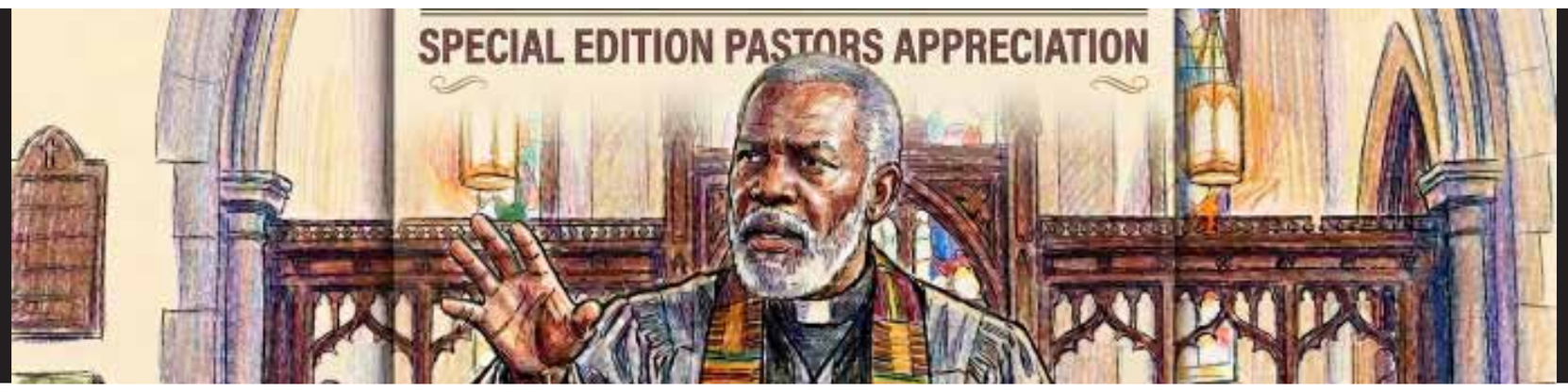
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Dedicated to the Spirit and Service of God

The Carolinian

N.C.'s Twice-Weekly African-American Owned Newspaper

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RALEIGH, N.C. THURSDAY OCTOBER 8, 2026 - OCTOBER 14, 2026 VOL. 86, NO. 50

Progress' Perspective Depends On Your Side Of The Street



A road can be a symbol of progress to one community and a reminder of loss to another.

A new highway can mean shorter commutes, economic development and greater access to jobs. But for residents whose neighborhoods have previously been divided or displaced by highways, the same project can raise very different questions: Who benefits? Who pays? Whose property is affected? And whose history is being considered before construction begins?

Charlotte's experience with highway development provides an important example of why communities do not always view the same public project in the same way.

Charlotte has acknowledged that highway construction in the mid-20th century destroyed portions of established Black neighborhoods. The city's own historical account notes that Brooklyn, a predominantly Black neighborhood near downtown, was demolished during the 1960s, displacing more than 1,000 families and contributing to the closure of more than 200 Black-owned businesses.

The construction of I-77 and later I-277 also affected Black neighborhoods in and around Charlotte's West End. The city says that highway construction demolished minority neighborhoods, including portions of Brooklyn, and that additional Black neighborhoods were affected by interstate interchanges during the 1970s and 1980s.

The exact same thing happened in Durham when the construction of Highway 147 cut straight through the Hayti community, and in Raleigh when I-40 was built.

Those historical experiences matter when residents hear discussions about new roads, highway expansions or toll lanes.

For a commuter sitting in traffic, an express lane can represent a practical solution: pay a toll and get a more reliable trip. For transportation planners, express lanes can be tools for managing congestion and improving travel-time reliability.

For a longtime resident of a historically Black neighborhood, however, the conversation may begin somewhere else. It may begin with the memory of what happened the last time a major highway project came through.

For now we will focus on the question of who benefits from Charlotte's current transportation plans.

NCDOT is developing express-lane projects on I-77 and other major corridors. The department says the projects are intended to improve safety, address congestion and provide more reliable travel times. The I-77 South Express Lanes project is currently in the procurement stage, with preliminary designs still subject to change.

But NCDOT also recognizes that the history of highway construction in Charlotte has created legitimate concerns.

In February 2026, the department announced that it was moving forward with an elevated design for the I-77 South project after extensive community engagement. According to NCDOT, the design was selected in part because it would reduce neighborhood impacts. The department said the elevated alternative would avoid impacts to 41 homes compared with an at-grade widening option.

That distinction is important.

The debate is not simply about whether Charlotte needs better transportation. It is also about how transportation improvements are designed and who is protected when those improvements are made.

NCDOT says the current preliminary designs will not displace homes in several historic Black communities, including McCrorey Heights, Biddleville, Lincoln Heights and the West End.

For residents and community leaders, however, preserving homes is only one part of the conversation.

There are also questions about property values, small businesses, pedestrian connections, air quality, neighborhood cohesion and whether residents who have lived in these communities for generations will be able to remain there as investment increases.

Charlotte itself acknowledges that public and private investment can create displacement when existing residents do not have an opportunity to share in the benefits of growth. The city identifies physical, economic and cultural displacement as separate but related concerns. It's the same project, but from different perspectives.

This is an important lesson for communities throughout North Carolina.

A transportation project may look completely different depending on where someone sits.

A business owner may see a new road as an opportunity to attract customers.

A commuter may see it as a way to get to work faster.

A developer may see increased property values.

A city planner may see improved connectivity.

But a homeowner may see the possibility of losing property.

A senior citizen may worry about losing the neighborhood where he or she raised a family.

A small-business owner may worry that construction will reduce customers.

And a historically marginalized community may remember previous projects that promised regional progress but came with a disproportionate local cost.

None of these perspectives should automatically be dismissed. They represent different experiences of the same place.

Charlotte's highway history demonstrates why community engagement cannot begin after a transportation plan has already been largely designed.

The city is now undertaking efforts to reconnect parts of the West End and address the long-term effects of transportation infrastructure. The West End is a historically Black community with deep connections to Johnson C. Smith University, Black entrepreneurship and the Civil Rights Movement.

That history changes the questions residents are likely to ask.

Instead of simply asking, "Will

(See ***PERSPECTIVE,*** P. 9)

Americans' Water Bills Are Growing Faster Than Groceries, Overall Inflation

NC Newsline—Household water bills are increasing faster than inflation and income, according to a new analysis.

The environmental advocacy nonprofit Food and Water Watch analyzed water bill data among the nation's 500 largest community water providers. Those systems serve a collective 155 million people — nearly half the nation's population.

Between 2015 and 2025, water bills increased by 62% on average across those water providers. That was faster than the overall inflation rate and more than two times the rate of grocery price increases over the same period. Food and Water Watch found that water bills increased 19% faster than household incomes, meaning people are spending a greater share of their earnings on water.

In Louisiana, Maryland, New Hampshire and West Virginia, water bills grew about twice as fast as household incomes, the analysis found.



Costs varied widely across the country: In Idaho, the average household spent $286 on water bills last year. In West Virginia, the average cost was $1,383. The analysis found for-profit water companies charge more than publicly owned water providers (Food and Water Watch advocates against private ownership of water systems).

The analysis projects that costs will rise further as climate-change driven drought and natural disasters threaten water supplies. It also pointed to growing infrastructure needs that are estimated to cost hundreds of billions of dollars across the country.

"Industrial pollution, aging infrastructure, and federal disinvestment are fueling a crisis for the nation's water systems," the report said.

The American Water Works Association, which includes more than 4,300 North American water utilities, estimates American drinking water systems will need as much as $2.4 trillion over the next 25 years to sustain and modernize infrastructure. If those costs are covered solely by users, bills could more than double by 2050, the association projected.

Aside from abandoning water system privatization, Food and Water Watch recommends that state and local governments support local control of water systems, hold polluters accountable for contamination and prevent the tech, fossil fuel and agriculture sectors from passing on costs to residential water users. The organization also calls on Congress to fund water improvement projects that can help communities meet federal water standards.

The report comes as more Americans struggle with the high costs of electricity, gas, groceries and housing.

Electric bills continued to soar and millions of families that heat their homes with oil are facing a much more expensive winter. The National Energy Assistance Directors Association, which represents state employees administering federal energy assistance programs, estimates that heating oil costs will be about 50% higher than last winter.

Though federal forecasters predict a warmer winter, wars in Iran and Ukraine have greatly disrupted petroleum markets, leading to quick price hikes.

Households in the Northeast, which use more than 80% of the nation's heating oil, will be most affected. But the association projects American home heating costs will rise an average of 8.7% this winter — more than twice the rate of inflation.

Americans Are Using Buy Now, Pay Later More Than Ever. Here's What To Know

NEW YORK (AP) — Americans spent more than $160 billion last year using buy now, pay later plans, according to research published by Federal Reserve economists.

Experts say they're increasingly seeing people use the plans for everyday expenses like groceries, bills, transportation and, sometimes rent.

"It has been very hard out there for a lot of people," said Sara Rathner, NerdWallet's credit card expert. "It's a tough job market, and it's a rough economy, and the cost of the things that we buy every day has been going up, in some cases more than people's incomes."

Pay-in-four plans, which generally allow consumers to pay for purchases in four installments over six weeks, accounted for about half of the $160 billion in buy now, pay later spending last year, according to the study. Use of those plans has increased nearly 80% since 2023.



The rest of the plans were either longer- or shorter-term loans.

How consumers are using buy now pay later

When Elizabeth Brown first used buy now, pay later, she had just started living by herself and was earning a salary that made it hard to afford basic expenses. She would buy groceries and, once she got her paycheck, pay for them through buy now, pay later. Six years later, things haven't changed much.

(See ***BUY NOW, PAY LATER,*** P. 3)

STATE NEWS BRIEFS

FINAL WEEK TO REGISTER TO VOTE FOR THE 2026 GENERAL ELECTION

RALEIGH, NC - The Wake County Board of Elections is reminding residents that the voter registration deadline for the 2026 General Election is Friday, Oct. 9. Anyone wishing to make their voice heard in the upcoming Nov. 3 General Election should check their voter registration online now to ensure it is current.

Eligible voters can register or update their voter information by completing a one-page form. The completed and signed form may be submitted through one of the following methods:

- Postmarked by Oct. 9 and mailed to Wake County Board of Elections, PO Box 695, Raleigh, NC 27602;
- Delivered in person to the Wake County Board of Elections Office at 1200 N. New Hope Rd., Raleigh, NC 27610 by 5 p.m. on Oct. 9;
- Printed and signed, scanned or photographed, and emailed to voter@wake.gov by 5 p.m. on Oct. 9;
- Faxed to 919-743-4746 by 5 p.m. on Oct. 9; or
- Submitted at any Wake County Public Library (or other approved agency) by 5 p.m. on Oct. 9.

Voters with a valid North Carolina driver license or identification card from the North Carolina Department of Motor Vehicles may also register to vote or update their information online through the myNCDMV website. This is a free and standalone service of the DMV.

Voter Registration Requirements

To register to vote in Wake County for the 2026 General Election, you must:

- Be a U.S. citizen;
- Be at least 18 years old on or before Nov. 3;
- Be a resident of Wake County for 30 days prior to Election Day (Oct. 4); and
- Not currently be serving a felony sentence, including any period of probation, post-release supervision or parole.

The voter registration form requires an identification number – a North Carolina driver license number or North Carolina DMV identification number or, for voters who do not have one, the last four digits of their Social Security number. Voters who do not have either form of identification must check the box on the form confirming they do not have one.

Voter registration is maintained at the county level, and voters who have moved into Wake County from another county must re-register. Registered voters may choose to cast their ballot by mail, in person at an Early Voting site, or in person on Election Day.

Voters can view the candidate lists and see sample ballots at wake.gov/upcomingelection.

For more information on upcoming elections and voting, visit ReadyToVote.com.



Campbell Holds Off NC Central

By Steve Worthy

Photography

North Carolina Central University and Campbell University went back and forth in a competitive non-conference matchup on October 3 in Durham, with Campbell ultimately holding off the Eagles for a 38-31 victory.

NC Central quarterback Nelson Layne was active early, looking toward the end zone through the air while also making plays with his legs. Layne helped put points on the board for the Eagles when he dove into the end zone for a first-half touchdown.

Campbell quarterback Kamden Sixkiller answered for the Camels, reaching the end zone while facing pressure from NC Central linebacker Joshua Maxwell. Sixkiller remained a focal point of Campbell's offense, but the Eagles' defense found opportunities to disrupt him throughout the half.

NC Central defensive lineman Zarion Walters broke through the Campbell protection to sack Sixkiller, while defensive back Bubba Camp was in position to challenge for possession after Campbell wide receiver Jyron Waiters put the ball on the ground.

The Eagles also generated offense through wide receiver Tristan Stitt. Stitt made a catch against Campbell defender Jayvian Sickles before later beating the coverage again for a touchdown, helping NC Central stay within striking distance.

Both teams continued trading scoring opportunities as the game developed, with NC Central keeping pressure on Campbell throughout the contest. The Eagles received contributions from their offense and defense, but Campbell was able to withstand the challenge and preserve the lead.

When the final whistle sounded, the Camels walked away with a 38-31 win, ending a hard-fought afternoon in Durham with NC Central falling just one score short.



STATEMENT FROM A&D FOODS

"A&D Foods was recently alerted by the U.S. Department of Agriculture about a recall involving meat products supplied by Star Meat Delivery Inc. and distributed by A&D Foods. We understand that news of a food recall can be concerning, so upon learning this, we quickly coordinated with the agency and notified our customers to ensure all recalled products are identified and removed from commerce as quickly as possible.

The safety and the integrity of the products we distribute are among our highest priorities. We have been in direct communication with our customers and are assisting them with the appropriate recall procedures. No illnesses or adverse health events have been reported in connection with the products subject to this recall.We will continue to take every appropriate step and work closely with regulatory authorities and our customers and supply chain partners to support the recall, protect consumers, and uphold the standards of safety, quality, and integrity that guide our business." - A Spokesperson for A&D Foods

Budding Food Scrap Pickup Services Want Your Coffee Grounds, Eggshells



DETROIT (AP) — Every Monday, Ricky Blanding drives his Ford Ranger pickup truck around Detroit along a carefully planned route.

Blanding hops in and out of the truck, grabbing buckets of food scraps from porches and restaurants, piling those scraps into bins in the truck bed and driving them to a composting site.

Blanding is the CEO of Scrap Soils, one of the many budding food waste collection services across the country helping to divert food from landfills and make composting more accessible. It's especially important for those who can't compost at home, who live in cities without municipal curbside pickup or who can't get to a drop-off location.

Composting leftover coffee grounds, eggshells, carrot tops and more reduces the amount of food that goes into dumps where it produces the potent greenhouse gas methane. It also ultimately helps create healthy soil for gardeners and urban farmers.

Experts say companies like Scrap Soils are an important part of cleaning up the broader food ecosystem. Emily Cassidy, research associate at climate solutions nonprofit Project Drawdown, said composting offers the dual benefits of reducing landfill methane emissions and, once the composting process is complete, returning nutrients to soil.

"Because methane has such a big impact on the climate in a short amount of time, the more we can reduce methane, it is like pulling the emergency brake on climate change," Cassidy said.

Beyond mitigating climate change, composting can also improve local food production, she said.

"That's a way that we can see that we're benefiting the environment, because we're taking food and then replenishing the ground with those nutrients," she said.

Detroit homes and restaurants use the service

Blanding, a 34-year-old native Detroiter, co-launched Scrap Soils in 2020 to play a local part in solving a statewide food waste problem that mirrors what's happening around the globe. Food waste is a huge source of methane in Michigan landfills, estimates say, and accounts for millions of metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent emissions in the state.

In Detroit, more than 70 homes and businesses are signed up for Scrap Soils' weekly pickups. It's an easier way to compost than making space in one's backyard or driving to a city drop-off site. Home pickups start at $15 per month, while businesses pay $60 per month or more, depending on volume.

One of those commercial customers is The Grand Porter restaurant in the Southwest neighborhood of Detroit.

"We go through a lot of eggs, so mostly egg scraps, eggshells and the cardboard. We put all of our bread scraps, stale bread scraps, in here," said Lou Hammer, the restaurant's executive chef, pointing to a large bin with bags of food waste inside. "Some tomato tops, some avocado skins. Probably a few other things in there, too."

"It doesn't take any extra effort," she said of the pickup service. "This was going to go in a bag anyway. It's just going to go in a green bag instead."

Scraps get turned into a rich soil additive

After completing his nine-hour, more than 100-mile (160-kilometer) weekly route, Blanding drops off the waste at Scrap Soils' partner, Sanctuary Farms in Detroit. There, everything from apple cores to rotted pumpkins to corn husks is composted into a rich soil additive that's available for purchase.

"Food waste has not only become the problem," Blanding said, "but it's also the solution to so many issues in climate change."

The company ultimately plans to purchase a larger truck, as well as its own property and equipment for composting. It's fundraising to meet a matching grant through the state.

That hasn't been without challenges. As Blanding seeks to grow, he's come up against skepticism that a small team with limited resources can make a big impact. Companies like Scrap Soils also face challenges ranging from gaining visibility to getting people to actually sign up and commit.

At the same time, emphasizing what can and cannot be composted, and how to do it correctly — such as removing produce stickers before putting a peel in the bucket — is key to its success, too.

"The role of a hauler is very important, and education around composting is also very important," Blanding said.

"Being able to continue to get more engagement and more partnership, those things go far in helping us to expand this tiny effort into something that actually can scale," he added.

City initiatives are expanding with demand

Despite hurdles, other independent composting programs and companies are expanding. Examples include the Denver Compost Collective, Nashville's Compost Co. and Compost Now, which operates in Atlanta and the North Carolina cities of Raleigh, Durham and Asheville.

Hundreds of municipal governments oversee food waste pickup or drop-off programs to allow for composting, though a much smaller number than the thousands of ordinary waste programs nationwide, indicating room to grow. A 2023 report by BioCycle, a publication on composting and recycling, identified 400 municipally supported residential food waste collection programs in the country, 230 of which offered curbside pickup.

Dept. Gives Guidance On New Federal K-12 Scholarship Tax Credit Program



NC NEWSLINE - The U.S. Department of the Treasury released new guidance Thursday for participating states, scholarship-granting organizations and taxpayers as the federal scholarship tax credit program prepares to take effect in January.

Created through President Donald Trump's massive tax and spending law in 2025, the Education Freedom Tax Credit program allows individuals to claim a dollar-for-dollar federal tax credit of up to $1,700 for donations to certain scholarship-granting organizations (known as SGOs) and taxpayers can contribute to an eligible organization regardless of where that taxpayer lives.

The $1,700 limit applies to the donor credit, not the scholarship amount, and married couples filing jointly can claim a combined $3,400 credit.

