

Radioactive seafood? Walmart pulls shrimp over possible contamination.



Tour Championship: All eyes are on world No. 1 Scottie Scheffler at East Lake.

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

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Fulton OKs \$1.2B jail facility plan

An agreement with the Department of Justice mandates the county, sheriff improve jail conditions.

By Allia Pharr
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As concerns intensify over conditions at the Fulton County Jail and the costs of complying with a federal order to improve them, the Fulton County Commission on Wednesday narrowly approved a \$1.2 billion plan to renovate the

jail and build a new facility for inmates with special needs. Four of the commission's seven members approved the proposal, allowing county staff to refine the plan and conduct community outreach. Of the three commissioners who did not vote to approve the proposal, Mo Ivory opposed it, Dana Barrett abstained and

Marvin Arrington Jr. was absent. "I think this is a very fiscally responsible approach," Commissioner Bob Ellis said. Earlier this year, Fulton County entered a federal consent decree with the U.S. Department of Justice mandating that the county and its sheriff improve jail conditions, which federal officials called "abhorrent" and unconstitutional.

Jail continued on A11



The Fulton County Jail dorm for inmates with mental health issues is seen in 2023. The jail is to be renovated and a new facility added to house inmates with special needs. NATRICE MILLER/AJC 2023

OPINION

The numbers don't lie: Rural Georgia is dying



Cuthbert is the county seat of Randolph County, which registered more deaths than births in 2024. State Rep. Gerald Greene, R-Cuthbert, represents nine counties in the state's southwest corner. Five have no hospitals. HYOSUB SHIN/AJC

Most of the state's 159 counties report more deaths than births.



Bill Torpy
Only in the AJC

Every now and then, you see something that's a holy (smokes!) moment. And an old number-crunching author/researcher named Charles Hayslett provided one this time. Hayslett has researched Georgia for decades and writes a blog called Trouble in God's Country, which documents rural counties dying on the vine. His work has been so influential that

the state House created a committee to try to address the deterioration. Recently, Hayslett wrote "Mapping the death of rural Georgia," a sober piece demonstrating that concept in bleak outlines. Years ago, he started compiling state data concerning the number of births and deaths registered in each county. In 2017, he made a presentation at the initial meeting of the Georgia House Rural Development Council in Tifton. He showed legislators a map from 1994 that indicated 12 of Georgia's 159 counties had more deaths than births. That number stayed relatively constant until after the Great Recession of 2008. Then the numbers took off. By 2015, there were 60.

Torpy continued on A6

Y'ALL-ITICS

Patricia Murphy: With a small inheritance, a wicked sense of humor and a commitment to treat the poorest people in the poorest part of the state, Dr. Karen Kinsell has been a literal lifeline to patients in 2,900-person Clay County. At 70, she hopes to practice five more years, **A9**

■ Sign up for more from Patricia Murphy at **AJC.com/newsletters**



Hundreds of health workers call on RFK Jr. for protection

Current, ex-employees ask secretary to stop sowing distrust in CDC, science.

By Ariel Hart
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Current and former employees of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and other parts of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, have sent a letter to Congress and HHS Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr., calling him complicit in endangering them and the health of Americans. The letter asks for Kennedy's help in protecting them. It comes on the heels of the Aug. 8 shooting at the CDC, in which a gunman shot nearly 500 rounds at the CDC headquarters on Clifton Road and killed DeKalb County Police officer David Rose, who confronted him. About 330 people signed the version of the letter that was sent out, the organizers said. About another 430 signed but asked that their names be kept private for fear of reprisal, they said.

CDC continued on A6

Good education news: Metro Atlanta has few teacher vacancies

School districts 'very innovative' in how they retain, recruit educators.

By Cassidy Alexander
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A recent DeKalb County Board of Education meeting was interrupted by applause and cheers at some surprising good news: The district only had two teacher vacancies in August. It's a big difference from the start of the school year in recent years. Georgia's third-largest school system reported more than 100 teacher openings in August last year, and more than 300 the year before that. The low number of vacancies is reflected across metro Atlanta this year. Gwinnett, the state's largest school system, reported 14 openings at the start of the academic year. Cobb County reported five. Atlanta Public Schools and Cherokee County each reported three. Fulton County Schools reported 66, which is still just about 1% of its 6,200 teaching

Vacancies continued on A6

LIVING, C1

Beloved rink about to hang up its skates

After Skate Along USA opened on Beaver Ruin Road in Lilburn in 1978, multiple generations of kids blew out birthday candles, ate pizza, played pinball and experienced their first kisses in the nooks and crannies of the 22,000-square-foot space. But that's about to end. The property has been sold, and Skate Along USA is closing for good, with this Sunday the last day to roll through for one final 'couples skate.'



Israel passes settlement plan that could divide West Bank

Critics say project ruins hopes for peace and a Palestinian state.

By Melanie Lidman
Associated Press

TEL AVIV, ISRAEL — Israel gave final approval Wednesday for a controversial settlement project in the occupied West Bank that effectively would cut the territory in two, and that Palestinians and rights groups say could destroy hopes for a future Pales-

tinian state. Settlement development in EI, an open tract of land east of Jerusalem, has been under consideration for more than two decades but was frozen because of U.S. pressure during previous administrations. The international community overwhelmingly considers Israeli settlement construction in the West Bank to be illegal and an obstacle to peace. Israeli Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich, a former settler leader,

Israel continued on A6



HURRICANE ERIN, A7

East Coast beaches close ahead of strong storm

Authorities expect Erin's large swells to whip up life-threatening rip currents from Florida to New England.

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