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A scenic view of a river flowing through a forest with autumn foliage. The water reflects the surrounding trees and the overcast sky. The banks are lined with trees showing vibrant orange, yellow, and red leaves, interspersed with some evergreens. The sky is filled with heavy, grey clouds.

'Forever chemicals' found in all 30 samples taken in past 2 years

The nonprofit Savannah Riverkeeper has tested nearly 30 soil and surface water samples in the Savannah River basin over the past two years – all of which were contaminated with PFAS.

“I don’t have a sample yet that doesn’t have PFAS in it,” said Tonya Bonitatibus, executive director of Savannah Riverkeeper.

PFAS, short for perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances, is a class of about 15,000 chemicals manufactured by U.S. companies since the 1940s that lets oil glide on non-stick pans, water

Tonya Bonitatibus, executive director of Savannah Riverkeeper

roll off of raincoats and firefighting foams spread across surfaces. But these slippery substances also evade chemical breakdown – they can't be boiled, dissolved or easily filtered out – hence their moniker “forever chemicals.”

As for what they do to us, PFAS leave

few stones unturned, disrupting liver, kidney, thyroid, nervous, immune, endocrine and reproductive functions. It takes about five years to half their amount in the human body.

See CHEMICALS, Page 4A

A federal review of Georgia's unique implementation of Medicaid found that two-thirds of the money went to administrative overhead rather than to medical assistance.

The report from the U.S. Government Accountability Office also found that more than half of the \$80 million spent on the program since 2021 went to contractors who helped the state overhaul its eligibility and enrollment

system.

Georgia's Pathways to Coverage demonstration project needed the overhaul because of the state's work requirement. All applicants must prove they spent 80 hours working, attending college or doing community service during the month before applying.

They must continue those activities to stay insured.

A law passed by Congress this year makes other states impose similar work requirements.

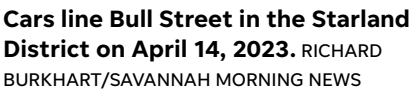
The new GAO review was requested

by four Democrats in the U.S. Senate, including Georgia Sens. Raphael Warnock and Jon Ossoff. They oppose the work requirements.

Warnock's office released the report Thursday.

In a briefing with reporters, a Warnock staffer criticized the lower-than-advertised program enrollment. There were about 7,500 Georgians insured by Pathways in May, the review said, far below the 25,000 Georgia had projected

See MEDICAID, Page 2A



City seeks input, potential solutions in latest study

Evan Lasseter
Savannah Morning News
USA TODAY NETWORK

Parking in Savannah north of Victory Drive can be a puzzle, with drivers sifting through city streets to find where they can fit. And in certain neighborhoods, that puzzle becomes even more difficult.

The City of Savannah released initial findings and draft recommendations for its 2025 Parking Matters study, where it seeks to identify new parking pressures and remedies amid Savannah's growth in development.

The study area encompassed south of Liberty Street to Victory Drive (with a portion extending beyond), in between Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard and East Broad Street. Occupancy counts conducted in October 2024 showed the highest increase in parking demand along the Bull Street corridor, primarily in the booming Starland District.

See PARKING, Page 2A

Ty Tagami
Capitol Beat News Service

Gov. Brian Kemp's upcoming trip to the Republic of Korea was planned "well before" the federal immigration raid on Georgia's Hyundai electric vehicle battery plant west of Savannah, his office said, indicating the two are unrelated.

“Governor Kemp and First Lady Marty Kemp will travel to Japan and the Republic of Korea this fall on a mission focused on strengthening economic ties with two key partners,” Kemp’s office said Sunday. “This travel, as with any economic development mission, was scheduled well before the events of Sept. 4, with the logistics required to organize such a mission taking months to finalize.”

The U.S. Department of Homeland

See KEMP, Page 5A

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