable using fear as a governing tool. Their stated goals are straightforward: defend voting rights, protect reproductive autonomy, and demand economic policies that lift the poor rather than punish them. Even if the final crowd falls short of projections, the march is designed as a visible rebuttal to intimidation politics.

What strikes me is how today’s politics of fear differ from the tactics used to resist civil rights up through the 1970s. Back then, suppression was often brutally direct: poll taxes, literacy tests, open police violence, and explicit segregationist rhetoric. The threat was visible in the billy club, the fire hose, the courthouse door. Today, fear is more often coded into policy language and amplified through digital echo chambers—voter ID laws framed as “integrity,” protest crackdowns framed as “public safety,” reproductive restrictions framed as “states’ rights,” all carried on waves of online disinformation and targeted outrage.

The goal, however, feels familiar: make certain Americans doubt their own power and question whether showing up matters. The march on Washington, and the broader resistance around it, is a reminder that fear can be answered—not with silence, but with presence. In a country this sour, this skeptical, choosing to stand together in public is itself a statement: we see