

Pirate passer
Houser, others
enter portal

Sports, B1



The Daily R eflector

Reflecting you ... every hour, every day

WEDNESDAY, December 17, 2025

Reflector.com

Home delivery price 78¢ | **\$3.25**

GOP school board members want NCAE to pay fee

School system deducts dues from paychecks of association members

KIM GRIZZARD
Staff Writer

Some Pitt County school board members want to consider charging the state's largest association of professional educators a processing fee for payroll deductions.

District 9 representative Benjie Forrest told fellow Board of Education members on Monday that



Forrest

the North Carolina Association of Educators has become increasingly partisan. Forrest and District 6 representative Worth Forbes, the only Republicans on the nine-member school board, have taken issue with NCAE endorsing school board candidates at the local level.

"I'm not opposed to partnering with other groups that are going to remain neutral," Forrest

said. "When you start endorsing opposition of the board that controls the agency on the local level, that's going too far."

He said Pitt County Schools should not absorb the cost of processing payroll deductions for NCAE membership but should charge the organization a fee for the service.

"That takes time, energy, effort from our finance people," Forrest said. "I think we need to take a look at that and see what it does actually take in resources as far as time and money is concerned and present them with a bill."

District 3 representative James Tripp said the issue is one that Republicans have raised at the state level.

In February, three N.C. Senate Republicans filed a bill that would end allowing state employees to automatically pay association dues straight from their paychecks. The deductions have been an ongoing political issue for more than a decade, with a court intervening after a 2012 veto override.

"Whoever goes behind that curtain votes the way they want to," Tripp said. "It has been

brought up in the state; it has been voted down."

Forrest's presentation to the school board included an image of an NCAE logo on promotional material endorsing Democratic candidates, including Tripp and District 1 representative Mary Nobles Maultsby. The red, apple-shaped handout, which included NCAE picks for several eastern N.C. House and Senate seats, endorsed Forbes' opponent, Erin Kessel, in last year's school board election.

More **FEES** | **A6**

HIGH SCHOOL ART COMPETITION



PHOTOS BY REGINALD HINES/PCS COMMUNICATIONS

High school art competition winner Sydney Hoang, center, shows off her blue ribbon with Pitt County Schools Superintendent Steve Lassiter and South Central art teacher Gael Storey at Monday's awards ceremony and visual art exhibit. Looking on at left is PCS Coordinator of Arts Education Russell Knight.

Contest puts talent on display

Students from six high schools demonstrate value of the arts through more than 80 works

KIM GRIZZARD
Staff Writer

Students from half a dozen Pitt County schools created works in watercolor, acrylic paint, colored pencil, graphite and even Sharpie for this year's high school art competition, but one that made an especially lasting impression was burned into wood.

"Raccoon Spy," a wood burned panel by South Central High School junior Sydney Hoang, received first place at the annual visual art exhibit and competition, held Monday at the Kathy Taft Center.

"A lot of kids don't work



Beth Ulffers, left, PCS director of outreach and public relations, greets art competition sponsor and namesake Harvey Wooten during Monday's awards ceremony. "This is one of my favorite nights of the year," Wooten said.

on wood that often," South Central art teacher Ira Varney said. "It's interesting. It catches your eye."

Art from the high school captured top honors at the competition, which included more than 80 works of art from students at six traditional public high schools across the county. Aditi Mishra received second place and Elizabeth Buckmon placed third in the contest, established in 1988 and renamed this year in honor of arts supporter Harvey Wooten.

More **CONTEST** | **A6**

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Divided vote adds 'In God We Trust' to Pitt courtrooms

GINGER LIVINGSTON
Staff Writer

The Pitt County Board of Commissioners voted 5-4 this week to display the words "In God We Trust" in Pitt County courtrooms after a debate over whether the motto's placement is appropriate.

Details about the installation were unclear after Monday's vote to display the words, adopted by Congress as the official motto of the United States in 1956 and signed by President Dwight Eisenhower. District B Commissioner Rochell Brown of Greenville proposed the action.

"This phrase is not meant to be partisan, it is not meant to be political," Brown said. "It's our nation's official motto, adopted by Congress and affirmed throughout our history as a reflection of our values that have guided our history."

Brown's proposal called for the fabrication and installation of three sets of polished black acrylic letters. It included an estimate from Sign Works of Greenville for two sets of letters that are five inches in height and one set with letters of 10 inches in height. Total cost of the work was estimated at \$1,979.50.

The proposal called for the "responsible redirection" of existing courthouse facility funds to pay for the installation.

"This is not about compelling faith, it's about acknowledging our history, it's about recognizing the foundation our laws and freedoms were built in this country,"

Brown said.

Pitt County Senior Resident Superior Court Judge Jeffrey Foster supported the motto's installation.

"Our nation was built on Judeo-Christian principles," he said. "Witnesses in our courts swear to tell the truth, 'so help me God.' The oath I took as a judge incorporated 'so help me God' numerous times."

"Much of our criminal code incorporates the tenets of the Ten Commandments ... I strongly feel that it's fully proper to be displayed tastefully in the superior courtrooms in Pitt County," Foster said.

Witnesses also are allowed to affirm they will testify honestly rather than swear to God.

District 3 Commissioner Chris Nunnally, a lawyer, said the courthouse is often the only location people directly encounter government and its effect on their freedom, so it has an outsized place in their hearts and minds.

"It's absolutely imperative that the courthouse and its walls and everything before it reflect that impartiality and we don't do anything to upset that balance," Nunnally said.

"Our founders warned that even symbolic governmental endorsement of state religion corrupts fairness," he said. "It creates a de facto perception of inequality ... and leads to social distrust in critical moments in civil and criminal adjudication."

Commissioner Melvin McLawhorn said a number of people called him with concerns about the motto's installation.

More **MOTTO** | **A6**

144th year, No. 351 © 2025



f **FACEBOOK.COM/DAILY REFLECTOR**

R **REFLECTOR.COM**

@REFLECTORNEWS

NATIONAL EDITION
News from across the country and around the world are part of The Reflector's e-edition daily. Get it at reflector.com or download The Daily Reflector app.



Weather

Today: 55, Cloudy
Tonight: 36, Some clouds
Forecast on A2



Index

Abby A3
Bridge A3
Classified B5-6
Comics B4
Community ... A2
Crossword A3
Horoscope A3
Obituaries A5
Opinion A4
Sports B1-3

COMMUNITY

Email announcements at least a week in advance to community@reflector.com.

Holiday market
Leroy James Farmers Market, 4560 County Home Road, will host a holiday farmers market from 8 a.m. to noon on Saturday. Enjoy unique artisan Christmas gifts, homemade bread and baked goods, live music, hot cocoa, special event vendors and free photos with Santa. Visit facebook.com/LJFarmersMarket.

Festival of Trees
The Center for Family Violence Prevention will host its third annual Festival of Trees fundraiser through Dec. 26 at the Greenville Convention Center, 303 S.W. Greenville Blvd. The holiday event will showcase an array of decorated trees and festive displays sponsored by local businesses, organizations and individuals. Proceeds from the event will benefit the Center for Family Violence Prevention. Visit c4fvp.org for more information.

Noon Years Eve
Noon Years Eve, an early New Year's Eve celebration, will be held from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Dec. 31 at Five Points Plaza, 500 S. Evans

SEND US YOUR PHOTOS

Your photos could appear in this space. To submit photos for consideration, email community@reflector.com

St. Enjoy bounce houses, a DJ, photo booths, a caricature artist, Touch-a-Truck, food vendors and a special New Year's toast before bedtime. Visit facebook.com/City-ofGreenvilleNC.

Business After Hours

The Greenville-Pitt County Chamber of Commerce will host Business After Hours from 5-6:30 p.m. on Jan. 8 at The Oakwood School, 4000 MacGregor Downs Road. The free event provides a casual atmosphere for connecting with other chamber members. Expand your network, exchange business cards and potentially win a door prize. Register at tinyurl.com/after-hours-oakwood-school. Call 752-4101 ext. 2223.

Economic forecast

The Greenville-Pitt County Chamber of Commerce will host its 20th Annual Economic Forecast Luncheon from 11:30 a.m. to



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Mike Shugart of Greenville shared this photo of one of the many tricked-out vehicles that participated in the Winterville Christmas Parade on Saturday.

1:30 p.m. on Jan. 13 at the Hilton Greenville, 207 S.W. Greenville Blvd. Frederick "Rick" Niswander, East Carolina University professor emeritus of accounting and former dean of the ECU College of Business, will provide key insights into the economic trends and opportunities shaping the region and beyond. Member fee is \$40, non-member fee is \$60. Register at greenvillenc.org/events/2026-economic-forecast-luncheon. For more information call 752-4101 ext. 2223.

Unity breakfast

The Greenville-Pitt County Chamber of Commerce will hold its annual Community Unity Breakfast from 7:30-9 a.m. on Jan. 19 at ECU's Murphy Center (Harvey Hall), 100 Ficklen Drive. The event is held on the commemoration of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday to celebrate and expand diversity initiatives in Greenville and Pitt County. Key-note speaker will be Brian Floyd, COO of ECU Health and president

WHEN WE'RE WRONG

The Daily Reflector corrects factual errors in its reporting in this space. Call editor Bobby Burns at 329-9572 to report errors. Please leave a voice mail if necessary or email him at baburns@reflector.com.

of ECU Health Medical Center. The event is free and open to the public. Visit greenvillenc.org/events/2026-community-unity-breakfast or call 752-4101, Ext. 2223.

MLK celebration

Interfaith Clergy will celebrate the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. at 11:30 a.m. on Jan. 19 at Jarvis Memorial United Methodist Church, 510 S. Washington St. Visit clergy2014.org.

VFW Bingo

Charles Gray Morgan VFW Post 7032, 1108 Mumford Road, hosts bingo night every Saturday. Doors open at 5:30 p.m., card sales at 6:30 p.m. and games start at 7:30 p.m. Price varies with quantity and types of cards purchased. Cash only.

TODAY IN HISTORY

Today is Wednesday, Dec. 17, the 351st day of 2025. There are 14 days left in the year.

Today in history: On Dec. 17, 1903, Wilbur and Orville Wright conducted the first successful manned, powered airplane flights near Kitty Hawk, North Carolina, using their experimental craft, the Wright Flyer.

Also on this date:

- In 1777, France became one of the first nations to officially recognize the independence of the United States.
- In 1933, the Chicago Bears defeated the New York Giants 23-21 in the first NFL championship game.
- In 1944, U.S. Army Maj. Gen. Henry C. Pratt rescinded incarceration orders for people of Japanese ancestry during World War II; more than 110,000 people, about two-thirds of them U.S. citizens,

had been forced into camps after a February 1942 executive order by President Franklin D. Roosevelt.

■ In 1963, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Clean Air Act into law; it was the first federal legislation targeting the control of air pollution.

■ In 1975, Lynette "Squeaky" Fromme was sentenced to life in prison for her attempt on the life of President Gerald R. Ford in Sacramento, California. (She was paroled in August 2009.)

■ In 1979, Arthur McDuffie, a Black insurance broker and former Marine, was beaten by police after leading them on a chase with his motorcycle in Miami. McDuffie died four days later. (Four white police officers accused of beating McDuffie were acquitted in 2000, sparking riots in Miami that led to several deaths and millions of dollars in damages.)

NICK REINER ARRESTED AFTER ROB, WIFE FOUND DEAD

LOS ANGELES — Rob Reiner's younger son, Nick Reiner, was in custody Monday after being booked for what investigators believe was the fatal stabbing of the director-actor and his wife at their Los Angeles home a day earlier, authorities said.

It was not immediately clear what charges Nick Reiner, 32, would face. Online records show he remained in jail on Monday. Police Chief Jim McDonnell said he is being held on \$4 million bail.

Representatives for the Reiner family did not immediately respond to a request for comment and it wasn't immediately clear if Nick Reiner had an attorney who could speak on his behalf.

Nick Reiner has spoken publicly of his struggles with addiction. By 18, he had cycled in and out of treatment facilities with bouts of homelessness and relapses in between. Rob and Nick Reiner explored

their difficult relationship and Nick Reiner's struggles with drugs in a semi-autobiographical 2016 film, "Being Charlie."

Rob and Michele Singer Reiner were found dead Sunday at their home in Los Angeles, and investigators believe they suffered stab wounds, a law enforcement official told The Associated Press. The official, who was briefed on the investigation, confirmed that Nick Reiner was being held but could not publicly discuss the details and spoke to AP on condition of anonymity.

Reiner was long one of the most prolific directors in Hollywood, and his work included some of the most memorable movies of the 1980s and '90s, including "This is Spinal Tap," "A Few Good Men," "When Harry Met Sally" and "The Princess Bride."

The Associated Press



Elevate Your Marketing with Quality Printing at a Reasonable Price!

- Menus • Posters • Postcards
- Brochures • Magazines
- Glossy Copies and more

CALL 252-329-9600 FOR A FREE QUOTE



Buccaneer Direct
We'll find your treasure.

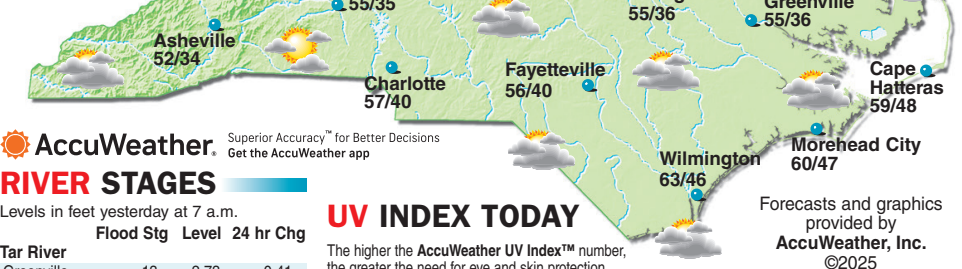
SEVEN-DAY FORECAST FOR GREENVILLE, PITT COUNTY

Wednesday, December 17, 2025

TODAY	TONIGHT	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY
							
High: 55° Increasing cloudiness	Low: 36° Clouds breaking	64° 58° A shower or two in the p.m.; breezy	65° 28° Breezy in the morning with a shower	52° 40° Sunny and cooler	64° 38° A shower in places in the afternoon	47° 28° Cooler with increasing cloudiness	54° 38° Cloudy
Winds: SW 6-12 mph POP: 5%	Winds: SSW 3-6 mph POP: 5%	Winds: SE 8-16 mph POP: 55%	Winds: W 8-16 mph POP: 55%	Winds: S 4-8 mph POP: 5%	Winds: WNW 6-12 mph POP: 50%	Winds: NNE 4-8 mph POP: 0%	Winds: WNW 4-8 mph POP: 25%

POP: Probability of Precipitation

Shown is today's weather. Temperatures are today's highs and tonight's lows.



AccuWeather

Superior Accuracy™ for Better Decisions
Get the AccuWeather app

RIVER STAGES

Levels in feet yesterday at 7 a.m.

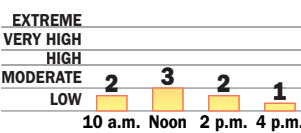
	Flood Stg	Level	24 hr Chg
Tar River			
Greenville	13	2.73	-0.41
Lower Tar gauge			
Tarboro	19	2.07	-0.17
Rocky Mount	15	3.06	+0.06
Grimesland	15	-0.61	-0.26
Neuse River			
Kinston	14	4.30	-0.05
Goldsboro	14	3.69	+0.05
Pamlico River			
Washington	10	1.16	-0.38

TIDE DATA

	Oregon Inlet		Beaufort Inlet	
Day	High	Low	High	Low
Today	6:04 a.m.	12:00 a.m.	5:30 a.m.	12:08 p.m.
	6:45 p.m.	1:08 p.m.	5:43 p.m.	11:33 p.m.
Thu.	6:42 a.m.	12:42 a.m.	6:09 a.m.	12:48 p.m.
	7:23 p.m.	1:49 p.m.	6:23 p.m.	--
Fri.	7:18 a.m.	1:20 a.m.	6:47 a.m.	12:12 a.m.
	7:57 p.m.	2:27 p.m.	7:01 p.m.	1:26 p.m.
Sat.	7:51 a.m.	1:56 a.m.	7:24 a.m.	12:50 a.m.
	8:25 p.m.	3:05 p.m.	7:39 p.m.	2:03 p.m.

UV INDEX TODAY

The higher the AccuWeather UV Index™ number, the greater the need for eye and skin protection



SUN AND MOON

	Today	Tomorrow
Sunrise	7:13 a.m.	7:14 a.m.
Sunset	4:58 p.m.	4:59 p.m.
Moonrise	5:13 a.m.	6:12 a.m.
Moonset	2:57 p.m.	3:38 p.m.



ALMANAC DATA

Greenville/Pitt Airport through Monday

Temperature	
High/low	34°/18°
Normal high/low	56°/35°
Record high	78° in 1956
Record low	12° in 1962
Precipitation	
Monday	0.00"
Record for date	1.02" in 1976
Month to date	2.50"
Normal month to date	1.65"
Year to date	51.30"
Normal year to date	51.54"
Relative Humidity	
6 a.m.	54%
Noon	31%
6 p.m.	57%

BEACH FORECAST

Atlantic Beach: Mostly cloudy today. Wind WSW 10-20 mph. Seas 3-6 feet.

MARINE FORECAST

Cape Hatteras: Mostly sunny today. Wind WSW 15-25 knots. Seas 3-6 feet.

THE WORLD

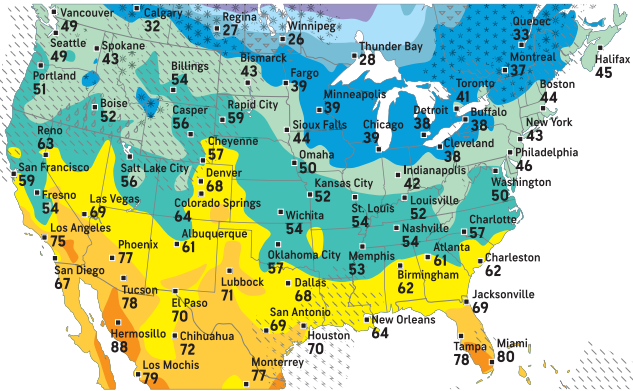
City	Today			Tomorrow		
	Hi	Lo	W	Hi	Lo	W
Athens	63	41	pc	62	42	s
Baghdad	55	48	c	65	48	pc
Beijing	43	22	pc	39	27	pc
Buenos Aires	84	71	s	92	72	s
Cairo	69	53	pc	70	52	s
Caracas	73	63	r	77	64	pc
Hong Kong	76	65	s	75	64	s
Jerusalem	50	35	s	56	41	s
London	52	49	c	54	43	r
Madrid	58	39	c	54	40	c
Mexico City	69	45	sh	70	46	s
Moscow	36	31	c	34	30	c
New Delhi	70	54	pc	67	51	pc
Paris	51	46	c	57	48	c
Rio de Janeiro	77	70	r	75	70	sh
Rome	65	48	sh	64	46	pc
Seoul	47	24	sa	46	27	s
Sydney	80	67	s	89	74	s
Tokyo	55	46	s	55	42	s
Toronto	41	28	pc	45	30	c

Legend: W=weather, s=sunny, pc=partly cloudy, c=cloudy, sh=showers, sa=snow

Legend: W-weather, s-sunny, pc-partly cloudy, c-cloudy, sh-showers, t-thunderstorms, r-rain, sf-snow flurries, sn-snow, i-ice

NATIONAL WEATHER WEDNESDAY

Shown are areas of precipitation and high temperatures for the day.



THE NATION

	Today			Tomorrow				Today			Tomorrow		
	Hi	Lo	W	Hi	Lo	W		Hi	Lo	W	Hi	Lo	W
Albuquerque	61	39	s	63	36	pc	Los Angeles	75	54	s	78	50	pc
Anchorage	15	7	s	11	-1	s	Louisville	52	43	c	60	25	r
Atlanta	61	47	pc	59	42	sh	Miami	80	69	s	82	71	pc
Atlantic City	47	32	pc	53	46	pc	Milwaukee	36	31	c	41	15	r
Baltimore	48	27	c	50	45	r	Minneapolis	39	34	c	35	-3	sn
Billings	54	28	c	40	35	c	Nashville	54	46	c	61	28	r
Boise	52	33	r	46	42	sh	New Orleans	64	60	c	74	51	t
Boston	44	32	pc	46	40	pc	New York	43	33	pc	47	45	pc
Buffalo	38	28	pc	48	33	r	Norfolk	56	38	pc	61	59	pc
Burlington, VT	39	26	sf	44	40	c	Oklahoma City	57	46	pc	58	29	s
Charleston, SC	62	50	pc	67	60	r	Omaha	50	35	pc	40	12	s
Charleston, WV	49	30	c	59	35	c	Orlando	75	61	pc	81	64	pc
Chicago	39	31	pc	46	14	r	Philadelphia	46	27	pc	47	42	pc
Cincinnati	44	36	c	54	21	r	Phoenix	77	50	s	78	53	s
Cleveland	38	30	pc	50	26	r	Pittsburgh	43	30	c	53	30	s
Columbia, SC	60	44	pc	60	54	r	Providence	44	27	pc	45	43	pc
Columbus, OH	42	32	c	53	24	s	Sacramento	56	46	sh	59	50	pc
Dallas	68	56	pc	68	58	s	St. Louis	54	47	pc	55	20	r
Denver	68	27	pc	48	37	pc	Salt Lake City	56	32	r	51	45	c
Des Moines	44	36	pc	39	10	c	San Antonio	69	59	c	77	45	s
Detroit	38	31	pc	47	25	r	San Diego	67	49	pc	71	52	s
El Paso	70	42	s	73	42	s	San Francisco	59	49	sh	63	51	s
Honolulu	78	72	sh	79	68	sh	San Juan, PR	87	73	pc	86	75	pc
Houston	70	61	t	78	43	t	Seattle	49	42	sh	52	39	r
Indianapolis	42	35	pc	50	17	r	Tampa	78	63	pc	80	67	pc
Jacksonville	69	55	pc	75	61	c	Tucson	78	45	s	79	49	s
Key West	79	71	pc	80	74	t	Washington, DC	50	31	pc	50	44	r
Las Vegas	69	47	s	70	48	sh	Wichita	54	41	pc	53	24	s

lty cloudy, c-cloudy, sh-showers, t-thunderstorms, r-rain, sf-snow flurries, sn-snow, h-ice

The Daily Reflector

Reflector.com

The Daily Reflector (USPS 145-4000) is published in print Tuesday-Saturday by Adams Publishing Group, 1150 Sugg Parkway, Greenville, NC 27834.

All subscriber newspapers are delivered by USPS.

Periodicals postage paid at Greenville, NC.

Postmaster: Send address changes to The Daily Reflector, PO Box 1967, Greenville, NC 27835.

SUBSCRIPTION TERMS: Automatic Renewal: The EZ-PAY subscription constitutes a continuous subscription and will automatically renew after the initial subscription term. To prevent automatic renewal and the corresponding charges for an additional term, written notice of cancellation must be provided before the expiration of the current subscription term. **Subscription License:** This subscription grants the subscriber a fully prepaid, non-refundable (for issues served) license to receive and access the subscription materials for the full duration of the subscription term. **Prepayment Terms:** Subscribers who elect to prepay for their subscription acknowledge that changes in pricing, additional content, applicable fees, or surcharges may occur during the pre-payment period, potentially resulting in either an extension or reduction of the prepaid subscription term. The publisher reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to issue refunds or credits. **Bonus Editions:** All subscriptions may include up to one bonus edition per month. The cost of such editions is included in the total subscription price and will be reflected as "All-Access" within the subscriber's online account. If the bonus edition cost was not included in the original payment, the cost will be deducted accordingly, which may result in a shortened subscription term. **Rate Adjustments:** The publisher reserves the right to modify subscription rates and publication schedules at any time, including during the term of an active subscription. **Maintenance Fees:** A maintenance fee may be imposed on subscriptions to accommodate unforeseen operational expenses beyond the publisher's control, including but not limited to fuel surcharges and tariffs. **One-Time Fee Implementation:** A one-time fee of \$3.50 was instituted effective March 31, 2025. This fee may result in a minor adjustment to the length of the current subscription term.

CURRENT PRICES: Billed by the month: \$41.67; every 3 months: \$125; every 6 months: \$250; annually \$500; Easy Pay automatically deducted each month: \$37.72. Sales tax added to price of all subscriptions per state law. All subscriptions include unlimited online access. Save \$3.95 billing fee by signing up for e-billing or Easy Pay.

How to reach us

Call Center hours: Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-5 p.m.

SUBSCRIPTION: To subscribe, report service issues, make a payment, or ask a question, please call 252-329-9505, email customer@apggenc.com, Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-5 p.m., or visit www.Reflector.com at your convenience.

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING: 252-329-9505, email classifieds@apggenc.com

OPINION

The Daily Reflector

Established 1882Adams Publishing Group

Bobby Burns
Editor
Publishers Emeritus, The Whichard Family

“Truth in Preference to Fiction”

EDITORIAL

To be healthy, country needs young women

You could field a 16-inch softball league with the celebrities who’ve threatened to leave the U.S. if their presidential pick wasn’t elected in recent years.

What’s more striking today is that it isn’t only the Hollywood set floating the idea of relocating. Increasing numbers of ordinary Americans — especially younger women — say they’re thinking about moving abroad, not because of a single election outcome but because they doubt the country’s direction, economic prospects and social climate.

That shift should worry all of us. For the second year, about 1 in 5 Americans indicated they’d like to move abroad permanently if given the option, according to Gallup. What their data uncovered is that this spiking trend is being driven primarily by younger women, between the ages of 15 and 44.

Among that group, a stunning 40% said they’d leave the U.S., compared with just 10% a decade ago. These aren’t people who’ve actually left, of course — but their interest itself is telling. Gallup notes the same phenomenon isn’t playing out in other advanced economies.

This isn’t about hypothetical moving plans. It’s about a generation of women questioning whether the United States is a place that values them, keeps them safe or offers a future worth building. If young women stop believing the country is on their side, that undermines everything from civic cohesion to the nation’s economic and demographic future.

