



Ponte Vedra Concert Hall reopening after renovation

METRO, 1B

The Florida Times-Union

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According to the city of Jacksonville, a developer is considering bringing a Hard Rock Hotel downtown at the former site of the unfinished Berkman II tower across from the Sheriff's Office on East Bay Street. BOB SELF/FLORIDA TIMES-UNION

Hard Rock Hotel eyed in downtown Jacksonville

City officials have had talks with a development group that's interested in building the project

David Bauerlein
Jacksonville Florida Times-Union
USA TODAY NETWORK

Global hotelier Hard Rock Hotels might come to downtown Jacksonville on a riverfront site that's stood vacant since demolition tore down the half-built Berkman II apartment tower.

The Hard Rock Hotel would be just up the St. Johns River from the Four Seasons Hotel and Residences Jacksonville that Jaguars owner Shad Khan is building and a short walk from the Hyatt Regency Jacksonville Riverfront hotel.

Hard Rock and its music-themed hotels operate around the world. In Florida, Hard Rock is a major player among destination hotels operating in Daytona Beach, Orlando, Tampa, Hollywood and Fort Lauderdale. Hard Rock is moving forward with a planned hotel in Pensacola.

City officials have had talks with a development group that's interested in building a Hard Rock Hotel in downtown, city spokesman Phillip Perry said.

"We have spoken with several groups looking at downtown parcels," Perry said. "One of those groups is interested in the possibility of a hotel on the Berkman II site, and it potentially being a Hard Rock Hotel."

Some of Hard Rock's hotels in Florida



have casinos in them. The hotel in Jacksonville would not have a casino.

Hard Rock previously showed interest in Jacksonville when a developer submitted a proposal in 2022 for building a Reverb by Hard Rock Hotel and an apartment building on the former site of the old county courthouse off Bay Street.

See **HARD ROCK HOTEL**, Page 6A

Crews put up the sign at the Hard Rock Hotel in Daytona Beach on March 6, 2018.
NIKKI ROSS/
DAYTONA BEACH NEWS-JOURNAL

Summer record for electricity use broken

Previous daily peak had stood since August 2007

David Bauerlein
Jacksonville Florida Times-Union
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JEA customers set a record this week for summertime electric consumption and then promptly broke that record the next day as they revved up their air conditioning in the face of sweltering weather.

The previous daily peak in summer had stood since August 2007.

"These record-breaking levels not only reflect the continued growth of our community but also the increasing demand for electricity during extreme weather and the resilience of our system to keep up with our customers' needs," JEA spokeswoman Karen McAllister said.

On a typical summer day, JEA customers consume 2,500 to 2,600 MW of electricity.

That usage surged to 2,959 MW on July 28, eclipsing the prior record of 2,937 MW. Then on July 29, JEA customers used 2,980 MW.

See **ELECTRICITY USE**, Page 6A

About 154,000 federal workers took buyouts, source says

Alexandra Alper and Courtney Rozen
REUTERS

WASHINGTON – Roughly 154,000 federal employees have taken buyouts offered by the Trump administration this year, part of a broader push to slim the federal workforce, a person familiar with the matter said July 31. The resignations, which amount to 6.7% of the civilian federal workforce, are the result of a program launched in January by billionaire Elon Musk, a former adviser to President Donald Trump, with an email titled "Fork in the Road." The buyouts included staff at the Departments of Agriculture and Energy, and the Internal Revenue Service, among others.

Similar buyout offers were made in the following months at different agencies.

See **FEDERAL BUYOUTS**, Page 6A

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