These contributions are meant to fund K-12 scholarships, primarily at private schools, though the scholarships can cover tutoring, books, supplies, extended-day programs and disability services for students who remain in public schools, and tutoring can take place during or after school.

So far, 30 states have agreed to join the program, according to the Internal Revenue Service. Officials also confirmed a deadline for states to opt in by Jan. 1 and to submit their SGO lists by Feb. 15. On a press call with reporters Wednesday, a Treasury official said that if an organization meets the federal statutory requirements, the state must include it on the list submitted to the IRS; states cannot pick and choose the SGOs they like.

States opting in so far include: Alabama, Alaska, Arkansas, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Virginia, West Virginia and Wyoming.

New York Democratic Gov. Kathy Hochul, has said that she plans to have her state participate, but wants to first review the federal rules before making a final decision.

Several Democratic governors, including those in Hawaii, Minnesota, New Mexico and Oregon, have said their states won't participate.

In some states, Republican lawmakers and Democratic governors have had some disputes over the decision to opt in. Democratic governors in North Carolina and Kansas vetoed legislation requiring their states to opt in, but GOP-controlled legislatures overrode both vetoes.

The Democratic governors of Arizona and Wisconsin successfully vetoed GOP legislation that would have opted their states into the program.

Under the program, scholarships may be given to students whose household income is up to 300% of an area's median income. During the press call, Treasury officials said approximately 95% of American children live in households meeting that threshold, while Department of Education officials said about 28 million children in the 30 participating states would be eligible.

States have limited authority on the rules they can impose on scholarship-granting organizations within their borders; federal rules don't allow them to supersede limits by the federal government.

Under the federal rules, the organizations would be required to undergo annual financial and program audits and provide those reports to participating states. States could use the audits to identify problem organizations and remove groups that fail to meet federal requirements or to prevent fraud, including duplicate scholarship payments for the same student expense.

SGOs are required to be 501(c)(3) nonprofits that are not private foundations, and they must keep qualified contributions in separate accounts.

Under the law, SGOs must spend no less than 90% of their income on scholarships. Additionally, each scholarship-granting organization must serve at least 10 students who do not all attend the same school. They cannot earmark donations for a particular student and must verify household income and family size.

Federal statute also requires SGOs to prioritize students who received a scholarship the previous school year, then siblings of the recipients. Students who would otherwise be public school students could qualify for these scholarships.

The rules stipulate that homeschools will be treated as they are defined and categorized according to each state's law.

According to new estimates provided by the Treasury, by 2030, there could be somewhere between 600 and 700 SGOs with contributions from more than 11 million taxpayers, nearly $26 billion in qualified contributions annually and as many as 2.2 million scholarships annually.

PUBLIC MEETINGS FOR PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS TO RAMSEY STREET FROM MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. FREEWAY TO BETHUNE DRIVE IN FAYETTEVILLE, CUMBERLAND COUNTY

STIP NO: U-4403

FAYETTEVILLE: The N.C. Department of Transportation will hold two open house style public meetings to provide information on the proposed improvements to Ramsey Street from the Martin Luther King Jr. Freeway to Bethune Drive in Fayetteville.

Wednesday, October 14
5 p.m. to 7 p.m.
First Baptist Church
302 Moore Street
Fayetteville, NC 28301

Thursday, October 15
5 p.m. to 7 p.m.
Cedar Falls Baptist Church
6181 Ramsey Street
Fayetteville, NC 28301

Proposed improvements would widen Ramsey Street to six lanes and provide accommodations for pedestrians and bicyclists. The proposed project would help relieve current and future traffic congestion and improve safety of this heavily traveled corridor.

Additional improvements are also being considered at these two major Ramsey Street interchanges — I-295 and Martin Luther King Jr. Freeway.

NCDOT representatives will be available in an informal, open house-style setting to answer questions and gather public input regarding the proposed project. The opportunity to submit written comments or questions will be provided at the meetings or via the webpage (https://publicinput.com/ramseystreet), email (ramseystreet@publicinput.com) or phone (984-205-6615 and enter code 2502 to leave a message).

Citizens may attend at any time between 5 p.m. and 7 p.m. either day. There will be no formal presentation, and the same information will be available at both meetings as well as on the webpage.

For more information the NCDOT Project Manager:

Craig Freeman
Project Engineer
NCDOT Highway Division 6
PO Box 1150
Fayetteville, NC 28302

NCDOT will provide auxiliary aids and services under the Americans with Disabilities Act for disabled persons who want to participate in this public open house. Anyone requiring special services should contact Diane Wilson at ext-pdwilson1@ncdot.gov or (919)670-7686 as soon as possible so that arrangements can be made.

Those who do not speak English, or have a limited ability to read, speak or understand English, may receive interpretive services upon request prior by calling 1-800-481-6494.

Aquellas personas no hablan inglés, o tienen limitaciones para leer, hablar o entender inglés, podrían recibir servicios de interpretación si los solicitan llamando al 1-800-481-6494.

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Business & Finance

American Consumers And Businesses Are Now Facing A Future Of More Expensive Borrowing With Higher Rates

THE CONVERSATION - From mortgages to auto loans to credit cards, borrowing is set to get even pricier.

But the Federal Reserve's decision on Sept. 16, 2026, to hike its baseline interest rate also highlighted an increasingly confounding dilemma: It can raise the price of money across the economy, but it can't determine which sectors are most affected.

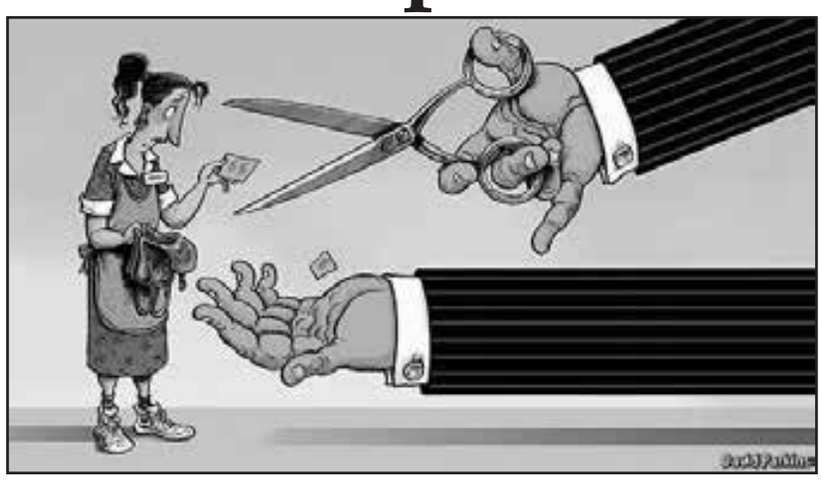
That means the rate increase may further slow the weaker parts of the economy, such as housing, while barely affecting the strongest, namely the relentless investment in artificial intelligence.

In its statement summarizing its unanimous vote, the Fed's policymaking committee said it was raising its benchmark rate by a quarter percentage point so that it now stands at a new target range of 3.75% to 4%. It described inflation as still "elevated" and noted that other economic indicators remain strong, from productivity to investment, to domestic spending.

As a scholar of public finance, I believe the Fed probably had little choice but to raise rates given its commitment to maintain inflation-fighting credibility. Markets had already expected the hike, and if the Fed had failed to deliver, it might have pushed longer-term interest rates even higher amid concerns it was becoming less wedded to that target.

But the Fed's action also underscores that the U.S. increasingly looks like an economy moving at two very different speeds. Investment in AI – whether through data centers, computing capacity or related infrastructure – has been booming, while it's crowding out other kinds of investment.

Meanwhile, the housing market is getting crushed by high mortgage



rates and diminishing affordability, while consumers are carrying ever more expensive credit card and auto debt.

Many small and traditional businesses are also in a bind as they face substantially higher financing costs than they did several years ago. Those costs reflect the rising yields on longer-term U.S. government debt, which have been going up for months on a mix of factors: Longer-term inflation concerns due to soaring U.S. government debt, geopolitical risks driving up energy costs, and ongoing financing demand for AI.

On Sept. 14, the yield on the 10-year Treasury crossed 5% for the first time since 2023.

An elusive inflation target

When the Fed hikes short-term interest rates, it slows down economic activity by making borrowing more expensive and saving more attractive.

That mechanism works particularly well when consumers are deciding whether to finance a house, purchase a car or take on additional debt. It also discourages businesses from making investments when the expected return is only modestly above their financing costs. As demand slows, businesses have less room to raise prices, easing inflationary pressures.

In this case, the Fed justified its move by citing "elevated" inflation and noting that it "will support a timelier return" to its goal of an annual inflation target of 2%. It also suggested the economy would be able to absorb the tightening and described economic activity as "expanding at a solid pace."

The decision aligns with Fed Chairman Kevin Warsh's recent comments that restoring price stability is central to the Fed's credibility. In a key speech in August, he underscored his commitment to bringing annualized inflation back down to 2%, an objective he called a "firm, fixed target" – a turnaround from his more ambiguous comments in July.

But in recent months, the economic data has shown that the 2% annual target remains elusive. Consumer prices rose 0.4% in August and 3.4% over the past year. Meanwhile, the war with Iran has pushed oil prices back above US$100 a barrel, adding a new source of inflation pressure through gasoline, diesel, transportation and production costs.

At the same time, the labor market isn't faltering. The economy added 162,000 jobs in August, while the unemployment rate remained at 4.1%. The one notable concern is the persistence of long-term joblessness despite the strong headline numbers. More than one-quarter of unemployed Americans have now been out of work for at least six months.

Taken together, those numbers suggested there was room for the Fed to hike rates, given that the economy isn't sliding into recession. So investors overwhelmingly expected the Fed's rate increase.

An uneven economic hit

However, tighter monetary policy carries a risk: It falls disproportionately on sectors that are already struggling and highly sensitive to interest rates, while having less effect on one of the economy's strongest sources of demand – the booming AI investment cycle.

Housing provides the clearest example. Persistently high mortgage rates are reinforcing the "lock-in" effect for current homeowners. Millions of homeowners financed their houses when mortgage rates were 3% or 4%, so they're staying put, with little incentive to sell their home and purchase another at much higher rates.

Mortgage rates are mostly influenced by longer-term factors, including Treasury yields, inflation expectations and market expectations about the future path of interest rates. But the Fed's decision still matters. Markets increasingly expect today's hike to be followed by additional increases, signaling that it views inflation as a more persistent risk and putting upward pressure on longer-term interest rates.

That expectation will keep mortgage rates high – probably resulting in fewer home sales, less mobility and continued headwinds for prospective buyers. It's also likely to make renting relatively more attractive for potential homebuyers who are priced out of buying.

Higher-for-longer rates also change how consumers save.

When interest rates were near zero, they earned almost nothing on safe assets. Today, Treasury securities, money market funds and other relatively safe assets offer meaningful returns. Higher rates therefore tend to shift incentives throughout the economy away from borrowing and spending and toward saving.

With consumers stretched by inflation and increasingly dipping into their savings, however, this effect may be less pronounced.

The AI sugar high

When it comes to the AI investment boom, it's a different picture. Warsh noted in August that more than half of recent capital-spending growth could be attributed to the AI buildout.

The companies that are spending billions of dollars on computing infrastructure are doing so because they expect potentially enormous returns from AI. If those expected returns on investment are exceptionally high, a modest increase in borrowing costs may do little to alter their investment decisions. That stands in sharp contrast to a prospective homebuyer getting sticker shock from mortgage rates nearing 7%.

NC Receives First $45.2M Payout From Settlement

NC NEWSLINE - North Carolina Attorney General Jeff Jackson said Thursday the state has received its first $45.2 million payment from Meta, owner of Facebook and Instagram, as part of a multistate settlement over allegations that the company's social media platforms harmed children.

The payout is the first installment of a settlement that could bring up to $645 million to the state by 2035. The state is guaranteed at least $451 million, with an additional $194 million available if other major social media companies, including YouTube and TikTok, agree to safety measures.

The state legislature will decide how to spend the money. Jackson has encouraged lawmakers to direct the money toward funding crisis helplines for children and funding after-school and summer programs.

He also suggested using the money to hire additional school health officials amid shortages of counselors, social workers and nurses in North Carolina's school systems.

"This settlement is about holding Meta accountable and protecting children," Jackson said. "Not only does it require Meta to make major safety changes to its platforms, but it brings hundreds of millions of dollars to our state."

Jackson announced the settlement with Meta in August after North Carolina and 32 other states sued the company in 2023.

The states alleged that Meta designed Facebook and Instagram to increase the time children spent on their platforms while downplaying the risks and collecting data from minors without parental consent.

State officials also cited the company's internal documents and raised concerns about features such as autoplay, push notifications and infinite scrolling, which they said were designed to increase engagement.

The settlement requires Meta to strengthen measures keeping children under 13 off Facebook and Instagram and give parents more control over teen accounts.

Jackson said teens can expect to see several changes to their accounts in the coming months:

- Under the changes, teens will have a new default two-hour daily limit. Once they reach that limit, their accounts will time out, restricting access to their feeds and scrolling. Access to direct messages will still be allowed.
- Meta will also implement an anti-scrolling feature that will pop up every 15 minutes to discourage continuous app usage.
- Feeds will be blocked from midnight to 6 a.m. each night and notifications will be disabled from 10 p.m. to 7 a.m. Notifications will also automatically turn off on Facebook and Instagram during school hours on weekdays during the school year.
- Like counts and post reactions will be turned off by default, and beauty filters will be removed on the platforms to limit potential harm to children's self-esteem and self-image.
- The remaining payments to the state will be made through the next decade, with installments scheduled each Jan. 15 beginning in 2027.

Rising Underemployment Remains Unreported

By Jheri Hardaway
Staff Writer

The North Carolina Department of Commerce released August County and Area Unemployment figures on September 30th. We learned that unemployment rates (not seasonally adjusted) decreased in 91 counties in August 2026 and remained unchanged in nine. Edgecombe County had the highest unemployment rate at 5.4 percent while Currituck County had the lowest at 2.7 percent. Twelve of the state's metro areas experienced rate decreases, and three remained unchanged. Among the metro areas, Rocky Mount had the highest rate at 4.8 percent while Asheville and Raleigh each had the lowest at 3.1 percent. The not seasonally adjusted statewide rate was 3.6 percent.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics reports unemployment at 4.1 percent, but that does not give us the entire picture. Their October 2nd update reads, "Both the unemployment rate, at 4.2 percent, and the number of unemployed people, at 7.1 million, changed little in September. The unemployment rate has remained in a narrow range of 4.1 percent to 4.3 percent since March. Among the major worker groups, the unemployment rate for people who are Black 7.0 percent. The jobless rates for adult men 3.9 percent, adult women 3.6 percent, teenagers 14.5 percent, and people who are White 3.6 percent, Asian 2.9 percent, or Hispanic 4.7 percent showed little change over the month. The Ludwig Institute for Shared Economic Prosperity reports the rate of unemployment at 24.9 percent as of July 2026. What is real? More so, what isn't being reported?

The underemployment numbers are missing from the wider conversation. Many people are working but not full-time, despite seeking full-time employment. Some people get up and go to work every day, yet they still are not earning an actual living wage. According to experts, a living wage is $26,000 per year; at the current rate of inflation, this still puts hard-working people in a paycheck-to-paycheck cycle. Think about it: productive, hardworking Americans cannot sustain themselves despite maxing out their working hours. Underemployment is a major issue, reports indicate that there have been 140,000 evictions in Atlanta, Georgia. Minimum wage has been $7.25 since 2009. The eviction process is not easy. It takes time. People are truly struggling.



The NC Budget & Tax Center is a non-profit, non-partisan organization, their website indicates "We work to document and analyze fiscal and economic conditions in partnership with community leaders and North Carolinians with lived experience of poverty to advance systemic solutions through public policy that drive anti-racist outcomes." Alex Campbell, a Public Policy Analyst with the organization, reports, "Young people who are just entering the labor force for the first time are struggling to find employment. People who lose their job are finding it increasingly difficult to find new ones. As a result, underemployment is rising, as workers are forced to take jobs that they are overqualified for or to take part-time jobs to pay for the essentials. Even in NC, which is relatively better situated than many states, 28 percent of workers who have lost their job and received unemployment benefits have not been able to find a job within a year after losing their job. Where do we go from here? Hopefully, to the polls to elect leaders with vision that can create opportunities for the people.

Wendell School Gains Nat'l Recognition With Yass Prize



RALEIGH, NC - Creative Minds Microschool in Wendell recently gained national recognition after being selected as one of 26 Yass Prize contenders from across the country.

The selection gave the local microschool an opportunity to participate in the Yass Prize Accelerator and travel to Miami to present its educational model on a national stage.

Founded in Wendell, Creative Minds provides personalized, small-group instruction and hands-on, project-based learning designed to support each student's individual potential. The school serves families throughout eastern Wake County and surrounding communities.

The Yass Prize recognition highlights the school's continued growth and its approach to creating a more personalized and responsive learning environment for students and families.

Buy Now, Pay Later — *CONT. FROM PG 1*

"I used buy now, pay later so I can have the furniture I need. I have groceries in my fridge because of it. I don't necessarily feel shameful for using it because at the end it's very beneficial to me at this point of my life," said Brown, 26, of Columbia, South Carolina, who works as a clinical service member at an optical store.

Buy now, pay later products have evolved. Rent now, pay later services are one form, which break rent into multiple payments.

"It isn't really just a convenience element anymore; it really is becoming a cash flow challenge," said Mark Elliott, chief customer officer at Happen Bank, a financial services company formerly known as Lending Club.

Jordan Williams, 28, first used buy now, pay later to get concert tickets to Hozier. Then, when she experienced financial hardship after her daughter was born, she started leaning on it to pay for some of her groceries.

"There's just not a lot of resources, and that makes me angry because this shouldn't be something I have to do," said Williams, a lecturer and content creator from Greensboro, North Carolina. "We should be able to just afford groceries. I feel angry and then I feel embarrassed."

For a long time, Williams felt ashamed about having to use buy now, pay later for basic expenses. She now feels less alone after talking with other people who also have debt.

If you're going to use buy now, pay later plans, here are some expert recommendations:

Read the fine print

The most well-known buy now, pay later product is pay-in-four, where you can pay back what you owe in four payments, one every two weeks, with a 0% annual percentage rate, or APR. However, not every buy now, pay later loan has the same terms. Before you commit to buying something using buy now, pay later, Ed deHaan, a professor at the Stanford Graduate School of Business, recommends that you read your contract carefully.

"So-called buy now, pay later products are popping up that are not good deals at all," deHaan said. "Some of them charge hefty fees, both upfront and if you miss a payment."

In general, if you miss a buy now, pay later payment, you can face fees, interest or the possibility of being banned from using the services in the future.