Gallup noted the first dramatic upward shift in young women’s dissatisfaction in 2016, during the last stages of Barack Obama’s presidency and ahead of President Donald Trump’s first term. A desire to flee is not escalating among Gen X and boomers. Just 14% of women 45 and older and 8% of men who are 45 and older would leave. And just 19% of younger men would seek their fortunes elsewhere.

This misalignment of worldviews between younger men and younger women also is causing much-observed tensions in the dating pool, driven by a mismatch of values and core beliefs. Yet even married women and women with children are expressing a growing desire to leave.

Numbers like these may seem like outliers, but they’re often warning signs of fixable problems.

Gallup offers some insight into what’s driving these results, and notes that as this trend has emerged, young women’s faith in institutions has fallen sharply. Over the past 10 years, young women’s confidence in the courts has dropped from 55% to 32%, a shift Gallup speculates may be tied to the Supreme Court’s 2022 decision to overturn *Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization*. Politics undoubtedly plays a part, and it’s worth noting that 59% of younger women identify as or lean Democrat, compared with just 39% of younger men.

Even if few of these disgruntled women ultimately leave, and no doubt few of them will, that’s not the real danger. We’re creeping uncomfortably close to half of young women reporting they’d prefer to build their future somewhere else, and the message is unmistakable: American institutions are failing at persuading its next generation of women that this is a place where they will thrive.

A nation that wants stronger families, a more stable workforce and a healthier democracy can’t afford a future built on resignation or escape. Our challenge now isn’t to dismiss these findings as fantasy, but to make this a country young women still want to call home.

The Chicago Tribune authored today’s editorial. The views expressed are not necessarily shared by this newspaper.

PUBLIC FORUM

Trump’s chaos praised by Rep. Greg Murphy

The Trump administration is a distressing nightmare enthusiastically supported by Rep. Greg Murphy.

The Defense Department is led by a probable war criminal who can’t be bothered with security or laws. Morale at the State Department has plunged as career diplomats are fired and State can’t decide who it supports in Ukraine. Former and present agents say the FBI is “rudderless,” led by a man “in over his head.” Homeland

Security lets its Stormtroopers ignore due process and rights of citizens as it terrorizes targeted cities. Health and Human Services undermines medical science in favor of debunked theories. The Department of Justice, acting on Trump’s impulses, bungles appointments, launches unsupportable cases and targets political opponents.

Then there’s Trump, the insurrectionist. While sending a drug-fighting armada to face off Venezuela’s mighty fleet of fishing boats, he commutes the sentence of a smuggler who

brought tons of cocaine into the U.S. Despite contradictory evidence, he claims he didn’t know Jeffrey Epstein and has nothing to hide, but blocked releasing the files. He claims inflation is down while his tariffs — arguably illegal — are raising prices. Undermining the law and the hard work of those enforcing the law, he pardons a cryptocurrency multi-billionaire convicted of money laundering and says, “I don’t know who he is.” He uses his office to fill his family’s coffers, from hawking cheap merch to arranging deals to benefit his donors. While

endlessly complaining about rigged elections, he demands that states gerrymander the 2026 elections. Like a dictator, he calls for the death of members of Congress who lawfully reminded service members of their legal duties.

While Trump’s administration is reveling in chaos and corruption, Greg Murphy is happily defending it. If you’re a Republican disaffected by Trump, why would you ever vote to reelect Greg Murphy?

Don Clement
Greenville

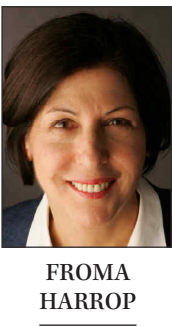
COLUMNISTS

Trump leading America boldly into decline

Bribery, inflation, plagues, crumbling trade links, stalled innovation — all these negatives helped bring down the once-mighty Roman Empire. But Rome needed centuries of bad leadership to collapse.

Donald Trump seems to be undoing American greatness at warp speed. Sure, the United States possesses strengths that will maintain an aura of power for some time to come. But Trump has turbocharged the kind of destructive governance that could undo us.

Start with bribery, gifts that buy special deals and access. Witness the bags of money going into the Trump family’s crypto schemes. Also,



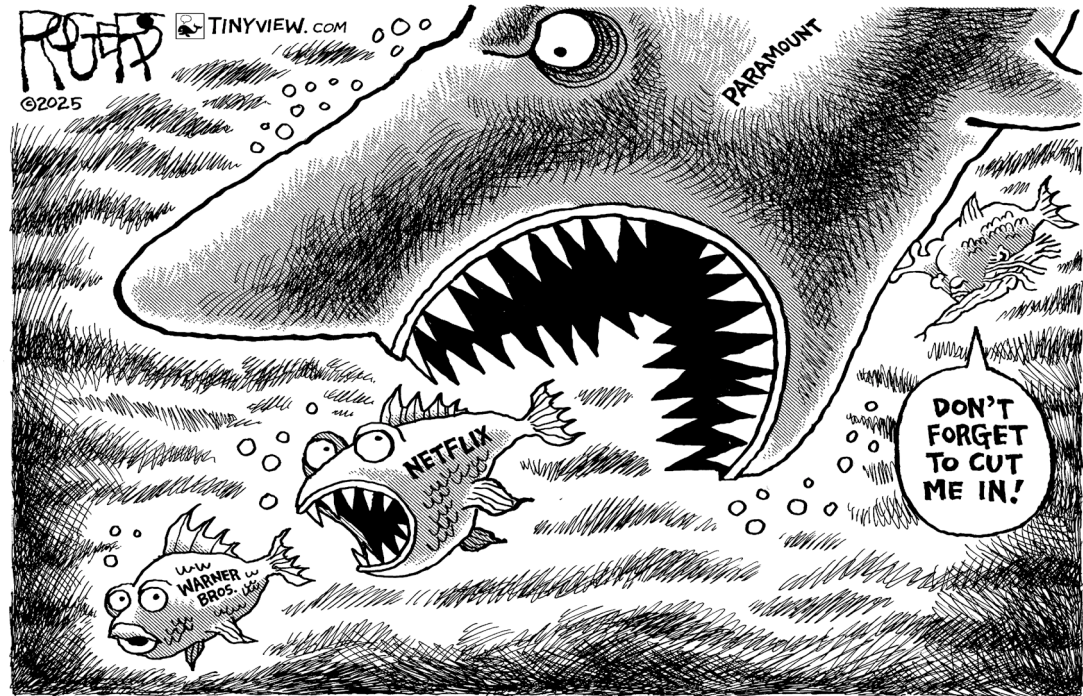
FROMA HARROP

Qatar’s handing Trump a \$400 million jetliner for his eventual personal use. A smaller but astounding act of submission was Amazon’s \$40 mil-

lion “investment” in a Melania documentary, most of which goes to her. Grab some Tums as companies needing government favors hand over millions for a White House ballroom, bearing Trump’s name.

Such a blatant grift recalls the Emperor Commodus (180-192 A.D.), who turned his palace into a marketplace for selling political payoffs or protection. Consulships and governorships were hawked openly. Roman historian Cassius Dio described Commodus’ court as a “shop for offices.”

Trump is supercharging inflation, thanks in part to his price-raising trade wars and his spending — the highest



peacetime spending outside pandemic disruptions. Add in his tax cuts, which drain the money to pay for the spending, and debt as a percent of GDP is at or near 100%.

High tariffs on China led that country — the American farmer’s biggest customer — to go elsewhere for corn, wheat and soybeans. China has already turned to Brazil and Argentina for these commodities.

Trump’s response is to call for funneling \$12 billion to the suffering farmers. But that’s a one-time handout. His unhinged trade policies are fraying long-nurtured trading relationships that could hurt American agriculture for years.

Plagues are not hard to imagine given Trump’s choice of lunatic Robert F. Kennedy Jr. to lead Health and Human Services. A lawyer who made money suing drug companies, RFK Jr. is determined to sow distrust in vaccine safety and seems to be succeeding.

Take the measles vaccine. Lacking serious scientific

evidence, RFK Jr. falsely claims that the vaccine may cause autism in children. That has convinced a growing number of parents to withhold measles shots from their children. This rise in “vaccine hesitancy” is behind several measles outbreaks. Before that, the United States enjoyed official measles-free status. It’s about to lose that.

Ancient Rome lacked the medical advances we enjoy today but offers examples of what that means. The Antonine Plague (A.D. 165-180), believed to largely be measles, killed as many as 10 million people across the empire.

Kennedy has overseen mass layoffs and buyouts at HHS, and his ignorant attacks on medical expertise have set off resignations of leading scientists. HHS had been a crown jewel of public health and medical research.

Which brings us to stalled innovation.

Especially jarring is the resignation of the top drug regulator Richard Pazdur — the fourth to

bail — one month after he was appointed to the FDA. Such turmoil has reportedly made investors wary of backing cutting-edge treatments.

The National Institutes of Health is funding fewer grants. But so is the National Science Foundation, and in areas such as computer science, engineering, math and physics. No surprise that top researchers are fleeing the U.S. for institutions in other countries.

Commodus, again. He dismissed senior scientific advisers and replaced them with entertainers. Domitian (A.D. 81-96) executed senators considered too educated.

To distract us from governmental chaos, Trump is building gilded ballrooms and staging colossal spectacles, seen in videos of missile attacks on boats that may or may not be carrying drugs.

Wherever he is, Caligula must be enjoying the show.

Froma Harrop comments on politics and culture for Creators Syndicate.

Telling the truth last item on Dems’ agenda

Recently in The Wall Street Journal, Neera Tanden, CEO of the Center for American Progress, a major foghorn in our nation’s capital for America’s left, explained “Why Democrats Won the Shutdown.”

The most accurate declaration in the article is that “fights tell the country a lot about what — and who — the fighters care about.”

And, indeed, there should be no question what the Democratic Party is about.

That is, to miss no opportunity to accumulate political power by fostering, as widely and as deeply as possible, a culture of government dependence in America. And to pay the bill for this by bankrupting our country.

“Affordability” is the political buzzword du jour now. And, indeed, no one wants higher prices.

But the way to lower prices is greater efficiency in businesses delivering the products and services we care about. The government’s role in this is removing, to the greatest extent possible, unnecessary regulations and taxes.



STAR PARKER

However, for those who love political power, the way to lower prices — to “affordability” — is subsidies. Shield those who you want to depend on

you from the true costs of what they are consuming.

And, indeed, this is the way of Obamacare. Shield the true cost of health care by sending the subsidy funds to the insurance companies to keep premiums to the consumer artificially low.

Per the Paragon Health Institute, “in 2023, federal subsidies through the ACA Medicaid expansion and the exchanges, which almost all flowed to insurers, totaled \$218 billion.”

Not surprisingly, as Paragon reports, since 2010 when Obamacare was enacted, a weighted average of stocks of health insurance companies is up 1,032% (though the end of 2023) compared to 251% in the overall market, measured by the S&P 500.

Wouldn’t it be wonderful if

the federal government went to your local grocer and said they will pay for all his stock if he gives it all away free to all his customers? How can things get more affordable than this?

The next question is: How can we pay for this plan Democrats have for making things more affordable?

Unfortunately, here we have even more subterfuge to shield Americans from reality. Or, in the words of former UK Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher,” the problem with socialism is eventually you run out of other people’s money.”

There are two ways the federal government can get its hands on more money. Tax us. Or, not tax us now and borrow the money on global credit markets, basically putting us all on the hook without us knowing about it. That is, commit to higher taxes in the future.

Our federal government has been running a fiscal deficit every year since 2001. Expenditures are greater than income. The only way to get more tax revenue without raising taxes is adequate growth in the economy so that with the same tax structure, people have higher

incomes and pay more taxes. The other way is to raise taxes.

We’re not growing fast enough to generate enough new tax revenue without raising taxes. And this stunted growth is just another symptom of the same problem: more government larding down our country and slowing things down. And raising taxes is not popular. Raising taxes means that taxpayers become aware that they are paying for political ruses such as Obamacare subsidies.

And of course, Democrats have no interest in cutting spending.

The result is that in 2001, the last year we had a fiscal surplus, federal debt as percent of GDP was 30%. Now, per the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, it’s 95%.

Projections from the Congressional Budget Office show our debt burden will continue to grow to unimaginable levels.

Step one to solving the problem is being honest and realistic that we have a problem. And this is the last thing that Democrats want.

Star Parker is president of the Center for Urban Renewal and Education.

Weigh pros, cons before grocery shopping online

There are many food drives going on locally. If you are able, please give generously. Happy holidays.

I haven't tried online or internet grocery shopping yet. What are the advantages/disadvantages for shopping for food and drinks? — **KM, Greenville**

I have a few colleagues who live some distance from their aging parents and they regularly use online food buying and delivery to make sure there is healthy, appropriate food and



KATHY KOLASA

drinks in their homes. However, I have not yet had an experience using Instacart, Food Lion to Go or other groceries to go for either pick-up or delivery.

Researchers including Dr. Stephanie Jilcott Pitts from ECU's Department of Public Health, who have an interest in studying health promotion programs and policies to reduce diet-related diseases in the rural U.S., have published studies about consumer use of online grocery shopping.

Natalie Draper, a senior ECU dietetic student, wants to share some information with you. After graduation, Natalie plans to complete a dietetic internship at ECU to qualify as a registered dietitian. She chose dietetics as a major because she wants to help people become healthier



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Shopping for groceries online may lead to some people not buying as many healthy foods, like fresh fruits and vegetables, as they need.

and feel more comfortable in their bodies.

Let's start with some of the advantages of online grocery shopping. Online grocery shopping can be convenient, as you can shop at any time of day from anywhere. If it is 10 p.m. and you remember you need to buy something from the grocery but it is closed, you can at least add it to your cart for the next day so you don't forget it.

You can also have your groceries delivered to you, so it's also convenient for caregivers like Dr. K's friends, who don't want their elders to drive to the store or need to travel to fill their refrigerator. Someone who is physically disabled, would rather not drive, has no time or hates grocery shopping can benefit from deliveries or shipping of food to their home.

Like any other consumer product, some ingredients or products that are hard to find locally can be ordered online, though you might want to consider if delivery fees, which can sometimes be expensive, are worth the convenience or access. At Harris Teeter, delivery

fees can be anywhere from \$7 to \$15 depending on if you order in advance or do same-day delivery.

For me, an advantage of internet grocery shopping is that it helps limit impulse buying. I do try to shop from a list, but I am often tempted to buy something I don't need when I see something new or different. When you shop online, you search for the exact items you know you need and put them in your cart, making it easier to keep to your budget. A downside is that you might miss some managers' in-store specials, but you can see all of your items in your cart and their total prices before you check out. You can also compare products using Nutrition Facts labels online and select the healthiest food for you.

However, there are a few disadvantages for online shopping for food and drinks. For example, it may lead to some people not buying as many healthy foods, like fresh fruits and vegetables, as they need, especially if they prefer to pick out the exact fresh produce for

the desired freshness and quality they like.

There are reports that if you use delivery services, the food sometimes arrives late or not at all. When shopping in person or "to go" for pick-up, there is less worry about not receiving the food you ordered.

Technology issues could also be a disadvantage for online grocery shopping. If your internet is slow or the website you're on keeps crashing, it can be difficult and frustrating trying to shop online. If you decide to try it, set aside some time to become familiar or comfortable with the website of your favorite store. If you are not sure how to work the website or app that is used for internet grocery shopping, you might be more comfortable shopping in person.

In short, when deciding whether you want to grocery shop online or in person, it is important to consider all of these factors. Reducing impulse buying, convenience and helping with budgeting are all reasons why someone might prefer to shop online for themselves. However, hesitancy to order fresh produce, delivery issues and fees, missing in-store specials and technology issues are all reasons why someone might prefer to shop in person. Figuring out which of these things are most important to you can help you decide whether or not to try online shopping.

Professor emeritus Kathy Kolasa, a registered dietitian nutritionist and Ph.D., is an affiliate professor in the Brody School of Medicine at ECU. Contact her at kolasaka@ecu.edu.

True extent of SNAP fraud problem is unclear

ASSOCIATED PRESS

President Donald Trump's administration is talking tough about SNAP, saying the government's biggest food aid program is riddled with fraud that must be stopped.

His appointees are looking at the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program from an enforcement perspective, seeing fraud as a major and expensive problem, perpetrated by organized criminal organizations, individual recipients and retailers willing to break the law for profit.

"We know there are instances of fraud committed by our friends and neighbors, but also transnational crime rings," Jennifer Tiller, a senior advisor to U.S. Agriculture Secretary Brooke Rollins, said in an interview.

Some experts agree that SNAP fraud is a major problem. But there is little publicly available data showing the extent of it, and others who study the program are skeptical about the scale.

"It you're spending \$100 billion on anything, you're going to have some leakage," said Christopher Bosso, a professor of public policy and politics at Northeastern University who published a book on SNAP.

THE ADMINISTRATION LEANS INTO FRAUD ALLEGATIONS

Of the \$100 billion spent on SNAP a year, about \$94 billion goes to benefits and the rest to administrative costs.

About 42 million people — or 1 in 8 Americans — receive SNAP benefits averaging about \$190 per person per month. The number of recipients is in the same ballpark as the number of people in poverty — 36 million by the traditional measure and

43 million under a more nuanced one also used by the federal government.

Under federal law, most households must report their income and basic information every four to six months and be fully recertified for SNAP at least every 12 months.

The Trump administration has demanded that states turn over data on individual SNAP recipients including Social Security numbers, dates of birth and immigration status as part of its effort to root out fraud.

States with Republican governors, plus North Carolina, have complied. Most led by Democrats are pushing back in court, arguing that providing the data would violate recipients' privacy.

The USDA says that from the records that have been shared, it found 186,000 deceased people — about 1% of participants in those states — receiving benefits and about 500,000 people — about 2.7% — receiving benefits in more than one jurisdiction.

The USDA has not made public detailed reports on the data and has not broken down the estimates by type of alleged fraud. The department also hasn't answered questions about what portion of any improperly awarded benefits was actually spent and how much sat unclaimed on EBT cards after recipients moved or died.

The department estimated in a letter to the states that have refused to turn over data that the nationwide total combining fraud and undetected errors could be \$9 billion a year or more. Democratic-led states responded in a letter last week that states already have systems to catch

wrongdoing and that the USDA isn't explaining how it's crunching the numbers.

PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS CAN BE PERPETRATORS OR VICTIMS OF FRAUD

There are a lot of forms of wrongdoing.

SNAP benefits are put on EBT cards that recipients swipe in stores like debit cards. Organized crime groups put skimmers on EBT readers to get

information used to make copies of the benefit cards and steal the allotments of recipients — or to use stolen identity information to apply for benefits for fictitious people. A Romanian man who was in the U.S. illegally pleaded guilty last year to skimming cards in California. Authorities say he took more than 36,000 numbers over three years.

OBITUARIES

Deborah (Debi) Labas Levine

GREENVILLE - Deborah (Debi) Labas Levine passed away unexpectedly, yet peacefully, at her home in Greenville, North Carolina, on December 7, 2025. Born July 8, 1953, in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, she was 72 years old when she passed.

Debi was a devoted wife, mother, sister, daughter, and grandmother (Nana). She was a talented ballroom dancer and enjoyed crocheting, reading, and spending time with nature. A compassionate and empathetic listener, she had a gift for helping people understand and work through life's challenges. Debi earned a Master's Degree in marriage and family therapy, taught child and adolescent development at East Carolina University, and maintained a private counseling practice. Debi touched the lives of many and will be remembered for being a bright, genuine, kind and generous person.

Debi was preceded in death by her parents, Nicholas and Irene Bock Labas, brother Daniel Labas, sister-in-law Lori Dovgan, brother-in-law Dennis Levine, and nephew Nick Labas. She is survived by her husband, Gary Ira Levine, MD, of Greenville, daughters Arielle Dozier (Scott) of Raleigh, NC, and Katrina Perry (Dean) of Cary, NC, granddaughters Madelyn and Lillian Dozier and Isla Perry, sister Donita Grady (Francis) of Rocky River, OH, brother David Labas (Robin) of Mantua, OH, and several nieces and nephews.

The family will welcome visitors from 5:00-7:00 pm on Friday, December 19, at Wilkerson Funeral Home in Greenville, NC. Interment at Raleigh Memorial Park in Raleigh, NC, will follow on Saturday, December 20, at 11:00 am.

In lieu of flowers, please help honor Debi's memory through a donation or act of kindness to something that has meaning for you.

Arrangements by Wilkerson Funeral Home & Crematory. Online condolences are available at www.wilkersonfuneralhome.com



OBITUARIES

James Michael Kenny, M.D.

GREENVILLE - James Michael Kenny, M.D., 89, of Greenville, NC, formerly of Milton, MA, passed peacefully at his loving home on December 11, 2025.

A celebration of life will be held on Saturday, December 20, at 11 am at St. Peter Catholic Church in Greenville, NC followed by a reception in the parish hall

Jim was born on June 2, 1936, at the Brooklyn Hospital to Elizabeth Brosnan Kenny and Irish immigrant Michael

James Kenny of Queens, NY. He was raised with a deep faith in Catholicism alongside his big sister, Elaine. Jim attended his favorite school, St. John's Prep, and served as an altar boy from a young age. As a child, he loved playing stickball in the street and had an active imagination, particularly with his toy soldiers.

A gifted writer, Jim turned down a full journalism scholarship to St. John's University in favor of studying biology at Fordham College, as he knew he wanted to become a doctor. After graduating from Creighton University School of Medicine, he proudly accepted residency and fellowship appointments at Columbia, Yale, and Harvard. Jim enjoyed teaching and was on the faculty of five medical schools throughout his career.

During his time at Yale, Jim met a gorgeous young nurse, Susan, who was taking care of his ill father. Love at first sight, they married within six months, and began a beautiful life together. They ran a private medical practice together for 27 years, one mile from their home in Milton. Jim had a spare room next to his office where his children could study, play, or watch the small black-and-white television while enjoying Whitman's Chocolates after school.

Although Jim was a highly respected physician with an extensive curriculum vitae, he was most passionate about family, faith, children, the environment, and helping those in need. He held several board positions for the American Lung Association, Massachusetts Hospital School, and various organizations close to his heart. A dedicated volunteer, Jim tirelessly advocated for emissions standards in Massachusetts and received the Clean Air Carolina "Air Keeper" award. He was an active member of the local Golden K, St. Vincent DePaul Society, and Adoration Chapel for St. Peter.

Above all, Jim was the definition of a family man. He spent his life ensuring he never missed anything with his children. An avid sports fan, Jim loved taking his kids to watch the Red Sox, Celtics, and Bruins in Boston. Pursuant to his move to North Carolina, he became a fan of the Carolina Hurricanes, becoming a season ticket holder, where he shared memories with his children and grandchildren.

Jim treasured every second with his family, especially meals, which always started with Grace and ended with the family holding hands while cheering, "Hooray for the Kennys!" He had the reputation of being pure, kind, and a true gentleman. All were welcome at his home, where he was known to serve a stiff martini. He had a particular soft spot for dogs, from Toby to Dolly, his beloved pal who was the last to follow him out the door after his passing.

Jim was dearly loved by many. He will be forever missed by his wife of 58 years, Susan Sheridan Kenny of Greenville NC; daughter Erin Kenny Connelly of Greenville, NC; son Sean Patrick Kenny and his wife, Rhonda, of Greenville, NC; daughter Caroline Kenny Sweeney and her husband, Timothy, of Gray, Maine; and his precious nine grandchildren: Summer, Aidan, Bridget, James, Michael, Elizabeth, Caitlin, Patrick and Thomas. Jim is reunited in heaven with his infant son and special angel, Michael James Kenny.

The family would like to give special thanks to Jim's wonderful nurses, Lashonna and Kayla, from Gentiva Hospice.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to: American Lung Association, 55 W. Wacker Drive, Suite 1150, Chicago, IL 60601, the Humane Society of Eastern Carolina, 3520 Tupper Drive, Greenville, NC 27834 or Breakthrough T1D (Aidan's Activists), 200 Vesey Street, 28th Floor, New York, NY 10281.

Online condolences at www.wilkersonfuneralhome.com

DEATH NOTICES

WASHINGTON — **Edward "Sidney" Moore**, 78, died on Sunday, December 14, 2025. Graveside service Friday, at 2 p.m., at Pine-wood Memorial Park Mausoleum. Visitation from 1-2 p.m. prior to the service at the Mausoleum. Arrangements by Wilkerson Funeral Home.

OBITUARY POLICY

To submit obituaries or death notices Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m., call 329-9505 or email obits@appenc.com and specify that you are interested in obituary information.



Add Some **Fire** to Your Feeders

One Regularly Priced Item

15% off

*Valid only at the Greenville NC store. Offer not valid on previous purchases or sale items. Offer valid in-store only thru 01/30/26

Present Coupon at time of Purchase

518 Greenville Blvd. SE Unit A, Greenville, NC
(252) 493-0340 • www.wbu.com/greenvillenc

BIRD FOOD • FEEDERS • GARDEN ACCENTS • UNIQUE GIFTS

Suspects plead guilty in Greenville shooting deaths

Kearney Park shooter set for sentencing in May

THE DAILY REFLECTOR

A man has pleaded guilty to second-degree murder in a 2022 shooting that killed a 17-year-old in Greenville's Kearney Park neighborhood. Court documents said that Andre'vious Ni'ja Spencer, 22, of 202 Caddie Court, entered his plea Monday morning in the death of Idn Arrington, 17, in the 1900 block of Kennedy Circle. Reports said Arrington



Spencer

was shot in the street just after 8 p.m. on June 15, 2022, and went to a nearby residence for help. He died at the residence. Spencer was identified as a suspect and located and arrested in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, in July 2022. He was 18 when he shot Arrington. Pitt County Superior Court Judge Jeffery Foster signed Monday's judgment. Spencer's sentencing

hearing has been continued to May 7, 2026, or until the state enters its prayer for judgment. In North Carolina second-degree murder is a Class B1 felony which can carry a sentence of life in prison. Pitt County Assistant District Attorney Joel Stadiem led the state's case. Matthew James Thomas is Spencer's appointed defense attorney. Carlos Cox, 22, was also charged with murder in Arrington's death. His bond was modified on Dec. 3. He is not currently listed as incarcerated at the Pitt

County Detention Center. Cox's next hearing is set for March 4 in Pitt County Superior Court.

