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Hurricane Erin stirring up seas

East Coast is experiencing higher tides and big waves

Dinah Voyles Pulver and Jeanine Santucci
USA TODAY

Hurricane Erin’s higher tides and big waves prompted the expansion of tropical storm and coastal flooding advisories along much of the East Coast.

Beachfront property owners braced for the worst with predictions for a life-threatening storm surge of up to 4 feet and significant coastal erosion, with “large, powerful, life-threatening” waves of 15 to 20 feet expected to batter beaches for 48 hours or more as the hurricane crawls northward offshore through at least Aug. 21, if not longer.

Beachgoers along the entire East Coast were warned against swimming in the ocean.

“Erin is a large hurricane and growing,” the National Weather Service said the morning of Aug. 20.

Already on Aug. 19, Erin was generating waves of 35 feet or more at an ocean buoy east-northeast of the Bahamas, creating swells and stirring up a broad swath of the ocean.

The Category 2 hurricane saw its winds weaken to as low as 100 mph on Aug. 19 as its north side battled winds, but the National Hurricane Center said early on Aug. 20 that the storm had re-formed an inner eye wall. The official forecast stated the storm could see its winds increase to 110 mph as it passes North Carolina on Aug. 21.

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“We’ve seen some very impressive, and dangerous, waves on webcams up and down the coast. Significant, and large, breaking waves ... will only strengthen over the next 24-48 hours.”

Roger Martin
A meteorologist with the National Weather Service in Morehead City, North Carolina

A flag warns against swimming in Avon-by-the-Sea, New Jersey, as Hurricane Erin creates dangerous rip currents up and down the East Coast.
EDUARDO MUNOZ/REUTERS

Power Partners celebrates milestone

Athens plant produces 10 millionth transformer

Wayne Ford
Athens Banner-Herald
USA TODAY NETWORK

A local manufacturing plant that has operated in Athens since 1958 recently announced that the plant has produced its 10 millionth electrical transformer, an important component of an electrical system serving homes and businesses.

Power Partners, located on Newton Bridge Road and serving communities throughout Georgia and the U.S., hosted a special ceremony for employees to recognize the achievement.

ERMCO purchased Power Partners in December 2022. Among those attending the event in Athens were ERMCO’s leaders and production staff, along with employees from the company’s parent company, Arkansas Electric Cooperative.

The transformer that reached the 10 million milestone was presented to Southern Company. The company noted that Southern Co., through its

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The Athens Library Store at the Athens-Clarke County Library in Athens on Aug. 18.

ANDREW SHEARER/ATHENS BANNER-HERALD

County library launches bookstore

Andrew Shearer
Athens Banner-Herald
USA TODAY NETWORK

Folks who are used to having to return all of the books that they get from the Athens-Clarke County Library will be pleased to know that there will soon be an opportunity to keep some of them for good.

The Athens Library Store will hold its grand opening at 10 a.m. Saturday, Aug. 23, allowing local readers to shop for quality secondhand books, vintage and one-of-a-kind books, gifts, cards,

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Senate eyeing need-based college scholarship program in Georgia

Dave Williams
Capitol Beat News Service

The state’s lottery-funded HOPE Scholarship program has been highly successful, covering most or all of college tuition for more than 2.2 million Georgians since its inception in 1993.

But Georgia lawmakers are considering expanding state aid to public college and university students beyond the merit-based HOPE program to a need-based scholarship initiative. The newly formed state Senate Study Committee on Higher Education Affordability will hold its first meeting on Monday at the state Capitol.

“In my conversations on both sides of

the aisle, there’s been a recognition that getting more students into college is a must,” said Sen. Nan Orrock, D-Atlanta, who will chair the committee. “[But] we have not turned our attention to need-based support.”

“I’m very concerned about the level of debt students come out of college with,” added Sen. Max Burns, R-Sylvania, chairman of the Senate Higher Education Committee and a member of the new study panel. “The study committee is designed to explore as many avenues as we can to expand our graduation rates.”

The University System of Georgia’s six-year graduation rate has increased significantly during the last decade,

surpassing 80% for the system as a whole and surging beyond 90% at the system’s research universities including the University of Georgia and Georgia Tech.

The university system has taken various steps to boost graduation rates. The system has participated in the Complete College America program since 2011.

In 2022, the system launched the website Georgia Degrees Pay to show the value of a degree. The following year saw the start of GEORGIA MATCH, a direct admission program that involves sending letters to high

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