Know how it impacts your credit score

In the past, buy now, pay later loans didn't impact your credit score, but that has changed. Buy now, pay later agencies now report credit lending activity to one of the three major credit bureaus, Equifax, Experian and TransUnion.

"Entering into a buy now, pay later plan for now isn't going to affect your credit in any way, but missing a payment can, so that's where you really want to be careful," Rathner said.

Credit reporting depends on the company and its policies. For example, both Affirm and Klarna report to Experian and TransUnion. Afterpay does not report to any credit bureau.

Only borrow what you can pay back

Before purchasing something with buy now, pay later, deHaan recommends pausing to consider whether it's an amount you can pay back.

"The general advice for credit is that it's very easy to spend and hard to pay off," deHaan said. "And most of us, many of us, are not good at making good predictions about what we will be able to pay in the future."

When using buy now, pay later, Brown set herself a limit of $100 a month across payments, and she avoids signing up for payments every two weeks and instead chooses the monthly payment options.

Avoid stacking plans

As with credit cards, you can sign up for multiple buy now, pay later plans. These loans can quickly balloon until they become unmanageable. If you don't want to risk snowballing into debt, avoid stacking buy-now, pay later loans, said Carla Sanchez-Adams, senior attorney at the National Consumer Law Center.

"Avoid multiple purchases because then it gets really hard to track, especially if they're with different companies," Sanchez-Adams said.

If you have to utilize multiple loans, make sure you keep track of the payment amounts and dates so you avoid late fees, she added.

Seek out additional resources

Looking into additional resources such as food banks, SNAP or hardship help programs in your area can be helpful, Rathner said.

"If you are stretched thin for affording food and going into debt to do so, it could be time to seek out additional help," she said. "So this is hopefully less of a struggle for you and your family while you're going through this difficult time."

Seek help from a nonprofit credit counseling agency

If you've reached a point where you have too many buy now, pay later loans and maybe some credit card debt too, it might be time to seek help from a credit counseling agency. Two well-known resources for finding nonprofit credit counseling agencies are the National Foundation for Credit Counseling and the Financial Counseling Association of America. Both can help you connect with certified agencies and counselors.

"You have financial stress, you have work stress, you have family stress," Rathner said. "Get help with the financial stress because that can help you feel more in control of this area of your life. And it can help take one step at a time toward paying down your debts and feeling more in control."

NC Counties Now Paying More To Help Feed People

NC NEWSLINE - North Carolina counties are now paying more for a federal program that helps some hungry people eat, as a law shifting more of the cost of the nutrition assistance program to states takes effect.

One of the changes in the massive tax cut and social services cut bill Congress passed last year, the One Big Beautiful Bill Act, makes states pick up 75% of the administrative costs for SNAP. The federal government had split the cost 50–50 for many years.

North Carolina is one of the few states that has passed most of that expense on to counties, which are responsible for administering the program.

The N.C. Association of County Commissioners estimated the administrative expenses are expected to cost counties an additional $52 million over nine months starting Oct. 1. The association asked the General Assembly to cover the cost increase. There was a late push among some Democratic legislators and health advocacy groups to have the state pick up the cost. All those efforts failed.

As of June 2026, 1.2 million North Carolinians received SNAP benefits, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Beginning next year, the state could shoulder even more SNAP costs under a provision of the same federal law. It charges states with high error rates more for SNAP benefits. Counties worry that the state will pass along those charges to them as well.

Starting Oct. 1, 2027, states with SNAP error rates above 6% must begin paying anywhere from 5% to 15% of the cost of benefits.

According to the agriculture department, North Carolina's error rate in 2025 was 7.36%. If that law had been in effect for 2025, the state would have had to pay 5% of the benefits cost.

In its latest budget, the state legislature appropriated about $2.6 million toward reducing the error rate and integrating SNAP eligibility changes into the state's electronic case management system.

The Evolution Of Education In The Social Media Era

By Jheri Hardaway
Staff Writer

The North Carolina Department of Justice reported last week that Meta, which owns Instagram and Facebook, will pay up to $645 million, with a guaranteed minimum of $451 million, to North Carolina and make major child safety upgrades to its apps in a landmark settlement with Attorney General Jeff Jackson and 51 bipartisan attorneys general. Meta will pay up to $17.1 billion to the states – the second-largest state consumer protection settlement in history and the largest big tech settlement ever. "This is about protecting kids and empowering parents," said Attorney General Jeff Jackson. "We know that this company built these apps to keep kids hooked and misled parents about what was happening. Today, Meta has to change those features and hand parents the controls."

This is undoubtedly a step in the right direction, but has the damage already been done? As an educator in the higher education space, I am currently confronted with several realizations about the current class of college freshmen. This is the class that began 6th and 7th grade online during the pandemic. Many of them did not experience the maze of a middle school hallway, being asked to stand up and read in class, or the joys of having a locker in the same ways that many others did. I find I'm often facing the Gen Z stare, which has been defined as, "a blank, expressionless, and unblinking facial response that members of Generation Z often give during everyday social interactions, particularly in customer service or workplace settings when a verbal or enthusiastic reply is traditionally expected." The Gen Z stare is not the only issue impacting educators and wider shared community spaces. There is also the phenomenon of the "screenager." Oxford English Dictionary defines this as, "a young person who spends a lot of time using digital devices like computers, smartphones, and video game consoles." I would argue that this is not just young people but anyone dangerously addicted to their device.

What I'm also experiencing in the classroom and beyond is the inability of people to distinguish real-life experiences from what they see on the screen. I'll often ask questions that a few years ago could induce a crowd response, yet these days I'm met with a "Gen Z stare" style glare from folks of all ages.

The final issue is what social media interactions have done to our collective mental resilience. A colleague shared with me that many students have faced rejection online in the comments, leading them to be even more reserved in person out of a fear of rejection. The front of a classroom is a lonely place to be as an educator when only one or two students will react out of the 20 or more in front of you.

So what do we do? How do we crack the shell of in-person social anxiety? My concerns reach beyond the classroom. Will these students advocate for themselves? Will they stand up for social causes when the time comes?

The solutions I've considered surround three keys that I hope North Carolina Attorney General Jeff Jackson and the General Assembly will consider as they allocate the first $45M payment from the historic Meta settlement.

First, we've got to cope with where we are and process the facts. Young folks must be educated around the dangers of social media and the benefits of the policies. Under the new default terms, teenagers will face a strict two-hour daily limit on the applications, after which their main feeds will lock. Meta will also implement mandatory nighttime blocks, shutting down main feeds from midnight to 6 AM, and silencing all notifications between 10 PM. and 7 AM. To protect classroom focus, non-messenger notifications will be automatically disabled during standard school hours, from 8 AM. to 3 PM. on weekdays between August and June. The platforms will also introduce automated "scrolling pauses" at 15, 60, and 90 minutes of continuous use. In an effort to curb toxic social comparison, public "like" and reaction counts will be hidden by default on all teenage accounts.

Next, we have to provide more resources and access to alternatives to being on the phone. Right now, sports and extracurricular activities are unattainable for many due to transportation and rising costs of participation. This should be considered when it comes to fund allocations.



Finally, a strong support system. Imagine the amount of things young people are seeing for the first time online. Who can they ask questions to? How do they find clarification or develop methods to help them process ideas and information presented to them online? There must be a support system, a reference method outside of the internet; parents, educators, coaches, community where they feel safe and encouraged to ask questions.

Money will not save our future leaders from the dangers of increasingly online world, only true leadership and opportunity can guide us to a brighter more engaged future.

Small Biz Admin Opens Nominations for National Small Business Week 2027

WASHINGTON — Today, the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) opened nominations for its 2027 National Small Business Week Awards, which recognize exceptional small business owners from every state. National Small Business Week will take place May 2–8, 2027. Nominations must be submitted by 3:00 PM ET on December 7, 2026, at SBA.gov/nsbw.

"Thanks to President Trump, the golden age for small businesses is here, with record new business starts, rising employment and investment, and historically high small business optimism," said SBA Administrator Kelly Loeffler. "We are proud to celebrate the entrepreneurs and hardworking business owners who are putting that renewed confidence to work across America—from our rural communities to revitalized industrial hubs. From generational businesses to innovative startups, National Small Business Week 2027 will honor the nation's best small business leaders who are creating jobs, investing locally, and contributing to America's historic economic comeback."



SBA has recognized National Small Business Week since 1963. Each year, a business owner from each of the 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Guam is selected for State Small Business Person of the Year awards. These State award winners will compete for the 2027 National Small Business Person of the Year – SBA's signature award and the agency's highest small business honor. The agency is also accepting national nominations for specialty award categories recognizing small businesses that are excelling in specific areas that contribute to American strength, innovation, and resilience including the following categories:

- Small Business Manufacturer of the Year
- Small Business Exporter of the Year
- Blue Collar Small Business of the Year
- Rural Small Business of the Year
- Veteran Small Business of the Year
- Phoenix Award for Small Business Disaster Recovery

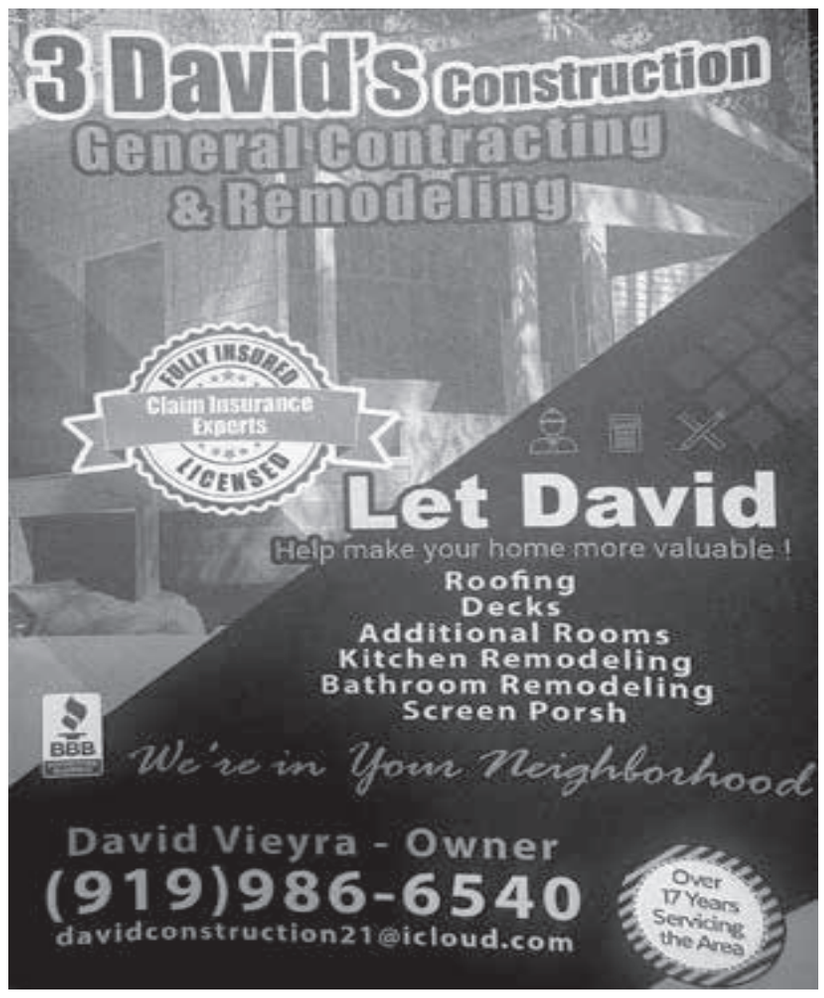
Small business owners may nominate themselves for an award, or they may be nominated by a third-party. Visit SBA.gov/nsbw for the full list of awards, eligibility requirements, guidelines, nomination forms, local area contacts and all related information. National award recipients will be recognized during a ceremony in Washington, D.C., next May as part of National Small Business Week. Last year, national award recipients were recognized by President Donald J. Trump at the White House during the National Small Business Week Small Business Summit.

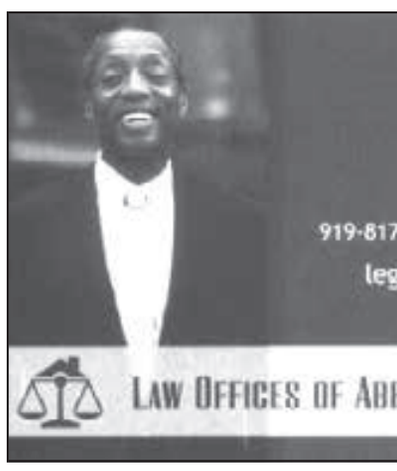


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Health & Wellness

The Rocky Road To More Manageable Healthcare Costs

NC NEWSLINE - As it seeks ways to make healthcare in North Carolina more affordable, a group of some of the state's main decision-makers in medical care, payments, and policy highlighted the challenges of developing and agreeing on ideas that will lead to lower costs and better health.

In on the discussions are the state's big insurers, including state Treasurer Brad Briner, who oversees the State Employee Health Plan; the CEO of Blue Cross Blue Shield, the state's largest insurer; the state Health and Human Services secretary, who runs Medicaid; and doctors, nurses, hospital administrators, and academics.

Gov. Josh Stein appointed the bipartisan Health Care Affordability Commission in June. The goal is to come up with suggestions for reducing the share of household income that state residents spend on healthcare while improving quality.

Legislators and state government officials are voting members. The advisory members represent healthcare providers, businesses, and nonprofits.

"We're trying to move a large and complicated system in a different direction," said Barak D. Richman, the commission facilitator, at the commission's Friday meeting. "We're trying to change a lot of interlocking parts at once."

The commission is considering how to invest in primary care as a way to lower overall patient cost and improve health. The idea is to keep people healthy or catch problems early before they become harder and more expensive to treat.

One option is setting annual spending targets for primary care for both public and private insurers. However, leaning more heavily on primary care is a challenge because the state doesn't have enough doctors in rural counties.

"We just don't have enough docs," said Dr. Tunde Sotunde, Blue Cross North Carolina president and CEO. The state is short about 2,000 doctors, he said.

"At the end of the day, we have to solve for this," Sotunde said. "Status quo is not going to work. We have to come up with creative solutions. The bottom line is that we are facing a significant access issue in our rural and underserved parts of the state."



Dr. Karen Smith, an independent primary care doctor with an office in Raeford, likened talk of different ways of paying doctors to performing CPR on a patient that is bleeding to death.

"Right now, independent primary care practices are hemorrhaging," she said, because they can't afford to stay open.

Another suggestion that nurse practitioners be empowered to treat patients without supervision from doctors revealed the familiar fault lines between advanced practice nurses who want independence and doctors who oppose it.

"Advanced practice registered nurses have known for many, many years they could be doing more for the people of North Carolina, but have been restricted by a 1970s-era regulatory structure," said Tina Gordon, CEO of the North Carolina Nurses Association.

"This has never been about what nurses want," she said. "This is about what nurses can do, and what patients need."

Steve Keene, CEO of the North Carolina Medical Society, representing the doctors, said physician supervision for advanced practice nurses is an important safety feature.

"I do not think we are in a position to say conclusively that it's time to change," Keene said.

Legislators have filed bills to allow advanced practice nurses to work without doctors' supervision, but they have not become law. Last month, a nurse practitioner filed a lawsuit to overturn the requirement.

Expensive medical bills are stressing North Carolina households, recent polls have shown.

A poll from earlier this year found that 75% of respondents said they were concerned about costs, and 57% said their medical bills were too high but they paid anyway,

When Your Financial Stress Becomes A Health Problem



For many people, financial stress is more than a temporary worry. When the bills keep coming but the money does not, the constant pressure of trying to make ends meet can begin to affect nearly every part of a person's life — including their health.

Worrying about rent or a mortgage, utility bills, groceries, medical expenses, car payments or mounting debt can keep the body in a prolonged state of stress. The brain interprets financial uncertainty as a threat, triggering the body's stress response. Stress hormones such as cortisol and adrenaline can increase heart rate, blood pressure and alertness.

When that response continues for weeks or months, it can take a toll.

Chronic financial stress has been associated with sleep problems, headaches, digestive problems, fatigue, anxiety and depression. It can also contribute to unhealthy coping behaviors, including overeating, drinking too much alcohol, smoking or avoiding medical care because of the cost. Over time, prolonged stress can make it harder to manage existing health conditions and may increase the risk of serious health problems.

The emotional effects can be just as significant. People struggling financially may experience shame, embarrassment, anger or a sense of failure. They may withdraw from family and friends because they do not want others to know how difficult things have become.

But financial hardship is not a personal failure. Unexpected medical expenses, job loss, reduced hours, inflation, caregiving responsibilities and other circumstances can put enormous pressure on otherwise responsible people.

And this is where the community has an important role to play.

No one should have to choose between paying the electric bill and buying groceries, or between filling a prescription and paying the rent. When financial stress becomes widespread, it is no longer simply an individual problem. It becomes a community health issue.

One of the most important steps is to stop dealing with the problem alone.

Start by getting a clear picture of your finances. Write down your income, essential expenses, debts and upcoming bills. Prioritize necessities such as housing, food, utilities, transportation and medications. Knowing exactly what is owed can be uncomfortable, but uncertainty often creates even more anxiety.

Then contact creditors and service providers before a bill becomes seriously overdue. Some companies offer payment arrangements, hardship programs or extensions. If you are struggling with medical bills, ask the provider about financial assistance or payment options.

Community resources can also help. Food banks, housing assistance programs, utility assistance, nonprofit organizations, churches and government programs may be able to provide temporary relief. Asking for help is not a sign of weakness. These resources exist precisely because financial emergencies happen.

But communities must also do more than simply tell people where to find help. We need to make sure people can actually access that help.

Churches can create emergency assistance ministries and financial counseling programs. Community organizations can connect families with food, housing, employment and utility resources. Health care providers can recognize financial stress as a factor affecting a patient's health and connect patients with available assistance. Employers can provide workers with information about financial counseling, benefits and community resources. Local governments, businesses and nonprofits can work together to identify gaps in the safety net and develop solutions.

And neighbors can play a role, too.

Sometimes helping someone through a difficult financial period can be as simple as sharing information about a local resource, offering a meal, helping with transportation or simply asking, "Are you OK?"

We should also work to remove the stigma surrounding financial hardship. People are often embarrassed to admit they are struggling, and that silence can allow a financial problem to become a health crisis. Communities are stronger when people know that asking for help will be met with compassion rather than judgment.

It is also important for individuals to protect their health while addressing their finances. Try to maintain a regular sleep schedule, eat as well as your circumstances allow, get some physical activity and make time for people you trust. Even a short walk or a conversation with a friend can help reduce stress.

Most importantly, pay attention to warning signs that stress is becoming overwhelming. Persistent sadness, severe anxiety, inability to sleep, panic attacks, hopelessness or thoughts of hurting yourself should not be ignored. A doctor, counselor or mental health professional can help.