PARAMOUNT 3800

Isaiah Paul Payton, 25, of 244 Tucker St., Grifton, entered a plea of guilty to voluntary manslaughter on Monday in connection to an Oct. 29, 2020, shooting that killed Delashon Andrews at 4460 Bostic Drive. Payton was initially charged with murder. He was also charged with attempted first-degree murder and assault with a deadly weapon with intent to kill,



Payton

inflicting serious injury. Reports said that Greenville police officers arrived about 4 a.m. to find Andrews dead outside a building at the Paramount 3800 apartment complex. Payton and Darius Wayne, 22, of Greenville, were also injured by gunfire and taken to Vidant Medical Center, now ECU Health Medical Center, for treatment. Police recovered three

firearms from the scene, reports said. They also believed that Payton opened fire on Andrews and Wayne and that he was injured when Andrews returned fire. Payton was arrested on Sept. 4, 2024, following a second police investigation that garnered new information. Details of his sentencing were not available Monday. Pitt County Assistant District Attorney Anthony Futrell prosecuted the case. Public defender Christopher Suggs was Payton's defense attorney.

Trump to stump for Whatley in Rocky Mount on Friday

WILLIAM F. WEST
Staff Writer

President Donald Trump is coming to Rocky Mount on Friday for a campaign rally as a U.S. Senate race heats up. Confirmation came via a text message late Monday afternoon from Jonathan Felts, who is a Michael Whatley for U.S. Senate campaign spokesman. The campaign earlier posted a message on social media with Whatley saying of Trump that, "Let's give him the North Carolina welcome he deserves." The plan calls for Trump to be at the Rocky Mount Event Center, which is going to mark the second time he has been there to speak. Trump, who was president from 2017 to 2021, spoke at a rally there on Oct. 29, 2024, in his

successful campaign for a second non-consecutive term. The event center, which is on the northeastern side of downtown, opened in October 2018 after being built at a cost of \$48 million to boost sports tourism in the region. The facility also has the flexibility to be the scene of gatherings such as banquets, conferences and weddings. Whatley served as N.C. GOP chairman from 2019-24. He became then-presidential candidate Trump's choice to become the Republican National Committee chairman. Whatley, a Gastonia native, is Trump's preference to be the GOP candidate for the U.S. Senate seat that is going to be up for election in 2026. However, three other Republicans also are running, including

Don Brown of Waxhaw, which is just south of Charlotte. Brown is a former Navy Judge Advocate General officer, a former special assistant U.S. attorney and an author. Brown was quoted on Nov. 10 by Raleigh media outlets, saying that, "I'm hearing all over the state that Republicans are not enthusiastic about Whatley. The Republicans who are behind him are doing so because Trump told them to." Additionally, former two-term Gov. Roy Cooper, a Democrat and a Nash County native, is running for the seat, as are two other Democrats. Trump is also coming to Rocky Mount amid a contest that is shaping up in 2026 in a redrawn 1st Congressional District composed of northeastern North Carolina counties, including the

Twin Counties. U.S. Rep. Don Davis, D-1st District, is in his second term on Capitol Hill and filed qualifying papers declaring his candidacy Monday to seek a third term representing a district that no longer includes Greene County, where he resides. Republican legislators added more coastal areas into the 1st District in an effort to make the seat winnable, heeding calls from Trump to use redistricting as a tool to preserve Republican majorities in the U.S. House. The GOP field so far consists of four candidates: N.C. Sen. Bobby Hanig of Currituck County, who is a U.S. Army veteran and a businessman; Lenoir County Commissioner Eric Rouse, who also is a businessman; Carteret County Sheriff Asa Buck; and Ashley Nicole Russell, a family law

attorney, author and speaker. Laurie Buckhout, a former U.S. Army colonel and the 2024 GOP nominee for the seat, also said on Sunday that she is considering entering the 2026 GOP primary. Buckhout, who was backed by Trump in the 2024 general election and who narrowly lost to Davis in a hard-fought three-person contest, said that she has just returned to her Edenton home after having served as acting assistant secretary of war for cyber policy in the Trump administration. Rocky Mount Mayor Sandy Roberson announced last week he was suspending his campaign for the seat. He announced his intention to run back in April.

William F. West can be reached at bwest@apgenc.com or (252) 366-8126.

Fees/

from A1

"I don't want to be paying anyone or helping anyone that's going against me when I'm right here on the board. You know?" Forbes said. "I don't think that's right." Maultsby said she was not aware of the endorsement until after she was elected. Both Maultsby and Tripp expressed concerns that a change would have a negative effect on

teachers. "Why charge them when we're fighting to give them a raise?" Tripp asked. Forrest replied: "Because they're fighting to take us off the board" and then added that a processing fee would be charged to the organization rather than to the teachers. Forbes, a former NCAE member, said he was not opposed to teachers being part of the organization. But he disagrees with the group campaigning against

members of the board. "If it was an open seat that would be different," he said. District 4 representative Justin Eastwood, the only politically unaffiliated member of the board, said that while he did not see a benefit in "punishing an organization for their beliefs," he believes organizations that obtain some kind of benefit from PCS should not actively endorse candidates. Chairwoman Kelly

Weaver said she wanted clarity on what it costs Pitt County Schools to process deductions for NCAE and other organizations. District 8 representative Amanda Klein said while she would like to have a better understanding of which groups endorse candidates, she was concerned about creating a burden for the staff. "My sense is a lot more things are going to pop up," she said. "I feel like this could open up maybe a

bigger can of worms." But Forrest said examining the process would increase transparency. "I'm against those groups, if there are more than one, those groups that are actively endorsing this board of education's candidates," he said. "I don't think there's another group that does it. I think you're going to find this is the only one." NCAE Communications Director Justin Guillory told The Daily

Reflector that it is common for NCAE members to pay their dues through payroll deductions. He said endorsements in local races, such as school board and county commissioner, are also common and are handled by local affiliates. The Pitt County Association of Educators did not respond to questions from the newspaper on Monday. Kim Grizzard can be contacted at 252-329-9578 and kgrizzard@apgenc.com.

Contest/

from A1

Wooten, a Kinston native and ECU alumna, five years ago became the sponsor of the contest that was established in honor of her relative, Margaret Blount, to acknowledge the importance of arts in Pitt County Schools. "Ms. Wooten is a wonderful supporter tonight. She's a supporter of us year-round," Pitt County Schools Coordinator of Arts Education Russell Knight said, adding that Wooten also contributed matching funds for proceeds generated at the Youth Arts Festival that pays for supplies for Pitt County art teachers. This year's competition, which included works from about 75 students, expanded to recognize six winners, along with nearly three dozen students who received honorable mention. High school art teachers throughout the school district are invited to submit up to eight student creations for the show. Superintendent Steve Lasiter, who spent time viewing the works before the awards announcement, said he saw some amazing pieces. "Expressing what comes to mind and being about to put it on canvas, that takes a lot of talent,



REGINALD HINES/PCS COMMUNICATIONS

Pitt County Board of Education member Amanda Klein views the work of second-place winner Aditi Mishra on Monday at the Kathy Taft Center. time and a lot of commitment," he said. "I'm proud of our students and the work that you're doing." Knight said he appreciated parents for being willing to allow their children to sign up for arts classes while students are working to complete courses needed for college acceptance. "I have heard over the years sometimes where a parent says, 'Maybe you shouldn't take that class. Will a college really respect that class?'" he said. "We know in the arts world that colleges love to see a student that's well-rounded, and they give just as much credit for an arts class as they do for an AP class. They want to see students that are doing both." Hoang is an example of that, having completed her prize-winning work in an Advanced Placement art class. "For AP art, we all have an inquiry," she said. "My inquiry is how I can draw different animals as spies. I like to experiment a lot so I've used all types of paints, pencils, color pencils, oil pastels, chalk pastels." Varney said students in the class are essentially challenged to create a work of art each week with the goal of demonstrating progress as they explore different types of work. "They have to take a deep dive into something and go further, to generally show that they're

pushing themselves, which is a lot to ask of high school students," he said. "That's why it's an AP. It's a college-level course, but the ones that step up and really take hold of it like Sydney does, it's awesome to see. She's just embraced it and is really a superstar." Rounding out the top awards were Emari Mayfield of D.H. Conley High School, fourth place; Raine Varnadoe of J.H. Rose, fifth; and Akira Paddison of Conley, sixth. Paddison, Mishra and Buckmon also received honorable mention awards for other works submitted for the show. The competition, originally scheduled a week earlier, was postponed due to the threat of snow. The later date brought even colder temperatures but a warm reception for student artists and their families. Knight thanked participants for the vulnerability shown in their art. "Some of the work and some of the writing you guys have done about the work, giving us just a little peek into your soul, it's moving," he said, adding that a staff member who viewed the entries earlier in the day was moved to tears when she read some of the descriptions. An oil pastel titled "Wait, we die?" by honorable mention

winner Lyric Moore of South Central, is a vivid and poignant image of a child peering into a casket to view a woman's body. Mishra's second-place acrylic paint work, "This is supposed to be fun," is an abstract piece that represents her fear and frustration at being interrogated by customs agents when she arrived in America after 30 hours of traveling. Following the reception, art from the competition is displayed in Pitt County Schools' district office for much of the next year. Additional honorable mention recipients include: Karlee Crumpler, Abigail Dickens, Analiz Martinez and Carolina Palacios Salinas of Ayden-Grifton High School; Caroline Flowers, Austin Gregory, Jessie Hsieh, Reece Messer, Jacob Moye, Jordyn Reddick and Cindy Soe of Conley; Lesley Ortiz-Hernandez of Farmville Central; Jhon Castillo Candelero, Jordin Evans, Autumn Hoyt, Ainsley Taylor, Geneva Willets and Athena Workman of Rose; Brian Espino Hipolito, Yelena Gonzalez Bojorquez, Yolanda Hernandez Briones and Jazmine Hernandez-Tamayo of North Pitt; and Cross Bardlavens and Jeremy Jones of South Central. Kim Grizzard can be contacted at 252-329-9578 and kgrizzard@apgenc.com.

Motto/

from A1

"In principle it sounds good, it sounds great, but in practice it has not been fulfilled," McLawhorn said. "Blacks and other minorities are not treated in the same manner in the court system, the judicial system, as nonblacks. There is a sense that it is money that talks in the court system." Commissioner Mac

Manning asked if the decision could be delayed so commissioners could seek input from ministerial organizations. Commissioner Mary Perkins-Williams the motto is on every piece of money, and people opposed to having it in the courts should oppose it being on currency. If they do that, she said, they should get rid of it. She offered to take it for them.

Commissioner Gary Weaver made a motion to install the "In God We Trust" motto; it was seconded by Brown. Before the commissioners could vote, Nunnally made a substitution motion to delay action on the request until January. Under the Board of Commissioners rules, substitute motions are voted on first. It failed 4-5 with Nunnally, McLawhorn,

Manning and Commissioner Ann Floyd Huggins voting for the delay and Brown, Perkins-Williams, Weaver, Benji Holloman and Mark Smith voting against the delay. The board then voted on the motion to install the motto and it passed 5-4 with Brown, Perkins-Williams, Weaver, Holloman and Smith voting in favor and Nunnally, McLawhorn, Manning and Huggins

voting against it. Monday's meeting ended with a closed session that lasted more than an hour. When the board returned, it voted to pursue an option to purchase property in northern Pitt County proposed for development of an industrial megasite. Commissioner Smith, the board chairman, said Tuesday that the vote authorized the execution of a five-year option with

Weyerhaeuser for 1,300 acres. Smith said there is no cost associated with the option. The purchase option was needed to complete the acceptance of a \$2 million readiness program grant from the Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina. Ginger Livingston can be contacted at glivingston@apgenc.com and 252-329-9570.

SPORTS

PRO FOOTBALL



ASSOCIATED PRESS
Carolina Panthers cornerback Mike Jackson walks off the field after a loss against the New Orleans Saints on Sunday in New Orleans.

Panthers’ playoff push compounded by inconsistencies

STEVE REED
The Associated Press

CHARLOTTE — The Carolina Panthers are still learning how to handle success.

While the Panthers have thrived in the underdog role this season with wins over Green Bay and the Los Angeles Rams, they continue to struggle winning the games they’re supposed to win.

Sunday was the latest example.

The Panthers, needing a win over the last-place New Orleans Saints at the Superdome to take full control of the NFC South, instead surrendered a fourth-quarter lead and lost 20-17, leaving them on the outside looking in at the playoff picture with a 7-7 record. They’re tied with Tampa Bay with two head-to-head games remaining against the Buccaneers, who are in the driver’s seat in terms of tiebreakers.

Carolina has now lost 12 straight games when listed as the betting favorite, according to BetMGM Sportsbook. The Panthers have not won a game they’re favored to win since Week 3 of the 2021 season.

Second-year head coach Dave Canales attributed some of that to a young team still learning how to win.

“I see the inconsistency of play that we can have at times, and to me this is a group that is still growing in terms of just finding week in, week out success that way,” Canales said Monday. “And that’s what I really attribute it to. That’s what it looks like on film.”

Canales pointed out that when a team begins to win big games, it tends to catch an opponent’s attention, and the attention to details needs to be amped up.

“I know that when you go into a game as a favorite or you start to build some momentum, the other team also sees that and they’re aware like, ‘hey, let’s go,’ and that calls on them to give their best,” Canales said.

WHAT’S WORKING

Carolina has converted more fourth-down conversions (23) than any team in the league and its 70% conversion rate is fifth best in the league.

However, the Panthers failed on the biggest fourth-down conversion attempt of the season on Sunday when the Saints blew up a fourth-and-1 run up the middle by Chuba Hubbard while Carolina was leading 17-10 early in the fourth quarter. If Carolina had converted the fourth down — or kicked the 53-yard-old field goal — that would have made it a two-score game.

Instead, the Panthers never scored again and lost.

The Panthers aren’t a team that runs the tush push, largely because of the diminutive nature of quarterback Bryce Young, who is listed at 5-foot-10 and a generous 204 pounds on the team’s website.

“It’s physics,” Canales said. “He goes about 190 pounds, and when you have a 220-, 230-pound quarterback leaning on a center, that’s an advantage.”

WHAT NEEDS HELP

Panthers cornerback Jaycee Horn is considered one of the top cornerbacks in the league, but he continues to struggle against Saints wide receiver Chris Olave.

Olave, who burned Horn for a long TD pass in New Orleans’ 17-7 win over Carolina in November, was huge down the stretch and beat Horn in 1-on-1 coverage for a 12-yard touchdown on a slant route with 2:29 left to tie the game at 17. Olave had three catches for 47 yards — two with Horn in coverage — on the game-tying drive and finished with six catches for 85 yards.

Canales said the Panthers were “totally disoriented” on the back end of the defense after the Saints went “tempo” during that drive.

More **PANTHERS** | **B3**

ECU FOOTBALL

Pirate passer Houser, others enter transfer portal

THE DAILY REFLECTOR

The news cycle didn’t get any slower for East Carolina football fans this week.

Redshirt junior quarterback Katin Houser intends to enter the transfer portal, according to multiple online reports Monday morning. He also will not join ECU when it plays Pittsburgh in the Go Bowling Military Bowl on Dec. 27. It was one of three costly losses endured by the Pirates this week, as sophomore wide receiver Yannick Smith and second-year tight end Jayvontay Connor also are set to leave Greenville.

Houser had yet to make a

public statement regarding his decision as of Tuesday morning. Newly adopted NCAA rules dictate players waiting until Jan. 2 to officially enter the portal.

The departures come just a week after former Pirates coordinators John David Baker and Josh Aldridge announced their intentions to leave for Ole Miss and South Florida, respectively.

Houser enjoyed a career season this fall, throwing for 3,300 yards with 19 touchdowns to just six interceptions. He also provided good work near the goal line, totaling a team-best nine rushing scores.

More **TRANSFER** | **B3**



SCOTT DAVIS FOR THE DAILY REFLECTOR
Katin Houser (4) stiff-arms BYU’s Faletau Satuala during a contest at Dowdy-Ficklen Stadium this past September. The redshirt junior this week announced his decision to enter the transfer portal.

COMMENTARY

New life?



PHOTOS BY SCOTT DAVIS FOR THE DAILY REFLECTOR
Luke Davis, left, grabs a rebound for East Carolina during Sunday afternoon’s win over Buffalo in Minges Coliseum. The Winterville native tied a career high with 11 rebounds in his first start of the season.

Davis gets ECU hoops closer to establishing identity

ECU’s Luke Davis (43) puts up a hook shot against App State last Thursday at Minges Coliseum.



DONNELL COLEY
Staff Writer

Every college basketball team has that one guy who knows his role and gains respect each week for thanklessly executing that job.

For East Carolina, Luke Davis is said guy.

Davis is a local product who decided to end his collegiate career playing for the hometown club, despite the real possibility of riding the bench. He spent most of the summer, and even the first few games, as a hard-working reserve who prepped ECU

starters for their next foe.

But with countless injuries through the opening month, Davis earned his first start as a Pirate over the weekend and tied his career high with 11 rebounds in response. And it couldn’t have come at a better time for a reeling group struggling to find an identity.

Mike Schwartz’s squads are known to defend and rebound regardless of what’s happening on offense. But that simply hasn’t been the case consistently through a 4-7 start.

More **ECU** | **B3**

COLLEGE BASKETBALL

Huskers set to enter break on heels of best-ever start

AARON BEARD
The Associated Press

Fred Hoiberg has his Nebraska team off to its best start in program history, owning the nation’s longest winning streak and armed with its best AP Top 25 ranking in more than three decades.

He wants it to be merely a start rather than a high point for the 15th-ranked Cornhuskers, along with a springboard into making more gains before diving into the meat of the Big Ten schedule. That starts with Sunday’s home game against North Dakota before taking the Christmas break.

“We’ve got to get tougher, there’s no doubt about it,” Hoiberg told

The Associated Press on Monday. “We’ve got to find a way to finish possessions. That toughness, you have to have it in this league if you want to be consistent and you want to have any chance to win.”

Still, there’s plenty for Hoiberg to feel good about, too.

Nebraska (11-0, 2-0) Big Ten is coming off a week that saw the Cornhuskers beat Creighton by 21, beat Wisconsin by 30, then win at then-No. 13 Illinois on Jamarques Lawrence’s last-second 3-pointer. Throw in winning last year’s College Basketball Crown tournament, and the Cornhuskers have now won a program-record 15 straight games.



ASSOCIATED PRESS
Nebraska’s Jamarques Lawrence drives to the basket as Illinois’ Tomislav Ivisic defends during a game Saturday in Champaign, Ill.

More **T25** | **B3**

NATIONAL SCOREBOARD

TV SPORTS

WEDNESDAY, DEC. 17

COLLEGE BASKETBALL (MEN'S)

6:30 p.m. FS1 — Creighton at Xavier

SECN — Saint Francis (Pa.) at Florida

7 p.m. ESPN2 — Vanderbilt at Memphis

8:30 p.m. FS1 — Georgetown at Marquette

9 p.m. BTN — UTSA at Southern Cal

10 p.m. CBSSN — Air Force at San Diego St.

10:30 p.m. FS1 — Arizona St. at UCLA

11 p.m. BTN — Portland at Oregon

COLLEGE BASKETBALL (WOMEN'S)

6 p.m. ACCN — E. Kentucky at Louisville

7 p.m. PEACOCK — Marquette at UConn

8 p.m. ACCN — UNC-Wilmington at North Carolina

CBSN — UNLV at Grand Canyon

9 p.m. SECN — Northwestern St. at Texas

COLLEGE FOOTBALL

5 p.m. ESPN — StaffDNA Cure Bowl: Old Dominion vs. South Florida, Orlando, Fla.

7 p.m. ESPNU — NJCAA DI Tournament: Hutchinson vs. Iowa Western, National Championship, Canyon, Texas

8:30 p.m. ESPN — 68 Ventures Bowl: Louisiana-Lafayette vs. Delaware, Mobile, Ala.

GOLF

7:30 p.m. GOLF — Optum Golf Channel Games

USA — Optum Golf Channel Games

4:30 a.m. (Thursday) GOLF — DP World Tour: The AfrAsia Bank Mauritius Open, First Round, Heritage La Réserve GC, Bel Ombre, Savanne, Mauritius

NBA BASKETBALL

8 p.m. NBATV — L.A. Clippers at Oklahoma City

NHL HOCKEY

TNT — Utah at Detroit

TRUTV — Utah at Detroit

10 p.m. TNT — New Jersey at Vegas

TRUTV — New Jersey at Vegas

SOCCER (WOMEN'S)

2:55 p.m. CBSSN — UEFA Champions League: Paris Saint-Germain at Benfica

TENNIS

6 a.m. TENNIS — Next Gen Finals: Round Robin

11 a.m. TENNIS — Next Gen Finals: Round Robin

6 a.m. (Thursday) TENNIS — Next Gen Finals: Round Robin

BASKETBALL

NBA EASTERN CONFERENCE

Atlantic

W

L

Pct

GB

New York

18

7

.720

—

Toronto

16

11

.593

3

Boston

15

11

.577

3½

Philadelphia

14

11

.560

4

Brooklyn

7

18

.280

11

Southeast

W

L

Pct

GB

Orlando

15

11

.577

—

Atlanta

15

12

.556

½

Miami

14

12

.538

1

Charlotte

8

18

.308

7

Washington

4

20

.167

10

Central

W

L

Pct

GB

Detroit

21

5

.808

—

Cleveland

15

12

.556

6½

Milwaukee

11

16

.407

10½

Chicago

10

15

.400

10½

Indiana

6

20

.231

15

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Southwest

W

L

Pct

GB

San Antonio

18

7

.720

—

Houston

16

7

.696

1

Memphis

12

14

.462

6½

Dallas

10

17

.370

9

New Orleans

5

22

.185

14

Northwest

W

L

Pct

GB

Oklahoma City

24

2

.923

—

Denver

19

6

.760

4½

Minnesota

17

9

.654

7

Utah

10

15

.400

13½

Portland

10

16

.385

14

Pacific

W

L

Pct

GB

L.A. Lakers

18

7

.720

—

Phoenix

14

12

.538

4½

Golden St.

13

14

.481

6

Sacramento

6

20

.231

12½

L.A. Clippers

6

20

.231

12½

Sunday's Games

Washington 108, Indiana 89

Brooklyn 127, Milwaukee 82

Atlanta 120, Philadelphia 117

Minnesota 117, Sacramento 103

New Orleans 114, Chicago 104

L.A. Lakers 116, Phoenix 114

Portland 136, Golden St. 131

Charlotte 119, Cleveland 111, OT

Monday's Games

Detroit 112, Boston 105

Toronto 106, Miami 96

Utah 140, Dallas 133, OT

Denver 128, Houston 125, OT

Memphis 121, L.A. Clippers 103

Tuesday's Games

New York vs San Antonio, 8:30 p.m., Las Vegas (Championship Game)

Wednesday's Games

Cleveland at Chicago, 8 p.m.

Memphis at Minnesota, 8 p.m.

Thursday's Games

Atlanta at Charlotte, 7 p.m.

New York at Indiana, 7 p.m.

Miami at Brooklyn, 7:30 p.m.

Houston at New Orleans, 8 p.m.

L.A. Clippers at Oklahoma City, 8 p.m.

Toronto at Milwaukee, 8 p.m.

Washington at San Antonio, 8 p.m.

Detroit at Dallas, 8:30 p.m.

Golden St. at Phoenix, 9 p.m.

L.A. Lakers at Utah, 9 p.m.

Orlando at Denver, 9 p.m.

Sacramento at Portland, 10 p.m.

College AP Top 25 Men

The top 25 teams in The Associated Press' college basketball poll, with first-place votes in parentheses, and total points based on 25 points for a first-place vote through one point for a 25th-place vote and previous ranking.

Rec

Pts

Prv

1. Arizona (42)

9-0

1500

1

2. Michigan (15)

10-0

1470

2

3. Duke (3)

10-0

1406

3

4. Iowa St. (1)

11-0

1336

4

5. UConn

10-1

1286

5

6. Purdue

10-1

1195

6

7. Gonzaga

10-1

1109

8

8. Houston

10-1

1079

7

9. Michigan St.

9-1

1037

9

10. BYU

9-1

1017

10

11. Louisville

9-1

921

11

12. North Carolina

9-1

794

14

13. Vanderbilt

10-0

766

15

14. Arkansas

8-2

726

17

15. Nebraska

11-0

655

23

16. Alabama

7-3

644

12

17. Kansas

8-3

502

19

18. Illinois

8-3

483

13

19. Texas Tech

7-3

314

16

20. Tennessee

7-3

286

20

21. Auburn

8-3

283

21

22. St. John's

6-3

250

22

23. Florida

6-4

200

18

24. Virginia

9-1

200

24

25. Georgia

9-1

82

—

Others receiving votes: Southern Cal 68, Iowa 47, Seton Hall 46, LSU 19, Kentucky 19, UCLA 16, Clemson 14, California 13, Saint Mary's 12, Arizona St 5, Villanova 5, Notre Dame 4, Indiana 4, Miami (Ohio) 4, Miami 4, Utah St. 2, Saint Louis 1, Wisconsin 1.

Monday's Games

No. 1 Arizona (9-0) vs. Abilene Christian (7-3), 9 p.m.

No. 3 Duke (10-0) vs. Lipscomb (6-4), 6 p.m.

No. 5 UConn (10-1) vs. Butler (8-2), 8:30 p.m.

No. 9 Michigan State (9-1) vs. Toledo (5-5), 6:30 p.m.

No. 10 BYU (9-1) vs. Pacific (8-3), 9 p.m.

