The Washington Times

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PROBLEMS: The nationwide ground stop of airlines starting Friday was attributed to a router glitch during an upgrade of decades-old infrastructure.

SECURITY

Global power will be won or lost in space

NASA chief, generals sound the alarm at summit on China's increasing edge

By Vaughn Cockayne
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

The U.S. will dominate the second space race and extend America's reach to the stars, while new space-based technologies will protect crucial national security assets in orbit and pave the way for a multibillion-dollar cislunar economy, key government officials, generals and industry leaders said at a major conference Tuesday.

NASA Administrator Jared Isaacman was among the headliners at the Golden Age of Space event in Arlington, Virginia, hosted by Threat Status, The Washington Times' flagship national security platform. The future of the Trump administration's Golden Dome missile shield, the need for the U.S. to build more launchpad infrastructure to get satellites into orbit, and the rapidly expanding size and mission of the U.S. Space Force were among the central topics at the gathering.

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Mr. Isaacman, the billionaire businessman appointed by President Trump to lead NASA, argued that America's global power and influence in the 21st century will be won or lost in space.

He pointed to several of NASA's most notable achievements in spaceflight and said upcoming successes will only increase America's reach into space. Mr. Isaacman vowed that the U.S. will soon return humans to the moon and build a base on the lunar surface that will serve as a launchpad to Mars and beyond.

"We will return to the lunar surface. We will build the base, and we will never give up on the moon again," he said in

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TECHNOLOGY

Mullin blames AI for surge in outages

Warns of even more disruptions ahead

By Mary McCue Bell and Sean Salai
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Homeland Security Secretary Markwayne Mullin said recent tech outages at JP Morgan Chase, United Airlines and Microsoft may have been caused by artificial intelligence and predicted further disruptions, despite many organizations denying AI as a factor.

Mr. Mullin told Fox News host Sean Hannity that he found a theory credible from an unnamed tech industry source that self-fixing AI software writes code faster than legacy infrastructure can handle, creating a ripple effect of system overloads.

"But it has nothing to do with cyberattacks. And I believe we're going to see more of this as new technology rolls out, better technology," Mr. Mullin said.

Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy told CNBC's "Squawk Box" on Monday that "they're pushing new technology on top of really old computer systems, and it just seems to overwhelm the system a little bit, and it's not able to catch up."

Mr. Mullin, dismissing what he called conspiracy theories, added that "we are not under attack" from foreign hackers and urged private companies to alert consumers about scheduled system updates to minimize related disruptions.

Meanwhile, a cyberattack planted malicious JavaScript code on the websites of 178 organizations Monday — including CNN, the BBC, Zoom, Peacock and HSBC — by exploiting a vulnerability in Optimizely, a web-testing platform used across those sites, web security firm Report URI reported.

The incident stemmed from third-party website scripts and was unrelated to the infrastructure outages that Mr. Mullin addressed.

Technology experts interviewed by

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MIDTERMS

Voters deal blow to data centers



ASSOCIATED PRESS PHOTOGRAPHS

RECONSIDERING: Sen. Josh Hawley, Missouri Republican, is heeding calls from voters nationwide about the rise of data centers. "People are apoplectic about this," Mr. Hawley said. "In my state, they're apoplectic about losing prime farm ground."

Hawley breaks with Republicans, backs moratorium

By Lindsey McPherson
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Sen. Josh Hawley, Missouri Republican, was not on the ballot this year, but one of his pet issues was: data centers.

The senator has championed the need for guardrails on data center construction, but since the election, he has taken a rare position within his party, calling for a moratorium on data center construction.

The position signals that voters' opposition to data centers has broken through.

"People are apoplectic about this," Mr. Hawley said. "In my state, they're apoplectic about losing prime farm ground. They're apoplectic about transmission lines running over their homes to fund these data centers. And they feel like they have no control — and that's before we even get to electricity costs."

In the Nov. 3 midterm elections, not a single one of the 46 local ballot questions seeking approval for a data center across the country passed. Voters overwhelmingly elected candidates, primarily Democrats, who took stronger stances against data center development.

"There's a lot of fear about AI from people who think that AI will take away their jobs, and AI is not something that you can put your hands on, but a data center is," said Dan Ye, an AI expert and researcher who teaches at UC Merced. "So, in some sense, this anti-data-center sentiment, especially from the left, is also people's reaction against the [concern] that AI might take away their job."

A majority of voters said AI will do more to harm society than to help it, and that data centers were a major factor in how they voted, according to CBS News exit polls.

Roughly 76% of voters would oppose a data center in their community, compared with 24% who would support it.

The opponents include 87% of Democrats, 78% of independents and 62% of Republicans.

Still, Mr. Hawley is fairly alone among Republicans in calling for a data center moratorium. Many Democrats are not

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IMMIGRATION

Agents get 'bored' at most secure border ever

Smugglers turning to sea crossings

By Stephen Dinan
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

The southwestern border has become so calm that a recent visitor reported that Border Patrol agents are almost bored by the lack of activity.

Agents are called out for fewer search-and-rescue operations; border deaths are down 80% since President Trump took office; drug seizures are up; and the ratio of criminal arrests has soared as the Border Patrol has to spend less time tracking down and caring for illegal immigrants and can devote more time to scouring the people and contraband that do make it across.

Gotaways — migrants who are detected but manage to evade capture — have also plummeted, from thousands a day in 2023 to more than 800 a day in 2024 to an average of just dozens per day now.

Some days, there are zero gotaways, said Todd Bensman, who served as a senior adviser to the Homeland Security Department and the Border Czar's office during the Trump administration and is now a senior research fellow at The Heritage Foundation.

"I would argue that Border Patrol and the military forces down there don't have enough to do," Mr. Bensman said. "They're bored. They get very excited when there's any kind of movement anywhere."

It is a shocking turnaround for a border that several years ago was the most chaotic in history, with agents regularly recording daily arrest totals of 10,000 illegal immigrants. Now the Border Patrol averages fewer than 300 a day.

The arrest numbers are just part of the story.

Search and rescue operations have

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ECONOMY

Taxpayer-funded grocery store closes after 16 months

Illinois failure gives warning to Democrats

By Susan Ferrechio
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

An Illinois grocery store funded by state and federal tax dollars closed abruptly Sunday, a little more than a year after its grand opening, serving as a potential warning sign to Democrats pushing for more government-funded food stores.

The Prairie Food Co-op opened in July 2025 in Lombard with the help of an $807,835 state grant and an additional $750,000 in federal funding secured by Rep. Sean Casten, Illinois Democrat.

Last year, Mr. Casten celebrated the co-op's federal funding for "locally sourced groceries" that "create economic and environmental benefits for constituents."

In a Nov. 11 letter to co-op members, the board announced that the store lacked sufficient funds to remain open.

The co-op generated about $40,000 in sales per week, about half the weekly sales needed to keep operating.

The board's attempts at improvements, including hiring "experienced grocery consultants" and a general manager, did nothing to improve sales, the board said.

Results from a member survey released by the board provided clues behind the store's downfall: "Our survey ... made clear that the store was not meeting many shoppers' needs, particularly around produce selection, pricing and the availability of conventional grocery options alongside natural and organic offerings."

The Prairie Food grocery store was among dozens of co-ops that received millions of dollars in federal funding under the Biden administration.

The federal government has handed out millions of dollars in grants to co-op food stores across the country, including $2.6 million awarded in 2024 to 20 co-op

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DEALT A LOSS: Rep. Sean Casten, Illinois Democrat, helped secure government funding for the Prairie Food Co-op, which closed abruptly Sunday.

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