Financial problems may not be solved overnight, but they do not have to determine the course of a person's health. Taking one step at a time — asking for help, making a plan and taking care of yourself along the way — can turn an overwhelming situation into a manageable one. But individuals cannot carry this burden alone.

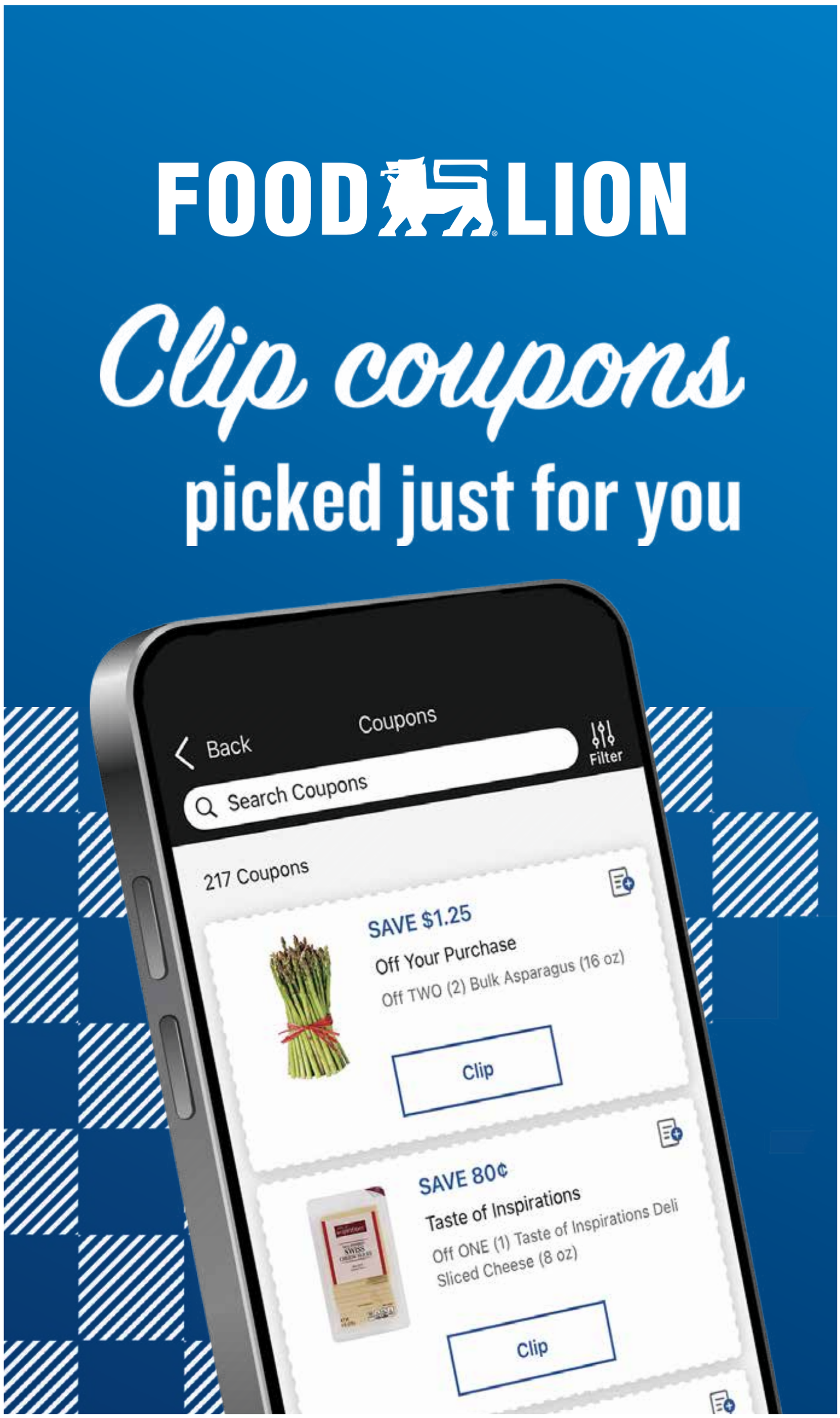
Our communities must decide that financial well-being is part of community well-being. That means churches, businesses, health care providers, nonprofits, schools, elected officials and residents coming together to make sure people know where to turn before a financial crisis becomes a medical crisis.

We should be asking: Who is struggling? What resources already exist? Who is falling through the cracks? And what can we do together to close those gaps?

The answer cannot simply be, "They should have planned better." Sometimes people need a helping hand, a second chance or simply someone willing to stand beside them while they get back on their feet.

A healthy community is not one where nobody ever struggles. It is one where people do not have to struggle alone.

If we want healthier families, we must build communities where people have access to the resources, relationships and support they need to weather difficult times. Financial stability is not just an economic issue. It is a health issue — and it is a community responsibility.



Arts & Culture

Old Hillside Bourbon Co Honors America's 1st Black Generals

By Jheri Hardaway

Staff Writer





Celebrity culture has taken our world by storm and distracted local communities from the amazing people and things happening inside of our respective communities. The leaders, innovators, and tastemakers among us deserve way more celebration than untouchable folks who frame careers around selling concert and movie tickets and merchandise to people they do not respect or value past the purchase. Let's take a moment to celebrate a group of men in our community working to provide the vibes and highlight history in North Carolina and far beyond.

For those out of the loop, Old Hillside Bourbon Company was founded in friendship more than six years ago. Bottled in Kentucky, the name "Old Hillside" pays homage to Durham, North Carolina's historic Hillside High School. As one of five historically Black high schools remaining active since desegregation, the institution carries a rich legacy. Building on that legacy, Brian Burton, Jesse Carpenter, Emmanuel Waters, and Courtney Tucker came together through their love of Bourbon and brotherhood to create an amazing product and an outlet to celebrate Black history and excellence. During the pandemic, Jesse leveraged Brian's IT skills and natural curiosity, Courtney's marketing strategy and communications, and Emmanuel's ability to assist with contract negotiations and business development to birth Old Hillside Bourbon Company.

After years of success and growth nationwide, the team found themselves in Harlem at an event celebrating the Harlem Hellfighters. The Old Hillside special edition bottles brought for the function sold out, but the networking was plentiful, and they found themselves in conversation with the insightful and well-connected Doug Melville. Melville had recently published Invisible Generals, a powerful story that recounts his family's extraordinary lived experience. It is the story of a father and son who always maintained their belief in the American dream no matter the obstacles. This is not your average family story. Understand, out of more than thirty million Americans who have donned a military uniform since the founding of the republic, only two families have ever produced both a father and a son who achieved the rank of general or admiral. One was the McCain dynasty of the United States Navy. The other was the Davis family, the first two Black generals in the United States Military.

Benjamin O. Davis Sr. rose to become the first Black Brigadier General in the United States Army. His son, Benjamin O. Davis Jr., commanded the world-renowned Tuskegee Airmen, weathered four years of isolation and total silence from his white peers at West Point, and eventually retired as a four-star Air Force General under President Bill Clinton. Beyond the battlefield, Davis Jr. helped architect foundational elements of modern American life, from standardizing the national 55 mph speed limit to shaping aviation safety policies, locked cockpit protocols, and what would become the Transportation Security Administration.

Despite their monumental impact across six presidential administrations, the full, unvarnished story remained largely hidden, even within their own home. Doug Melville's father was raised as a Davis. "My dad didn't really want me to write the book. He didn't support it," the Invisible Generals author recalled. "He didn't even read it until it came out. He didn't even want to see it, because it's trauma. Old people don't want you to kill your career. The whole thing for him was: silence is safety. Once you start talking about it, people make you a target."

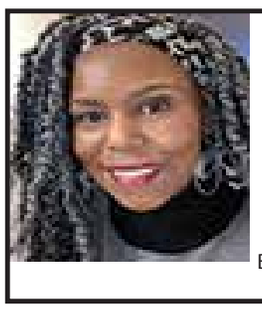
That instinct ran deep. The family's proximity to power had long been an everyday reality rather than an anomaly. Decades spent attending Thanksgiving dinners at the White House, lighting national Christmas trees, and working alongside icons, Doug's father once clerked for Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall before becoming a judge. For this American family, their outstanding contributions were routine matters of survival and discretion, not things to boast about.

The gentlemen from Old Hillside Bourbon Company have consistently demonstrated great reverence for the United States Military, counting a U.S. Air Force Veteran and a government contractor as founding members of their team. The 2023, Old Hillside Bourbon Company's Purple Heart Rye is a limited-edition 104-proof straight rye whiskey dedicated to honoring Corporal Nathan Jakubisin, a Marine Corps veteran, and Sergeant Derek Drew, an Army veteran. Exhibiting a medium amber color with a bold aroma of rye spice and floral notes, the spirit offered a complex palate of caramel, vanilla, mint, and floral characteristics layered with a lingering spice, finishing with hints of nutmeg and cinnamon. Highly acclaimed, it earned a Gold medal at the 2024 San Francisco Spirits Competition and a Double Gold at the 2023 San Francisco Spirits Competition. A portion of the proceeds from each bottle sold is donated to Military Missions In Action, a non-profit supporting veterans in need.

This alignment, alongside the Harlem Hellfighters special edition bottle, inspired Old Hillside Bourbon to collaborate with Doug Melville on the Invisible Generals special set.

The Ben Davis Sr. Cognac Cask finish opens with rich caramel and toasted vanilla, complemented by dried apricot, golden raisins, dark cherry, and honey, alongside subtle aromas of leather, sweet tobacco, toasted oak, and warm baking spice. Full and velvety on the palate, it delivers layers of caramel, vanilla bean, dark fruit, brown sugar, toffee, roasted nuts, cinnamon, and cocoa, with the Cognac cask contributing a refined grape and dried-fruit character.

The finish is long, warm, and elegant, carrying lingering notes of dark fruit, vanilla, toasted oak, tobacco, and baking spice before concluding with a gentle, dry oak note.



THE GOLDEN YEARS

By Judykay Jefferson

BREATHE DIFFERENT AIR

I waited until I was 70+ years old to decide to learn another language. I am now struggling to learn to speak Korean. Why? For some reason, I'm extremely interested in Korean culture and plan a visit for Spring 2027, God willing. If you can believe what you see on TikTok, I'm not alone. There is a whole community of African Americans visiting and even living and working in a variety of Asian countries. Who knew?

If you're like me, you've probably spent some time wondering what life is like beyond America's borders. In 1973, my parents retired and moved from Chicago to Mississippi. At the time, I was considering moving to Sicily with a college friend whose mother was returning to her home. I planned to visit my parent, see the new house, then bid them adieu. I was there for forty years, but that's a story for another day.

For years, when African Americans talked about living abroad, the conversation usually centered on Europe or, more recently, Africa. But lately, another trend has been quietly unfolding. More Black Americans are packing their bags and heading east, to countries like Thailand, South Korea, Japan, Singapore, and Vietnam. Reports from Black expatriate communities suggest these destinations are attracting growing numbers of African Americans seeking a different pace of life and new opportunities.

What caught my attention wasn't just where they're going. It was why they're going. For some, it's economics; for other, quality of life.

Many of us remember a time when a middle-class paycheck could buy a house, raise a family, and leave something for retirement. Today, plenty of Americans, including African Americans, are finding that harder to achieve. Some Black expatriates report that their dollars stretch much further in places such as Thailand and Vietnam than they do in many American cities.

I have heard Black Americans living overseas describe enjoying safer neighborhoods, reliable public transportation, affordable healthcare, and a slower pace of living. They aren't necessarily running away from America. Many are simply running toward a lifestyle they believe offers more peace and less stress.

Now let's be clear. No country is perfect. Racism and prejudice exist all over the world. But many African Americans living in Asia describe a different experience. Instead of being viewed primarily through the lens of America's racial history, they often find themselves viewed first as Americans, foreigners, professionals, teachers, or business owners. Some speak about curious stares and questions. Others talk about being the only Black person in a room. Yet many also report feeling welcomed and safe in their daily lives.

Thailand appears to be one of the most popular destinations, especially cities like Bangkok and Chiang Mai. South Korea has a longstanding community of Black educators and professionals in Seoul and Busan. Japan continues to attract people interested in technology, culture, and international business. Vietnam's low cost of living and growing economy have made it especially appealing to entrepreneurs and remote workers.

Many teach English in schools and universities. Others work in technology, consulting, business management, international education, sports, and online businesses. Increasingly, some aren't tied to a traditional job at all. They work remotely for companies based in the United States while living halfway around the world.

What I find most interesting is that this movement isn't limited to twenty-somethings chasing adventure.

It includes retirees, veterans, entrepreneurs, families, and professionals in midlife. It includes people looking for a fresh start and people simply looking for a better quality of life.

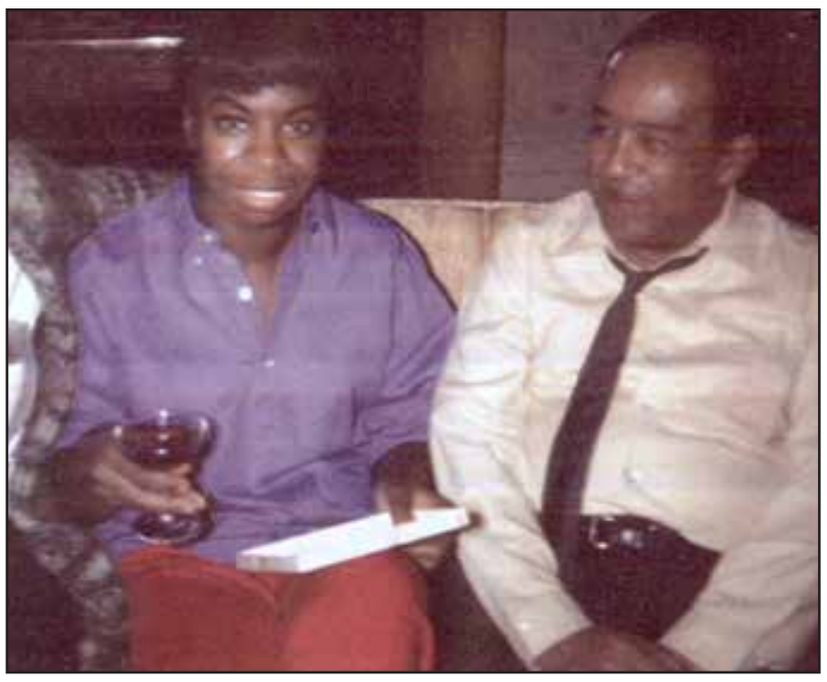
Believe it or not, Thailand is probably the most retiree-friendly destination in Asia for Americans. It offers retirement visas for people 50 and older and allows long-term stays with renewals. There are financial requirements however, the exchange rate is roughly $35/$1 USD to Thai currency (THB). They also have a huge Black community of expats. And then there's Malaysia seen as the most culturally diverse with the easiest English transition and excellent healthcare. Japan is extremely safe, has excellent healthcare but it all comes with a higher cost and more language challenges.

Among the countries most often described as welcoming by Black travelers and expatriates are Thailand, Singapore, and Japan, followed closely by South Korea, Vietnam, and Malaysia. Many travelers report high levels of personal safety and generally positive interactions with local residents. I'll definitely have stories to tell when I get back from Korea.

Many African American seniors spent their lives adapting to workplaces, neighborhoods, and systems that weren't always designed with us in mind. For the first time in history, large numbers of Black retirees can realistically compare retirement options across the globe. The question is no longer merely where can we afford to retire. Increasingly, the question is where can we thrive.

That's a powerful shift in the discussion from travel to freedom, choice, and quality of life in our later years.

Simone, Hughes & Their Forgotten Collaboration



THE CONVERSATION—Many music fans know that Nina Simone's 1965 hit "I Put a Spell on You" helped establish the 32-year-old singer as the "High Priestess of Soul."

Few probably realize that it was Langston Hughes – the pioneering poet and face of the Harlem Renaissance – who had encouraged Simone to record it.

As a Langston Hughes scholar, I've spent the past six years documenting Hughes' largely overlooked friendship with Simone. I explore the creative bond they shared in my newest book, "Don't Let Me Be Misunderstood: Nina Simone, Langston Hughes, and the Birth of Black Power," which details how the two supported and inspired each other.

The seeds of this relationship were planted in 1949, when Hughes delivered a lecture featuring his own poetry at Simone's high school in Asheville, North Carolina. Simone – then known by her birth name, Eunice Waymon – was just 16 years old.

As part of the programming, Simone played the piano. Hughes was impressed. Even though she was just a teenager, Hughes saw her as a "somebody" – a budding talent who would one day join figures such as classical singer Marian Anderson in the pantheon of legendary Black performance artists. Simone's performance that day went on to inspire his poem "To Be Somebody":

- Little girl
- Dreaming of a baby grand piano
- (Not knowing there's a Steinway bigger, bigger)
- Dreaming of a baby grand to play
- Simone's big booster

As Simone matured into adulthood, she and Hughes became close friends. Once she permanently moved to New York City in 1959, the two routinely visited each other's homes.

Hughes' relationship with Simone remained strictly professional. As far as scholars know, the poet did not harbor romantic feelings for her.

Simone performed at clubs across New York City, including the famous Village Gate in Greenwich Village. And her debut album, "Little Girl Blue," was well received in 1959.

But Hughes also used his considerable fame to elevate the rising star. He secured her a spot at the 1960 Newport Jazz Festival, where she performed songs like "Trouble in Mind" and "Little Liza Jane." Hughes himself wrote the final song of the festival, "Goodbye Newport Blues," which Muddy Waters' pianist, Otis Spann, sang. At the conclusion of the festival, Hughes and Simone slipped off to the nearby Rebel Festival, an "anti-festival" organized by jazz icons Charles Mingus and Max Roach. There, Simone joined Little Richard for an impromptu performance.

Later that year, Hughes published an article in the Black newspaper The Chicago Defender, headlined "Spotlight on Nina Simone."

A regular columnist, Hughes rarely devoted an entire article to one artist. And with a cultural status in 1960 that rivaled that of Oprah Winfrey's today, Hughes' endorsement of Simone's talent as a singer, performer and pianist carried exceptional weight.

The article was important for another reason. At the time, Simone couldn't seem to shake comparisons to Billie Holiday, who had died in 1959. Like Holiday, Simone sang with a husky, blues-inflected voice. And like Holiday, she had covered a song from George and Ira Gershwin's "Porgy and Bess," "I Loves You Porgy."

Hughes put those comparisons to rest. In repeatedly highlighting Simone's masterful piano playing – an instrument over which Holiday had no command – he was able to signal that Simone was completely unlike "Lady Day."

Not only did quotes from the review appear on Carnegie Hall concert posters advertising Simone's performances, but a revised version of the article also ended up being included as the liner notes on the back of Simone's 1964 album, "Broadway-Blues-Ballads."