No. 11 Louisville (9-1) at No. 20 Tennessee (7-3), 7 p.m.

No. 14 North Carolina (9-1) vs. East Tennessee State (8-3), 8 p.m.

No. 16 Texas Tech (7-3) vs. Northern Colorado (9-1), 8 p.m.

No. 17 Arkansas (8-2) vs. Queens (5-6), 9 p.m.

No. 19 Kansas (8-3) vs. Towson (6-4), 9 p.m.

No. 22 St. John's (6-3) vs. DePaul (8-3), 7 p.m.

Wednesday's Games

No. 8 Gonzaga (10-1) vs. Campbell (5-5), 9 p.m.

No. 12 Alabama (7-3) vs. South Florida (6-4), 8 p.m.

No. 15 Vanderbilt (10-0) at Memphis (4-5), 7 p.m.

No. 18 Florida (6-4) vs. St. Francis (PA) (2-9), 6:30 p.m.

No. 25 UCLA (7-3) vs. Arizona State (9-2), 10:30 p.m.

Friday's Games

No. 10 BYU (9-1) vs. Abilene Christian (7-3), 9 p.m.

390 p.m.

No. 25 UCLA (7-3) vs. Cal Poly (5-6), 10 p.m.

Saturday's Games

No. 1 Arizona (9-0) vs. San Diego State (5-3) at Phoenix, 10:30 p.m.

No. 3 Duke (10-0) vs. No. 16 Texas Tech (7-3) at New York, 8 p.m.

No. 6 Purdue (10-1) vs. No. 21 Auburn (8-3) at Indianapolis, 6:30 p.m.

No. 7 Houston (10-1) vs. No. 17 Arkansas (8-2) at Newark, N.J., 5:30 p.m.

No. 9 Michigan State (9-1) vs. Oakland (5-6) at Detroit, Noon

No. 11 Louisville (9-1) vs. Montana (6-5), Noon

No. 14 North Carolina (9-1) vs. Ohio State (8-2) at Atlanta, 3 p.m.

No. 22 St. John's (6-3) vs. Kentucky (7-4) at Atlanta, 12:30 p.m.

No. 24 Virginia (9-1) vs. Maryland (6-5), 6 p.m.

Sunday's Games

No. 2 Michigan (10-0) vs. La Salle (4-7), 4 p.m.

No. 4 Iowa State (11-0) vs. Long Beach State (2-9), 6 p.m.

No. 5 UConn (10-1) at DePaul (8-3), 4:30 p.m.

No. 8 Gonzaga (10-1) vs. Oregon (5-5) at Portland, Ore, 6 p.m.

No. 12 Alabama (7-3) vs. Kennesaw State (8-2) at Huntsville, Ala., 2 p.m.

No. 15 Vanderbilt (10-0) at Wake Forest (8-3), 1 p.m.

No. 18 Florida (6-4) vs. Colgate (6-5), Noon

No. 20 Tennessee (7-3) vs. Gardner-Webb (1-11), 3 p.m.

No. 23 Nebraska (11-0) vs. North Dakota (4-9), 8 p.m.

Women

The top 25 teams in The Associated Press' women's college basketball poll, with first-place votes in parentheses, and total points based on 25 points for a first-place vote through one point for a 25th-place vote and previous ranking.

Rec

Pts

Prv

1. UConn (24)

10-0

792

1

2. Texas (8)

12-0

776

2

3. South Carolina

10-1

727

3

4. UCLA

9-1

710

4

5. LSU

11-0

642

5

6. Michigan

9-1

640

6

7. Maryland

12-0

583

7

8. Oklahoma

11-1

566

9

9. TCU

11-0

560

8

10. Iowa St.

12-0

555

10

11. Iowa

10-1

430

11

12. Kentucky

11-1

414

15

13. Vanderbilt

9-0

403

14

14. Mississippi

10-1

322

17

15. Baylor

10-2

302

13

16. Louisville

10-3

297

22

17. Tennessee

7-2

278

18

18. North Carolina

9-3

273

12

19. Southern Cal

7-3

246

16

20. Notre Dame

8-2

221

19

21. Ohio St.

9-1

180

21

22. Washington

9-1

161

20

23. Nebraska

11-0

123

24

24. Michigan St.

9-1

63

25

25. Princeton

10-1

40

—

Others receiving votes: Oklahoma St. 35, Texas Tech 26, Alabama 13, Georgia 12, NC State 8, Arizona St. 1, Illinois 1.

Monday's Games

No. 13 Vanderbilt (10-0) 87, South Florida (6-5), 58

Tuesday's Games

No. 4 UCLA (9-1) vs. Cal Poly (2-7), 10 p.m.

No. 5 LSU (11-0) vs. Morgan State (1-11), Noon

No. 9 TCU (11-0) vs. Arkansas-Pine Bluff (3-5), 7:30 p.m.

Wednesday's Games

No. 1 UConn (10-0) vs. Marquette (7-3), 7 p.m.

No. 2 Texas (12-0) vs. Northwestern State (4-4), 9 p.m.

No. 14 Ole Miss (10-1) vs. Mississippi Valley State (1-8), 5 p.m.

No. 16 Louisville (10-3) vs. Eastern Kentucky (7-3), 6 p.m.

No. 18 North Carolina (9-3) vs. UNC Wilmington (3-5), 8 p.m.

Friday's Games

No. 7 Maryland (12-0) vs. Central Connecticut (0-8), 11 a.m.

No. 12 Kentucky (11-1) vs. Wright State (5-7), 6:30 p.m.

No. 22 Washington (9-1) at Stanford (9-2), 10 p.m.

Saturday's Games

No. 1 UConn (10-0) vs. No. 11 Iowa (10-1) at Brooklyn, N.Y., 1:30 p.m.

No. 3 South Carolina (10-1) at Florida Gulf Coast (3-5), 2 p.m.

No. 4 UCLA (9-1) vs. Long Beach State (0-9), 5 p.m.

No. 9 TCU (11-0) vs. Kansas State (7-6), 5 p.m.

No. 13 Vanderbilt (9-0) vs. Texas Southern (3-5), 1 p.m.

No. 16 Louisville (10-3) vs. No. 17 Tennessee (7-2) at Brooklyn, N.Y., 11 a.m.

No. 25 Princeton (10-1) at George Mason (6-5), 1 p.m.

Sunday's Games

No. 2 Texas (12-0) at South Dakota State (10-2), 2 p.m.

No. 5 LSU (11-0) vs. UT Arlington (5-5), 2 p.m.

No. 6 Michigan (9-1) vs. Oakland (3-6), Noon

No. 10 Iowa State (12-0) vs. Kansas (9-2), 1 p.m.

No. 14 Ole Miss (10-1) vs. Old Dominion (7-3), Semifinals Game 1 at Cherokee, N.C., 7:30 p.m.

No. 15 Baylor (10-2) vs. Texas Tech (12-0), 4 p.m.

No. 18 North Carolina (9-3) vs. Charleston Southern (2-7), Noon

No. 19 USC (7-3) vs. California (8-4) at San Francisco, 8:30 p.m.

No. 20 Notre Dame (8-2) vs. Bellarmine (2-9), 5 p.m.

No. 22 Washington (9-1) at Pacific (4-5), 4 p.m.

No. 23 Nebraska (11-0) vs. California Baptist (6-4), Noon

No. 24 Michigan State (9-1) vs. Indiana State (4-4), Semifinals Game 2 at Cherokee, N.C., 5 p.m.

FOOTBALL

NFL AMERICAN CONFERENCE

East

W

L

T

Pct

PF

PA

New England

11

3

0

.786

382

276

Buffalo

10

4

0

.714

411

324

Miami

6

8

0

.429

296

324

e-N.Y. Jets

3

11

0

.214

276

397

South

W

L

T

Pct

PF

PA

Jacksonville

10

4

0

.714

376

292

Houston

9

5

0

.643

323

228

Indianapolis

8

6

0

.571

392

303

e-Tenn.

2

12

0

.143

225

394

North

W

L

T

Pct

PF

PA

Pittsburgh

8

6

0

.571

336

326

Baltimore

7

7

0

.500

335

320

e-Cincinnati

4

10

0

.286

314

437

e-Cleveland

3

11

0

.214

226

332

West

W

L

T

Pct

PF

PA

x-Denver

12

2

0

.857

342

261

L.A. Chargers

10

4

0

.714

315

284

e-Kansas City

6

8

0

.429

328

268

e-Las Vegas

2

12

0

.143

196

363

NATIONAL CONFERENCE

East

W

L

T

Pct

PF

PA

Philadelphia

9

5

0

.643

320

271

Dallas

6

7

1

.464

407

420

e-Washington

4

10

0

.286

291

375

e-N.Y. Giants

2

12

0

.143

300

396

South

W

L

T

Pct

PF

PA

Tampa Bay

7

7

0

.500

327

354

Carolina

7

7

0

.500

264

317

e-Atlanta

5

9

0

.357

281

341

e-New Orleans

4

10

0

.286

226

332

North

W

L

T

Pct

PF

PA

Chicago

10

4

0

.714

365

338

Green Bay

9

4

1

.679

348

281

Detroit

8

6

0

.571

428

345

e-Minnesota

6

8

0

.429

289

307

West

W

L

T

Pct

PF

PA

x-L.A. Rams

11

3

0

.786

420

261

Seattle

11

3

0

.786

405

242

San Fran.

10

4

0

.714

344

293

e-Arizona

3

11

0

.214

302

388

Thursday's Games

Atlanta 29, Tampa Bay 28

Sunday's Games

Baltimore 24, Cincinnati 0

Buffalo 35, New England 31

Chicago 31, Cleveland 3

Houston 40, Arizona 20

Jacksonville 48, N.Y. Jets 20

L.A. Chargers 16, Kansas City 13

Philadelphia 31, Las Vegas 0

Washington 29, N.Y. Giants 21

Denver 34, Green Bay 26

L.A. Rams 41, Detroit 34

New Orleans 20, Carolina 17

San Fran. 37, Tenn. 24

Seattle 18, Indianapolis 16

Minnesota 34, Dallas 26

Monday's Games

Pittsburgh 28, Miami 15

Thursday, Dec. 18

L.A. Rams at Seattle, 8:15 p.m.

Saturday, Dec. 20

Philadelphia at Washington, 5 p.m.

Green Bay at Chicago, 8:20 p.m.

Sunday, Dec. 21

Buffalo at Cleveland, 1 p.m.

Cincinnati at Miami, 1 p.m.

Kansas City at Tenn., 1 p.m.

L.A. Chargers at Dallas, 1 p.m.

Minnesota at N.Y. Giants, 1 p.m.

N.Y. Jets at New Orleans, 1 p.m.

Tampa Bay at Carolina, 1 p.m.

Atlanta at Arizona, 4:05 p.m.

Jacksonville at Denver, 4:05 p.m.

Las Vegas at Houston, 4:25 p.m.

Pittsburgh at Detroit, 4:25 p.m.

New England at Baltimore, 8:20 p.m.

Monday, Dec. 22

San Fran. at Indianapolis, 8:15 p.m.

PITTSBURGH 28, MIAMI 15

Miami 0 3 0 12 — 15

Pittsburgh 0 7 14 7 — 28

SECOND QUARTER

Mia—FG Patterson 54, 5:11.

Pit—Co.Heyward 1 run (Boswell kick), :21.

THIRD QUARTER

Pit—Valdes-Scantling 19 pass from Rodgers (Boswell kick), 11:25.

Pit—Metcalf 28 pass from Rodgers (Boswell kick), 5:06.

FOURTH QUARTER

Pit—JSmith 14 run (Boswell kick), 13:06.

Mia—Waller 6 pass from Tagovailoa (pass failed), 9:41.

Mia—Waller 13 pass from Tagovailoa (pass failed), 2:32.

A—65,663.

Mia

Pit

First downs

16

22

Total Net Yards

285

336

Rushes-yards

16-63

32-135

Passing

222

201

Punt Returns

2-14

3-9

Kickoff Returns

3-74

2-54

Interceptions Ret.

0-0

1-0

Comp-Att-Int

22-28-1

23-27-0

Sacked-Yards Lost

4-31

3-23

Punts

4-48.5

5-46.2

Fumbles-Lost

0-0

0-0

Penalties-Yards

6-31

4-25

Time of Possession

26:27

33:33

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS

Rushing—Miami, Achane 12-60, Wright 1-2

Tagovailoa 1-1, Gordon 2-0. Pittsburgh, Gainwell 13-80, Warren 12-33, Smith 1-14, Johnson 2-4, Co.Heyward 4-4.

Passing—Miami, Tagovailoa 22-28-1-253.

Pittsburgh, Rodgers 23-27-0-224.

Receiving—Miami, Waller 7-66, Achane 6-67, Dulcich 2-46, Waddle 2-26, J.Hill 2-25, M.Washington 1-10, Wright 1-9, Ingold 1-4. Pittsburgh, Gainwell 7-46, Metcalf 3-55, Freiermuth 3-45, Washington 3-25, Warren 3-15, Smith 2-12, Valdes-Scantling 1-19, Thielen 1-7.

Missed Field Goals—None.

COLLEGE Tuesday Salute to Veterans Bowl Montgomery, Ala.

Troy vs. Jacksonville State, 9 p.m. (ESPN)

Wednesday Cure Bowl Orlando, Fla.

Old Dominion vs. South Florida, 5 p.m. (ESPN)

68 Ventures Bowl Mobile, Ala.

Louisiana vs. Delaware, 8:30 p.m. (ESPN)

Thursday Xbox Bowl Frisco, Texas

Arkansas State vs. Missouri State, 9 p.m. (ESPN2)

Friday Myrtle Beach Bowl Conway, S.C.

Kennesaw State vs. Western Michigan, 11 a.m. (ESPN)

Gasparilla Bowl Tampa, Fla.

Memphis vs N.C. State, 2:30 p.m. (ESPN)

College Football Playoff First Round

No. 11 Alabama (10-3) at No. 8 Oklahoma (10-2), 8 p.m. (ESPN/ABC)

Saturday College Football Playoff First Round

No. 10 Miami (Fla.) (10-2) at No. 7 Texas A&M (11-1), noon (ESPN/ABC)

No. 17 Tulane (11-2) at No. 6 Mississippi (11-1), 3:30 p.m. (TNT/HBO Max)

No. 19 James Madison (12-1) at No. 5 Oregon (11-1), 7:30 p.m. (TNT/HBO Max)

COLLEGE FOOTBALL

A who’s who (and when) for the College Football Playoff

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

The 12-team College Football Playoff bracket is set, and the games begin on Dec. 19. The first round is hosted by the higher seed before the games shift to neutral sites. Here is you need to know:

WHO’S PLAYING WHEN?

11 games are set between Dec. 19 and Jan. 19, and each will be broadcast nationally. The first round (CFP seeds, times Eastern): No. 9 Alabama at No. 8 Oklahoma, Dec. 19, 8 p.m. (ABC, ESPN) BetMGM College Football Odds: Oklahoma by 1.5.

What to know: The CFP kicks off with an SEC rematch: The Sooners got the best of Alabama with a 23-21 road win in mid-November. Oklahoma’s defense led the charge, helping OU score 17 points off three turnovers, one of which was an 87-yard pick-six. Alabama comes off a lackluster SEC title game loss to Georgia. Quarterback Ty Simpson and Alabama’s offense will look for redemption against one of the nation’s top defenses while Oklahoma’s John Mateer will try to continue his storybook season.

The winner: Advances to the Rose Bowl to play No. 1 Indiana.

No. 10 Miami (Fla.) at No. 7 Texas A&M, Dec. 20, Noon (ABC, ESPN)

BetMGM College Football Odds: Texas A&M by 3.5.

What to know: Texas A&M and Miami meet



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Indiana’s Louis Moore tries to stop Ohio State’s Bo Jackson during the second half of the Big Ten championship game in Indianapolis on Dec. 6.

for the sixth time overall and first time in two years. The Aggies and Hurricanes were the only teams to knock off Notre Dame this year, which played a major factor in Miami earning a CFP bid and the Irish being left out. The Hurricanes stumbled with a pair of bad conference losses but bounced back with four straight wins to end the season. Texas A&M had a perfect season up until the very last week, when they lost 27-17 to in-state foe Texas.

The winner: Advances to

the Cotton Bowl to play No. 2 Ohio State.

No. 11 Tulane at No. 6 Ole Miss, Dec. 20, 3:30 p.m. (TNT, HBO Max)

BetMGM College Football Odds: Ole Miss by 17.5.

What to know: Tulane punched its playoff ticket with a 34-21 American Conference championship win against North Texas. The Green Wave heads to Oxford to face Ole Miss for the second time this season. The two last met in September, and Ole Miss cruised to a 45-10 victory. The Rebels will be without

head coach Lane Kiffin, whose request to lead the team before he leaves for LSU was turned down.

The winner: Advances to the Sugar Bowl to play No. 3 Georgia.

No. 12 James Madison at No. 5 Oregon, Dec. 20, 7:30 p.m. (TNT, HBO Max)

BetMGM College Football Odds: Oregon by 21.5.

What to know: James Madison’s trip to the CFP accounts for several firsts. It marks the Dukes’ first time in the playoff, it will be the first time James Madison and Oregon meet in

T25/from B1

And that helped them on Monday to jump eight spots in the AP Top 25 poll, the program’s highest ranking since sitting at No. 11 in March 1991 in the final poll of that season.

Hoiberg, now in his seventh season in Lincoln, can point to a number of factors in Nebraska’s rise. Big man Rienk Mast — who led the Huskers in rebounding and assists for a team that reached the 2024 NCAA Tournament — is back for a sixth season of competition after missing last year with a knee injury.

They’ve gotten a boost from adding Pryce

Sandfort (Iowa transfer averaging 17.1 points) and Braden Frager (averaging 10.8 points after redshirting last year), while Lawrence returned to Nebraska after playing a year at Rhode Island.

Hoiberg said an offseason priority was to improve the team’s 3-point shooting, after going from making 9.4 per game in 2023-24 to just 7.5 last year. They enter this week ranked 19th nationally by making 11.2 per game.

The test this week, beyond Sunday’s game, is having players stay focused instead of listening to family members and friends pat them on the back through the Christmas

break for Nebraska’s strong start.

When the Huskers return, they host New Hampshire on Dec. 30 then return to Big Ten play against No. 9 Michigan State on Jan. 2.

“We talk to them all the time about keeping your walls up,” Hoiberg said, adding: “Listen, we’ve won two Big Ten games. ... If we get satisfied, we’re done. And we remind our guys every day of that.”

CARDS & VOLS

The AP Top 25 national schedule featured only four ranked-versus-ranked games on the men’s side. Of those, only one was played in a team’s home venue: No.

11 Louisville’s trip to No. 20 Tennessee on Tuesday night.

The Volunteers (7-3) entered the week having lost three straight, falling to Kansas in the Players Era Championship in Las Vegas, at Syracuse in the ACC/SEC Challenge and Illinois despite having a home-state crowd in Nashville.

The Cardinals (9-1) suffered their only loss in another trip to a Southeastern Conference venue, falling to now-No. 14 Arkansas in the ACC/SEC Challenge on Dec. 3.

NEUTRAL-COURT THROWDOWNS

Three top-10 teams

football and JMU made history with Tulane as the CFP has two Group of Five teams for the first time. The Dukes were crowned Sun Belt champions with a 31-14 win against Troy, finishing the season with a 12-1 record. Oregon finished third in the Big Ten with an 11-1 record. The Ducks’ only loss of the season was to Indiana in October.

The winner: Advances to the Orange Bowl to play No. 4 Texas Tech.

THE FAVORITES?

Ohio State is the betting favorite with plus-225 odds (9-4) to win the national championship for the second straight year, according to BetMGM Sportsbook. Indiana (+275, or 11-4) and Georgia (+500, 5-1) are next.

The rest of the odds: Oregon (8-1), Texas Tech (9-1), Texas A&M (17-1), Miami (22-1), Ole Miss and Alabama (both 25-1), Oklahoma (50-1) and Tulane and James Madison (each 500-1).

HOW DOES IT WORK?

A 12-member CFP selection committee finalized the highly anticipated bracket on Sunday, Dec. 7.

Five spots were reserved for the highest-ranked conference champions, regardless of their overall CFP ranking. Duke won the ACC championship but was left out because of its five losses, clearing a path for the two G5 schools (Tulane and James Madison).

This year, first-round

byes were awarded using a straight-seeding approach. No. 1 Indiana, No. 2 Ohio State, No. 3 Georgia and No. 4 Texas Tech await opponents in the quarterfinals. The rest play first-round games on campus: No. 5 Oregon, No. 6 Ole Miss, No. 7 Texas A&M, No. 8 Oklahoma, No. 9 Alabama, No. 10 Miami, No. 11 Tulane and No. 12 James Madison.

The CFP began with four teams in January 2015 and was expanded to 12 teams before the start of the 2024 season.

HOW MUCH MONEY?

Each conference earns \$4 million per team in the CFP bracket. The eight teams that advance to the quarterfinals earn their conference an additional \$4 million. No. 1 Indiana, No. 2 Ohio State, No. 3 Georgia and No. 4 Texas Tech are already on the books for \$8 million apiece as the top four.

The SEC has already accumulated \$24 million, with five teams making the playoff and one already in the quarterfinals. With three teams in the bracket and two earning first-round byes, the Big Ten starts with \$20 million.

Conferences earn an additional \$6 million for teams advancing to the semis and another \$6 million for making the finals. There’s also a \$300,000 stipend per team that is academically eligible for the playoffs. Teams that make the playoff get \$3 million to cover expenses for each round.

WATCH LIST

USC (10-1) is the top vote-getter among unranked teams. The Trojans — who spent a week at No. 24 earlier this month — have home games against UTSA and Brown this week before the Christmas break, then return to visit No. 2 Michigan on Jan. 2.

Iowa (9-2) and Seton Hall (10-1) are hovering behind the Trojans. The Hawkeyes play Bucknell on Saturday, while the Pirates visit Providence on Friday in Big East play.

Iowa hasn’t been ranked in the AP Top 25 since November 2022; Seton Hall hasn’t been ranked since January 2022.

ECU/from B1

Giving Davis a chance to run with the starting five Sunday against Buffalo provided some semblance of normalcy. It was a rewind to the memorable 19-14 campaign in 2024.

Diving on the floor. Crashing the offensive glass. Hedging on ball screens.

These are the effort plays

the Winterville native has always provided since transferring from New Orleans this past offseason.

Just ask Jordan Riley, the Pirates’ leading scorer and best all-around player.

“Every day. Literally,” Riley said Sunday of his teammate’s unwavering motor.

Davis plays the power forward naturally. He slid next to ECU center

Giovanni Emejuru in the starting lineup against Buffalo and immediately came down with four rebounds through the first four minutes. The Pirates held a 9-4 advantage during that span.

When it got late and they were trying to complete an epic 21-point comeback, you know who made key hustle plays down the stretch.

The deficit was slowly

evaporating but still out of reach until Davis intercepted a pass, then found Riley for his transition dunk that made it a one-possession game, as the Bulls led 68-66 with under four minutes left.

The Pirates outscored their visitors 7-3 from that moment and closed out the program’s largest comeback in over 40 years.

“I thought Luke was

awesome, making high-energy plays,” said Schwartz.

He added that Davis’ minutes at center were crucial to the comeback as he was surrounded by four guards during important stretches. Having the 6-foot-8 hustle man provide versatility in that manner should help overcome the losses of injured starters Jay Woodard and Eli DeLaurier, who both were

sidelined again Sunday and don’t have a definitive timetable for return.

Davis has averaged 25 minutes the past two games, resulting in 15 boards and four blocks. No matter the opponent moving forward, having him in the lineup for significant stretches will help the Pirates reestablish their identity and possibly turn things around.

Panthers/from B1

STOCK UP

Panthers wide receiver Jalen Coker missed the first six games of the season but is rounding into form.

Coker had four catches for 60 yards, including a 30-yard touchdown on a well-thrown ball from

Young. Coker now has 10 catches for 134 yards in the last two games, including two touchdown receptions. By comparison, struggling starting wide receiver Xavier Legette has just five catches for 40 yards over the last two weeks.

STOCK DOWN

Panthers rookie

linebacker Lathan Ransom made a huge mistake on Sunday with nine seconds left when he hit a sliding Tyler Shough on the quarterback’s final carry of regulation. That drew a penalty that moved the Saints 15 yards closer to the end zone, turning a 62-yard field-goal attempt by Charlie Smyth into a 47 yarder.

Smythe made the kick to give the Saints the win.

Derrick Brown also was called for a penalty on the sliding Shough earlier in the game.

INJURIES

The Panthers played without DT Turk Wharton because of a hamstring injury after he tripped on

a teammate during a walk-through practice on Friday. Canales called it unfortunate, adding that he has never seen anything like it in all of his years as an NFL coach.

KEY NUMBER

4-0 — Baker Mayfield’s record against the Panthers since being cut by Carolina.

NEXT STEPS

The Panthers have two games left against the Bucs (Week 16 and 18) and may need to beat their NFC South rivals to reach the playoffs for the first time since 2017. If they don’t sweep the Bucs, the Panthers will need help in Week 17 from other teams.

Transfer/from B1

The Pirates finished 8-4 during the regular season, including a program-best 6-2 record in American Conference play. Houser’s signature moment came in Dowdy-Ficklen Stadium on Nov. 15, orchestrating

a game-winning drive that was capped by his 31-yard TD hookup with Payton Mangrum to knock off Memphis.

The former Michigan State transfer leaves Greenville after collecting a total of 5,306 yards and 37 TDs through air, while completing north of 64 percent of

his passes in two seasons. Houser also helped ECU win last year’s Military Bowl over nearby rival N.C. State, marking the Pirates’ first win over a Power 4 school since 2018.

OTHER PORTAL UPDATES

The Pirates will also be without two of Houser’s top

pass-catchers, as Smith and Connor plan to enter the portal, according to ESPN reports.

Smith finished tied for first on the team with five receiving touchdowns. He hauled in 44 catches for a career-best 583 yards. During two years at ECU, the South Carolina native

finished with more than 1,000 yards receiving and eight TDs.

