

# Rome News-Tribune

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Saturday/Sunday, March 28/29, 2026

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Weather: Sunny. High 68. Low 40. **B4**

## Historic courthouse fire: What we know

By Adam Carey  
ACarey@RN-T.com

Five days after a historic disaster, Rome and Floyd County citizens are still reeling from the loss of the Floyd County Historic Courthouse as a fast-moving fire consumed the 134-year-old building. The cause of the fire remains under investigation as of Friday, according to Rome-Floyd Fire Department Division Chief Jamie Stone, and the investigation could take several weeks.

“It was such a massive fire, it will take time to conduct a full investigation,” Stone said. “And most of the structure is still mostly inaccessible.” The fire started at approximately 2:20 p.m. on Monday, March 23, on an otherwise beautiful day, when Floyd County Facility Manager Ryan Davis and supervisor Blake Oyler smelled smoke and went into the attic of the building to investigate. They found that the attic, a huge space above the second-story of-

fices, was filled with smoke and clearly on fire. The space is only accessible from the second floor via a ladder with a removable panel. Davis and Oyler quickly ran through the building, alerting workers and visitors that the building was on fire. Within minutes of the building being evacuated, thick white smoke was pouring from every part of the roof, which is a bad sign, according to Battalion Chief Greg Abbott.



The roof of the clock tower on the Floyd County Historic Courthouse collapses hours after the fire started Monday. Contributed by Ryan Smith

SEE FIRE, A4

## Rome City Commission seeks to talk projects with Georgia DOT

By Mo Burge  
MBurge@RN-T.com

The Georgia Department of Transportation has a slate of projects inside the city limits of Rome and while there is a general consensus that each will provide some modicum of improvement for traffic and congestion, there doesn't appear to be an end in sight.

At a March 23 Rome City Commission caucus meeting, Mayor Jim Bojo asked staff to facilitate a meeting with DOT to answer some pressing questions about the projects and why there doesn't appear to be much latitude in minimizing the inconvenience of delays and ever-changing start and completion dates.

Take for instance the Second Avenue project, which DOT recently announced won't be complete until 2028 instead of the summer 2026 initial date.

Or the work under construction on Riverside Parkway, which has yet to turn dirt.

A third project, which involves Turner McCall Boulevard, has sparked conversation amongst the Rome Commission and it all came to a head regarding a fence. According to Commissioner Jill Fisher, who chairs the public works committee, DOT plans to put up a chain-link fence on the Turner McCall Bridge, to protect the railroad track that runs beneath it.

Commissioners were not impressed with the design and discussed the lack of

SEE DOT, A5

## What is a data center, and why is rural Georgia suddenly on the map?



Joel Bissell/mlive.com/TNS

An aerial image shows one of the two operational sites of Amazon Web Services Project Rainier spanning 1,200 acres in New Carlisle, Indiana, Feb. 4, 2026. The \$11 billion-dollar data center project will be larger than any computing facility in Michigan.

## Georgia's hidden industry

By Adam Carey  
ACarey@RN-T.com

It's been a long time since two fairly innocuous words have caused as much concern as these: data and center. This is the first article in a five-part series on a topic that has placed Northwest Georgia on the frontlines of a national conversation.

### WHAT IS A DATA CENTER?

A data center is essentially a warehouse holding thousands of interconnected computers that are simultaneously joined to the internet. Their cumulative computational power is used by many different companies for many different technologies.

Some data centers are built by specific companies that people know. Amazon, Microsoft, Google, Meta (Facebook), X (Twitter) and others. However,



Vickie Connor/Tribune Content

A Google data center operates in The Dalles, near the Columbia River.

some data centers are built by third parties so their processing power can be leased to whatever company needs it.

Some of these data centers can be more than a million square feet, and contain more than 100,000 expensive computer chips, all linked together to perform complex calculations very quickly.

These computer chips consume massive amounts of electricity and generate huge amounts of heat, which is why they need water to cool everything down. Typically, the amount of electricity consumed by a data center is measured in megawatts, or one million watts, which is enough electricity to power approximately 500 homes. The amount of money be-

### GEORGIA'S HIDDEN INDUSTRY

“Georgia's hidden industry” is a Rome News-Tribune 5-part series on the proliferation of data centers in Northwest Georgia and beyond. The series is published weekly on Saturday.

SEE DATA CENTER, A2

## Tyson Foods announces impending closure of Rome factory

By Adam Carey  
ACarey@RN-T.com

The Tyson Foods plant on Darlington Drive, which makes Nature Valley Granola Bars, is closing the factory this spring, according to the company.

“After careful consideration, we have made the difficult decision to cease operations at our Rome, Georgia, prepared foods facility,” Tyson Brands Corporate & Brand Communications Vice President Laura Burns said. “The facility has operated under a unique single-customer model, but recent changes have made continued operations at the site no longer viable.”

“We recognize the impact this has on our team members

SEE TYSON, A5



LOCAL MATTERS



Judged a newspaper of General Excellence 2025



### TODAY'S YOUNG ARTIST

Henry Cux Cuin, a second grader at Alto Park Elementary School

Email artwork to HKoon@RN-T.com. Include the student's name, grade and school.

Business	<b>D1</b>	Roman Record	<b>R1</b>	Roman Life	<b>C1</b>
Classified	<b>R6</b>	Opinion	<b>A8-A9</b>	Sports	<b>B1</b>
Dear Abby, Puzzles	<b>C6</b>	Religion	<b>C4</b>	TV listings	<b>R3</b>

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NO OBITUARIES: Funeral homes submitted no obituaries for today's edition.

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