A source of inspiration

Beyond using his considerable fame to elevate Simone, Hughes also inspired her songwriting.

Largely known as a poet, Hughes considered himself a songwriter as well. But he never achieved the same stature or success as a lyricist, which ended up being a source of some frustration. Still, roughly 60 of his songs were eventually recorded by a variety of artists, and he provided Simone with more than a dozen original lyrics of his own.

In 1964, Hughes suggested Simone consider singing the lyrics of an obscure song that his personal assistant, George Bass, uncovered while preparing archival material for his radio show broadcast. Bass went on to quietly copyright the unpublished folk song himself.

Simone performed the song, "See-Line Woman," for the first time at a March 21, 1964, concert in Carnegie Hall, where Hughes was in attendance.

Often spelled various ways – "Sea-Lion," "C-Line" or "She-Lyin'" – the tune describes sex workers who greet sailors as they arrive in port, with their different-colored dresses conveying the services they are willing to provide:

- See-line woman (See-line)
- Black dress on (See-line)
- For a thousand dollars (See-line)
- She wail and she moan (See-line)

The birth of the spellcaster

Sometime between November 1964 and January 1965, Hughes approached Simone in person with a new concept.

Buoyed by his success at pitching "See-Line Woman," Hughes suggested what he called "Incantations for Nina Simone." These were what Hughes titled "Songs of Enticement, Bewitchment, Voodoo, Hoodoo, Conjuration, Bedevilment" and, most importantly, "Spell Casting."

In one song he'd written – which Hughes titled "You Cast a Spell on Me" – he imagined Simone as a witch riding a broomstick brewing magic potions. It included uninspired lyrics such as:

- I'll work my black and white magic
- And the other color, too,
- So come on, baby bunting,
- Let me cast a spell on You.

It's easy to see Hughes' suggestions as an effort to typecast Simone as a hypnotic Black woman. And perhaps there was an element of that at play. But Simone accepted the concept, which she saw as a nod to Hoodoo, a set of African American folk-magic traditions that developed primarily in the American South. And she found a way around using Hughes' verses, turning instead to "I Put a Spell on You," which the eccentric R&B singer Screamin' Jay Hawkins had recorded in 1956.

"I Put a Spell on You" ended up becoming the title track of Simone's album, which she released in June 1965. It helped forge her identity as a sultry, mysterious singer and eventually served as the title of her 1991 autobiography.

Over the years, when Simone performed the song live, she would sometimes leave the stage, only to return in a trance, as if she possessed the hypnotic powers of a spiritual shaman.

Simone's follow-up album, 1967's "The High Priestess of Soul," featured a startling cover that continued the Hoodoo theme: Simone appears as a sorceress smoking a pipe.

Fans and critics have been responding to her spellbinding performances ever since.

Keep on workin'

Simone may have passed on Hughes' version of "You Cast a Spell on Me," but the poet would get another chance a year later.

In 1966, Hughes gave a copy of a poem he had written to Simone. He wanted to know if she would be interested in performing it.

Simone agreed, and Hughes was in the audience at the Lincoln Center's Philharmonic Hall on Nov. 22, 1966, when Simone performed "Backlash Blues" for likely the first time.

Simone received a standing ovation, and "Backlash Blues" became a staple of her performances. It was later featured in the 2021 Academy Award-winning documentary film "Summer of Soul."

After Hughes died in May 1967, Simone added a new verse during her live performances of the song, paying homage to its author:

When Langston Hughes died, he told me many months before

"Nina, keep on workin', till they open up the door.



Community

Wake Weighs Affordable Housing, SNAP Amid Budget Pressures

By Jordan Meadows
Staff Writer

Wake County commissioners spent Monday examining two major areas of local government responsibility—health and human services in the morning and affordable housing at midday.

The meetings came as Wake County and other North Carolina counties face new financial pressures from changes to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), while the county also continues to confront housing affordability and displacement issues tied to rapid growth.

The Wake County Board of Commissioners' Health and Human Services Committee began the day with an update on changes to the federal food assistance program administered locally through the county's social services system. Ben Canada, chief of staff in the Wake County Manager's Office, outlined the scale of the program in Wake County.

Roughly 80,000 residents are enrolled, with approximately $15 million in SNAP benefits distributed each month. County staff process about 4,200 new applications and 3,000 recertifications each month, while Wake County currently spends about $11 million a year administering the program. The discussion focused heavily on changes contained in H.R. 1, the federal law that changed how SNAP is financed and administered. Beginning Oct. 1, the federal share of SNAP administrative costs dropped from 50% to 25%.

North Carolina is among a relatively small number of states in which counties administer SNAP.

The North Carolina Association of County Commissioners has estimated that counties statewide will face roughly $52 million in additional administrative costs over nine months beginning Oct. 1. The General Assembly did not provide funding to cover that increase.

Canada told commissioners that Wake County had already incorporated an estimated $3 million increase related to the administrative cost shift into its current budget.

The larger concern is a second change scheduled for October 2027.

Under the federal law, states with SNAP payment error rates above 6% will eventually have to pay a portion of the benefits themselves. The required share can range from 5% to 15%, depending on the error rate. North Carolina's 2025 payment error rate was 7.36%, placing the state in the first cost-sharing tier.

For Wake County, Canada estimated that the potential exposure could be approximately $12 million annually if the state remains in the 5% payment-cost tier and the state continues passing the resulting costs through to local governments.

"It is not what I would call a really solid estimate. We feel good about it. It's the best we have with what we know today," he said.

The threshold of 6% is particularly important; if North Carolina can consistently bring its SNAP payment error rate below that level, the state would not be required to pay a share of SNAP benefits under the new federal formula. If the error rate rises above 8%, however, the potential cost increases substantially.

North Carolina's rate has fallen considerably from its 2024 level of 10.21%, but it remains above the 6% threshold.

Commissioners also discussed the uncertainty surrounding how the state will ultimately recover the money. Canada explained that Wake



County may not receive a bill in the conventional sense. Instead, the county could see a reduction in sales-tax revenue.

Commissioner Tara Waters asked whether the county could approve a budget in June without knowing how much revenue might be withheld later in the year.

"It's not like we have to cut a check, but we would have to anticipate a revenue reduction that we may not have planned for," Canada responded.

At noon, commissioners shifted from food assistance to housing as the Affordable Housing Committee received updates on Wake County's response to homelessness and the challenges facing residents of manufactured homes.

Stephen S. Gruver, director of Wake County's Homeless and Prevention Services Division, presented an update on Bridge to Home, a program launched in 2021 after growing out of the county's pandemic-era Hotels to Housing initiative.

Bridge to Home was initially supported by $10.5 million in American Rescue Plan Act funding. Wake County has since continued the program with roughly $2.45 million in annual investment. The program works through community partners and provides a combination of housing navigation, transportation, flexible financial assistance, health-care connections, benefit assistance, case management and household necessities such as furniture. The county has previously reported that the program has served more than 3,300 people and helped hundreds of people move into permanent housing.

According to the figures presented to commissioners, Bridge to Home partners have delivered more than 21,100 services, including nearly 9,000 transportation services, more than 2,800 move-in deposits, more than 2,600 instances of medical and prescription assistance and nearly 2,000 home-furnishing services. The presentation also reported that Bridge to Home agencies have expanded their reach substantially since the program's baseline period, while increasing exits to permanent housing and maintaining rates of returns to homelessness even as more people are served.

Gruver described the program as an intentionally broad response to homelessness rather than a single housing intervention.

"This program is proof that ending homelessness requires a comprehensive approach. This means investing in a wide range of interconnected strategies, not just one single solution."

The committee also heard about efforts to make the Bridge to Home model available to other communities. Staff described an implementation guide built around self-assessment, lessons learned, and practical tools, with a focus on funding, grant management, coordination among service "pillars," data and reporting systems, and process improvement.

Sarah Kirk, Wake County's new equitable housing and community development division director, presented an overview of manufactured housing and the role it plays in the county's housing supply.

Wake County has approximately 13,000 manufactured homes, representing about 2.7% of its housing stock, according to the presentation. About 270 manufactured homes were added between 2019 and 2024. Residents of manufactured housing have an average income of roughly $40,000, according to the county figures presented Monday.

Kirk explained that manufactured housing can provide a lower-cost housing option because the homes are generally less expensive to produce and install than site-built homes. But ownership arrangements can leave residents vulnerable when they own the home but rent the land beneath it.

That issue has become particularly visible in Cary's Chatham Estates, where residents of a long-standing mobile home community were required to leave as the property changed hands and was slated for redevelopment. Approximately 140 households lived at Chatham Estates, with residents paying roughly $400 a month to rent the land beneath their homes. Residents received notice in late 2025 that they would have to vacate by June 30, 2026. The property is planned for redevelopment, with reporting indicating plans for hundreds of apartments and townhomes.

The Town of Cary committed $800,000 through its Stable Homes Cary program to assist residents, with NeighborUp administering the relocation effort.

According to the figures presented to commissioners, NeighborUp and its partners assisted 94 families. About 80% remained in Wake County, roughly 40% remained in Cary, and about 20% achieved homeownership by purchasing a house or another manufactured home. Twenty families were able to move their existing manufactured homes.

Kirk told commissioners that Wake County has approximately 13,000 manufactured homes and that local zoning rules vary considerably among the county's municipalities. Six of the county's 12 municipalities allow manufactured-home parks or subdivisions by right or through special-use approvals in at least some zoning districts. Two do


Mathias Bishop Photo

The Color of Education Summit

The 2026 Color of Education Summit was held October 3rd at the McKimmon Conference & Training Center in Raleigh. Its theme was "Justice Rising: Repairing, Restoring, Resisting." The summit focused on racial equity, educational justice, access, and opportunity in North Carolina's public schools.

- It brought together educators, students, researchers, policymakers, advocates, and community leaders to discuss systemic inequities and strategies for change.
- October 3 featured the full-day, in-person program, following a virtual opening session on October 2.
- Sessions addressed topics including the history of educational inequity, leadership, policy, student opportunity, and preparing education systems for the future.
- The central message was that achieving educational justice requires collective action—repairing past harms, restoring opportunity, and resisting policies or practices that perpetuate inequity

'Medicare for All' Message Attracts Voters Buckling Under Medical Bills

LANSING, Mich. — Christina Starks-Clay doesn't know how "Medicare for All" would work exactly, but she's willing to bet it'd be better than what she has now.

Standing in line for U.S. Senate candidate Abdul El-Sayed's town hall in the state's capital in September, she whipped out her phone to pull up a screenshot. It was of the $1,000 cashier's check she'd picked up at the bank that day to pay down a chunk of her son's dental bills. An early childhood special education paraprofessional, she still owed $389, even with good dental insurance. Her own cleaning a few weeks before cost $600.

She tried to talk herself down at the bank, to focus on being grateful for what she could afford.

"I'm like, 'Tina, OK, you were in a position for this moment to do this,'" she said. "A lot of people couldn't do what I had to do today. I couldn't do it. But I did it. So I need to hear, how are you going to make this better for everyone?"

Many who waited in the hot sun that afternoon in a line stretching blocks through downtown Lansing shared similar anxieties. A man ahead of Starks-Clay talked about watching his brother rack up thousands of dollars in medical debt. A professor emeritus at nearby Michigan State University worried aloud about his grandkids' medical care, because his adult kids were struggling to meet a $9,000 insurance deductible. Healthcare workers who'd turned up for the event described patients choosing between affording medication or food, or how they themselves had been financially devastated by a medical crisis.

They all knew Michigan Democrat El-Sayed's rallying cry by heart, chanting it when the candidate took the stage: "Money out of politics! Money in your pocket! Medicare for All!"

Support for Medicare for All is at its highest in at least a decade, according to a new KFF poll. The survey found two-thirds of Americans now favor expanding the government health program that largely covers seniors (about half of whom are enrolled in private plans through Medicare Advantage).

But many people don't actually know how to define Medicare for All. Traditionally, the idea has been to establish a single health insurance program, run by the federal government, that would guarantee coverage for Americans and minimize or even eliminate private insurance. How much people like the idea depends on what they're told about it, pollsters have found.

Still, at a time when fewer than

(See ***MEDICARE FOR ALL,*** P. 9)



Rocky Mount Launches New On-Demand Sunday Transit Service

By Jordan Meadows
Staff Writer

Rocky Mount residents who rely on public transportation now have a new option for getting around on Sundays, filling a long-standing gap in the city's public transit system.

Tar River Transit launched TRT-2GO on Sunday, an on-demand transportation service designed to provide residents with a flexible and affordable way to travel when the city's traditional fixed-route bus system is not operating.

For years, Tar River Transit has provided affordable fixed-route bus service throughout Rocky Mount from Monday through Saturday, but there was no regular public transportation service on Sundays. For residents without access to a vehicle, that meant a lack of reliable transportation for essential trips such as getting to work, attending medical appointments, buying groceries, attending church, or reaching other destinations across the city.

TRT2GO fills that gap by operating Sundays from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. and costs $5 per ride.

Rather than requiring passengers to follow a predetermined bus route or schedule, riders can request a same-day trip using a cellphone app. The service is designed to work similarly to calling a taxi or using an app-based rideshare service such as Uber or Lyft.

The announcement was made shortly after the beginning of last Monday's City Council meeting as part of a routine update. The council



said TRT2GO will allow people to request rides to destinations throughout Tar River Transit's service area, including UNC Health Nash, grocery stores, Downtown Rocky Mount, and other locations.

The new service uses a micro-transit model rather than operating full-size city buses along fixed Sunday routes. Under the model, vehicles are dispatched when riders request transportation, allowing the transit system to respond to demand rather than running scheduled buses throughout the day regardless of how many people are riding. The approach is intended to make Sunday service more efficient while giving passengers greater flexibility in where and when they travel.

Instead of requiring riders to walk to a traditional bus stop, TRT2GO is designed to provide pickup and drop-off service within the designated service area.

A major focus of the new service is ensuring that residents can reach essential community destinations. TRT2GO provides access to UNC Health Nash, the area's hospital, as well as surrounding medical offices. It also reaches major commercial areas, including shopping destinations along U.S. 301. Those destinations include Golden East Crossing Mall, Walmart, Sam's Club, and multiple Food Lion grocery stores. The service also connects residents with Downtown Rocky Mount and residential areas throughout its broader service footprint.

The program was funded primarily through a $3 million grant from the North Carolina Department of Transportation. The funding comes through the NCDOT Integrated Mobility Division as part of the state's "Mobility for Everyone, Everywhere in North Carolina" initiative, which supports efforts to expand transportation access. Funding is being used for the purchase and equipment of

(See ***SUNDAY TRANSIT,*** P. 9)



Politics & Election News

BCF Unveils The New 2026 State Of Black America Report

By Jordan Meadows
Staff Writer



The Black Conservative Federation released its 2026 State of Black America Report on Wednesday afternoon, presenting what the organization's leaders described as an accounting of Black American life built entirely from federal, academic, and independently verified sources and data.

BCF President and founder Diante Johnson opened a press briefing on the report, a 72-page document produced through BCF's newly launched Center for American Opportunity & Excellence.

"This report tells the story, not the conservative story, not the Democratic story, but it tells the true story of what the state of Black America is," Johnson said.

Johnson walked reporters through what he called the report's good news:

Black poverty sits at a record low of 17.1%, down from 55% in 1959, and Black family wealth grew 61% from 2019 to 2022, the fastest growth of any group, according to the report.

"Black families are building wealth faster than anyone from a lower base," Johnson said.

He cited record-low Black unemployment, record prime-age employment, and more than a third of Black workers now holding management or professional jobs. Black-owned employer firms grew 29% to roughly 161,000 companies.

He highlighted the Black high school graduation rate, now at 81%, as one of his favorite statistics in the report.

"I know that many people say, 'Is that something we should be celebrating'?" Johnson said. "But 81% of Black students graduating high school is a tremendous improvement."

He also pointed to two straight years of record declines in murder, a 33% drop in the Black imprisonment rate from 2013 to 2023, a roughly 75% decline in youth confinement, and a rise in the share of Black children living in two-parent households, from about 35% to 39%: "More fathers are in the home," Johnson said.

Despite the record-low poverty rate, he called 17.1% "a number that is uncomfortable to us here at the Black Conservative Federation."

Black homeownership remains at 45.7%, with 52% of Black Americans still renting. Johnson stated that expanding ownership would be a major focus of the center's work going forward, including a push for first-time homeownership programs and HUD grants.

"Having property, being able to own something, having a deed—that's very important," Johnson said.

He also flagged a persistent gap in generational wealth, noting that roughly one in ten Black families report receiving an inheritance. "That's still not where we need to be," he said, "but thank God for Trump accounts"—a new tax-advantaged, hybrid investment and retirement account created for children under 18 that was authorized under the 'One Big Beautiful Bill' and launched in July.

Walter Blanks Jr., executive director of the Center for American Opportunity & Excellence, agreed:

"The fact that there are families across America who have made, never even talked about investing beforehand, are doing it, regardless of the account that they're using, is a massive plus," Blanks said regarding the Trump Accounts.

Blanks said the report was designed to give what he called a complete picture of Black America rather than a partisan one.

"It's not meant to be a celebration or an indictment in any kind of way," Blanks said. "It's really just meant to establish where we are currently, and what the Black Conservative Federation is doing over time to really address some of those issues."

He said the report's chapters are interconnected: education shapes earnings, earnings shape ownership, and family stability shapes the next generation. Blanks pointed to state-level school choice policies and the "success sequence" framework—graduating high school, finishing college, getting a job, and marrying before having children—as themes running through the report's education and family chapters.

BCF unveiled the report in Chicago on July 18 during its 10th anniversary celebration. Johnson said the timing was tied to that anniversary rather than the midterm elections, though he said the findings could help explain election outcomes afterward.

"There was no rush, there was no major strategy behind releasing it this week that's tied to the midterms," Johnson said. "But I do think that it helps us understand the outcomes of the midterms a lot better, post-election."

When asked what role lawmakers should play in closing the Black homeownership gap, Johnson said he believes government programs already exist but that community awareness, not new legislation, is the bigger barrier. He also said BCF plans to run homeownership-focused campaigns similar to political get-out-the-vote efforts.

Asked about the group's grassroots focus ahead of the midterms, Johnson acknowledged the toll of current economic pressures on families.