Connor also spent the past two seasons in Greenville after transferring from Ole Miss.

The 6-foot-4 tight end enjoyed a breakout campaign this fall, helping the O-line block and

also extending his receiving abilities. Conner collected 23 catches for 333 yards and three scores. His 79-yard TD sprint against N.C. State was the Pirates’ longest this season.

Neither player publicly confirmed or denied the reporting as of Tuesday morning.

SUDOKU

DIFFICULTY RATING:☆☆☆☆

	1	2		5			9	
4	6		1		9		8	
				4	2			
8				7		5		
5	3	1		6		9	4	7
		6		9				3
			9	8				
	8		4		7		6	9
	2			1		4	5	

12/17

© 2025 Dist. by Andrews McMeel Syndication for UFS

PREVIOUS SOLUTION

7	8	4	9	5	1	6	3	2
2	9	3	6	4	8	1	5	7
5	1	6	3	2	7	8	4	9
9	6	1	8	7	5	4	2	3
4	5	2	1	6	3	9	7	8
3	7	8	4	9	2	5	6	1
1	3	5	2	8	6	7	9	4
6	2	9	7	1	4	3	8	5
8	4	7	5	3	9	2	1	6

HOW TO PLAY:
Each row, column and set of 3-by-3 boxes must contain the numbers 1 through 9 without repetition.

JUMBLE

Unscramble these Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

HEITC

BTAAE

CNORBO

ATRHWM

©2025 Tribune Content Agency, LLC
All Rights Reserved.

Get the free JUST JUMBLE app - Follow us on Facebook

12-17

Let me show you how that works.

I got it. It's perfect. Let's ring it up.

Well, that didn't take long.

WHEN SHE SAW THAT THE FITNESS WATCH COULD TRACK HER PULSE, SHE BOUGHT IT ---

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

(Answers tomorrow)

Yesterday's Jumbles: APART PERCH HIGHLY CRAYON
Answer: The problem with his ears was just wax buildup, which he was — HAPPY TO HEAR

CELEBRITY CIPHER

by Luis Campos

Celebrity Cipher cryptograms are created from quotations by famous people, past and present. Each letter in the cipher stands for another.

“ G A C Z M R Z A X R H X T A B E W . . . C Z
V W B W N X H C W F H M A E E H F ! K M I C W H S
Z L Z M W S H R Z L G X W I W M C I , J W
F H U W W K O F C V X H Y R M K O F C I . ”
— H S H T I H M S B W X

Previous Solution: “It’s only a car. Just turn up the radio and that noise’ll go away.” — “Car Talk” co-host Tom Magliozzi

TODAY’S CLUE: *o siɐnɔs ɐ*

© NEA, Inc., dist. by Andrews McMeel Syndication 12-17

ZITS

I HAVE NO WAY OF CONTACTING SARA BECAUSE MY PHONE IS IN THE TOILET! I'M DOOMED!

WHY MUST LIFE BE SO CRUEL??

JUST DRIVE OVER AND TALK TO HER!

MY MOM IS SO DRAMATIC.

©2025 NEA, Inc. Dist. by King Features Synd., Inc. www.familycircus.com

MOTHER GOOSE & GRIMM

12/17

NORTH POLE

CAUTION REINDEER XING

©2025 Criminy Inc. Distributed by Andrews McMeel Syndication

PEARLS BEFORE SWINE

HEY, GOAT. HAVE YOU MET SEWER GUY?

WHAT'S HE DOING DOWN THERE?

I'M WAITING OUT THIS WHOLE ERA.

HAVE ROOM FOR ONE MORE?!

YOU SCARED HIM BACK INTO HIS HOLE.

©2025 NEA, Inc. Dist. by King Features Synd., Inc. www.familycircus.com

JUMPSTART

MAX DREVEN ASSEMBLED FIFTY HIT MEN OF THE UNDERWORLD IN A REMOTE LOCATION OFF THE GRID.

HE TERMINATED THE MARK AGAINST ANTONIO SHARCANE!

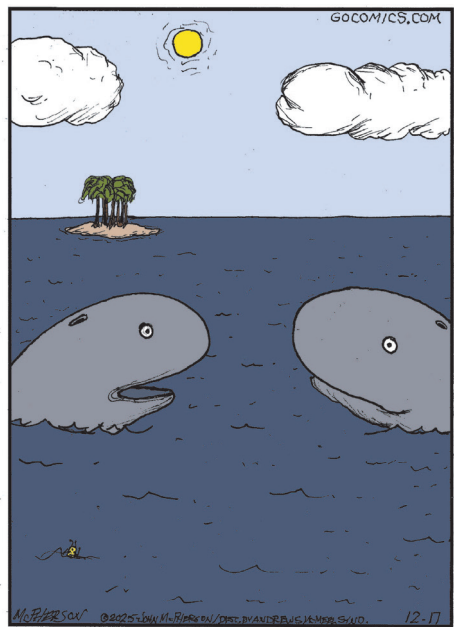
YOU HAD SOMETHING TO DO WITH THIS, DIDN'T YOU, CARLA?

WHO'S CARLA? THIS IS AN ORDINARY HOT DOG GUY NAMED BYRON.

TOOK THE WORDS RIGHT OUT OF MY MOUTH.

©2025 NEA, Inc. Dist. by King Features Synd., Inc. www.gocomics.com

CLOSE TO HOME



"I swim to Aruba and back every day and have stopped snacking on sea horses, but those last five tons are impossible to lose!"

FAMILY CIRCUS

12-17

©2025 NEA, Inc. Dist. by King Features Synd., Inc. www.familycircus.com

By artist JEFF KEANE

“Grandma’s gonna be hard to buy for. She says she already has everything she needs.”

MUTTS

12-17

©2025 NEA, Inc. Dist. by King Features Synd., Inc. www.kingfeatures.com

MUTTS & MOBBIE PRODUCTIONS. DISTRIBUTED BY KING FEATURES SYNDICATE

BABY BLUES

12-17

©2025 NEA, Inc. Dist. by King Features Synd., Inc. www.kingfeatures.com

FOR BETTER OR FOR WORSE

12-17

©2025 NEA, Inc. Dist. by King Features Synd., Inc. www.kingfeatures.com

B.C.

12-17-25

©2025 NEA, Inc. Dist. by King Features Synd., Inc. www.kingfeatures.com

BORN LOSER

12-17

©2025 NEA, Inc. Dist. by King Features Synd., Inc. www.kingfeatures.com

FRANK & ERNEST

12-17

©2025 NEA, Inc. Dist. by King Features Synd., Inc. www.kingfeatures.com

CLASSIC PEANUTS

12-17

©2025 NEA, Inc. Dist. by King Features Synd., Inc. www.kingfeatures.com

GARFIELD

12-17

©2025 NEA, Inc. Dist. by King Features Synd., Inc. www.kingfeatures.com

SHOE

12/17

©2025 NEA, Inc. Dist. by King Features Synd., Inc. www.kingfeatures.com

BLONDIE

12-17

©2025 NEA, Inc. Dist. by King Features Synd., Inc. www.kingfeatures.com

BEETLE BAILEY

12/17

©2025 NEA, Inc. Dist. by King Features Synd., Inc. www.kingfeatures.com

EASTERN NORTH CAROLINA

The Daily Reflector

CALL MONDAY-FRIDAY 8AM-5PM 252-329-9505 EMAIL: CLASSIFIEDS@APGENC.COM

WEDGEWOOD ARMS Apartments
1 BR units for rent based on income for qualified applicants (elderly). wait-list is open at this time.
200 Wedgewood DR Greenville, NC 27858

MERCHANDISE

Miscellaneous For Sale

FOR SALE
Wood heater, large; large fire-place insert, small potbelly wood heater, old gas stove - sits on 4 legs, barber chair, scooter-Icebear 250, 55 gallon drum, trailers-10', odds and ends. 2010 transmission, 2006 motor and transmission, golf cart. Lifter for heavy items or motors. 252-350-0371.

NOTICES

Notices

BEHIND ON YOUR MORTGAGE PAYMENTS? Threatened with foreclosure? Denied a loan modification? Let us help! Call the Homeowner Relief Line to speak with a mortgage specialist 844-492-0883

GET A BREAK ON YOUR taxes! Donate your car, truck, or SUV to assist the blind and visually impaired. Arrange a swift, no-cost vehicle pickup and secure a generous tax credit for 2025. Call Heritage for the Blind Today at 1-855-869-7055 today!

GET DISH SATELLITE TV + Internet! Free Install, Free HD-DVR Upgrade, 80,000 On-Demand Movies, Plus Limited Time Up To \$600 In Gift Cards. Call Today! 1-877-920-7405

Get a High Quality, Modern Design bath or shower transformation in as little as One Day. \$0 Down, \$0 Installation, \$0 Payments for 12 months! Call: 1-877-243-7050.

Home Improvement
No more cleaning out gutters. Guaranteed! LeafFilter is backed by a no-clog guarantee and lifetime transferrable warranty. Call today 1-877-649-1190 to schedule a FREE inspection and no obligation estimate. Plus get 75% off installation and a bonus \$250 discount! Limited time only. Restrictions apply, see representative for warranty and offer details.

REPLACE YOUR ROOF with the best looking and longest lasting material - steel from Erie Metal Roofs! Three styles and multiple colors available. Guaranteed to last a lifetime! Limited Time Offer - up to 50% off installation + Additional 10% off install (for military, health workers & 1st responders.) Call Erie Metal Roofs: 1-855-585-1815

WESLEY FINANCIAL GROUP, LLC Timeshare Cancellation Experts.
Over \$50,000,000 in timeshare debt and fees cancelled in 2019. Get free informational package and learn how to get rid of your timeshare! Free consultations. Over 450 positive reviews. Call 844-213-6711

WATER DAMAGE CLEANUP & RESTORATION: A small amount of water can lead to major damage in your home. Our trusted professionals do complete repairs to protect your family and your home's value! Call 24/7: 1-833-928-1861. Have zip code of service location ready when you call!

We Buy Vintage Guitar's! Looking for 1920-1980 Gibson, Martin, Fender, Gretsch, Epiphone, Guild, Mosrite, Rickenbacker, Prairie State, D'Angelico, Stromberg. And Gibson Mandolins / Banjos. These brands only! Call for a quote: 1-833-641-6577

WE BUY HOUSES for Cash AS IS! No repairs. No fuss. Any condition. Easy three step process: Call, get cash offer and get paid. Get your fair cash offer today by calling Liz Buys Houses: 1-888-247-1189

PETS

Domestic Pets

1 girl Pekingnese puppy, \$400.
1 male Pomeranian puppy - 13 weeks - \$300.
Call 252-508-2518.

FOR SALE

Pegk-Chic \$400.00

Yorkie-poops-\$600.00

Yorkies-\$700.00

252-531-6070
or 252-341-2638

Domestic Pets

MINIATURE DACHSHUND PUPPIES FOR SALE. Getting puppies ready for new home Dec. 24, 2025. 3 males and 1 female. Call 252-331-3007

POODLES FOR SALE \$200 All colors. Super intelligent. 252-886-2582

REAL ESTATE

Commercial For Rent

!!!!!!Available!!!!
Commercial Property
148 Martin Luther King Jr. Circle
Sharpsburg, NC 27878
This property may be used as
a beauty salon fully equipped.
There is an additional area which may be used as an area for a secondary business such as a barbershop or nail salon.
Monthly Rent: \$1000.00
Cooper and Associates RESVC, Inc
252-977-1429

House For Sale

House for Sale
2 story brick veneer with 4 bedrooms, 4 full baths, river view, hardwood floors and tile, master bedroom downstairs and master bedroom upstairs, attached 2-car garage with room upstairs. 3500+ sq. ft. heated area.
206 Auston Point Drive (Magnolia Shores)
Washington, NC 27889
919-672-5303

LEGALS

Government

Notice of Public Hearing
Town of Winterville
NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Winterville Town Council will meet on Monday, December 22, 2025 at 6:00 pm in the Town Hall Assembly Room at 2571 Railroad Street, to consider the following requests and amendments:
Rucker Farm Rezoning: The Town of Winterville has received a rezoning application for parcel numbers 23077 (40.76 acres) and 92800 (68.79 acres) totaling (109.55 acres). The two parcels are located south west of the Old Tar Rd. and Laurie Ellis Rd. intersection. The parcels are currently zoned Agricultural-Residential (A-R). The application is requesting to rezone the property to "R-10 Conditional District (CD)", with the following condition "Provide 10% open space dedicated to passive recreation, trails, playgrounds, amenity centers, fields or greens."
Copies of the Zoning Ordinance and Map are on file at the Planning Department Office in the Town Hall and are available for public inspection by contacting stephen.penn@wintervillenc.com or the Winterville Planning Department at (252) 756-2221; ext. 2360 or at www.wintervillenc.com.
The meeting is open to the public and will be available electronically. The public is encouraged to attend the meeting or watch the meeting live on YouTube (www.wintervillenc.com/videos). Persons having an interest in this matter and desiring to speak either for or against are encouraged to submit comments in writing prior to the meeting to stephen.penn@wintervillenc.com. Details on how to participate or view the meeting will be posted on the Town website. For further information, contact the Winterville Planning Department at (252) 756-2221; ext. 2360. The public may submit written comments to the Town Clerk's office, 2571 Railroad Street, Winterville, NC 28590, or via email to don.harvey@wintervillenc.com. Please include your name and address.
12/10, 12/17, 2025

Private Party

East Carolina University Medical Examiner Complex Advertisement for Bid

T. A. Loving Company will accept sealed proposals from pre-qualified subcontractors only, for the construction of the ECU Medical Examiner Complex on January 22, 2026 @ 3:00 pm.

Bids will be received, publicly opened, and read aloud in room 221 at ECU Mendenhall, on ECU Main Campus, Greenville, NC. Plans, Specifications, and Bidders Manual will be available for inspection at the office of T. A. Loving Company in Goldsboro and online at www.talovingplanroom.com on or about December 8, 2025. A virtual Pre-Bid Meeting will be held on Tuesday, January 7th, 2026, at 10:00 am. Meeting credentials are available at the plan room site above. The meeting will address project-specific questions, issues, bidding procedures, and bid forms.

Bid Packages include: 0150 General Trades, 0300 Concrete, 0400 Masonry, 0500 Structural and Misc Steel, 0600 Millwork, 0700 Roofing, 0750 Metal Panels, 0790 Caulking and Waterproofing, 0800 Frames and Hardware, 0834 Overhead Doors, 0840 Glass and Glazing, 0925 Dry-wall Assemblies, 0930 Hard Tile, 0960 Soft Flooring, 0963 Terrazzo, 0980 Acoustical Ceilings, 0990 Painting, 1014 Signage, 1220 Window Treatment, 1235 Laboratory Case-work and Equipment, 2100 Fire Pro-

Private Party

tection, 2200 Plumbing, 2300 HVAC, 2600 Electrical, 3100 Sitework, 3231 Fencing, 3290 Landscaping.

All minority contractors and suppliers are encouraged to participate in the bidding process. NOTE: The prime bidders shall include with the proposal the form Identification of Minority Business Participation identifying the minority business participation they will use on the project, and shall consist of either Affidavit A or Affidavit B as applicable. Forms and instructions are included in the Bidder's Manual. Failure to complete these forms is grounds for rejection of the bid. (GS143-128.2c Effective 1/1/2002).
All questions are to be directed to Trey Dawson (tdawson@taloving.com). No questions are to be directed to the owner or design team.
NOTE: BIDS WILL BE ACCEPTED FROM PRE-QUALIFIED BIDDERS ONLY. THE CONSTRUCTION MANAGER AND EAST CAROLINA UNIVERSITY RESERVE THE UNQUALIFIED RIGHT TO REJECT ANY AND ALL PROPOSALS.
12/17, 12/20, 2025

All questions are to be directed to Trey Dawson (tdawson@taloving.com). No questions are to be directed to the owner or design team.

NOTE: BIDS WILL BE ACCEPTED FROM PRE-QUALIFIED BIDDERS ONLY. THE CONSTRUCTION MANAGER AND EAST CAROLINA UNIVERSITY RESERVE THE UNQUALIFIED RIGHT TO REJECT ANY AND ALL PROPOSALS.
12/17, 12/20, 2025

Notice of Office of THE LIVING ESTATE TRUST
The Living Estate Trust Governs the Estate "Ernest Richard Palmer" that was registered on September 25, 1956, Multnomah County, Oregon, certify and declare to all persons and men worldwide that I am an egressed Multnomah County native Oregonian private American national citizen, now ingressed within the nation North Carolina republic [Union] country at Pitt County of the United States of North America at all times since birth upon the soil foreign to, without, and excluded from Domestic, Territorial, Military, and District of Columbia jurisdictions under the constitution A.D. 1776; further, I am the living grantor to the Office of Grantor titled "Ernest Richard Palmer Tr", established November 25, 2025, the certificate of trust and affidavit of trustee in County of Pitt, State of North Carolina Register of Deeds Document ID 016445510001 and 0164455200001, the rights, title and interest executed on Trust Transfer Grant Deeds intended for his assigns, devisees and legatees entitled RF197338785US-00.000 thru RF197338785US-99.999, unless otherwise intended recorded in Pitt County North Carolina Register of Deeds Document ID: 016430990001, 016431000001 & 016431010001, November 17, 2025, and 016445500001 dated December 3, 2025 for sole beneficiary "Ernest Richard Palmer Living Estate Trust" established November 25, 2025. The Trustee has accepted the appointment. The Trust vested on November 25, 2025. The beneficiary is a private civilian North Carolinian national, who's jurisdiction is the Exclusive Equity Jurisdiction, governed by the Maxims of English and American Equity as at the time of adoption of the 1789 Constitution of the United States of America, protected by Article III Sec 2 subd. 1, heir to the posterity thereof and is administrator for the Estate. Further, notice is given of the establishment of the private Irrevocable Living Estate Trust entitled "Ernest Richard Palmer Living Estate Trust" or "RF197338785US-25" executed on November 25, 2025 with same status as foretasted by the Office of Grantor within the meaning at the time of the adoption of the constitution A.D. 1789, with the certificate of trust and affidavit of trustee recorded with Pitt County North Carolina Register of Deeds November 25, 2025. Per: Office of the Trustee. Ernest Richard Palmer Tee. Ernest Richard Palmer Tr. 7607 Pitt Street, Unit 331. Grimesland, North Carolina. The United States of America. RFD. [27837]. 12/10, 12/17, 12/24, 2025

Notice of Equitable Title to the Estate of ERNEST RICHARD PALMER
Notice is hereby given to all persons, third party custodians, bailees and trustees worldwide and the government of the United States proper by Palmer, Ernest Richard "Beneficiary" a private American / North Carolinian State Citizen, who's mailing location is: c/o 7607 Pitt Street, Unit 331, Grimesland, North Carolina, the united states of north America RFD [27837], residing and domiciling at all times without said jurisdictions, to wit: District of Columbia; Territorial, and Military—that Beneficiary is the true holder in possession of entire legal estate exemplification by the Probate Division of Pitt County, North Carolina, Case Number 202500000000 decedent Estate of ERNEST RICHARD PALMER "Estate" and further, that Trust Transfer Grant Deeds ("TTGD") of "Chattels" are conveyed to Ernest Richard Palmer Living Estate Trust ("Trust"); and further, Beneficiary, in esse sui juris, does now certify and declare that I, am the bona fide sole exclusive priority natural blood heir and equitable title Holder to said Estate and Chattels including, but not limited to, all equitable assets, accounting, rents, interest, property in connection with and derived from said Estate and Chattels; and further, that Beneficiary is bona fide without any adverse notice of record, actual or constructive, of any equal, superior or prior equitable right by nature that can suspend or confuse said rights to said equitable Estate. If any man, person, legal agency worldwide, foreign or domestic, shall submit an adverse claim they/it shall put forth such claim under oath of affirmation to Notary Public Sierra Wheeler 4137 Kittrell Farms Drive #204, Greenville, NC 27858, the absence of which, it shall BE IT RESOLVED, it shall be Beneficiary's lawful right call for the merge of the titles of all legal trustee, custodial and bailment title holders of Estate/Chattel property. Signed and Sworn on the 25th day of November, 2025, Palmer, Ernest Richard, heir and Beneficiary.
12/10, 12/17, 12/24, 2025

NORTH CAROLINA PITT COUNTY ESTATE FILE NO. 25E00219-730 NOTICE

Having qualified as Executrix of the Estate of Connie Lou Bridgewater aka Connie Loue Kuenzi (File No. 25E002119-730), late of Horry County, South Carolina; This is to notify all persons, firms and corpora-

Private Party

tions having claims against the estate of said deceased to present them to the undersigned Administratrix on or before February 25, 2026, or this notice or same will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to said estate please make immediate payment.
This the 20th day of November, 2025. Martha Brown Hilgeford
Executrix of the Estate of Estate of Connie Lou Bridgewater aka Connie Loue Kuenzi
November 26 and December 3, 10 & 17, 2025

Notice of Office of Grantor
I, Ernest Richard Palmer, the living Grantor, in sui juris in esse capacity, established September 3, 1956, at Multnomah Hospital, Portland, Oregon, as second born son of David Curtiss Palmer and Ardine Constance Reinholdt in holy wedlock August 16, 1951, identified by North Carolina Judicial Branch Special Proceedings in the General Court of Justice Superior Court Division Pitt County Adult Name Change Order 24 SP 159, May 9, 2024 and Adult Name Change Order 24 SP 348, September 6, 2024; am an ingressed Pitt county private North Carolinian national located at Revised Final Plat for Ernest R. Palmer Lot 1 and 2, at Pitt County, Grimesland, North Carolina; without and excluded from jurisdictions Territorial, Military, District of Columbia or Municipal; am Grantor to the Ernest Richard Palmer Estate as witnessed by my sole ability to personally obtain the Registrar's Certificate of Live Birth book entry copy of same established September 25, 1956 and; do hereby give notice herein of Grantor's trust "Ernest Richard Palmer, Tr" executed on November 25, 2025 with the same status as foretasted by the Grantor's Office. Further; that all legal, equitable, reversionary, remainderman interest and rights are now fully conveyed to Ernest Richard Palmer Living Estate Trust; and all records of the Grantor's Office are held in private.
Ernest Richard Palmer Tee. Ernest Richard Palmer Tr. 7607 Pitt Street, Unit 331. Grimesland, North Carolina. The United States of America. RFD. [27837]. 12/10, 12/17, 12/24, 2025

NORTH CAROLINA PITT COUNTY

FILE NUMBER: 25E002181-730

IN THE GENERAL COURT OF JUSTICE SUPERIOR COURT DIVISION BEFORE THE CLERK

IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF

MARY H. MCINTYRE, Deceased

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

Having qualified as Executor of the Estate of MARY H. MCINTYRE, formerly of Pitt County, North Carolina, this is to notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against the Estate to present them to the undersigned at the address shown below on or before March 17, 2025, or this Notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons, firms or corporations indebted to the Decedent or her estate are requested to make immediate payment to the undersigned Executor or his Attorney. This the 3rd day of December, 2025.

SIGNED
Michael R. McIntyre, Executor
Estate of MARY H. MCINTYRE
c/o Christopher P. Edwards, Attorney, PLLC
P.O. Box 647
Farmville NC 27828
12/17, 12/24, 12/31, 2025; 1/7/2026

NORTH CAROLINA PITT COUNTY NOTICE
Having qualified as Executrix of the estate of Mary A. Dixon (aka) Mary Ann Dixon, late of Pitt County, North Carolina, this is to notify all persons having claims against the estate of said deceased to present them to the undersigned Executrix on or before March 17, 2026 or this notice or same will be pleaded in bar of their recovery.

