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FORECAST

TODAY **WED** **THU**

91°/67° **94°/73°** **89°/73°**
Complete forecast, **A2**

NATION



Vaccination rates are down again

U.S. kindergarten vaccination rates inched down again last year and the share of children with exemptions rose to an all-time high, according to federal data posted Monday. **A3**

Watchdog reviews DEA fentanyl tactic

The U.S. Justice Department's internal watchdog on Monday announced a review of a controversial tactic in which federal law enforcement allowed fentanyl to hit the streets to build bigger cases against drug traffickers. **A7**

WORLD

Indonesians await aid after earthquake

Thousands of people waited for aid on the Indonesian island of Flores on Monday as the country marked its 81st Independence Day, two days after a powerful earthquake killed at least 68 people, injured more than 200 others and damaged thousands of homes. **A3**

Border project paused in Texas national park

The Trump administration said Monday it is temporarily pausing construction of a contentious border construction project in Texas' Big Bend National Park while the head of the agency tasked with building the wall visits to do an "on-the-ground evaluation." **A7**

BUSINESS

Ukraine targets Russia's economy

The attacks began on a July weekend and have continued for a month, stretching from Moscow and St. Petersburg, to cities in the south, and eastward to the Ural Mountains. The targets weren't oil refineries, maritime hubs or arms plants hit by other Ukrainian strikes, but warehouses that bring the convenience of online shopping across the breadth of Russia. **B8**

AREA DEATHS

Sheila Baker, Decatur
Mary Beene, Moulton
Wayne Carmen, Decatur
Tracey Cox, Decatur
Amos Grissom, Decatur
Ty Hamilton, Decatur
Bonnie Terry, Trinity
Vernell Wilson, Moulton
Death notices, obits, **A5**

AbbyB5 Horoscopes.....B5
Business.....B8 In the Community..A8
Classified.....B6 Obituaries.....A5
Comics.....B4 Sports.....B1
Crossword.....B5 Weather.....A2
Editorials.....A4

Decatur, Alabama
115th year, No. 155
16 pages, 2 sections



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DECATUR

Council sets data center rules

By Bayne Hughes
Staff Writer

With the possibility of data centers coming to Decatur, the City Council on Monday approved zoning restrictions for the facilities.

The council voted 4-1 to pass an ordinance that does not restrict the size of a data center in an industrial setting or require

data centers to place their power source inside. The ordinance limits data centers to industrial zoning districts.

The zoning text amendment also bans keeping chickens in an apartment or town home setting while allowing personal-vehicle sales,



McMasters



Bullard

rentals, service and repairs in community commercial (CC), commercial regional (CR), light industrial (LI) and industrial

(I) zoning districts.

The ordinance sets data centers as a "special exception use" in an industrial zoning district.

This requires a developer to get a variance from the Board of Zoning Adjustments to have a center in the city. The zoning does not allow data centers anywhere else in the city.

The council Monday added additional steps a proposed data center would have to complete before receiving approval.

SEE COUNCIL, A6

ATHENS-LIMESTONE HOSPITAL

Room for growth



A visitor walks in the new Acute Observation and Infusion Unit at Athens-Limestone Hospital on Monday.

[JERONIMO NISA/DECATUR DAILY]

New observation and infusion unit opening

By Erica Smith
Staff Writer

ATHENS — Athens-Limestone Hospital is opening a new Acute Observation and Infusion Unit with 25 beds in response to the growth the county and city are seeing.

"With growth, you have to add beds to take care of the needs," said Athens-Limestone Hospital President Traci Collins. "We're growing so fast. As our community grows, our healthcare services also expand. That's why this was added."

The hospital is hoping to open the unit by the end of the month. Collins said they

are just waiting for a letter of occupancy from the state. The unit area already existed and was the Long-term Acute Unit. It was renovated to be the new Acute Observation and Infusion Unit.

The hospital is located at 700 Market Street West in Athens. To enter the unit, one would come through the Sanders Street lobby entrance. There was a ribbon cutting on Monday for the new unit.

Collins said she believes they will eventually fill up the unit.

"Last week, we were holding patients in our ER because we didn't have a bed to put them in," she said. "When you hold patients in your ER,



Collins



Langford

it means more patients are holding in the lobby. Instead of holding those patients in the ER, they would come to this unit."

Stacy Langford is the Athens-Limestone Hospital service line director for emergency and outpatient services. She will be overseeing the new Acute Observation and Infusion Unit.

"Observation status is just a neat way to say patients who do not require full hospital admission. They may have entered through the emergency department and need ongoing monitoring and treatment and diagnostic

SEE HOSPITAL, A6

PLANNING COMMISSION

Food trucks may be in more places

By Bayne Hughes
Staff Writer

Food trucks could get new places to park in downtown Decatur under proposed zoning ordinance changes reviewed by the Planning Commission during a called work session last week.

Planning Director Chad Bowman proposed relocating some existing food-truck spaces and adding others, including locations under the Gordon Drive overpass, along First Avenue Northeast and near Lee Street and Oak Street Northeast.

The food-truck changes were among several revisions commissioners reviewed less than a year after Decatur adopted its new zoning ordinance. Commissioners also agreed on proposed changes involving major subdivisions and sidewalk café barriers.

The commission did not complete its review. Additional work sessions are likely, but dates were not set. Any changes to the ordinance would have to be reviewed and approved by the City Council.

In 2021, the City Council approved a mobile vending ordinance limiting food trucks to three public locations: the Morgan County/Decatur Farmers Market; First Avenue Northeast between the alley near the Alabama Center for the Arts and Lee Street; and the Pedestrian Mall near the Old State Bank, Bank and Church streets and Founders Park.

At the time, then-Planning Commission Chairman Kent Lawrence, now mayor, said the



Bowman

SEE FOOD, A6

STRAIT OF HORMUZ

Trump threatens Oman as it works on Iran deal

The Associated Press

U.S. President Donald Trump has again threatened Oman as Iran says it is working with the Gulf Arab country on a plan to manage shipping through the Strait of Hormuz. Fully reopening the waterway has been a key U.S. demand.

Meanwhile, the 60-day negotiating period to find a peace deal between the United States and Iran was expiring, with no word of an extension and both sides seemingly as far apart as they were at the start.

Here's a look at the latest

developments Monday in the Iran war and the wider Middle East.

Iran said it has reached an agreement with Oman over a plan for ships to transit the Strait of Hormuz, which runs between the two countries, and they are now working to finalize details for a joint statement.

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmail Baghaei told reporters in Tehran, Iran's capital, that "an understanding has been reached regarding the map of the transit route."

He did not elaborate, but details that have previously

emerged suggest the deal would reopen the strait with ships entering through a route close to Iran and exiting through a route close to Oman. Ships would transit without paying fees or tolls during an interim period.

The U.S. has sought an acceptable deal on opening the strait before ending its blockade of Iranian ports.

Iran effectively closed the strait — through which roughly one-fifth of the world's traded oil supplies passed before the war — after Israel and the U.S. attacked the country on Feb. 28.

Trump told Fox News reporter

Trey Yingst that the U.S. would bomb Oman if it "gets in the way," using an expletive for emphasis.

This is not the first time that Trump has threatened Oman. In May, he told reporters during a Cabinet meeting that "Oman will behave just like everybody else, or we will have to blow them up."

Trump also said the expiration of the 60-day deadline on talks to end the war was irrelevant and said there was no timeline, Yingst said. Trump said the U.S. has a back channel for talks with

SEE TRUMP, A5