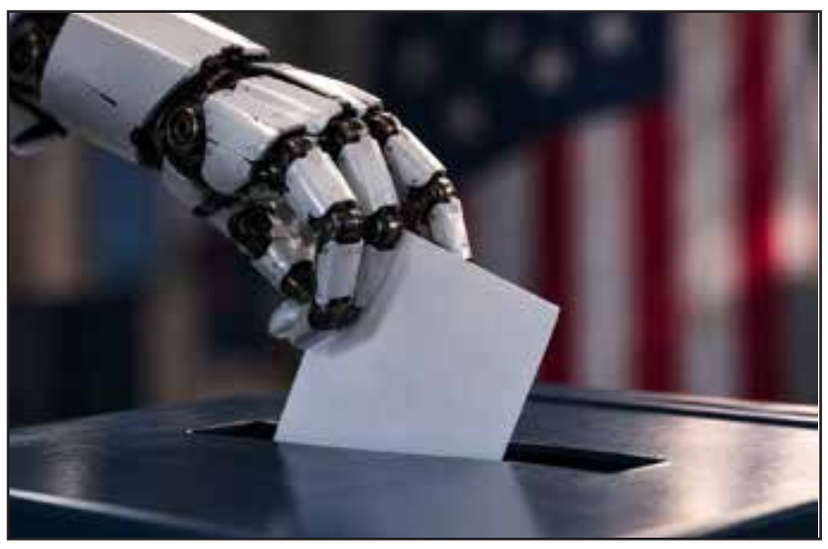
"Yes, the gas prices are extremely high. Yes, the food costs are high. Yes, we're experiencing an affordability issue," he said, adding that BCF is pushing financial literacy and multiple streams of income as near-term strategies.

Many of the gains BCF highlighted as positive—including HBCU enrollment growth, declining murder rates and improvements in Black maternal health—occurred during multiple political administrations.

Johnson said the report does not strip credit from either party.

"Yes, there were some wins in the Biden administration, and there were wins in the Trump first administration," Johnson said. "Both parties have a play in that."

$80M Of Spending On Almost 170 AI-Generated Political Ads



THE CONVERSATION - The 2026 U.S. midterm campaigns are the first in which AI-generated political ads are regularly appearing on people's televisions and social media feeds.

We are researchers who have been studying political advertising through the Wesleyan Media Project since 2010. This election cycle – using data from media reports, student coders and AdImpact, a firm that tracks political ad spending – we've tracked about US$80 million in spending on almost 170 unique ads that use AI.

What we found has surprised us: AI use spans from hyperrealistic deepfakes to subtle enhancements; Republican sponsors – both candidates and interest groups – are much more likely to use AI than are Democratic sponsors; and, thanks to a patchwork of state legislation, many of these ads do not disclose the use of AI at all.

From deepfakes to subtle edits

An assortment of politicians and watchdog groups have expressed concern about campaigns using generative AI to produce deepfakes – synthetic videos showing people doing things they did not do – that might deceive voters.

We've noticed several ads containing hyperrealistic deepfakes of famous politicians, including Donald Trump, Nancy Pelosi, Barack Obama, Kamala Harris and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez. Ocasio-Cortez, in particular, is a favorite among Republican advertisers, appearing in at least five ads.

We've seen deepfakes in which a Republican Senate candidate from Louisiana drives a school bus full of undocumented immigrants, a Republican candidate for governor from South Carolina walks arm in arm with drag queens, and an ad in which Liz Cheney, Mitt Romney and Mike Pence are seen carrying pitchforks on the White House lawn.

People who are not politicians made appearances, too, including a fake Dr. Anthony Fauci, seen running around a state fair with a huge syringe, presumably eager to vaccinate everyone. We've also noticed several ads in which AI was used to generate crowds or constituents.

In several cases, AI was used to enhance visuals rather than generate something new. One ad from Chip Keating, a Republican candidate for governor in Oklahoma, includes an AI disclaimer, but it doesn't specify exactly how AI was used. Ads that use AI to enhance visuals don't necessarily look different from ads that were created in the pre-AI era, which makes it difficult for viewers to discern whether they depict something false.

A partisan gap

Republicans – both candidates and groups such as super PACs and 501(c) organizations – are much more likely to use AI in their ads than are Democrats, according to our research.

In fact, Republican candidates or pro-Republican groups were behind 80% of the ads we tracked and 83% of the spending.

We can only speculate as to why Republicans dominate the use of AI in political advertising in 2026. In general, Democrats tend to take on a regulatory mindset when it comes to political campaigns, favoring limits on campaign spending and required disclosures. In 2022, for instance, only Senate Democrats and two independents voted to advance the DISCLOSE Act that would have required additional campaign finance disclosures for super PACs, labor unions and corporations. Republicans, by contrast, tend to be more in favor of a free market approach.

These more general philosophies may be reflected in the parties' use of generative AI for political advertising, something about which voters are worried. Polling shows broad support for more regulation, with 78% of registered voters favoring a ban on AI content that makes deceptive claims about candidates.

Disclaimers all over the map

Because regulation of AI in advertising depends on a patchwork of state legislation, many of these ads are not required to disclose the use of AI. This lack of disclaimers makes tracking AI use in ads challenging. Our team has relied on media coverage and trained student coders to flag ads that are potentially AI-generated.

Across 35 states, only 31% of the ads we tracked – representing 22% of the spending – disclosed the use of AI tools. The wording of these disclaimers was all over the map. For example, one Georgia ad included the disclaimer, "This video has been manipulated or generated with artificial intelligence," while an Oklahoma ad said, "Political satire. AI-generated images do not depict actual events." A North Carolina state Senate ad said, "You guessed it! AI was definitely used to generate these silly video clips."

Laws don't drive disclosure

Some advertisers voluntarily disclose the use of AI even when they are not required to do so. Sometimes, the opposite occurs – advertisers don't include disclaimers even when state law requires them to. In fact, we've found that a state law that requires disclaimers on ads that use AI has very little relationship with the actual use of disclaimers.

In states without laws governing the use of AI in political ads, 32% of ads contained a disclaimer; by contrast, in states with laws governing the use of AI, 29% contained a disclaimer. This comparison, however, is not perfect, as some of the ads in our database aren't covered by their state's law. Some states, such as Colorado, have laws that apply only to candidate deepfakes and thus exclude other uses of AI. In other instances, such as in Louisiana, an AI law was enacted after the ad aired.

Minnesota law generally bans deepfakes in political ads, but an ad featuring synthetic video of Democratic Senate candidate Peggy Flanagan aired in May 2026 anyway. Whether it violated state law is uncertain, as the law requires that the media be "so realistic that a reasonable person would believe it depicts speech or conduct of an individual who did not in fact engage in such speech or conduct."

Moving forward, the real policy challenge will revolve around transparency, the enforceability of existing laws and simply figuring out what type of disclosure would be helpful to voters.

With Election Pressure Mounting, States Move To Suspend Fuel Taxes



NC NEWSLINE - With Election Day less than a month away, lawmakers in several states are suspending gas taxes or rolling back regulations on diesel fuel as voters grow increasingly frustrated with rising fuel costs amid President Donald Trump's war with Iran.

On Tuesday, Trump issued an executive order to expand access to tax-free diesel fuel nationwide, following the lead of several governors who have taken the same step.

Trump signed the order at a Nebraska rally, promising U.S. Sen. Pete Ricketts and Gov. Jim Pillen, both Republicans, that "this should absolutely ensure your election, I guarantee you that," the Associated Press reported.

In at least four states — Georgia, Indiana, Ohio and Utah — leaders have moved to temporarily suspend or reduce the state tax on gasoline.

Ohio lawmakers voted last month to approve a 90-day gas tax holiday, a move called for by both the Democratic and Republican candidates for governor.

While many Democrats joined with Republicans to pass the bill, some Democratic leaders called the measure a last-ditch effort to salvage the GOP's electoral prospects, the Ohio Capital Journal reported.

"If this had been so important, we would have acted (earlier this year), but we didn't," said Senate Minority Leader Nickie Antonio, a Democrat. "They said we have nothing more to take up until after the election, and then suddenly they got polling numbers, and the polling numbers told them they were behind."

Georgia Republican Gov. Brian Kemp suspended the state's gas tax with an executive order, as did Indiana Republican Gov. Mike Braun.

And Utah lawmakers voted earlier this year to temporarily reduce the gas tax by 15%.

Meanwhile, 10 states had reduced restrictions on the use of tax-exempt diesel fuel prior to Trump's order that loosened those restrictions nationwide.

That fuel, known as red-dyed diesel, is normally only allowed for off-highway agricultural, industrial and railroad use, according to the North Dakota Monitor. Some governors have issued executive orders expanding the use of red-dyed diesel, which is not taxed like regular diesel, in a bid to help farmers and truckers with transportation costs.

North Dakota, Nebraska, Oklahoma, Texas, Missouri, Arkansas, Louisiana, Alabama, North Carolina and Indiana have all issued similar orders, according to the Associated Press.

"Texas agriculture and freight run on diesel," Texas Republican Gov. Greg Abbott said in a statement, according to the Texas Tribune. "Record prices put both industries at risk and raise costs for every Texas family."

Tennessee Republican Gov. Bill Lee also issued an order Tuesday allowing farmers and loggers to use red-dyed diesel on public roads, at the urging of state lawmakers.

In other states, leaders are facing pressure to take similar action.

Legislative leaders in North Carolina have called for a special session on fuel prices. Some lawmakers there have suggested that the state could use surplus revenue from state reserves to pay for road projects while temporarily suspending the gas tax.

The Iowa Corn Growers Association is urging lawmakers there to follow suit, while asking them to push the Trump administration to release oil from the U.S. Strategic Oil Reserve.

In Kentucky, Republican Agriculture Commissioner Jonathan Shell has asked Democratic Gov. Andy Beshear to also roll back restrictions on untaxed diesel. And Connecticut Republicans have proposed a three-month holiday on fuel taxes, while Democrats have countered that they should focus on ending Trump's war with Iran.



IT'S VOTING TIME

October is here, and it's letting us know it's bringing a change in the weather, including lower temperatures and rain. It's still going to be a good month, and we've got work to do. Hopefully, you've been doing your Black job and encouraging people to vote. I'm going to be honest with you, and encouraging people to vote for the Democrats. There may be some good Republicans, but they haven't crossed my path, and the ones I've seen ads for are using the same old tactics: lies, coded ads about crime, etc. And they're not willing to say that Trump is increasing his family's financial treasure, lying every time he opens his mouth, and working to create a dictatorship and against all our democracy. So what? The only way to stop this lunacy is to have people in the Congress and Senate who will vote against those things he is proposing, and enough to win the vote.

These people think that they are slick. Here are some of the things that they've put off voting for until after the election: cuts to Medicaid, SNAP benefits, clean energy credits, student loans and funding for rural hospitals. Yet they fool their MAGA voters into thinking that this will be good for them, and unfortunately, most of those people believe whatever he tells them. Perhaps they agree. Someone posted something that I agree with: "It's the Republican way. Save the fetus, starve the child, honor the soldier, abandon the veteran, enrich the corporations, fleece the workers, protect the abusers, blame the victims, quote the Bible, ignore the verse."

They are full of contradictions, suggesting even now that they've won the Senate, the House and have the Supreme Court majority that the elections are rigged. Yet, miraculously, Trump promised that after the midterms, voters will get a $5,000 check, the war will end, prices will go down. Pay attention, folks, for although they are in charge in every branch of the government, the things that they are questioned about are the fault of Democrats.

Let's face it, we are not safe from inflation. The cost of everything is substantially up. He's torn off a part of the White House for a ballroom while unemployment rates are going up and job growth is stagnant or dropping. Healthcare is in the toilet, and children are literally dying from parents believing that vaccines are harmful. They bring Jack Smith to a Judiciary Committee hearing again as a last ploy to rev up their base, but that backfired on them because none of the Republican accusations fazed him, and he stood soundly against the lies. The Democrats on the committee asked potent questions with the facts he uncovered, and it didn't help that the 86 witnesses who testified to Trump's crimes all were Republicans, and not one was a Democrat.

There's still some justice left. The $5.6 million payment to E. Jean Carroll for Trump's sexual assault case that she won is now in her bank account, and the CNN reporters fought back against the pool duty block, and they won, though the administration is, in plain sight, refusing to comply. Our job is simple. We must vote, and as the Donald would say, vote "bigly," so we become the blue wave that must sweep the country. Our message must be: enough.

P.S. My pastor's name is Bouie, not Bowie, but if you could see my writing, it would be easy to see how anyone trying to translate it would be confused. LOL.

Subscribe To The Carolinian For More Election News!



Wake County Candidates Address Data Center Issues

By Jordan Meadows
Staff Writer

Southeast Raleigh residents and local candidates gathered Saturday at the Garner Woman's Club for a People's Assembly and candidate forum on proposed data center development in the region, with nearly every candidate in attendance backing some form of moratorium ahead of the Raleigh City Council's vote Tuesday evening.

The event combined a community organizing fair, panel discussion and candidate forum focused on what organizers described as the broader stakes of rapid data center expansion for land, water, energy, public health, utility infrastructure and local decision-making across Raleigh, Wake County and North Carolina more broadly. Candidates for Raleigh City Council, Wake County commissioner and the Wake Soil and Water Conservation District weighed in on how long a moratorium the city and county should pursue, with positions ranging from six months to a permanent ban.

Raleigh City Council member Christina Jones, who represents District E, said she supports a moratorium but cautioned that its length should be tied to how quickly the city can answer outstanding questions about data centers' energy and water usage.

"I definitely support a moratorium," Jones said. "What I'm concerned with is, if it's a six-month moratorium versus a 36-month one—if we don't address those questions and answer them, we're never going to get your buy-in. I want there to be public meetings, back-and-forth public conversation, and I think we need to use this time to justify that to the public."

Raleigh City Council member Cory Branch, who represents District C, urged the crowd to distinguish between the longstanding history of data centers and the newer hyperscale facilities driving current concerns.

"Data centers have been around for a very long time. They built this region," Branch said, pointing to companies such as IBM and Lenovo that have relied on data infrastructure for decades. "Let's be more specific when we talk about what is really impacting our environment, and that's the hyperscale data centers that are causing more impact right now on the environment than the legacy data centers. This gives us time to go in, tighten up our procedures, tighten up our rules, so that we can make sure that everybody is safe in Raleigh as well as our surrounding communities."

Jevon Smith-Cook, a nonpartisan candidate for Raleigh City Council District D, framed his support for a moratorium around workforce disruption, particularly in surrounding rural communities.

"The disruption that we see now is not the disruption that we're going to see in the future... Just because we don't have a data center in the city of Raleigh doesn't mean we won't have one in Chatham County, because the land here is so expensive," he said.

Wake County Commissioner At-Large Mona Singh, who said she comes from a technology background, argued the county simply lacks the capacity to absorb large-scale data center development.

"We have 66 people moving into the county every single day. We do not have the resources even to provide for those 66 people," Singh said. "Each AI data center would use resources that could actually help be used for 100,000 people. We just don't have it. Data centers should be in places where they have resources and no people, and that's not Wake County."

Samantha Kropp, who works professionally in water quality as a riverkeeper on the Neuse River, backed the longest moratorium discussed at the forum.



"I do support a 36-month moratorium. I support as long of a moratorium as we can feasibly pass, in order to gain the necessary time that we need to get the unanswered questions answered," Kropp said, noting other parts of Wake County have already passed moratoriums longer than six months.

She also warned against loopholes that would allow a wave of smaller data centers to collectively match a hyperscale facility's impact.

"If we're ushering in, let's say, 10, 20, 30 more smaller data centers, then what we end up with is the equivalent of the emissions and discharges of a hyperscale data center," she said.

Cece Grant, another candidate for the conservation district, said she has spent three years fighting data center development and rejected any moratorium as insufficient.

"I am not for a 36-month ban. I'm for a permanent ban," Grant said.

She cited three reasons for her opposition: 1) that data centers are disproportionately sited in low-income communities, 2) that developers often negotiate favorable deals with utility companies that shift costs onto ratepayers, and 3) that the facilities consume water needed by residents while discharging runoff into the same water supply.

"We have enough problems paying Duke Energy. We don't need to be paying for a data center," she said.

Terence Thomas, also running for the conservation district, said a six-month window isn't enough time to build public trust.

"There are two issues here: public safety and public trust. Six months does not give us enough time to communicate to the community about the impact and the effect of what the data center can do. When there is not enough communication, there is distrust in the community."

Less than an hour East of Wake County, the Wilson NAACP hosted its own candidate forum the same day, at Wilson Community College's DelMastro Auditorium.

Wake County Commissioners Sherry Lucas and JoAnne Daniels, the only commissioner candidates in attendance, both spoke against a ballot referendum to cap personal and property taxes, the Wilson Times reported.

"If we don't have the revenue, we will not be able to do the things in the county that we would like to do," Lucas said.

With the election approaching, more counties and candidates are expected to hold forums and address the issues most affecting their communities.

MEDICARE FOR ALL

Continued from page 7



half of Americans say they can afford their healthcare, Medicare for All has become a progressive shorthand for radical, systemic change.

"Too many people don't have health insurance, too many people who do have insurance can't afford medical care, and many people are terrified about the costs of being sick," said Jonathan Oberlander, a professor at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill who specializes in the politics of healthcare reform.

"And in an electorate that wants change, that is disenchanted with the status quo, Medicare for All is an important symbol," he said.

That's why Democrats running for Senate seats in the midterm elections in such states as Maine, Minnesota, and Florida tout their support for scrapping the current health insurance system in favor of broad Medicare coverage. But nowhere is the issue as central to a race as in Michigan, where Medicare for All has become synonymous with El-Sayed.

El-Sayed, who trained as a doctor and served as Detroit's top public health official, has campaigned on Medicare for All since his unsuccessful bid for governor in 2018. To Starks-Clay, that means he has a plan and will "stick to it," she said.

That's appealing to voters right now, said Ashley Kirzinger, director of survey methodology at KFF, a health information nonprofit that includes KFF Health News. "When we ask people what do they want to hear from candidates in regards to healthcare, it's a plan to bring down healthcare costs."

DUKE ENERGY ANNOUNCES DIVIDEND PAYMENTS TO ITS SHAREHOLDERS

CHARLOTTE, N.C.— Duke Energy (NYSE: DUK) today declared a quarterly cash dividend on its common stock of $1.085 per share. This dividend is payable on Dec. 16, 2026, to shareholders of record at the close of business on Nov. 13, 2026.

The company also declared a quarterly cash dividend on its Series A preferred stock of $359.375 per share payable on Dec. 16, 2026, to shareholders of record at the close of business on Nov. 13, 2026. This is equivalent to $0.359375 per depositary share.

Duke Energy has paid a cash dividend on its common stock for 100 consecutive years.

COASTAL CREDIT UNION FOUNDATION OPENS SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS FOR 2027–28 SCHOOL YEAR

RALEIGH, N.C. – The Coastal Credit Union Foundation is proud to announce that scholarship applications for the 2027–2028 academic year are now open. The scholarship is designed to help students pursue higher education by easing the financial burden of college costs. It is open to students attending a four-year university, community college, or technical school, and scholarships may be used for tuition, books, or other education-related expenses.