Private Party

ery. All persons indebted to said estate please make immediate payment.
This 17th day of December, 2025. Donna Kay Dahdal
113 Wellwater Ave. Durham, NC 27703
Executrix of the estate of Mary A. Dixon (aka) Mary Ann Dixon, deceased.
12/17, 12/24, 12/31, 2025; 1/7/2026

Notice of Office of EXECUTOR
I, Ernest Richard Palmer, the living Grantor, identified by Special Proceedings North Carolina Judicial Branch in the General Court of Justice Superior Court Division Pitt County Adult Name Change Order 24 SP 159, May 9, 2024 and Adult Name Change Order 24 SP 348, September 6, 2024; am an ingressed Pitt county private North Carolinian national located at Grimesland, Revised Final Plat for Ernest R. Palmer Lot 1 and 2, at Pitt County, Grimesland, North Carolina; without and excluded from jurisdictions Territorial, Military, or District of Columbia; am Executor to the Ernest Richard Palmer, Estate as witnessed by my sole ability to personally obtain the Registrar's Certificate of Live Birth unincorporated estate of same established September 25, 1956 by Testator and Testatrix in holy wedlock David Curtiss and Ardine Constance Palmer, intended solely for beneficiary Palmer, Ernest Richard and; do hereby give notice hereby and herein and this Post Office mailing location thereto:
Per: Office of Executor. Ernest Richard Palmer Executor, of my own right, Ernest Richard Palmer, Estate. Nation North Carolina-country [Union]. General Post Office. Pitt Street—seven six zero seven, [Unit 331]. Grimesland—town. The United States of America. [27837]. 12/10, 12/17, 12/24, 2025

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
Having qualified as Executor of the Estate of B. David Hudson, late of Pitt County, North Carolina, the undersigned does hereby notify all persons, firms, and corporations having claims against said Estate to present them to the undersigned, whose mailing address is 1711 Crest Circle, Greenville, NC 27834, on or before the 10th day of March, 2026, or this Notice will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons, firms, and corporations indebted to said Estate will please make immediate payment to the undersigned.
This the 10th day of December, 2025. Kendall Lang Hudson, Executor of the Estate of B. David Hudson
1711 Crest Circle Greenville, NC 27834

JOHN B. DUNN, JR. COLOMBO, KITCHIN, DUNN, BALL & POTRTER, LLP
Attorneys At Law
1698 E. Arlington Blvd
Greenville, NC 27858
12/10, 12/17, 12/24, 12/31, 2025

NORTH CAROLINA PITT COUNTY NOTICE
Having qualified as Co-Executrix of the estate of Jesse Stancill, Jr. aka Jesse Junior Stancill, late of Pitt County, North Carolina, this is to notify all persons having claims against the estate of said deceased to present them to the undersigned Co-Executrix on or before February 26, 2025 or this notice or same will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to said estate please make immediate payment. This 26th day of November, 2025. Shirley Bunn aka Shirley Stancill Bunn 606 Ashburton Drive Greenville, NC 27858

Sylvia A. Stancill aka Styliya Annette Stancill 1924 Chavis Ct. Greenville, NC 27858
Co-Executrices of the estate of Jesse Stancill, Jr. aka Jesse Junior Stancill, deceased.
11/26, 12/3, 12/10, 12/17, 2025

NORTH CAROLINA PITT COUNTY NOTICE
Having qualified as Executor of the estate of James Arthur Davis, late of Pitt County, North Carolina, this is to notify all persons having claims against the estate of said deceased to present them to the undersigned Executor on or before the 11th day of March, 2026 or this notice or same will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to said estate please make immediate payment. This 10th day of December, 2025. Robert Wayne Davis 1717 Will Cunningham Road Deep Run, NC 28525
Executor of the estate of James Arthur Davis, deceased.
12/10, 12/17, 12/24, 12/31, 2025

NORTH CAROLINA PITT COUNTY NOTICE
Having qualified as Executor of the estate of Douglas North Ferris, late of Pitt County, North Carolina, this is to notify all persons having claims against the estate of said deceased to present them to the undersigned Executor on or before March 10, 2026 or this notice or same will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to said estate please make immediate payment. This 10th day of December, 2025. Jeffery Neil Ferris 11474 Yuma Road Gate City, VA 24251
Executor of the estate of Douglas North Ferris, deceased.
12/10, 12/17, 12/24, 12/31, 2025

NORTH CAROLINA PITT COUNTY NOTICE
Having qualified as Executor of the estate of Raymond Potter, late of Pitt County, North Carolina, this is to notify all persons having claims against the estate of said deceased to present them to the undersigned Executor on or before the 11th day of March, 2026 or this notice or same will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to said estate please make immediate payment. This 10th day of December, 2025. Barry Alan Potter 2240 Lee Drive Greenville, NC 27858
Executor of the estate of Raymond Potter, deceased.
12/10, 12/17, 12/24, 12/31, 2025

PUBLIC NOTICE NORTH CAROLINA PITT COUNTY
Having qualified as Co-Administrator for the estate of Sherry Ann Gardner Young late of Pitt County, North Carolina, this is to notify all persons, firms and corporations having claims against the estate of said deceased to present them to the undersigned Co-Administrator on or before March 17th, 2026 or this notice or same will be pleaded in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to said estate please make immediate payment. This 17th day of December, 2025. Timothy Ryan Young, Co-Administrator for the estate of Sherry Ann Gardner Young 3616 Pine Needles Drive Wake Forest, NC 27587

Kristi Young Allen, Co-Administrator for the estate of Sherry Ann Gardner Young 4386 Mobleys Bridge Road Grimesland, NC 27837
12/17, 12/24, 12/31, 01/07/2025

Browse our Classifieds

You'll find lots of good deals!



EASTERN NORTH CAROLINA CLASSIFIEDS
CALL MONDAY-FRIDAY 8AM-5PM 252-329-9505 EMAIL: CLASSIFIEDS@APGENC.COM

EASTERN
NORTH CAROLINA

The
Daily

Reflector

BUSINESS
CORNER

CALL MONDAY-FRIDAY 8AM-5PM 252-329-9505

EMAIL: CLASSIFIEDS@APGENC.COM

Health & Wellness



Carolina
Arthritis
Center

Specializing in Rheumatology

carolina-arthritis.com

Bone Density, Xray, Lab & Infusion Center

Carolina Arthritis Center is a single-specialty practice offering individual care for arthritis patients. Our doctors and staff are committed to providing the best quality, most up-to-date care in a compassionate manner.

Now Accepting New Patients!



Kyle Harner, MD



Robert Oglesby, MD



Melissa Ott, NP-C



Jennifer Hammond, NP-C



Andrew Johannemann, MD

2355 Hemby Lane, Greenville, NC 27834 • 252-321-8474

Home Improvement

Absolute
Foundation
Repair Services

• Structural/
Crawl Space

• Foundation

• Repairs

member of BBB

WARRANTY

20 years exp.

absolutefoundationrepairservices.com
(252) 571-9134

Donald
Phillips
BUILDER

Remodeling,
Kitchens, Bath,
Flooring, Repairs

Warranty.

member of
BBB

252-633-6675

HANDYMAN
QUICKSERVICE

Can fix or repair
ANYTHING!

Repairs,
Remodeling,
To Do Lists,
Etc.

handymanquickservice.com
252-633-6675

ADVERTISE
TODAY!

2x4 AD
SIZE

\$308

/4 WEEKS

(includes The Standard)

Ask about our multi-
newspaper discounts!

Construction



OBRIEN BUILDING LLC

CHRIS OBRIEN

LIC. NC GENERAL CONTRACTOR

TEXT/CALL 252-531-1964

30 YEARS EXPERIENCE QUALITY

PAINTING
REPAIRS



RENOVATIONS • ADDITIONS
KITCHENS • BATHROOMS
REPAIRS • CARPENTRY
TILE • PAINTING

INTERIOR | EXTERIOR | RESIDENTIAL
COMMERCIAL | HISTORICAL

Drywall

MUD
MASTERS

For any drywall or plaster
repair, new or existing.

Mike Whitehurst

30 years experience

No job too large or small

Satisfaction guaranteed

CALL (252) 902-7009

Home Improvement



W&W
RESIDENTIAL SERVICES

"Large enough to serve you, small
enough to know you"

• Free Estimates

• Roofing (new rubber shingle)

• Painting

• Shingles (Repair & Replacement)

• Gutter Cleaning (Installation & Repairs)

• Foundation Repairs & Moisture Control

• Pressure Washing • Decks • and more

Jeffrey Wooten - Owner

Insured

SERVICING NC

CALL US TODAY!

252-315-5996

Miscellaneous

Rocky Mount Coin Shop

Buy/Sell

Gold, Silver, Coins, Bullion,
Sterling, Jewelry, Collections.

Top prices paid-Low premiums

138 Roundabout Court,
Rocky Mount, NC 27804

252-955-0156

www.raleighcoindealers.com

"Become your own central bank"

Stack Gold & Silver

ADVERTISE
TODAY!

1x2 AD
SIZE

\$133

(includes
The Standard) /4 WEEKS

(\$119/month with
2 month commitment)

Ask about our multi-
newspaper discounts!

EASTERN
NORTH CAROLINA

The
Daily

Reflector

BUSINESS
CORNER

CALL MONDAY-FRIDAY 8AM-5PM 252-329-9505

EMAIL: CLASSIFIEDS@APGENC.COM

Investigators release video timeline of the Brown campus shooting suspect’s movements

ASSOCIATED PRESS

PROVIDENCE, R.I. — Authorities on Tuesday released a new video timeline and a slightly clearer image of the man suspected in the Brown University shooting, though investigators provided no indication that they were any closer to zeroing in on his identity.

Investigators have been canvassing around Providence in search of clues that might help them figure out who was behind Saturday’s campus shooting, which killed two students and wounded nine others.

In all the videos made public, the suspect’s face was masked or turned away, and authorities have only been able to give a vague description of him as being stocky and about 5 feet, 8 inches (173 centimeters) tall.

Surveillance video the FBI posted online before it was removed showed a person in dark clothing walking along multiple sidewalks for about an hour starting shortly after 2 p.m. Saturday. The streets were all within a few blocks of the Brown University engineering building where the shooting occurred.

Some clips show the person walking in front of some properties several times. In one, the person abruptly turns around and runs in the other direction when someone approaches.

Two clips taken minutes after the shooting show the person walking away from a parking lot and then along a street.

AUTHORITIES ASK PUBLIC FOR HELP

Police have received about 200 tips, and Col. Oscar Perez, the Providence police chief, asked the public on Tuesday to look at their camera systems in the area to see if they have footage that might help officials identify the suspected gunman.

“We’re looking for a moment that is shorter than someone taking a breath,” Perez said.

A lack of cameras and clear video of the gunman has continued to frustrate both authorities and the community. While Brown President Christina Paxson confirmed Tuesday that the campus has 1,200 cameras, law enforcement says there is no clear video of the shooter from inside the engineering building.



ASSOCIATED PRESS

This image taken from video provided by the FBI shows a person of interest in the investigation of the shooting that occurred at Brown University, in Providence, R.I., Saturday, Dec. 13, 2025.

Rhode Island Attorney General Peter Neronha defended the investigation as going “really well” as he pleaded for public patience in locating the suspected killer.

Large questions remain, particularly about the shooter’s motive. When pressed about a connection to ethnicity, political motive or culture, Neronha said, “That is a dangerous road to go down.”

SEEKING SOLACE

Brown alumnus Chris Kremer joined about 200 others at a somber church service on campus for the victims Tuesday. He lives a block from the scene and often goes to the building where the shooting happened. Many in the community are thinking how easily they could have been among the shot, he said.

He said it was better to attend the service than to sit alone being sad, depressed and scrolling through his phone.

“It’s always nice to be in a big exalted space when you’re thinking kind of big heavy thoughts,” Kremer said. “I guess people for thousands of years have found that to be something of a salve, so I’m hoping that a little bit of that works for me tonight.”

CAMPUS SECURITY

The attack and the shooter’s escape have raised questions about campus security, including a lack of cameras, and led to calls for better locks on campus doors.

Paxson said the university has two security systems. One system, activated at a time of emergency, sent out text messages, phone calls and emails that reached 20,000 people. The other system features three sirens across the campus and was not activated Saturday, a decision Paxson defended because doing so would have caused people to rush into buildings, including the one where the shooting was happening.

“So that is not a system we would ever use in the case of an active shooter,” she said.

Brown’s website says the sirens can be used when there is an active shooter, but Paxson said it “depends on the circumstances” and the location of the shooter.

A CITY ON EDGE

Providence remained tense on Tuesday as additional police were sent to city schools to reassure worried parents that their kids would be safe. Ten state troopers were assigned to support police sent to beef up security at schools, district Superintendent Javier Montañez said.

Providence public schools canceled after-school activities and field trips for the week as a precaution.

Locals expressed fear as well as defiance as the investigation continued Tuesday.

“Of course it feels scary. But at the same time, I think that if the person really wanted to scare us, we shouldn’t

allow him or her to win,” said Tatjana Stojanovic, a Providence parent who lives next door to the Brown campus.

Others say the attention on security measures does little to address the real issue.

“The issue isn’t the doors, it’s the guns,” said Zoe Kass, a senior who fled the engineering building as police stormed in Saturday.

After spending of her life in schools where every door was locked and school shootings continued to persist, Kass said such security measures only created “the illusion of safety.”

A FULLER PICTURE OF THE VICTIMS EMERGES

Details have emerged about the victims, who were in the first-floor classroom in the school’s engineering building studying for a final.

Two of the wounded students had been released as of Tuesday, Brown spokesperson Amanda McGregor said. Of the seven people that remained hospitalized, Mayor Brett Smiley said one remained in critical condition, five were in critical but stable condition and one was in stable condition.

One of the wounded students, 18-year-old freshman Spencer Yang of New York City, told The New York Times and the Brown Daily Herald that there was a mad scramble after the gunman entered the room. Yang said he wound up on the ground between some seats and was shot in the leg.

Jacob Spears, 18, a freshman from Evans, Georgia, was shot in the stomach, “but through sheer adrenaline and courage, he managed to run outside, where he was aided by others,” according to a GoFundMe site organized for him.

Ella Cook, a 19-year-old sophomore who was one of the two students killed, was vice president of the Brown College Republicans and was beloved in her church in Birmingham, Alabama.

The other student killed was MukhammadAziz Umurzokov, an 18-year-old freshman from Brandermill, Virginia, who was majoring in biochemistry and neuroscience. His family immigrated to the U.S. from Uzbekistan when he was a kid.

Rob Reiner’s son, Nick, to appear in court on 2 counts of murder in killing of parents

ASSOCIATED PRESS

LOS ANGELES — Rob Reiner’s son Nick Reiner is expected to make his first court appearance Wednesday on two counts of first-degree murder in the killing of his parents.

Nick Reiner, 32, was charged Tuesday with killing the 78-year-old actor and director Rob Reiner and his wife, Michele Singer Reiner, Los Angeles County District Attorney Nathan Hochman announced at a news conference with LA Police Chief Jim McDonnell.

“Their loss is beyond tragic and we will commit ourselves to bringing their murderer to justice,” Hochman said.

Along with the two counts of first-degree murder, prosecutors added special circumstances of multiple murders and a special allegation that the defendant used a dangerous weapon, a knife. The additions could mean a greater sentence.

Hochman said his office has

not yet decided whether to seek the death penalty in the case.

“This case is heartbreaking and deeply personal, not only for the Reiner family and their loved ones but for our entire city,” McDonnell said.

The announcement came two days after the couple was found dead from apparent stab wounds in their home in the upscale Brentwood neighborhood on the west side of Los Angeles. Nick Reiner did not resist when he was arrested hours later in the Exposition Park area near the University of Southern California, about 14 miles (22.5 kilometers) from the crime scene, police said.

Rob Reiner was the Emmy-winning star of the sitcom “All in the Family” who went on to direct films including “When Harry Met Sally...” and “The Princess Bride.” He was an outspoken liberal activist for decades. Michele Singer Reiner was a photographer, movie producer and advocate for LGBTQ+ rights. They had

been married for 36 years.

Several of those closest to them, including actors Billy Crystal, Albert Brooks, Martin Short and Larry David, released a statement mourning and celebrating the couple on Tuesday night.

“They were a special force together — dynamic, unselfish and inspiring,” the statement said. “We were their friends, and we will miss them forever.”

Nick Reiner had been scheduled to make an initial court appearance earlier Tuesday, but his attorney Alan Jackson said he was not brought from the jail to the courthouse for medical reasons and the appearance was postponed.

At Wednesday’s hearing, Reiner may enter a plea, a judge may schedule an arraignment for later or the same issue that prevented him from coming to court Tuesday could cause further postponement. He is being held without bail.

Jackson is a high-profile defense attorney and former



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Rob Reiner, from left, Michele Singer Reiner, Romy Reiner, Nick Reiner, Maria Gilfillan, and Jake Reiner arrive at the premiere of “Spinal Tap II: The End Continues” on Tuesday, Sept. 9, 2025, at The Egyptian Theatre Hollywood in Los Angeles.

LA County prosecutor who represented Harvey Weinstein at his Los Angeles trial and Karen Read at her intensely followed trials in Massachusetts. He was a central figure in the HBO documentary on the Read case.

On the other side will be Deputy District Attorney

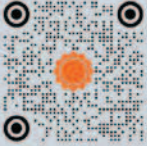
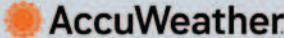
Habib Balian, whose recent cases included the Menendez brothers’ attempt at resentencing and the trial of Robert Durst.

Authorities haven’t said anything about a motive for the killings and would give few details when asked at the news conference.



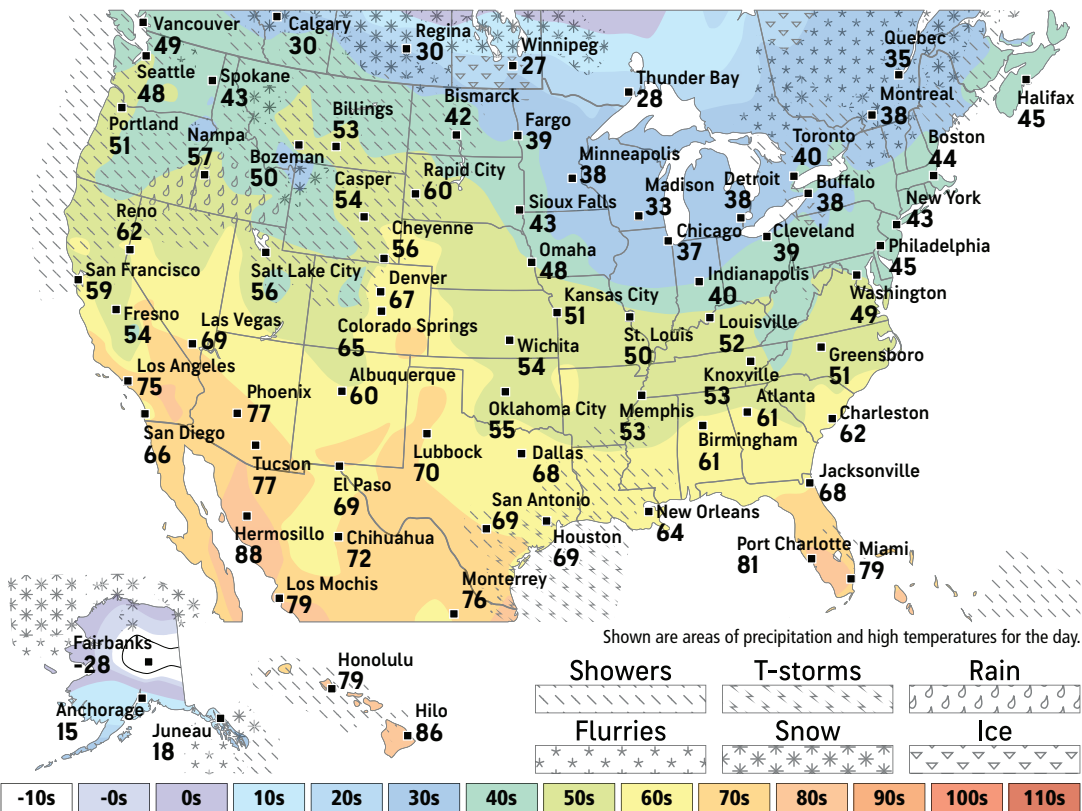
We make life simpler, safer, and better.

Visit AccuWeather.com or get the app.



NATIONAL FORECAST

In the digital e-edition, you can click anywhere on the US map to get up-to-date forecasts, radar, MinuteCast® and more.



National Summary: A storm will spread rain, snow and strong winds across the Northwest today. Meanwhile, showers and thunderstorms will dot parts of the Gulf Coast. Rain and snow showers are expected in northern portions of New England. Elsewhere will be dry. A warmup will occur across portions of the Midwest and Northeast.

NATIONAL CITIES TODAY

City	Hi	Lo	W	UV	AQ	City	Hi	Lo	W	UV	AQ	City	Hi	Lo	W	UV	AQ	City	Hi	Lo	W	UV	AQ
Aitkin, MN	36	30	c	1	29	Coon Rapids, MN	39	32	c	1	51	Fort Myer, VA	48	28	pc	1	69	Laramie, WY	49	22	sn	1	114
Alcoa, TN	54	31	pc	3	61	Dallas, TX	68	57	pc	1	41	Gladwin, MI	37	24	pc	1	39	Laurel, MT	56	29	c	1	111
Antigo, WI	27	22	c	1	33	Dayton, TN	52	34	pc	1	62	Glendive, MT	45	6	sh	1	51	Lenoir City, TN	53	33	pc	2	58
Apple Valley, MN	37	33	c	1	52	Denver, CO	67	27	pc	2	53	Grand Rapids, MN	31	28	pc	1	23	Lewistown, MT	48	17	c	1	118
Ashland, WI	32	29	pc	2	21	Detroit, MI	38	30	pc	1	65	Greeneville, TN	47	30	pc	2	62	Little Falls, MN	39	27	c	1	31
Athens, OH	47	26	pc	2	60	Dillon, MT	46	24	sn	1	32	Greenville, NC	56	36	pc	3	72	Livingston, MT	54	29	sn	1	93
Athens, TN	53	32	c	1	55	Driggs, ID	45	23	r	1	46	Hardin, MT	52	24	sh	1	128	Logan, OH	46	25	c	2	60
Belgrade, MT	53	27	sn	1	101	Dundalk, MD	45	29	pc	2	64	Hartford, CT	42	24	pc	2	74	Marinette, WI	31	27	c	1	42
Beloit, WI	35	29	pc	2	48	Easton, MD	48	29	c	2	63	Helena, MT	49	30	sn	1	129	McArthur, OH	46	25	c	2	55
Big Timber, MT	54	30	c	1	102	Eau Claire, WI	33	30	c	1	33	Hertford, NC	57	35	pc	3	52	Meridian, ID	55	30	r	2	87
Boone, NC	49	34	c	2	55	Eden Prairie, MN	39	32	c	1	51	Hickory, NC	54	35	pc	3	62	Miles City, MT	45	10	sh	1	120
Boston, MA	44	31	pc	2	59	Edenton, NC	57	36	pc	3	53	Hillsville, VA	51	39	pc	3	58	Minneapolis, MN	38	33	c	1	51
Bozeman, MT	50	28	sn	1	101	Elizabeth City, NC	56	37	pc	3	49	Honolulu, HI	79	71	sh	1	21	Monticello, MN	39	29	c	1	37
Buffalo, NY	38	27	sh	1	68	Elk River, MN	39	29	c	1	46	Idaho Falls, ID	48	27	sn	2	71	Mount Airy, NC	54	35	pc	3	72
Caledonia, MN	34	29	c	2	50	Elkton, MD	44	26	pc	1	64	Isle, MN	37	30	c	1	28	Mount Vernon, WA	47	42	sh	1	19
Cambridge, MN	37	31	c	1	35	Ellensburg, WA	44	32	pc	2	25	Janesville, WI	34	29	c	2	44	Nampa, ID	57	32	r	2	85
Casper, WY	54	24	sh	2	162	El Paso, TX	69	42	s	3	71	Kenansville, NC	57	38	pc	3	67	Newland, NC	49	34	c	2	55
Charlotte, NC	56	39	pc	3	66	Emmett, ID	54	32	r	2	54	Key West, FL	80	72	pc	4	25	New Lexington, OH	45	26	c	2	63
Cheyenne, WY	56	26	c	2	108	Fargo, ND	39	8	c	1	29	King, NC	49	33	pc	3	77	Newport, TN	51	29	c	2	66
Chicago, IL	37	32	pc	2	51	Faribault, MN	37	31	c	1	48	Klamath Falls, OR	46	31	sn	2	24	Osseo, MN	39	32	c	1	52
Cincinnati, OH	44	35	c	2	60	Flagstaff, AZ	62	28	s	3	62	Kuna, ID	57	31	r	2	80	Pocatello, ID	50	29	sn	2	113
Cleveland, OH	39	29	pc	1	78	Forest Lake, MN	38	32	c	1	51	Lake Mills, WI	33	28	c	2	44	Port Charlotte, FL	81	60	pc	4	29
Columbus, MT	59	29	c	1	107	Forsyth, MT	48	15	sh	1	114	Lakeview, OR	44	32	r	2	25	Princeton, MN	38	30	c	1	30
Columbus, OH	42	31	c	2	65	Fort Atkinson, WI	34	28	c	2	44	La Plata, MD	51	30	pc	2	68	Rawlins, WY	47	20	sn	1	141

Weather(W): s-sunny, pc-partly cloudy, c-cloudy, sh-showers, t-thunderstorms, r-rain, sf-snow flurries, sn-snow, i-ice. The higher the AccuWeather.com UV Index™ number, the greater the need for eye and skin protection. 0-2 Low; 3-5 Moderate; 6-7 High; 8-10 Very High; 11+ Extreme. Air Quality Index (AQ): 0-50, Good; 51-100, Moderate; 101-150, Unhealthy for sensitive groups; 151-200, Unhealthy; 201-300, Very unhealthy; 301-500, Hazardous.

Texas sues utility company to recover damages from historic fire sparked by downed power lines

ASSOCIATED PRESS

AUSTIN, Texas — Texas has sued the utility company whose downed power lines sparked the largest wildfire in state history, a deadly blaze that destroyed homes and livestock and charred miles of landscape, causing more than \$1 billion in damage.

The lawsuit filed Tuesday by state Attorney General Ken Paxton accuses Southwestern Public Service Company, which operates in Texas as Xcel Energy, of negligence in its upkeep of aging utility poles. It seeks to recover economic damages incurred by the state and prevent the company from passing those costs on to customers.

The Smokehouse Creek fire killed three people in 2024, burning through more than 1,500 square miles (3,885 square kilometers) in Texas before spilling into neighboring Oklahoma. Texas A&M Forest Service investigators determined it was ignited when a decayed utility pole snapped and fell, dropping Xcel power lines onto dry grass.

The Minnesota-based company has acknowledged its equipment appeared to have sparked the wildfire. But the lawsuit claims the company had neglected to replace aging utility poles in the windswept Panhandle, some of which were nearly 100 years old and more than twice their typical lifespan of 40 years.

“Xcel’s blatant negligence killed three Texans and caused unfathomable destruction in the Texas Panhandle,”



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Land charred by the Smokehouse Creek fire is seen Feb. 29, 2024, in Canadian, Texas.

Paxton said. “The company made false representations about its safety commitments and ignored warnings that its aging infrastructure needed immediate repair and to be updated.”

The fatalities related to the fire included a woman who was overtaken by flames after getting out of her truck, and another woman whose remains

were found in her burned home. A fire chief in one of the hardest hit towns died while responding to a house fire.

The company disputed Paxton’s claims of negligence and noted it had already accepted responsibility for equipment failure. Xcel said it has already paid out more than \$361 million to settle 212 of 254 claims.

“When the Attorney General’s office approached us earlier this year requesting information, we worked with them in good faith to try and find a consensus solution,” Xcel said in a statement. “They chose to file litigation instead. We will review this litigation and vigorously defend ourselves against these allegations.”

WEATHER HISTORY

An ice storm in Illinois on Dec. 17, 1924, caused more than \$21 million in damage. Ice accumulation was almost 2 inches. Wires snapped and trees cracked. The last of the ice stayed on the ground until Jan. 4.

