

Ross' 'masterpiece' will challenge best at PGA Championship, 1B

Edition readers get more | Subscribers can find bonus content at macon.com/edition.



Your local weather forecast
14A

VOLUME 200, No. 38
MIDDLE GEORGIA'S NEWSPAPER

Stay on top of local news and sports at macon.com.

WEDNESDAY MAY 13 2026

\$3

The Telegraph

MACON.COM

Lawmakers support phone ban, literacy boost in schools

BY MYRACLE LEWIS
mlewis@macon.com

Central Georgia lawmakers are praising a slate of new education laws focused on a variety of issues, including strengthened literacy, classroom dis-

cipline and teacher support.

Gov. Brian Kemp signed nine bills on May 5 that he framed as a "historic" step for Georgia students, among them the Georgia Early Literacy Act of 2026 and House Bill 1009, which bans personal electronic devices — including cellphones — in

high schools.

The restriction builds on last year's legislation that removed all personal electronic devices from K-8 classrooms in an effort to create distraction-free environments and improve student academic success.

The law requires all devices to

be stored away from the first bell of instruction time until dismissal. Students whose Individualized Education Program (IEP), Section 504 plan or medical plan requires the use of an electronic device would be exempt.

Schools will also have to create communication protocols directing parents to contact the school directly during the day and ensure emergency communication is handled.

Under the law, high schools must implement restrictions by July 1, 2027.

While the measure has drawn concern from families who previously told The Telegraph that removing cell-

SEE LAWMAKERS, 4A

Inflation accelerates after weeks of war in Iran

BY LYDIA DEPILLIS
NYT News Service

Consumer prices in the United States rose at the fastest rate since May 2023 last month, as sharp increases in energy costs caused by war in the Middle East made life more expensive for American consumers.

The consumer price index rose 3.8% in April from a year earlier, the Labor Department reported Tuesday, up from a 2.4% annual increase before the conflict started in February and a 3.3% increase in March.

The increase was driven largely by energy prices, up 3.8% since the previous month and nearly 18% from a year earlier. But the "core" index, stripping out volatile food and energy prices, also rose 2.8% over the year in April, up from 2.6% in March.

"I'm looking for anything where I can say 'here's some relief,' and that's not very easy to do in this report," said Michael Reid, chief U.S. economist at RBC Capital Markets. "Generally inflation is moving in the wrong direction."

The Federal Reserve tends to look past swings in energy costs, as they are generally expected to recede before translating into underlying inflation. But the hotter-than-expected measure will weaken the case for cutting interest rates this year, just as President Donald Trump's pick for Fed chair, Kevin Warsh, takes over from Jerome Powell. After the strong jobs report last week, many analysts had already moved back their forecasts for cuts into 2027.

As the heat from Trump's tariffs has faded from inflation readings this year, shortages of commodities blocked from transiting through the Strait of Hormuz are taking its place as a pressure on prices. Average gasoline prices are above \$4.50 per gallon, according to AAA, while diesel prices have nearly doubled.

Higher fuel costs are bleeding into prices for airline fares, which rose 2.8% in April, as well as goods that get to market in a diesel-fueled truck or on a boat. Grocery costs rose 2.9% since April 2025, driven largely by the price of beef, which has been rising for over a year because of smaller cattle herds. Tomato prices have risen nearly 40% from a year ago because of a combination of tariffs, severe weather affecting crop yields and higher fuel costs.

SEE INFLATION, 2A



KATIE TUCKER The Telegraph

Oglethorpe Power President and CEO Annalisa Bloodworth speaks to attendees at the ceremonial groundbreaking for the Smarr Combined-Cycle energy facility off of Rumble Road on Thursday, May 7, 2026, in Forsyth, Ga. The new natural gas plant is expected to be operational in 2029.

Oglethorpe Power breaks ground on \$3.3 billion natural gas plant

BY MARGARET WALKER
mwalker@macon.com

Georgia's growing electricity demand is driving another major natural gas expansion, with Oglethorpe Power breaking ground Thursday on a \$3.3

billion natural gas power plant in Monroe County.

The Smarr Combined-Cycle energy facility, planned off Rumble Road and across the street from the new Buc-ee's, which broke ground last month, is expected to come online in 2029. It will generate enough

electricity to power an estimated 800,000 homes and help meet rising demand from businesses and industries served by the company's electric cooperatives, according to the company.

The plant will serve 29 of Oglethorpe Power's 38 member

electric cooperatives. Georgia's electric membership cooperatives collectively serve nearly 5 million Georgians.

"This project is about planning for the future and supporting our member cooperatives as

SEE GAS PLANT, 4A

Police say threats to Houston County schools were hoaxes

BY MYRACLE LEWIS
mlewis@macon.com

School lockdowns and the incidents tied to them have increased in Houston County this fiscal year, with authorities

attributing the most recent events to hoax calls.

From early April 10 to May 4, at least six Houston County public schools were placed under code yellow and red lockdowns for varying circumstances, including reported bomb and

gun threats.

No suspects have been identified at this time, but police are continuing to investigate the calls, Houston County Sheriff Matt Moulton said Thursday.

The most recent incident occurred May 4 at Warner Rob-

ins High School, where a bomb threat prompted a lockdown and law enforcement response, according to the Houston County Sheriff's office. Authorities said the case remains active.

Moulton said the threats at Perry, Northside and Warner Robins high schools all appear to have been hoaxes.

"It was determined to be a hoax that originated from an unknown number with multiple VPNs used to avoid detection from law enforcement," Moulton told The Telegraph on April

20 about the telephoned gun threat at Perry High School. "There have been no suspects identified at this time."

On April 29, lockdowns were issued at three schools — David Perdue Elementary, David Perdue Primary and Houston County High schools — after a person escaped from Middle Flint Behavioral Health Center, which is located near the campuses, Moulton said.

The person was apprehended

SEE POLICE, 2A



We're dedicated to delivering the journalism you rely on. Discover the stories that matter to you inside. Subscribers, explore more stories and features like puzzles and games at macon.com/edition.

FOR CUSTOMER SERVICE
QUESTIONS, CALL US AT:
800-679-6397

OR REACH US ONLINE AT:
macon.com/customer-service



6 46012 00003 6