The scholarship is open to students who:

- Are members of any credit union in North or South Carolina, with scholarships available specifically for members of Coastal Credit Union
- Have a non-weighted GPA of 3.0 or higher

The program is managed by and in partnership with the Carolinas Credit Union Foundation. Students can learn more about eligibility, selection criteria, and tips for submitting a strong application by visiting the Carolinas Foundation scholarship portal. Applications are now being accepted at:

https://www.grantinterface.com/Home/Logon?urlkey=carolinasfoundation

The application deadline is February 1, 2027, and scholarship awards will be announced in April 2027. Coastal will host an award ceremony and career day for its member recipients in June 2027.

"Investing in education is one of the most powerful ways to build a brighter future," said Emily Nail, executive director of the Coastal Credit Union Foundation. "With college tuition continuing to rise, the Coastal Credit Union Foundation is committed to helping our young members pursue their academic and career goals with less financial stress. The scholarship program reflects the credit union philosophy of "people helping people," investing in future leaders, innovators, and changemakers."



How And When You Can Vote In NC

NC Newsline—If you are planning to vote in the midterm elections, there are some very important deadlines coming up. The first deadline is 5 p.m. this Friday, Oct. 9, which is the voter registration deadline.

If you are eligible to vote, you can complete your registration online or in person at the N.C. Division of Motor Vehicles.

You also have the option of filling out the registration form and delivering it or mailing it back to the N.C. State Board of Elections. It'll be accepted as long as it is postmarked by Oct. 9.

Early in-person voting begins on Thursday, Oct. 15. If you missed the Oct. 9 registration deadline, you can still take advantage of same-day registration during early voting.

Unlike on Election Day, during early voting you can vote at any location in your county. You can look up early voting locations here. Early in-person voting will wrap up at 3 p.m. on Saturday, Oct. 31.

If you'd like to see your sample ballot before you go to vote, you can look it up here.

If your plan is to vote by mail, Tuesday, Oct. 20 is the deadline to request an absentee ballot. And it must be received – not postmarked – by your county Board of Elections office no later than 7:30 p.m. on Election Day in order to be counted.

If you requested an absentee ballot but worry it may not arrive in the mail by Election Day, you are still allowed to vote in person. Election officials simply ask that you discard the unused absentee ballot and not return it to the Board of Elections to avoid confusion.

If you've changed your address recently or wish to change party affiliation, click here to learn how to update your voter registration. You can also make changes to your registration in person if you use early voting.

Election Day is Tuesday, Nov. 3. Polling sites are open from 6:30 a.m. until 7:30 p.m. statewide. You must go to your assigned voting site to make sure your vote will count. Click here to find your Election Day polling place.



Progress' Perspective —*CONT. FROM PG 1*

this road reduce congestion?" they may also ask, "Will this project strengthen or weaken our neighborhood?"

Instead of asking only, "How much will the project cost?" they may ask, "What will the project cost our community?"

And instead of asking only, "How quickly can we build it?" they may ask, "What will remain after it is built?"

Those are not necessarily arguments against transportation improvements. They are questions about how improvements should be measured.

The challenge for public officials is to recognize that technical measurements do not tell the entire story.

Traffic counts, travel times and construction costs are important. But so are neighborhood history, community connections, access to businesses, housing stability and the voices of residents who have lived with the consequences of earlier decisions.

That is why meaningful public participation matters.

NCDOT reported that it held nearly 30 small-group meetings and two formal public meetings during the I-77 South planning process, reaching approximately 2,000 people. The department says community feedback helped shape the current design.

Beyond Charlotte, and across the country, communities are being asked to accommodate new highways, transit systems, housing developments, industrial projects, renewable-energy facilities and other forms of growth.

The question should not simply be whether a project is good for the region.

Communities also have a right to ask whether it is good for the people who live there.

Progress should not require communities to surrender their history, their homes or their identity.

And when communities see the same project differently, that disagreement should not automatically be treated as resistance to progress.

Sometimes it is a reminder that progress looks different depending on where you stand.

The best public projects are not simply those that move cars, build buildings or attract investment.

They are projects that listen to the people who will live with the results.

Because a road may connect two destinations on a map — but whether it connects or divides a community depends on much more than asphalt and concrete.

Sunday Transit Service —*CONT. FROM PG 7*

the microtransit vehicles, as well as expenses associated with operating the service, including driver wages, fuel, maintenance, and dispatch and routing technology. A portion of the funding also supports marketing and efforts to educate residents about the new service and how to use the app.

The microtransit vehicles are wheelchair accessible, and certified service animals are permitted to accompany passengers. Seating options are available to better accommodate elderly passengers and people with physical disabilities. The service also includes accommodations for riders with documented medical needs. Although eating, drinking, and vaping are generally restricted aboard the vehicles, exceptions are provided for passengers whose medical conditions require access to food, beverages or certain equipment while traveling.

At the launch of the service last Friday, Councilman Rueben Blackwell highlighted the years of work that have gone into strengthening Rocky Mount's public transportation system.

"We have worked a long time together on building a transit system that benefits the communities that we know need transportation the most," Blackwell said. "It takes a whole team to make something happen, and we have a phenomenal team," he said.

Blackwell acknowledged that public transportation is not necessarily designed to generate a profit, but said its value should not be judged solely by its financial return.

"Transit doesn't make money. But you can't value everything according to a dollar," Blackwell said.

The launch of TRT2GO also comes with recognition of longtime supporters of Tar River Transit, including Nash County Commissioner Fred Belfield. Belfield, 89, announced that he would step down at the end of his current term. He was recognized as a longtime supporter of the transit system who has been involved since its early years.

Tar River Transit has served as Rocky Mount's public mass transportation provider since the 1990s, succeeding earlier municipal transit arrangements. The system has spent decades providing fixed-route transportation to residents throughout the city. The addition of TRT2GO represents an expansion of that system rather than a replacement for its existing services.

The traditional Tar River Transit buses will continue operating on their regular Monday-through-Saturday schedules, while TRT2GO provides a separate Sunday option.

Classifieds

DURHAM COUNTY

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
File No: 26E000869-310

Having qualified as Administrator of the Estate of WILLIAM CHASE MANSON, deceased, of 2702 Newquay Street, 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 January 9, 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 8th day of October, 2026.
Christian Manson
Administrators of the Estate of William Chase Manson
c/o N. Vail Gardner, Esq.
Vail Gardner Law, PLLC
732 9th Street #621
Durham, NC 27705
FOR PUBLICATION: The Carolinian
10/8, 10/15, 10/22 and 10/29/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
File No: 26E001146-310

Having qualified as Administrator of the Estate of MICHAEL LEWIS KELLY, deceased, of 923 Carroll Street, Durham County, Durham, NC 27701, the undersigned does hereby notify all persons, firms, and corporations having claims against the estate of said decedent to exhibit them to the undersigned in care of the attorney for the estate on or before January 9, 2027, 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 8th day of October, 2026.
Jeffrey L. Austin, PLLC
Public Administrator of the Estate of Michael Lewis Kelly
500 Westover Dr. #32043
Sanford, NC 27330
FOR PUBLICATION: The Carolinian
10/8, 10/15, 10/22, and 10/29/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
File No: 26E000766-310

Having qualified as Administrator of the Estate of DEGUI YUAN (a/k/a DE GUI YUAN), deceased, of 1 Barwinds Circle, Durham County, Durham, NC 27713, 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 January 9, 2027, 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 8th day of October, 2026.
Jeffrey L. Austin, PLLC
Public Administrator of the Estate of DeGui Yuan
500 Westover Dr. #32043
Sanford, NC 27330
FOR PUBLICATION: The Carolinian
10/8, 10/15, 10/22 and 10/29/2026
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
ESTATE OF NICOLAS MARTSCHENKO
FILE NO. 26E001142-310

ALL PERSONS, firms, and corporations having claims against NICOLAS MARTSCHENKO, deceased, of Durham County, N.C., are notified to exhibit the same to the undersigned on or before January 8, 2027, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of recovery. Debtors of the decedent are asked to make immediate payment. This the 8th of October, 2026. Alice Mask, Executor of the Estate of Nicolas Martschenko, c/o Richard Long, Attorney, 1255 Crescent Green, Suite 200, Cary, NC 27518.
10/8, 10/15, 10/22, and 10/29/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
In the General Court of Justice,
Superior Court Division
Before the Clerk
File No: 26E000013-310

Having qualified as ADMINISTRATOR of the Estate of CLYDE DOUGLAS PERRY, 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 8th day of January, 2027, 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 8th day of October, 2026.
Candice Donnica Perry
Administrator
42 Holly Berry Lane
Durham, NC 27703
10/8, 10/15, 10/22, and 10/29/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
COUNTY OF DURHAM
NOTICE TO CREDITORS

THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 29th day of September 2026, as Executor of the ESTATE OF DONG HWA TAYLOR, Deceased, of Durham County, North Carolina, does hereby notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against said Estate to exhibit them to the undersigned on or before the 9th day of January 2027 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 8th day of October 2026.
CECILIA KYUNG CHU, EXECUTOR
ESTATE OF DONG HWA TAYLOR
c/o SHIRLEY M. DIEFENBACH, Attorney
Walker Lambe, PLLC
Post Office Box 51549
Durham, North Carolina 27717
10/8, 10/15, 10/22, and 10/29/2026

NOTICE OF SERVICE OF PROCESS BY PUBLICATION STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA DURHAM COUNTY IN THE GENERAL COURT OF JUSTICE SUPERIOR COURT DIVISION BEFORE THE CLERK FILE NO. 26SP000869-310 FOR THE ADOPTION OF A MALE MINOR

TO: Luis Bazan Guzman, the legal father of Baby Boy Bazan, a male child, born on July 30, 2026 in Durham, Durham County, North Carolina, to Jessica Bazan.

Take notice that a Petition for Adoption was filed with the Clerk of Superior Court for Durham County, North Carolina in the above entitled special proceeding. The Petition relates to Baby Boy Bazan, a male child, born on July 30, 2026 in Durham, Durham County, North Carolina, to Jessica Bazan. Upon information and belief, Ms. Bazan is legally married to Luis Bazan Guzman, but his whereabouts are unknown. PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that you are required to file a response to such pleading not later than 40 days from the first day of publication of this notice, that date being November 18, 2026, and upon your failure to do so the Petitioner will apply to the Court for relief sought in the Petition. Any parental rights you may have will be terminated upon the entry of the decree of adoption.
Kelly T. Dempsey, Attorney for Petitioners, 10310 Couloak Drive, #400, Charlotte NC 28216.
10/8, 10/15, and 10/22/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
ESTATE OF JOHN JOSEPH SNEDDON
FILE NO. 22E000375-310

All persons, firms, and corporations having claims against John Joseph Sneddon, deceased, of Durham County, North Carolina are notified to exhibit the same to the undersigned on or before January 06, 2027 or this notice will be pleaded in bar of recovery. Debtors of the Decedent are asked to make immediate payment.

This the 1st day of October 2026.
LuAnn Sneddon Pendergraft,
Co-Executor and
Amy Sneddon McKnight, Co-Executor
C/O Hanrahan Law PLLC
4801 Glenwood Ave. Ste 200
Raleigh, NC 27612
10/1, 10/8, 10/15, and 10/22/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
In the General Court of Justice,
Superior Court Division
Before the Clerk
File No: 26E001201-310

Having qualified as ADMINISTRATOR of the Estate of DAVID DANIEL CRAIG, 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 1st day of January, 2027, 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 1st day of October, 2026.
Alan Wade Craig, Administrator
817 Fanning Way
Durham, NC 27704
10/1, 10/8, 10/15, and 10/22/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
In the General Court of Justice,
Superior Court Division
Before the Clerk
File No: 26E001156-310

Having qualified as EXECUTOR of the Estate of PAULA SCHUBERT, 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 1st day of January, 2027, 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 1st day of October, 2026.
Scott Pappas, Executor
c/o Attorney Christopher Hill
311 E. Main Street
Durham, NC 27701
10/1, 10/8, 10/15, and 10/22/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
In the General Court of Justice,
Superior Court Division
Before the Clerk
File No: 26E001159-310

Having qualified as ADMINISTRATOR and CO-ADMINISTRATOR of the Estate of VALJEANE KING SIMPSON, 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 1st day of January, 2027, 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 1st day of October, 2026.
Katherine King Cooper
Administrator
6409 3rd St. NW
Washington, DC 20012
Arvetta King Weston
Co-Administrator
5237 New Hampshire Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20011
10/1, 10/8, 10/15, and 10/22/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
NOTICE OF SERVICE OF PROCESS BY PUBLICATION
In The General Court Of Justice
Superior Court Division
File No.: 26CV003984-310

ANTHONY DOUGLAS, PLAINTIFF, VS. MATHEW KIPTUM, DEFENDANT

TO: Mathew Kiptum

Take notice that a pleading seeking relief against you has been filed in the above entitled action. The nature of the relief sought is as follows:

Complaint for Personal Injuries as a result of a Motor Vehicle Accident on September 9, 2023 on PP 1310 Wyldewood Drive in Durham, NC.

You are required to make defense to such pleading not later than November 10, 2026 and upon your failure to do so the party seeking service against you will apply to the Court for the relief sought.

This the 1st day of October, 2026.
Robert T. Perry
N.C. State Bar #11051
PERRY, PERRY & PERRY, P.A.
Attorneys for Plaintiff
601 Fayetteville Street, Suite 300
Post Office Drawer 2051
Durham, North Carolina 27702
Telephone: (919) 683-8685
10/1, 10/8, and 10/15/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS

Having qualified as Administrator of the Estate of WILLIAM MANUEL VIERRA, SR., deceased, this is to notify all persons, firms, and corporations having claims against the Estate of WILLIAM MANUEL VIERRA, SR. to present them to the undersigned on or before the 24th day of December, 2026,
or this Notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery.

All persons indebted to said Estate, please make immediate payment.

This, the 22nd day of September, 2026.
EDWARD J. FALCONE
Attorney for the Estate of WILLIAM MANUEL VIERRA, SR.
120 E. Parrish Street, Suite 200
Durham, North Carolina 27701
(919) 682-9273
9/24, 10/1, 10/8, and 10/15/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
In the General Court of Justice,
Superior Court Division
Before the Clerk
File No: 26E000942-310

Having qualified as EXECUTOR of the Estate of JAUN GILBERTO RODRIGUEZ ZEPEDA, 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 24th day of December, 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 24th day of September, 2026.
Erika Rodriguez, Executor
c/o Justin L. McCarthy
Bagwell Holt Smith P.A.
111 Cloister Court, Suite 200
Chapel Hill , NC 27514
9/24, 10/1, 10/8, and 10/15/2026
NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS

All persons, firms and corporations having claims against RAY CAPLE, deceased of Durham County, North Carolina, are notified to exhibit the same to the undersigned on or before the 24th day of December or this notice will be pleaded in bar of recovery. Debtors of the decedent are asked to make immediate payment. This the 24th day of September 2026.
Carlous Caple, Administrator
c/o Trusts and Estates Law Group
4141 Parklake Avenue, Suite 310
Raleigh, NC 27612
9/24, 10/1, 10/8, and 10/15/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
In the General Court of Justice,
Superior Court Division
Before the Clerk
File No: 26E001101-310

Having qualified as EXECUTOR of the Estate of JUDITH BEVERLYN CRABTREE, 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 24th day of December, 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 24th day of September, 2026.
Eddie Crabtree, Executor
c/o Christopher Hill
311 E. Main street
Durham, NC, 27701
9/24, 10/1, 10/8, and 10/15/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
File No: 26E000549-310

ALL PERSONS, firms and corporations having claims against DAVID LEE HARRISON, deceased, of DURHAM COUNTY, NC, are notified to exhibit the same to the undersigned on or before December 24, 2026 or this notice will be pleaded in bar of recovery. Debtors
of the decedent are asked to make immediate payment.

This the 24th day of September 2026.
Carl D. Harrison, David D. Harrison/ Executors of the Estate,
c/o MONROE JENKINS, PA
PO Box 12534
Durham, North Carolina 27709
9/24, 10/1, 10/8, and 10/15/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS

All persons, firms and corporations having claims against KIRSTEN KAY KLUMP, deceased of Durham County, North Carolina, are notified to exhibit the same to the undersigned on or before the 24th day of December or this notice will be pleaded in bar of recovery. Debtors of the decedent are asked to make immediate payment. This the 24th day of September 2026.
Bradley S. Klump, Executor
Estate of Kirsten Kay Klump, Deceased
c/o Trusts and Estates Law Group
4141 Parklake Avenue, Suite 310
Raleigh, NC 27612
9/24, 10/1, 10/8, and 10/15/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
File No: 26E001079-310

Having qualified as Public Administrator of the Estate of RICHARD M. ALLEN, SR., deceased, of 114 Laurel Avenue, 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 December 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 17th day of September, 2026.
Jeffrey L. Austin
Public Administrator of the Estate of Richard M. Allen, Sr.
c/o Law Office of Jeffrey L. Austin, PLLC
500 Westover Dr. #32043
Sanford, NC 27330
9/17, 9/24, 10/1, and 10/8/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
File No: 26E001080-310

Having qualified as Public Administrator of the Estate of JAMES MICHAEL DAVIS, deceased, of 901 Wood Chapel Lane, Durham County, 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 December 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 17th day of September, 2026.
Jeffrey L. Austin
Public Administrator of the Estate of James Michael Davis
c/o Law Office of Jeffrey L. Austin, PLLC
500 Westover Dr. #32043
Sanford, NC 27330
9/17, 9/24, 10/1, and 10/8/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
In the General Court of Justice,
Superior Court Division
Before the Clerk
File No: 26E001098-310

Having qualified as CO-EXECUTORS of the Estate of FRANCES OLIVIA GARRETT, 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 17th day of December, 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 17th day of September, 2026.
Frederick Wayne Garrett,
Co-Executor
316 Olive Branch Rd.
Durham, NC 27703
Janet G. Bennett, Co-Executor
712 E. Enon Rd.
Oxford, NC 27565
Tommy D. Garrett, Co-Executor
3606 E. Greer St.
Durham, NC 27704
9/17, 9/24, 10/1, and 10/8/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS AND DEBTORS OF Judy Frances Cosler

All persons, firms and corporations having claims against JUDY FRANCES COSLER, late of Durham County, North Carolina, are notified to exhibit them to Heather Batt as Executor of the decedent's estate on or before December 19, 2026, c/o Janet B. Witchger, Attorney at Law, 1414 Raleigh Rd., Ste. 203, Chapel Hill, NC 27517, or be barred from their recovery. Debtors of the decedent are asked to make immediate payment to the above-named Executor.