WEATHER TRIVIA™

Q: What makes wind howl?

A: Terrain, trees, buildings

TUESDAY’S EXTREMES

NATIONAL (for the 48 contiguous states)

High temperature	86 at Palm Springs, California
Low temperature	-7 at Presque Isle, Maine
Precipitation	1.01 inches at Quillayute, Washington

INTERNATIONAL

High temperature	111 at Morawa, Australia
Low temperature	-62 at Tommot, Russia
Precipitation	4.32 inches at Tela, Honduras

INTERNATIONAL CITIES

City	TODAY			THU.			City	TODAY			THU.		
	Hi	Lo	W	Hi	Lo	W		Hi	Lo	W	Hi	Lo	W
Athens	63	41	pc	62	42	s	Moscow	36	30	c	35	29	c
Auckland	68	56	pc	69	62	sh	Nairobi	81	62	sh	79	62	t
Beijing	42	22	pc	39	26	pc	Nassau	80	72	s	81	73	pc
Berlin	42	38	s	50	39	pc	New Delhi	72	51	pc	69	50	pc
Bogota	68	48	r	68	50	c	Paris	51	46	c	57	49	c
Buenos Aires	84	70	s	92	71	s	Rio de Janeiro	77	70	r	76	70	sh
Cairo	68	50	pc	70	52	pc	Rome	64	48	sh	64	45	pc
Hong Kong	77	66	s	76	65	s	Seoul	46	24	s	45	26	s
Jerusalem	50	34	s	56	42	s	Singapore	82	75	t	85	76	t
Johannesburg	75	58	t	70	57	t	Stockholm	45	34	c	43	40	c
London	50	49	c	54	43	r	Sydney	81	67	s	89	73	s
Madrid	57	41	c	54	40	c	Toronto	40	28	pc	45	33	c
Mexico City	70	47	sh	71	46	s	Tokyo	55	45	s	55	42	s
Montreal	38	17	sn	38	36	c	Vancouver	49	44	c	47	35	sh

Forecasts and graphics provided by AccuWeather.com ©2025



ASSOCIATED PRESS

President Nicolas Maduro joins a rally marking the anniversary of the Battle of Santa Ines, which took place during Venezuela’s 19th-century Federal War, in Caracas, Venezuela, Wednesday, Dec. 10, 2025.

Trump orders blockade of ‘sanctioned oil tankers’ into Venezuela, ramping up pressure on Maduro

MICHELLE L. PRICE
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump said Tuesday he is ordering a blockade of all “sanctioned oil tankers” into Venezuela, ramping up pressure on the country’s authoritarian leader Nicolás Maduro in a move that seemed designed to put a tighter chokehold on the South American country’s economy.

Trump’s escalation comes after U.S. forces last week seized an oil tanker off Venezuela’s coast, an unusual move that followed a buildup of military forces in the region. In a post on social media Tuesday night announcing the blockade, Trump alleged Venezuela was using oil to fund drug trafficking and other crimes and vowed to continue the military buildup until the country gave the U.S. oil, land and assets, though it was not clear why he felt the U.S. had a claim.

“Venezuela is completely surrounded by the largest Armada ever assembled in the History of South America,” Trump said in a post on his social media platform. “It will only get bigger, and the shock to them will be like nothing they have ever seen before — Until such time as they return to the United States of America all of the Oil, Land, and other Assets that they previously stole from us.”

Pentagon officials referred all questions about the post to the White House.

Venezuela’s government released a statement Tuesday accusing Trump of “violating international law, free trade, and the principle of free navigation” with “a reckless and grave threat” against the South American country.

“On his social media, he assumes that Venezuela’s oil, land, and mineral wealth are his property,” the statement said of Trump’s post. “Consequently, he demands that Venezuela immediately hand over all its riches. The President of the United States intends to impose, in an utterly irrational manner, a supposed naval blockade on Venezuela with the aim of stealing the wealth that belongs to our nation.”

Maduro’s government, according to the statement, plans to denounce the situation before the United Nations.

The U.S. buildup has been accompanied by a series of military strikes on boats in international waters in the Caribbean and eastern Pacific. The campaign, which has drawn bipartisan scrutiny among U.S. lawmakers, has

killed at least 95 people in 25 known strikes on vessels.

Trump has for weeks said that the U.S. will move its campaign beyond the water and start strikes on land.

The Trump administration has defended the strikes as a success, saying they have prevented drugs from reaching American shores, and pushed back on concerns that they are stretching the bounds of lawful warfare.

The Trump administration has said the campaign is about stopping drugs headed to the U.S., but Trump’s chief of staff Susie Wiles appeared to confirm in a Vanity Fair interview published Tuesday that the campaign is part of a push to oust Maduro.

Wiles said Trump “wants to keep on blowing boats up until Maduro cries uncle.”

Tuesday night’s announcement seemed to have a similar aim.

Venezuela, which has the world’s largest proven oil reserves and produces about 1 million barrels a day, has long relied on oil revenue as a lifeblood of its economy.

Since the Trump administration began imposing oil sanctions on Venezuela in 2017, Maduro’s government has relied on a shadowy fleet of unflagged tankers to smuggle crude into global supply chains.

The state-owned oil company Petróleos de Venezuela S.A., commonly known as PDVSA, has been locked out of global oil markets by U.S. sanctions. It sells most of its exports at a steep discount in the black market in China.

Francisco Monaldi, a Venezuelan oil expert at Rice University in Houston, said about 850,000 barrels of the 1 million daily production is exported. Of that, he said, 80% goes to China, 15% to 17% goes to the U.S. through Chevron Corp., and the remainder goes to Cuba.

In October, Trump appeared to confirm reports that Maduro has offered a stake in Venezuela’s oil and other mineral wealth in recent months to try to stave off mounting pressure from the United States.

“He’s offered everything,” Trump said at the time. “You know why? Because he doesn’t want to f--- around with the United States.”

It wasn’t immediately clear how the U.S. planned to enact what Trump called a “TOTAL AND COMPLETE BLOCKADE OF ALL SANCTIONED OIL TANKERS going into, and out of, Venezuela.”

But the U.S. Navy has 11 ships, including an aircraft carrier and several amphibious assault ships, in the region.

AROUND THE WORLD

Trump expands travel ban and restrictions to include an additional 20 countries

WASHINGTON — The Trump administration has announced an expansion of travel restrictions to include 20 more countries. This move doubles the number of nations affected by previous limits on travel and immigration to the U.S. The administration cites national security concerns, including the arrest of an Afghan national suspect, as reasons for the expansion, among others. Critics argue it unfairly targets a broad range of countries. The restrictions exempt those with visas, lawful permanent residents and certain visa categories. It’s unclear when these new restrictions will take effect. The expansion includes full bans and partial restrictions on various countries.

Australia to hold funerals for the 15 victims of an antisemitic mass shooting at Bondi Beach

MELBOURNE, Australia — Australia is preparing for the funerals of some of the victims of an antisemitic mass shooting during a Hanukkah celebration at Sydney’s Bondi Beach. The first funerals were to be held on Wednesday. Authorities say the attack was inspired by the Islamic State group. The suspects are a father, who was killed, and his son, who is in a hospital. Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese plans to tighten gun laws following the attack. Many Australians are donating blood and paying respects at the scene of the massacre. Stories of heroism have emerged, including those of Ahmed al Ahmed, who tackled one shooter, and Bondi Beach lifeguards who helped during the chaos.

Speaker Johnson rebuffs efforts to extend health care subsidies, pushing ahead with GOP plan

WASHINGTON — House Republican leaders are determined to push ahead with a health care bill that excludes efforts to address the soaring monthly premiums for Affordable Care Act recipients. The enhanced tax credits for people who buy insurance through the Affordable Care Act are set to expire at year’s end. Speaker Mike Johnson had discussed allowing more politically vulnerable Republicans lawmakers a chance to vote on their plan that would temporarily extend the pandemic-era subsidies. But leadership ultimately sided with conservatives who assailed the subsidies as propping up Obamacare. The outcome all but guarantees that many Americans will see substantially higher insurance costs in 2026.

Border Patrol official who is the face of Trump’s crackdown back in Chicago amid immigration raids

CHICAGO — Senior Border Patrol official Greg Bovino has returned to the Chicago area, about a month after leaving to lead immigration crackdowns in other cities. Bovino initially arrived in the Chicago area in September amid Operation Midway Blitz, which netted thousands of arrests and fueled fear among immigrant communities. The operation has become known for its aggressive tactics. As the face of the Trump administration’s immigration crackdown, Bovino was photographed Tuesday in a predominantly Mexican American neighborhood as activists blew whistles and shouted.

Levee breach triggers flash flood warning, evacuations south of Seattle

GENE JOHNSON
Associated Press

SEATTLE — The extent of the damage in Washington state is profound but unclear after more than a week of heavy rains and record flooding, Gov. Bob Ferguson said Tuesday, as more high water, mudslides and power outages were in the forecast.

A barrage of storms from weather systems stretching across the Pacific has dumped close to 2 feet (0.6 meters) of rain in parts of the Cascade Mountains, swelling rivers far beyond their banks and prompting more than 600 rescues across 10 counties.

As of Tuesday, there had been only one death — of a man who drove past warning signs into a flooded area — but key highways were buried or washed out, entire communities had been inundated, and saturated levees had given

way. It could be months before State Route 2, which connects cities in western Washington with the Stevens Pass ski area and the faux Bavarian tourist town of Leavenworth across the mountains, can be reopened, Ferguson said.

“We’re in for the long haul,” Ferguson said at a news conference. “If you get an evacuation order, for God’s sakes, follow it.”

It won’t be until after waters recede and landslide risk subsides that crews will be able to fully assess the damage, he said. The state and some counties are making several million dollars available to help people pay for hotels, groceries and other necessities, pending more extensive federal assistance that Ferguson and Washington’s congressional delegation expect to see approved.

According to the governor’s office, first responders had conducted at least 629 rescues and 572 assisted



ASSOCIATED PRESS

A response team crew member walks by standing water from a levee breach on the Green River in Tukwila, Wash., Monday, Dec. 15, 2025.

evacuations. As many as 100,000 people had been under evacuation orders at times, many of them in the flood plain of the Skagit River north of Seattle.

Elevated rivers and flood risk could persist until at least late this month,

according to the National Weather Service. Wind and flood watches and warnings are expected in much of the Northwest for the next couple of days as storms bring rain, heavy mountain snow and high winds.



ASSOCIATED PRESS

The 2026 Toyota Prius hybrid electric vehicle (HEV) is showcased at the LA Auto Show in Los Angeles on Nov. 20.

‘Illegal attempt’

16 states sue Trump administration again over billions in withheld electric vehicle charging funds

ASSOCIATED PRESS

DETROIT — Sixteen states and the District of Columbia are suing the Trump administration for what they say is the unlawful withholding of over \$2 billion in funding for two electric vehicle charging programs.

A federal lawsuit filed Tuesday in Seattle is the latest legal battle that Democratic-led states are pursuing over funding for EV charging infrastructure that they say was obligated to them by Congress under former President Joe Biden, but that the Department of Transportation and Federal Highway Administration are “impounding.”

“The Trump administration’s illegal attempt to stop funding for electric vehicle infrastructure must come to an end,” California Attorney General Rob Bonta said in a release. “This is just another reckless attempt that will stall the fight against air pollution and climate change, slow innovation, thwart green job creation, and leave communities without access to clean, affordable transportation.”

President Donald Trump’s administration has been hostile to EVs and has dismantled several Biden-era policies friendly to cleaner cars and trucks in favor of policies that align with Trump’s oil and gas industry agenda.

Transportation Department officials did not immediately respond to request for comment.

The Trump administration in February ordered states to halt spending money for EV charging that was allocated in the bipartisan infrastructure

law passed under the previous administration.

Several states filed a lawsuit in May against the administration for withholding the funding from the \$5 billion National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure program for a nationwide charging buildout. A federal judge later ordered the administration to release much of the funding for chargers in more than a dozen states.

Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy later issued revised guidance intended to streamline funding applications for states and make charger deployment more efficient. At least four states — Georgia, Illinois, Maryland, and Wisconsin — have announced awards under the vehicle infrastructure program, according to Loren McDonald, chief analyst at EV data firm Chargeonomics, who tracks the state awards.

Tuesday’s separate lawsuit, filed in the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Washington, addresses withholding of funds for two other programs: \$1.8 billion for the Charging and Fueling Infrastructure Grant program, as well as about \$350 million for the Electric Vehicle Charger Reliability and Accessibility Accelerator program.

The lawsuit is led by attorneys general from California and Colorado, joined by the attorneys general of Arizona, Delaware, Illinois, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, Rhode Island, Vermont, Washington, Wisconsin and the District of Columbia, and the governor of Pennsylvania. All are Democrats.

After returning to office in

January, Trump immediately ordered an end to what he has called Biden’s “EV mandate.” While Biden targeted for half of new vehicle sales in the U.S. to be electric by 2030, his policies did not force American consumers to buy EVs or automakers to sell them.

Biden did set stringent tailpipe emissions and fuel economy rules in an effort to encourage more widespread EV adoption, as the auto industry would have had to meet both sets of requirements with a greater number of EVs in their sales mix. Under the Biden administration, consumers could also receive up to \$7,500 in tax incentives off the price of an EV purchase, a program that congressional Republicans ended last fall.

The Trump administration has proposed rolling back both tailpipe emissions rules and the gas mileage standards and eliminated fines to automakers for not meeting those standards.

Trump has also repeated incorrect information about the status of the federal charging programs; without all of the funds available, only a fraction of what was obligated has been spent so far.

“We had to have an electric car within a very short period of time, even though there was no way of charging them and lots of other things,” Trump said in a Dec. 3 press conference about the proposed weakened fuel economy rules. “In certain parts of the Midwest, they spent — to build nine chargers they spent \$8 billion. So, that wasn’t working out too well.”

BRIEFCASE

The U.S. gained 64,000 jobs in November but lost 105,000 in October; unemployment at 4.6%

WASHINGTON — The United States gained a decent 64,000 jobs in November but lost 105,000 in October as federal workers departed after cutbacks by the Trump administration, the government said in delayed reports. The unemployment rate rose to 4.6%, highest since 2021. Both the October and November job creation numbers, released Tuesday by the Labor Department, came in late because of the 43-day federal government shutdown. Hiring has clearly lost momentum, hobbled by uncertainty over President Donald Trump’s tariffs and the lingering effects of the high interest rates the Federal Reserve engineered in 2022 and 2023 to rein in an outburst of inflation.

President orders blockade of ‘sanctioned oil tankers’ into Venezuela, ramping up pressure

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump says he is ordering a blockade of all “sanctioned oil tankers” into Venezuela, ramping up pressure on the country’s authoritarian leader Nicolás Maduro. The move comes after U.S. forces last week seized an oil tanker off Venezuela’s coast, an unusual move that followed a buildup of military forces in the region. In a post on social media Tuesday night announcing the blockade, Trump alleged Venezuela was using oil to fund drug trafficking and other crimes. The buildup has been accompanied by a series of military strikes on boats in international waters in the Caribbean and eastern Pacific.

Tariffs are having an uneven effect on holiday prices and purchases

NEW YORK — Many U.S. consumers say they’ve noticed higher than usual prices for holiday gifts in recent months, according to a December poll from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research. A contributing factor is the unusually high import taxes the Trump administration put on foreign goods. While the worst-case consumer impact that many economists foresaw from the administration’s trade policies hasn’t materialized, some popular gift items have been affected more than others. Most toys and electronics sold in the U.S. come from China. So do most holiday decorations. Jewelry prices have risen due to the cost of gold.

FAA head vows to maintain safety measures implemented after tragic DC plane crash

The head of the Federal Aviation Administration says he won’t forget the 67 people who died when an airliner collided with an Army helicopter over Washington, D.C., in January. Bryan Bedford says he won’t allow operations in the airspace over the nation’s capital to revert back to the way they were before the crash. Bedford gave the House aviation subcommittee an update on a number of key concerns about his agency. Provisions in a major defense bill have been widely criticized by safety experts who say they will make flying riskier.

STOCK MARKET TODAY

Wall Street slips as oil prices keep dropping

ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW YORK — The U.S. stock market drifted through a mixed day of trading Tuesday after reports on the economy did little to clear uncertainty about where interest rates may be heading.

The S&P 500 slipped 0.2% and remains a bit below its all-time high set last week. The Dow Jones Industrial Average dipped 302 points, or 0.6%, and the Nasdaq composite rose 0.2%.

Treasury yields eased in the bond market after one report said the U.S. unemployment rate was at its worst level since 2021, but employers also added more jobs last month than economists expected. A separate report,

meanwhile, said an underlying measure of strength for revenue at U.S. retailers grew more in October than economists expected.

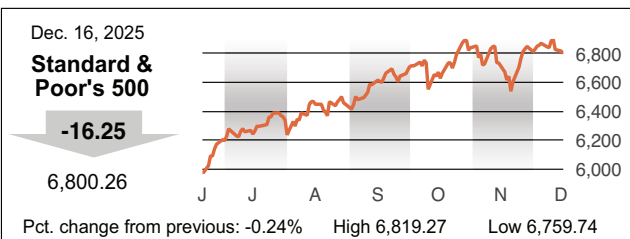
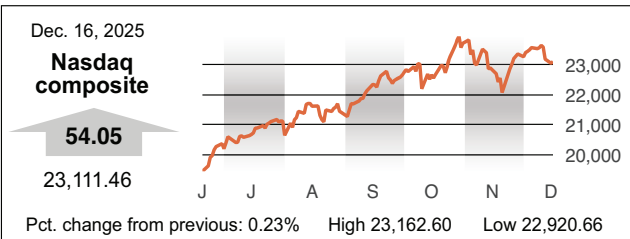
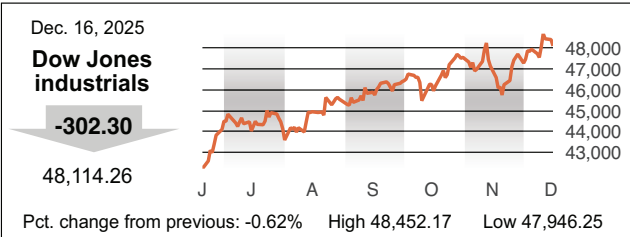
The mixed data meant little change in traders’ hopes that the Federal Reserve may continue to cut interest rates further in 2026. What the Fed does with interest rates is a top driver for financial markets because lower rates can boost the economy and prices for investments, even if they also may worsen inflation.

A report coming on Thursday will show how bad inflation was last month, and economists expect it to show prices for U.S. consumers continue to rise faster than anyone would like.

A report released on Tuesday after U.S. stocks began trading suggested price pressures are rising sharply, with average selling prices for businesses climbing at one of the fastest rates since the middle of 2022. The preliminary data from S&P Global also said growth for overall business activity slowed to its weakest level since June.

“Higher prices are again being widely blamed on tariffs, with an initial impact on manufacturing now increasingly spilling over to services to broaden the affordability problem,” according to Chris Williamson, chief business economist at S&P Global Market Intelligence.

A DAY ON WALL STREET





More work to do

As reefs vanish, assisted coral fertilization offers hope in the Dominican Republic

ASSOCIATED PRESS

BAYAHIBE, Dominican Republic — Oxygen tank strapped to his back, Michael del Rosario moves his fins delicately as he glides along an underwater nursery just off the Dominican Republic coast, proudly showing off the “coral babies” growing on metal structures that look like large spiders. The conservationist enthusiastically points a finger to trace around the largest corals, just starting to reveal their vibrant colors.

Del Rosario helped plant these tiny animals in the nursery after they were conceived in an assisted reproduction laboratory run by the marine conservation organization Fundemar. In a process something like in vitro fertilization, coral egg and sperm are joined to form a new individual.

It’s a technique that’s gaining momentum in the Caribbean to counter the drastic loss of corals due to climate change, which is killing them by heating up oceans and making it more difficult for those that survive to reproduce naturally.

A GLIMMER OF HOPE

“We live on an island. We depend entirely on coral reefs, and seeing them all disappear is really depressing,” del Rosario said once back on the surface, his words flowing like bubbles underwater. “But seeing our coral babies growing, alive, in the sea gives us hope, which is what we were losing.”

The state of corals around the Dominican Republic, as in the rest of the world, is not encouraging. Fundemar’s latest monitoring last year found that 70% of the Dominican Republic’s reefs have less than 5% coral coverage. Healthy colonies are so far apart that the probability of one coral’s eggs meeting another’s sperm during the spawning season is decreasing.

“That’s why assisted reproduction programs are so important now, because what used to be normal in coral reefs is probably no longer possible for many species,” biologist Andreina Valdez, operations manager at Fundemar, said at the organization’s new marine research center. “So that’s where we come in to help a little bit.”

Though many people may think corals are plants, they are animals. They spawn once a year, a few days after the full moon and at dusk, when they



ASSOCIATED PRESS PHOTOS

TOP: Michael del Rosario, environmental education coordinator at the Fundemar coral nursery, shows a piece of ceramic with corals growing on it in Bayahibe, Dominican Republic, on Oct. 17. **ABOVE:** Diploria labyrinthiformis, a type of coral, grows at the Fundemar.

release millions of eggs and sperm in a spectacle that turns the sea around them into a kind of Milky Way. Fundemar monitors spawning periods, collects eggs and sperm, performs assisted fertilization in the laboratory, and cares for the larvae until they are strong enough to be taken to the reef.

In the laboratory, Ariel Álvarez examines one of the star-shaped pieces on which the corals are growing through a microscope. They’re so tiny they can hardly be seen with the naked eye. Álvarez switches off the lights, turns on an ultraviolet light, and the coral’s rounded, fractal shapes appear through a camera on the microscope projected onto a screen.

One research center room holds dozens of fish tanks, each with hundreds of tiny corals awaiting return to the reef. Del Rosario said the lab produces more than 2.5 million coral embryos per year. Only 1% will survive in the ocean, yet that figure is better than the rate with natural fertilization on these degraded reefs now, he said.

CHANGING TECHNIQUES

In the past, Fundemar and other conservation organizations focused on asexual reproduction. That meant cutting a small piece of healthy coral and transplanting it to another location so that a new one would grow. The method can produce corals faster than

assisted fertilization.

The problem, Andreina Valdez said, is that it clones the same individual, meaning all those coral share the same disease vulnerabilities. In contrast, assisted sexual reproduction creates genetically different individuals, reducing the chance that a single illness could strike them all down.

Australia pioneered assisted coral fertilization. It’s expanding in the Caribbean, with leading projects at the National Autonomous University of Mexico and the Carmabi Foundation in Curaçao, and it’s being adopted in Puerto Rico, Cuba and Jamaica, Valdez said.

“You can’t conserve something if you don’t have it. So (these programs) are helping to expand the population that’s out there,” said Mark Eakin, corresponding secretary for the International Coral Reef Society and retired chief of the Coral Reef Watch program of the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

But the world must still tackle “the 800-pound gorilla of climate change,” Eakin said, or a lot of the restoration work “is just going to be wiped out.”

Burning fossil fuels such as oil, gas, and coal produces greenhouse gases that trap heat in the atmosphere, driving up temperatures both on Earth’s surface and in its seas. Oceans are warming at twice the rate of 20 years

ago, according to UNESCO’s most recent State of the Ocean Report last year.

And that’s devastating for corals. Rising heat causes them to feel sick and expel the algae that live in their tissue and provide them both their striking colors and their food. The process is known as bleaching because it exposes the coral’s white skeleton. The corals may survive, but they are weakened and vulnerable to disease and death if temperatures don’t drop.

Half the world’s reefs have been lost since 1950, according to research by the University of British Columbia published in the journal *One Earth*.

MORE THAN PRETTY CREATURES

For countries such as the Dominican Republic, in the so-called “hurricane corridor,” preserving reefs is particularly important. Coral skeletons help absorb wave energy, creating a natural barrier against stronger waves.

“What do we sell in the Dominican Republic? Beaches,” del Rosario said. “If we don’t have corals, we lose coastal protection, we lose the sand on our beaches, and we lose tourism.”

Corals also are home to more than 25% of marine life, making them crucial for the millions of people around the world who make a living from fishing.

Alido Luis Báez knows this well.

It’s not yet dawn in Bayahibe when he climbs into a boat to fish with his father, who at 65 still goes to sea every week. The engine roars as they travel mile after mile until the coastline fades into the horizon. To catch tuna, dorado, or marlin, Luis Báez sails up to 50 miles offshore.

“We didn’t have to go so far before,” he said. “But because of overfishing, habitat loss, and climate change, now you have to go a little further every day.”

Things were very different when his father, also named Alido Luis, started fishing in the 1970s. Back then, they went out in a sailboat, and the coral reefs were so healthy they found plenty of fish close to the coast.

“I used to be a diver, and I caught a lot of lobster and queen conch,” he said in a voice weakened by the passage of time. “In a short time, I would catch 50 or 60 pounds of fish. But now, to catch two or three fish, they spend the whole day out there.”



ASSOCIATED PRESS

New York Knicks guard Jalen Brunson, left, shoots the ball past San Antonio Spurs forward Julian Champagnie (30) during an NBA Cup championship basketball game, Tuesday, Dec. 16, 2025, in Las Vegas.

Knicks win NBA Cup after rallying to beat Spurs 124-113

MARK ANDERSON
Associated Press

LAS VEGAS — OG Anunoby scored 28 points, Jalen Brunson had 25, and the New York Knicks rallied to beat Victor Wembanyama and the San Antonio Spurs 124-113 on Tuesday night to win the NBA Cup.

Now the Knicks can hang a banner next to the 1973 NBA championship banner in Madison Square Garden, the last time they won the title.

But this is a championship roster — NBA Cup MVP Brunson, Josh Hart and Mikal Bridges cut down the nets in college at Villanova — with high hopes of representing a weak Eastern Conference in the NBA Finals.

New York's Karl-Anthony Towns had 16 points and 11 rebounds despite battling an injury. He went into the locker room with a minute left before halftime and later exited for the bench with 5:06 remaining in the third quarter and didn't return until late in the fourth. The broadcast said he had calf injury.

Dylan Harper led the Spurs with 21 points, Wembanyama scored 18 and De'Aaron Fox had 16.

New York dominated inside, outrebounding the Spurs 59-42, with Mitchell Robinson collecting 15 boards, including 10 on the offensive end. That helped give the Knicks a 56-44 edge in points in the lane.

The Spurs, however, led for much of the game before the Knicks went on a 13-1 run that began late in the third quarter to go up 100-95. New York never trailed again.

The Knicks got more than a trophy, each player with a standard contract got an extra \$318,560 for winning, making the total \$530,933 for even reaching the final.

This game doesn't count in the standings, so both teams remain 18-7, putting them atop their respective divisions.

Just making the final bodes well for both teams. The previous four finalists — Los Angeles Lakers, Indiana, Oklahoma City and Milwaukee — also made the playoffs. The Pacers made the Eastern Conference finals in 2024, and the Thunder won the NBA championship last season.

UP NEXT

Knicks: At Indiana on Thursday night.
Spurs: Host Washington on Thursday night.

SPORTS IN BRIEF

Shiffrin's slalom domination reaching new heights during the Olympic season

COURCHEVEL, France — Mikaela Shiffrin claimed a record-extending 105th World Cup victory after several of her top challengers went out during the opening run of a slalom night race. Shiffrin finished 1.55 seconds ahead of Swiss skier Camille Rast and 1.71 ahead of German racer Emma Aicher. Shiffrin has now won the opening four slaloms of the season and five straight including the final race of last season. Lara Colturi, Zrinka Ljutic and Katharina Liensberger each failed to finish the first run and Wendy Holdener crashed in the finish area. Up next Lindsey Vonn will be back in action this weekend for a downhill and a super-G in nearby Val d'Isere.

Injured Adams not ruled out by McVay for Rams' Thursday night showdown with Seahawks

LOS ANGELES — Receiver Davante Adams hasn't been ruled out for the Los Angeles Rams' showdown at Seattle on Thursday night despite his hamstring injury. Coach Sean McVay said the NFC-leading Rams likely will wait until game time to make a final decision on the availability of the NFL's touchdown receptions leader. The team remains hopeful Adams can play, although he won't participate in their walk-throughs and practice Tuesday. Adams got hurt while running a long route in the fourth quarter of the Rams' 41-34 comeback win over the Detroit Lions.



Dolphins considering a change at QB after Tua Tagovailoa's continued struggles this season

MIAMI GARDENS, Fla. — Dolphins coach Mike McDaniel is considering a quarterback change after Tua Tagovailoa's continued struggles this season. Those were magnified in Monday night's loss to the Pittsburgh Steelers that eliminated Miami from playoff contention for the second straight season. Tagovailoa threw for just 65 yards through three quarters, and the areas in which he has appeared to regress were evident again, from questionable decision-making to a lack of mobility that has hampered him throughout the season. McDaniel said he would give "more clarity" on his quarterback decision on Wednesday.

FIFA slashes price of some World Cup tickets to \$60 after fan backlash

ASSOCIATED PRESS

GENEVA — FIFA slashed the price of some World Cup tickets for teams' most loyal fans following a global backlash and some will get \$60 seats for the final instead of being asked to pay \$4,185.

It was a rare climbdown by the soccer body and its president Gianni Infantino after soaking up waves of criticism for World Cup strategies, including top-dollar prices and closer political alignment with U.S. President Donald Trump.

FIFA said Tuesday that \$60 tickets will be made available for every game at the tournament in North America, going to the national federations whose teams are playing. Those federations decide how to distribute them to loyal fans who have attended previous games at home and on the road.

The number of \$60 tickets for each game is likely to be from 400 to 750 per team, in what FIFA is now calling a "Supporter Entry Tier" price category. FIFA is using 16 host cities, including 11 NFL stadiums in the United States, plus two in Canada and three in Mexico.

FIFA did not specify exactly why it so dramatically changed strategy, but said the lower prices are "designed to further support traveling fans following their national teams across the tournament."

However, the Football Supporters

Europe group, which represents grassroots fan groups, said the limited price cut was "an appeasement tactic due to the global negative backlash."

"This shows that FIFA's ticketing policy is not set in stone, was decided in a rush, and without proper consultation," the group said in a statement.

The World Cup in North America will be the first edition that features 48 teams — up from 32 — and is expected to earn FIFA at least \$10 billion in revenue while being the most expensive ever for fans.

Despite the outcry over prices, FIFA says it has already received more than 20 million ticket requests in its latest sales phase.

The FSE group said that even with Tuesday's announcement, "the vast majority would still have to pay extortionate prices, way higher than at any tournament before."

INITIAL PLEDGE FOR CHEAP TICKETS

Fans worldwide reacted with shock and anger last week on seeing FIFA's ticketing plans that gave participating teams no tickets in the lowest-priced category. Their standard allocation is 8% of stadium capacity per team.

The cheapest prices ranged from \$140 to \$265 for group-stage games that did not involve co-hosts the United States, Canada and Mexico. The \$265



ASSOCIATED PRESS

FIFA President Gianni Infantino, right, awards President Donald Trump with the FIFA Peace Prize during the draw for the 2026 soccer World Cup at the Kennedy Center in Washington, Friday, Dec. 5, 2025.

games involve Lionel Messi's Argentina, Portugal with Cristiano Ronaldo and well-supported teams like Brazil and England.

FIFA had set those prices despite the co-hosts having pledged eight years ago — when they were bidding for the tournament — that hundreds of thousands of \$21 tickets would be made available for games before the knockout rounds.

The hospitality program in modern NFL venues, and now managed in-house instead of outsourced to an

agency, is expected to earn FIFA billions of dollars rather than hundreds of millions.

EUROPEAN CRITICISM

Criticism from fans, especially in Europe, had been increasing for several months over plans for "dynamic pricing" plus extra fees on a FIFA-run resale platform — both features which are common in the U.S. entertainment industry but not to soccer fans worldwide.

NATIONAL SCOREBOARD

* All times Eastern

BASKETBALL

NBA EASTERN CONFERENCE				
Atlantic				
	W	L	Pct	GB
New York	18	7	.720	—
Toronto	16	11	.593	3
Boston	15	11	.577	3½
Philadelphia	14	11	.560	4
Brooklyn	7	18	.280	11

Southeast				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Orlando	15	11	.577	—
Atlanta	15	12	.556	½
Miami	14	12	.538	1
Charlotte	8	18	.308	7
Washington	4	20	.167	10

Central				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Detroit	21	5	.808	—
Cleveland	15	12	.556	6½
Milwaukee	11	16	.407	10½
Chicago	10	15	.400	10½
Indiana	6	20	.231	15

WESTERN CONFERENCE				
Southwest				
	W	L	Pct	GB
San Antonio	18	7	.720	—
Houston	16	7	.696	1
Memphis	12	14	.462	6½
Dallas	10	17	.370	9
New Orleans	5	22	.185	14

Northwest				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Oklahoma City	24	2	.923	—
Denver	19	6	.760	4½
Minnesota	17	9	.654	7
Utah	10	15	.400	13½
Portland	10	16	.385	14

Pacific				
	W	L	Pct	GB
L.A. Lakers	18	7	.720	—
Phoenix	14	12	.538	4½
Golden St.	13	14	.481	6
Sacramento	6	20	.231	12½
L.A. Clippers	6	20	.231	12½

Monday's Games
Detroit 112, Boston 105
Toronto 106, Miami 96
Utah 140, Dallas 133, OT
Denver 128, Houston 125, OT
Memphis 121, L.A. Clippers 103

Tuesday's Games
New York 124, San Antonio 113 (Championship Game)

Wednesday's Games
Cleveland at Chicago, 8 p.m.
Memphis at Minnesota, 8 p.m.

Thursday's Games
Atlanta at Charlotte, 7 p.m.
Miami at Brooklyn, 7:30 p.m.
Houston at New Orleans, 8 p.m.
L.A. Clippers at Oklahoma City, 8 p.m.
Toronto at Milwaukee, 8 p.m.
Washington at San Antonio, 8 p.m.
Detroit at Dallas, 8:30 p.m.
Golden St. at Phoenix, 9 p.m.
L.A. Lakers at Utah, 9 p.m.
Orlando at Denver, 9 p.m.
Sacramento at Portland, 10 p.m.

Friday's Games
Miami at Boston, 7 p.m.
Philadelphia at New York, 7 p.m.
Chicago at Cleveland, 7:30 p.m.
San Antonio at Atlanta, 7:30 p.m.
Oklahoma City at Minnesota, 9:30 p.m.

COLLEGE
Top 25 Daily Fared

MEN

Tuesday

No. 1 Arizona (10-0) beat Abilene Christian 96-62. Next: vs. San Diego State, Saturday.

No. 2 Michigan (10-0) did not play. Next: vs. La Salle, Sunday.

No. 3 Duke (11-0) beat Lipscomb 97-73. Next: vs. No. 19 Texas Tech, Saturday.

No. 4 Iowa State (11-0) did not play. Next: vs. Long Beach State, Sunday.

No. 5 UConn (11-1) beat Butler 79-60. Next: at DePaul, Sunday.

No. 6 Purdue (10-1) did not play. Next: vs. No. 21 Auburn, Saturday.

No. 7 Gonzaga (10-1) did not play. Next: vs. Campbell, Wednesday.

No. 8 Houston (10-1) did not play. Next: at No. 14 Arkansas, Saturday.

No. 9 Michigan State (10-1) beat Toledo 92-69. Next: vs. Oakland, Saturday.

No. 10 BYU (10-1) beat Pacific 93-57. Next: vs. Abilene Christian, Friday.

No. 11 Louisville (9-2) lost to No. 20 Tennessee 83-62. Next: vs. Montana, Saturday.

No. 12 North Carolina (10-1) beat East Tennessee State 77-58. Next: at Ohio State, Saturday.

No. 13 Vanderbilt (10-0) did not play. Next: at Memphis, Wednesday.

No. 14 Arkansas (9-2) beat Queens 108-80. Next: vs. No. 8 Houston, Saturday.

No. 15 Nebraska (11-0) did not play. Next: vs. North Dakota, Sunday.

No. 16 Alabama (7-3) did not play. Next: vs. South Florida, Wednesday.

No. 17 Kansas (9-3) beat Towson 73-49. Next: TBA.

No. 18 Illinois (8-3) did not play. Next: TBA.

No. 19 Texas Tech (8-3) beat Northern Colorado 101-90. Next: at No. 3 Duke, Saturday.

No. 20 Tennessee (8-3) beat No. 11 Louisville 83-62. Next: vs. Gardner-Webb, Sunday.

No. 21 Auburn (8-3) did not play. Next: at No. 6 Purdue, Saturday.

No. 22 St. John's (7-3) beat DePaul 79-66. Next: at Kentucky, Saturday.

No. 23 Virginia (9-1) did not play. Next: vs. Maryland, Saturday.

No. 23 Florida (6-4) did not play. Next: vs. St. Francis (PA), Wednesday.

No. 25 Georgia (9-1) did not play. Next: vs. Western Carolina, Thursday.

WOMEN

No. 1 UConn (10-0) did not play. Next: vs. Marquette, Wednesday.

No. 2 Texas (12-0) did not play. Next: vs. Northwestern State, Wednesday.

No. 3 South Carolina (10-1) did not play. Next: at South Florida, Thursday.

No. 4 UCLA (10-1) beat Cal Poly 115-28. Next: vs. Long Beach State, Saturday.

No. 5 LSU (12-0) beat Morgan State 91-33. Next: vs. UT Arlington, Sunday.

No. 6 Michigan (9-1) did not play. Next: vs. Oakland, Sunday.

No. 7 Maryland (12-0) did not play. Next: vs. Central Connecticut, Friday.

No. 8 Oklahoma (11-1) did not play. Next: TBA.

No. 9 TCU (12-0) beat Arkansas-Pine Bluff 109-54. Next: vs. Kansas State, Saturday.

No. 10 Iowa State (12-0) did not play. Next: vs. Kansas, Sunday.

No. 11 Iowa (10-1) did not play. Next: at

SHOT OF THE DAY



ASSOCIATED PRESS

United States' Mikaela Shiffrin competes in an alpine ski, women's World Cup slalom, in Courchevel, France, Tuesday, Dec. 16, 2025.

No. 1 UConn, Saturday.
No. 12 Kentucky (11-1) did not play. Next: vs. Wright State, Friday.

No. 13 Vanderbilt (10-0) did not play. Next: vs. Albany, Thursday.

No. 14 Ole Miss (10-1) did not play. Next: vs. Mississippi Valley State, Wednesday.

No. 15 Baylor (10-2) did not play. Next: vs. Southern University, Thursday.

No. 16 Louisville (10-3) did not play. Next: vs. Eastern Kentucky, Wednesday.

No. 17 Tennessee (7-2) did not play. Next: at No. 16 Louisville, Saturday.

No. 18 North Carolina (9-3) did not play. Next: vs. UNC Wilmington, Wednesday.

No. 19 USC (7-3) did not play. Next: vs. Cal Poly, Thursday.

No. 20 Notre Dame (8-2) did not play. Next: vs. Bellarmine, Sunday.

No. 21 Ohio State (9-1) did not play. Next: vs. Norfolk State, Thursday.

No. 22 Washington (9-1) did not play. Next: at Stanford, Friday.

No. 23 Nebraska (11-0) did not play. Next: vs. California Baptist, Sunday.

No. 24 Michigan State (9-1) did not play. Next: vs. Indiana State, Sunday.

No. 25 Princeton (10-1) did not play. Next: at George Mason, Saturday.

FOOTBALL

NFL AMERICAN CONFERENCE

East

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
New England	11	3	0	.786	382	276
Buffalo	10	4	0	.714	411	324
Miami	6	8	0	.429	296	324
e-N.Y. Jets	3	11	0	.214	276	397

South

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Jacksonville	10	4	0	.714	376	292
Houston	9	5	0	.643	323	228
Indianapolis	8	6	0	.571	392	303
e-Tenn.	2	12	0	.143	225	394

North

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Pittsburgh	8	6	0	.571	336	326
Baltimore	7	7	0	.500	335	320
e-Cincinnati	4	10	0	.286	314	437
e-Cleveland	3	11	0	.214	226	332

West

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
x-Denver	12	2	0	.857	342	261
L.A. Chargers	10	4	0	.714	315	284
e-Kansas City	6	8	0	.429	328	268
e-Las Vegas	2	12	0	.143	196	363

NATIONAL CONFERENCE

East

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Philadelphia	9	5	0	.643	320	271
Dallas	6	7	1	.464	407	420
e-Washington	4	10	0	.286	291	375
e-N.Y. Giants	2	12	0	.143	300	396

South

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Tampa Bay	7	7	0	.500	327	354
Carolina	7	7	0	.500	264	317
e-Atlanta	5	9	0	.357	281	341
e-New Orleans	4	10	0	.286	226	332

North

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Chicago	10	4	0	.714	365	338
Green Bay	9	4	1	.679	348	281
Detroit	8	6	0	.571	428	345
e-Minnesota	6	8	0	.429	289	307

West

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
x-L.A. Rams	11	3	0	.786	420	261
Seattle	11	3	0	.786	405	242
San Fran.	10	4	0	.714	344	293
e-Arizona	3	11	0	.214	302	388

e-Eliminated from playoffs
x-clinched playoff spot

Monday's Games

Pittsburgh 28, Miami 15

Thursday, Dec. 18

L.A. Rams at Seattle, 8:15 p.m.

Saturday, Dec. 20

Philadelphia at Washington, 5 p.m.

Green Bay at Chicago, 8:20 p.m.

Sunday, Dec. 21

Buffalo at Cleveland, 1 p.m.

Cincinnati at Miami, 1 p.m.

Kansas City at Tenn., 1 p.m.

L.A. Chargers at Dallas, 1 p.m.

Minnesota at N.Y. Giants, 1 p.m.

N.Y. Jets at New Orleans, 1 p.m.

Tampa Bay at Carolina, 1 p.m.

Atlanta at Arizona, 4:05 p.m.

Jacksonville at Denver, 4:05 p.m.

Las Vegas at Houston, 4:25 p.m.

Pittsburgh at Detroit, 4:25 p.m.

New England at Baltimore, 8:20 p.m.

COLLEGE

Tuesday

Salute to Veterans Bowl

Montgomery, Ala.

Jacksonville State 17, Troy 13

Wednesday

Cure Bowl

Orlando, Fla.

Old Dominion vs. South Florida, 5 p.m.

(ESPN)
68 Ventures Bowl
Mobile, Ala.

Louisiana vs. Delaware, 8:30 p.m. (ESPN)

Thursday

Xbox Bowl

Frisco, Texas

Arkansas State vs. Missouri State, 9 p.m. (ESPN2)

Friday

Myrtle Beach Bowl

Conway, S.C.

Kennesaw State vs. Western Michigan, 11 a.m. (ESPN)

Gasparilla Bowl

Tampa, Fla.

Memphis vs N.C. State, 2:30 p.m. (ESPN)

College Football Playoff

First Round

No. 11 Alabama (10-3) at No. 8 Oklahoma (10-2), 8 p.m. (ESPN/ABC)

Saturday

College Football Playoff

First Round

No. 10 Miami (Fla.) (10-2) at No. 7 Texas A&M (11-1), noon (ESPN/ABC)

No. 17 Tulane (11-2) at No. 6 Mississippi (11-1), 3:30 p.m. (TNT/HBO Max)

No. 19 James Madison (12-1) at No. 5 Oregon (11-1), 7:30 p.m. (TNT/HBO Max)

HOCKEY

NHL EASTERN CONFERENCE

Atlantic Division

	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Detroit	34	19	12	3	41	107	111
Boston	34	20	14	0	40	113	106
Tampa Bay	33	18	12	3	39	106	88
Montreal	33	17	12	4	38	106	117
Florida	32	17	13	2	36	103	101
Toronto	32	15	12	5	35	105	104
Ottawa	32	15	13	4	34	101	104
Buffalo	32	14	14	4	32	98	109

Metropolitan Division

	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Carolina	32	21	9	2	44	108	90
N.Y. Islanders	34	19	12	3	41	102	96
Philadelphia	32	17	9	6	40	96	89
Washington	33	18	11	4	40	106	88
Pittsburgh	32	14	9	9	37	103	102
New Jersey	33	18	14	1	37	97	103
N.Y. Rangers	35	16	15	4	36	89	95
Columbus	33	14	13	6	34	100	115

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Central Division

	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Colorado	33	24	2	7	55	128	

TODAY IN HISTORY WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 17, 2025



ASSOCIATED PRESS PHOTOS

U.S. soldiers bow their heads at memorial services at Lai Khe, Vietnam, Dec. 17, 1965, for comrades killed in action the week before. The rifles, helmets and boots belong to the seven casualties killed during a search and destroy operation in the jungle west of Lai Khe.

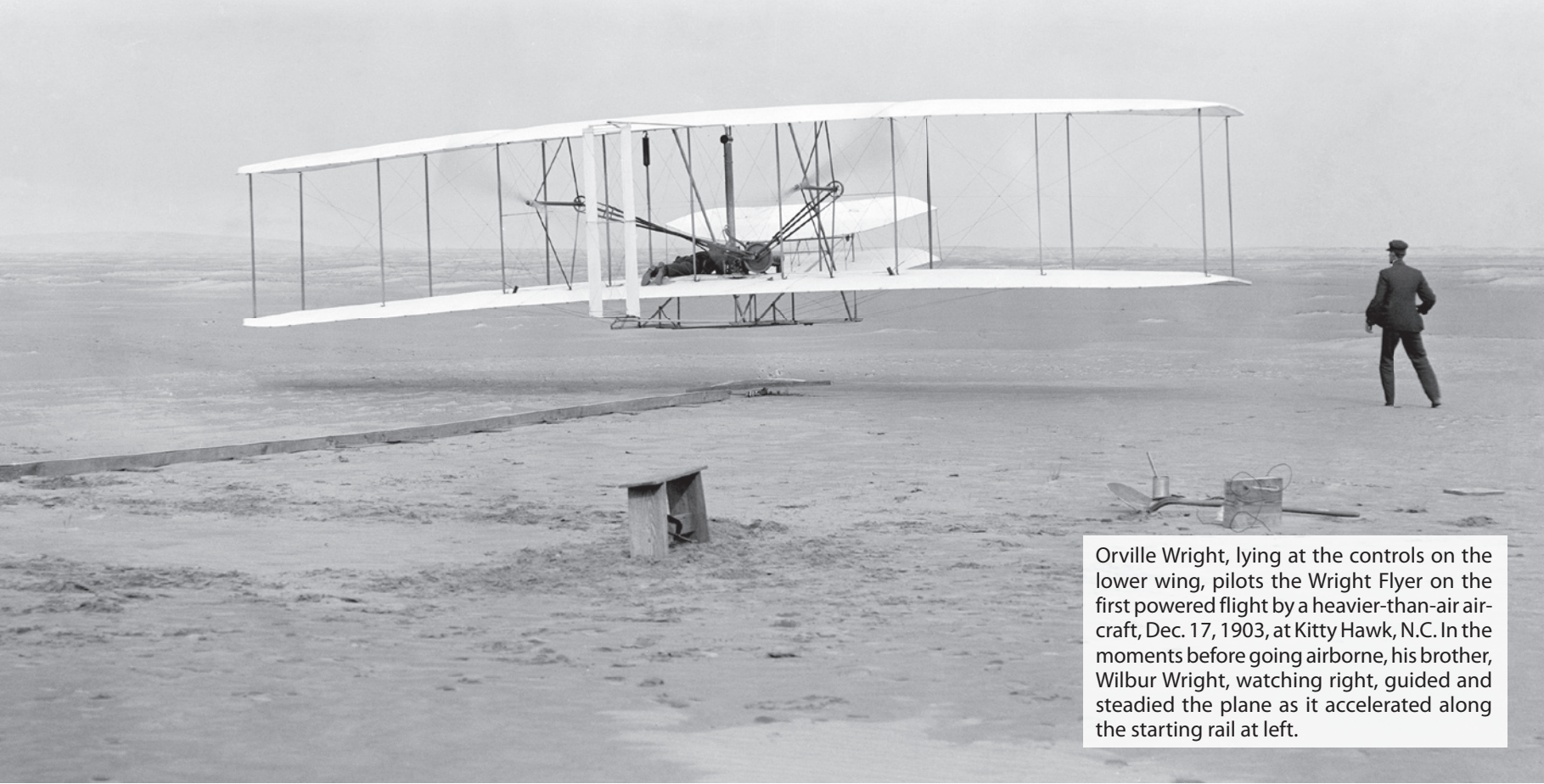
Today is Wednesday, Dec. 17, the 351st day of 2025. There are 14 days left in the year.

Today in history:
In 1777, France becomes one of the first nations to officially recognize the independence of the United States.
In 1933, the Chicago Bears defeated the New York Giants 23-21 in the first NFL championship game.
In 1944, U.S. Army Maj. Gen. Henry C. Pratt rescinded incarceration orders for people of Japanese ancestry during World War II; more than 110,000 people, about two-thirds of them U.S. citizens, had been forced into camps after a February 1942 executive order by President Franklin D. Roosevelt.
In 1963, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Clean Air Act into law; it was the first federal legislation targeting the control of air pollution.
In 1975, Lynette “Squeaky” Fromme was sentenced to life in prison for her attempt on the life of President Gerald R. Ford in Sacramento, California. (She was paroled in August 2009.)
In 1979, Arthur McDuffie, a Black insurance broker and former Marine, was beaten by police after leading

On Dec. 17, 1903, Wilbur and Orville Wright conducted the first successful manned, powered airplane flights near Kitty Hawk, North Carolina, using their experimental craft, the Wright Flyer.

them on a chase with his motorcycle in Miami. McDuffie died four days later. (Four white police officers accused of beating McDuffie were acquitted in 2000, sparking riots in Miami that led to several deaths and millions of dollars in damages.)
In 1989, “The Simpsons” debuts on Fox television; it has become the longest-running animated U.S. TV series.
In 1992, President George H.W. Bush, Canadian Prime Minister Brian Mulroney and Mexican President Carlos Salinas de Gortari signed the North American Free Trade Agreement in separate ceremonies; NAFTA went into effect in 2004 and was replaced by the United States–Mexico–Canada Agreement in 2020.

In 2014, the United States and Cuba announced they would restore diplomatic relations, which had been severed in 1961 after Fidel Castro's 1959 revolution overthrew a U.S.-backed government. Full diplomatic relations resumed in 2015.
In 2024, Lt. Gen. Igor Kirillov, a senior Russian general, was killed by a bomb hidden in a scooter outside his apartment building in Moscow, a day after Ukraine's security service accused him of directing the use of banned chemical weapons in Russia's war in Ukraine. A Ukrainian official said the service carried out the attack in which Kirillov's assistant also died.
Today's Birthdays: Actor Armin Mueller-Stahl is 95. Actor Ernie Hudson is 80. Political commentator Chris Matthews is 80. Comedian-actor Eugene Levy is 79. Actor Wes Studi is 78. Rock singer Paul Rodgers is 76. Actor Bill Pullman is 72. Filmmaker Peter Farrelly is 69. Rock musician Mike Mills (R.E.M.) is 67. Country singer Tracy Byrd is 59. Actor Laurie Holden is 56. Actor Claire Forlani is 54. Filmmaker Rian Johnson is 52. Actor Sarah Paulson is 51. Actor Giovanni Ribisi is 51. Actor Milla Jovovich (YO'-vuh-vich) is 50. Boxer Manny Pacquiao is 47. Actor Emma Bell is 39. Actor-singer Nat Wolff is 31.



Orville Wright, lying at the controls on the lower wing, pilots the Wright Flyer on the first powered flight by a heavier-than-air aircraft, Dec. 17, 1903, at Kitty Hawk, N.C. In the moments before going airborne, his brother, Wilbur Wright, watching right, guided and steadied the plane as it accelerated along the starting rail at left.