This the 17th day of September 2026.
Heather Batt, Executor
c/o Janet B. Witchger, Atty.
TrustCounsel
1414 Raleigh Rd., Ste. 203
Chapel Hill, NC 27517
9/17, 9/24, 10/1, and 10/8/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
File No: 26E001104-310

THE UNDERSIGNED, having qualified on the 8th day of September 2026, as Executor of the ESTATE OF NELSON LUTHER HOWER, III, 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 18th day of December 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 17th day of September 2026.
EMILY KATE HOWER
EXECUTOR
ESTATE OF NELSON LUTHER HOWER, III
c/o Jennifer Dalman, Attorney
Walker Lambe, PLLC
240 Leigh Farm Rd, Ste 100
Durham, North Carolina 27707
9/17, 9/24, 10/1, and 10/8/2026
STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DURHAM COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
In the General Court of Justice,
Superior Court Division
Before the Clerk
File No: 26E001096-310

Having qualified as EXECUTOR of the Estate of DAPHINE JEAN BRADSHER A/K/A DAPHINE NORWOOD BRADSHER, 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 17th day of December, 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 17th day of September, 2026.
LaJean Cris Bradsher, Executor
2194 Lauren Mill Drive
Oxford, NC 27565
9/17, 9/24, 10/1, and 10/8/2026
Estate of Leonard Edward Gethers, Durham County Estate
File No. 26E001121-310:

All persons, firms and corporations having claims against LEONARD EDWARD GETHERS, deceased, of Durham, N.C., are notified to exhibit the same to the undersigned on or before December 21, 2026, or this notice will be pleaded in bar of recovery. Debtors of the decedent are asked to make immediate payment. This the 17th day of September 2026.
Lauren Elizabeth Gethers, Administrator
C/O Elizabeth Boyette, Boyette Law, PLLC
4509 Creedmoor Road
Suite 201
Raleigh, NC 27612
9/17, 9/24, 10/1, and 10/8/2026
DURHAM COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
In the General Court of Justice,
Superior Court Division
Before the Clerk
File No: 25E001016-310

Having qualified as ADMINISTRATOR of the Estate of BETTY HARRINGTON, 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 17th day of December, 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 17th day of September, 2026.
Mike Wills, Administrator, c/o Richard F. Prentis, Jr., 4 Consultant Pl., Durham, NC 27707.
9/17, 9/24, 10/1, and 10/8/2026

IREDELL COUNTY

NORTH CAROLINA
IREDELL COUNTY
NOTICE OF SERVICE OF PROCESS BY PUBLICATION
In The General Court Of Justice
District Court Division
26CV005116-480

DESIREE LEWIS, Plaintiff, vs. DEOJUNIQUE FLIPPIN, SR., Defendant.

To: Deojunique Flippin, Sr.

Take notice that a pleading seeking relief against you has been filed in the above-entitled action. The nature of the relief being sought is as follows:

The Plaintiff seeks a final determination of legal and physical custody of the minor child identified in the Complaint, together with such other and further relief as the Court deems just and proper.

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

This the 24th day of September, 2026.
KOONTZ LAW, PLLC
Brandy E. Koontz,
Attorney for Plaintiff
NC State Bar #45458
181 South Main Street
Mocksville, NC 27028
Telephone: (336) 751-6235
Fax: (336) 751-7929
9/24, 10/1, and 10/8/2026

Classifieds

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: 26E003834-910

Having qualified as ADMINISTRATOR of the Estate of JOEL BAYNES LONG, 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 8th day of January, 2027, 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 8th day of October, 2026.
Elisabeth L. Burlee, Executor
1207 Balustrade Boulevard
Richmond, VA 23226
10/8, 10/15, 10/22, and 10/29/2026

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
WAKE COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
In the General Court of Justice, Superior Court Division
Before the Clerk
File No: 26E002169-910

Having qualified as ADMINISTRATOR of the Estate of JOSEPH LOVELL PIERCE, 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 1st day of January, 2027, 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 1st day of October, 2026.
Lisa Ann Pierce, Administratrix
c/o Richard F. Prentis, Jr.
4 Consultant Pl.
Durham, NC 27707
10/1, 10/8, 10/15, and 10/22/2026

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
WAKE COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
In the General Court of Justice, Superior Court Division
Before the Clerk
File No: 26E002594-910

Having qualified as ADMINISTRATOR of the Estate of RAYMOND PARIS WILLIAMS, 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 1st day of January, 2027, 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 1st day of October, 2026.
Antonio Paris Williams
Administrator
6029 Quitman Trl.
Raleigh, NC 27610
10/1, 10/8, 10/15, and 10/22/2026

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
WAKE COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
In the General Court of Justice, Superior Court Division
Before the Clerk
File No: 25E003477-910

Having qualified as ADMINISTRATOR of the Estate of JOHN TIMOTHY RHODES, 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 1st day of January, 2027, 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 1st day of October, 2026.
Shannon Williamson, Administrator
2644 Wintergreen Rd
Nashville, NC 27856
10/1, 10/8, 10/15, and 10/22/2026

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
WAKE COUNTY
NOTICE OF SERVICE OF PROCESS BY PUBLICATION
In The General Court Of Justice
District Court Division
File No. 25CV011670-910
LAKEMA BENTZEL, Plaintiff,
v. JACOB BENTZEL, Defendant.

TO: JACOB BENTZEL

TAKE NOTICE that a pleading seeking relief against you has been filed in the above-entitled action.

The nature of the relief being sought is as follows: Complaint for Absolute Divorce.

You are required to make defense to such pleading not later than November 3, 2026, which is forty (40) days from the date of the first publication of this notice. Upon your failure to do so, the party seeking service against you will apply to the court for the relief sought.

This the 24th day of September 2026.
Lakema Bentzel, Plaintiff Pro Se
622 Georgetown Road
Raleigh, NC 27608
9/24, 10/1, and 10/8/2026

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
WAKE COUNTY
NOTICE OF SERVICE OF PROCESS BY PUBLICATION
IN THE GENERAL COURT OF JUSTICE
DISTRICT COURT DIVISION
FILE NO. 25CV045670-910

CHETACHI NWOKEJIOBI, Plaintiff,
v. TABATHA TOMRA TURNER,
Defendant.

TO: TABATHA TOMRA TURNER

TAKE NOTICE that a pleading seeking relief against you has been filed in the above-entitled action in the District Court of Wake County, North Carolina. The action concerns temporary and permanent custody.

You are required to make defense to such pleading within the time prescribed by law following 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.

The matter is presently scheduled for hearing on November 10, 2026, at 9:00 a.m. in Wake County Courthouse, Courtroom 2A, Wake County, North Carolina.
Chetachi Nwokejiobi
Plaintiff, Pro Se
2917 Little John Road
Raleigh, NC 27610
9/24, 10/1, and 10/8/2026

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
WAKE COUNTY
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
In the General Court of Justice, Superior Court Division
Before the Clerk
File No: 26E001811-910

Having qualified as ADMINISTRATOR of the Estate of EVELYN VERNELL HINTON, 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 17th day of December, 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 17th day of September, 2026.
Vivian Beatrice Logan,
Administrator
5408 Kincross Ct.
Raleigh, NC 27610
9/17, 9/24, 10/1, and 10/8/2026

Wake County To Host Community Resource Fair

RALEIGH, NC - Wake County Public Health invites families across the county to celebrate Children's Health Month and Dental Hygiene Month at the Wake Kids Wellness Fest, a fun community resource fair designed to support children's health, well-being and growth.

This free, family-friendly event brings together Wake County departments and local partners to help families discover resources and services that empower kids to thrive. From early childhood support to health education and community programs, parents and caregivers will find everything in one place to feel informed, supported and connected.

Wake Kids Wellness Fest will take place on Monday, Oct. 12, from 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. at the Wake County Public Health Center, 200 Swinburne St., Raleigh. This date is a teacher workday for WCPSS students on a traditional calendar.

"We know that children grow their best when their families have access to the resources and support they need," said Wake County Commissioner Cheryl Stallings. "The Wake Kids Wellness Fest showcases the many ways local partners can work together to promote strong, healthy futures for our smallest residents."

Participating partners include:
- Wake County Child Health Clinic
- Wake County Dental Clinic
- Wake County Immunization Clinic
- Wake County WIC
- Wake County Public Libraries
- Wake County Maternal and Child Health
- Wake County Immunizations Outreach
- Wake County Health Promotion and Chronic Disease Prevention
- Poe Center for Health Education

With interactive tables, helpful staff and plenty of fun, the Wake Kids Wellness Fest is the perfect way for families to recognize National Children's Health Month and Dental Hygiene Month while discovering new opportunities to support their children's well-being. No registration is required.

Jeff Jackson Reaches $98K Medicaid Fraud Settlement

RALEIGH — Attorney General Jeff Jackson announced a settlement with White Oak Manor of Burlington over allegations that the nursing home hired an unqualified person as a nurse and then billed Medicaid for services she provided. The facility will pay $98,474 to the state, including $49,237 in Medicaid restitution.

"If you're providing health care to North Carolinians, you better be qualified to do the job," said Attorney General Jeff Jackson. "I'm grateful to NCDHHS for identifying this case and referring it to our office so we could protect North Carolinians' care and their taxpayer dollars."

"We take our responsibility to prevent, detect, and address fraud, waste, and abuse seriously," said NC Health and Human Services Secretary Dev Sangvai. "By working closely with the Attorney General's Office to catch unqualified personnel, we ensure that taxpayer dollars are protected and resources go directly toward the safe, quality health care North Carolinians deserve."

Nieasha Jones was hired as a nurse without a nursing license, training or experience. Jones worked 54 shifts over three months, interacting with residents and providing care despite not having the required qualifications or license. The facility then billed Medicaid for services provided to residents, including services provided by Jones.

The case was investigated by the Medicaid Investigations Division (MID) of the North Carolina Attorney General's Office after a referral from the Division of Health Service Regulation (DHSR) within the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services.

The civil claims resolved by this settlement are allegations only, and there has been no judicial determination or admission of liability.

PAYING CASH AND BUYING ALL OLD RAP MUSIC CASSETTE TAPES AND MIXTAPES. CALL MARVIN 919-268-7476.

WANTED WBE, MBE & DBE BIDS

for the following job:

Division Five Letting

DE00435	New Hanover Co.	Bid Date: Oct. 14th

Division Three Letting

DC00508	New Hanover Co.	Bid Date: Oct. 15th
DC00509	Pender Co.	Bid Date: Oct. 15th

Division Six Letting

DF00539	Columbus Co.	Bid Date: Oct. 21st
DF00565	Cumberland/Harnett Co.	Bid Date: Oct. 21st

These projects may involve some or all of the following aspects of construction: construction survey, clear and grub, trucking, drainage, milling, paving, incidental concrete, fence and guardrail, signs, structures, traffic control, utilities, signals, pavement marking, erosion control and seeding.
Bids can be emailed to **stw.quotes@stwcorp.com**

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

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

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

D/M/WBE

SUBCONTRACTORS/SUPPLIERS WANTED

T. A. Loving Company (NC General Contractor License No. 325) is seeking certified DBE, MBE, and WBE subcontractors and suppliers for the **Jackson Heights CDBG-NR** project for the **City of Sanford** which bids on **October 8, 2026, at 10:00 AM.** Plans and specifications for this project are available at the following locations: T. A. Loving Company; 400 Patetown Road; Goldsboro, NC 27530 * City of Sanford, Engineering Department; 225 East Weatherspoon Street; Sanford, NC 27330 * J. Thomas Engineering, Inc.; 143 Charlotte Avenue, Suite 104; Sanford, NC 27330.

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

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

NC Department of Adult Correction

ADVERTISEMENT FOR BIDS

The North Carolina Department of Adult Correction has the following contract in Mitchell County out for bid: C- 11828 Mountain View CI Boiler Replacement . The bid opening is scheduled for: Thursday, 11/05/2026 .

To obtain the Notice to Bidders, any Pre-Bid Requirements, and any Addenda visit:

https://evp.nc.gov/solicitations/details/?id=5f534c33-8cb6-f111-aaac-001dd803db57

NEW SOUTH CONSTRUCTION | RBI RIGHT BUILD INTERNATIONAL

New South-Right Build, A Joint Venture

NOTICE TO SUBCONTRACTOR
BIDDER PRE-QUALIFICATION REQUEST
FOR THE
Raleigh-Durham Airport Authority Parking Garages Rehabilitation Program – Phase 3 (Package 1 – Early Works)

New South-Right Build, A Joint Venture is seeking to prequalify subcontractors to submit bids for the following project: **Parking Garages Rehabilitation Program – Phase 3 (Package 1 – Early Works).** New South-Right Build has been selected as the Construction Manager at Risk (CMAR) 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 project is $25,000,000 overall and $5,000,000 for this phase. **Small Business participation will be required under RDU's Small Business program. Participation goals will be provided with the bid advertisement.**

Similar project experience will be considered during prequalification. **Anticipated Bid Date will be January 11, 2027.** 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 pre-qualification forms may be hand delivered, mailed, or submitted electronically. **Deadline for prequalification submission is November 30, 2026 or 42 days prior to bid date.** The CMAR 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 **Scott Wolynec at (919) 683-1701** or by **email** at: prequalNSC@newsouthconstruction.com

Prequalification documents can be accessed through the New South/Right Build plan room under **"Parking Garages Rehabilitation Program – Phase 3 (Package 1 – Early Works)"** at the below link:

https://www.planscope.com/projects/1540/details/parking-garages-rehabilitation-program-phase-3-package-1-early-works

Prequalification Submission:

Prequalification packages should be submitted by emailing attachment to: prequalNSC@newsouthconstruction.com.

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

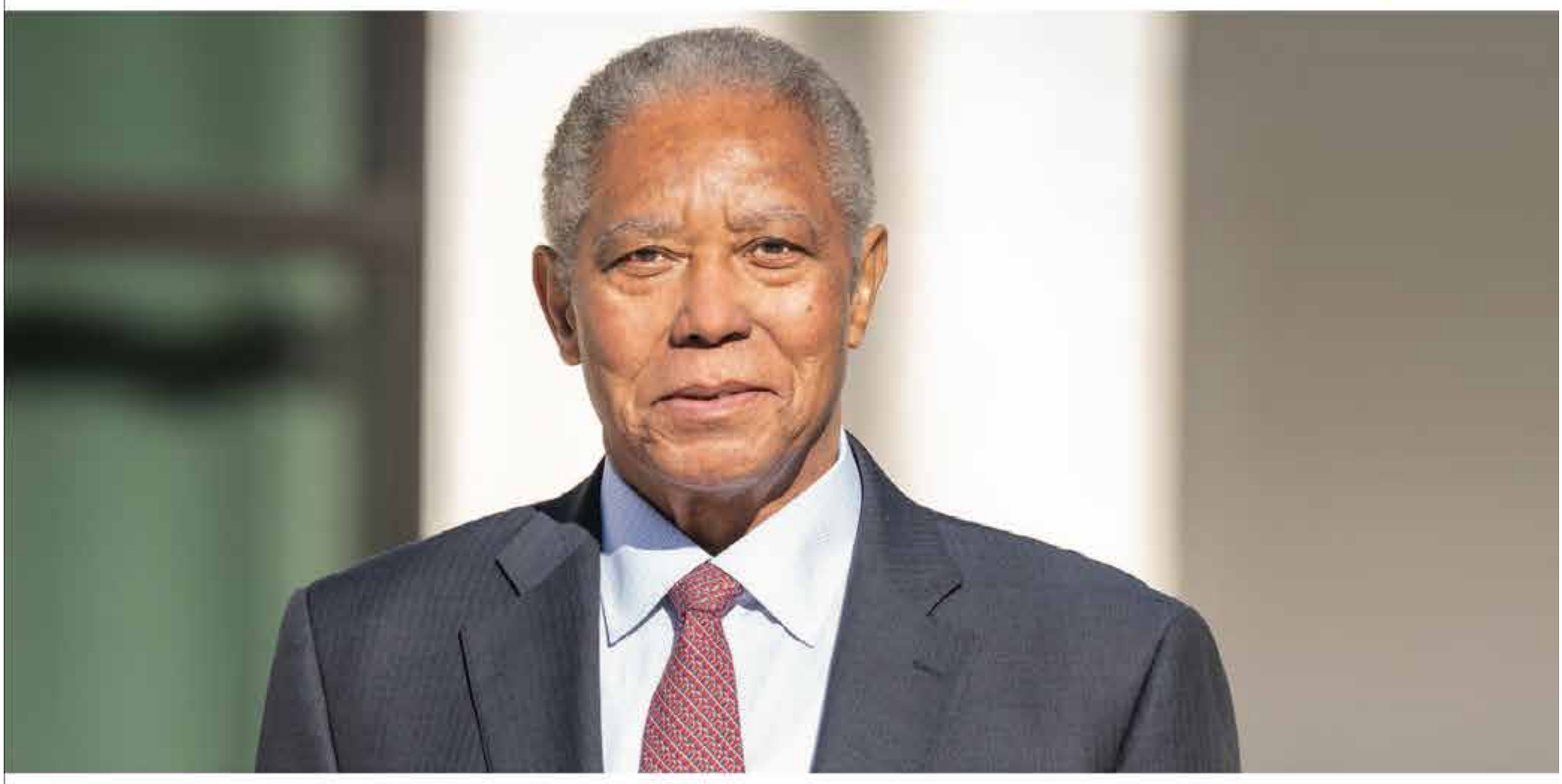
Attention: Scott Wolynec

1715 Camden Avenue

Durham, NC 27704



Strong Schools. Stronger Economy.



WORKING HARD FOR WAKE COUNTY'S WORKING FAMILIES

Dan Blue brings a proven record of service, a reputation for delivering results, and an unwavering commitment to making government work better for the people it represents. For Dan, that work begins with the opportunities every family deserves: an excellent public education, a good-paying job, and the chance to build a secure future. He understands that Wake County's success depends on the success of the people who live and work here.

★ INVESTING IN EDUCATION

Strong public schools are the foundation of strong communities. Dan supports better pay for educators, the resources students need to succeed, and keeping public dollars in public classrooms. He also supports greater funding for Historically Black Colleges and Universities.

★ STANDING UP FOR WORKING FAMILIES

Government should work better for working families. Dan supports funding for affordable housing, making childcare more affordable, and restoring tax credits that help families keep more of what they earn. Every family deserves the opportunity to build a better future.

★ BUILDING AN ECONOMY THAT WORKS FOR EVERYONE

A strong economy starts with a prepared workforce and opportunities to build a business. Dan supports investments in community colleges, workforce training, and apprenticeships that connect people with good-paying careers. He also supports opportunities to start and grow small businesses while helping businesses of all sizes find the talent they need to succeed

"It's our responsibility to use the state's resources wisely — to give every child the best education possible, to help families secure good-paying jobs, and to foster a business climate that encourages growth and innovation."

DAN Blue
N.C. SENATE

SCAN TO LEARN MORE

VOTE NOVEMBER 3 | danblueforsenate.org

Paid for by Citizens for Dan Blue