

Local commuters feel the grind

Study finds Naperville's 'burnout belt' among worst in the nation

By Carolyn Stein
NAPERVILLE SUN

Naperville is known for many things. Best city to live in America. Best city to buy a house in America. Best city to raise a family in America. But living in Illinois' third largest city comes with its tradeoffs, including a tough commuter journey for those regularly traveling to Chicago for work, according to a new study from mental health care provider A Mission for Michael.

In a survey of 3,002 people, the organization found that Naperville has one of the worst "burnout belts" in the country, referring to commutes from suburban areas to major U.S. cities that regularly contribute to chronic stress, exhaustion and burnout for workers. "Burnout is often framed as something that happens at work, but for many people it starts and ends with the commute," Anand Meta, executive director at A Mission for Michael, said in a news release. The study asked participants to identify the commutes across the U.S. that contribute most to feelings of burnout. Respondents were asked about the routes they regu-

larly take to work and which ones they find most mentally and physically draining due to a combination of heavy congestion, ongoing roadwork and long travel time. Naperville ranked No. 10 in the U.S., the only Illinois-based city to crack the top 10 list. "A significant portion of the day is already spoken for before the office even comes into view," the report said. "The commute from Naperville into Chicago reshapes everything around it — mornings surrendered early, evenings arriving halfway spent. What's left for personal time feels borrowed rather than earned."



A new study by healthcare provider A Mission for Michael says that the daily work commute from Naperville to Chicago is one of the worst in the country. CITY OF NAPERVILLE

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On Route 59, Yemeni and Arab coffee shops are Brewing community

By Carolyn Stein
NAPERVILLE SUN

On any given day of the week, Nadia Ali will see her relatives posting their drinks from Arwa Yemeni Coffee on social media.

Although Ali, 30, does not understand the appeal of posting a midday coffee photo online, she does understand the appeal of places like Arwa, located off Route 59 in Naperville. Warm atmosphere. Enticing scents. Coffee that she described as "soft tasting yet very refreshing."

"Everything is made fresh and right in front of the eyes," she said on a recent Wednesday morning.

It's a welcome addition to her hometown, which she noted has changed drastically over time.

"In a time span of the past five years, my god, (Route 59) has become a hub of coffee shops, big restaurants, franchises — it's always about getting into something new," she said. "It has just become a hub for teenagers, all kinds of ages."

Part of that changing Route 59 is a cluster of Yemeni and Arab coffee shops all located within a few miles of each other, serving everything from freshly brewed pistachio lattes and Adeni chai — sweet Yemeni milk tea infused with spices like cardamom and cinnamon — to baklava and Biscoff milk cakes.

But the boom isn't limited to the Naperville area.

Cities across the U.S., from New York to Dallas, are seeing a rise in Yemeni, Arab and Muslim-owned coffee shops. Unlike typical American cafes, many of these stay open late into the evening. On weekdays, that's usually until 10 or 11 p.m. On weekends, it can be as late as 1 a.m.

"Friday night, Saturdays, Sundays ... people are looking to party, go to clubs, go to bars, hang out. We Muslims don't do that because it's against our religion to drink," said Aqib Shazzad, managing partner and owner of the Naperville and Lombard locations for coffee shop Muslims of the World. "These coffee shops are a nice, healthy way for the community to come (and) enjoy time with friends and family."

And their appeal extends beyond



Above, Ali Shaibi, a barista, pours a cup of Adeni chai. At right, customers sit inside Qamaria Yemeni Coffee at 4400 McCoy Drive in Aurora on April 30. CAROLYN STEIN/NAPERVILLE SUN PHOTOS

the Muslim community, shop owners and experts say.

"I think that all Americans are looking for a third space like this," said Sally Howell, a professor of history at the University of Michigan-Dearborn. "They're different from some of the national coffee chains, which have really come to emphasize speed of service and not necessarily to provide a comfortable place for people to sit and hang out anymore."

Howell, who studies Arab American history, pointed to Qahwah

House in Dearborn, Michigan, as being responsible for kickstarting the rise of these types of coffee shops. When Ibrahim Alhasbani, who comes from a long line of Yemeni coffee makers, opened the first Qahwah House location in 2017, it was the first coffee shop of its kind.

"They serve coffee in a number of distinctive ways, like they season it with a lot of spices. And one of the ways they prepare it is they cook

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New rules restrict AI, bar state workers from prediction markets



Gov. JB Pritzker answers questions after speaking at the Newberry Library in Chicago on March 30. ANTONIO PEREZ/CHICAGO TRIBUNE

By Olivia Olander and Jack O'Connor
CHICAGO TRIBUNE

Gov. JB Pritzker's administration is setting rules on two emerging technologies for state workers, joining state governments across the country in trying to stay ahead of rapidly shifting terrain.

One of them, prediction markets, has become overtly political. Pritzker issued an executive order on Tuesday barring state employees from placing bets based on nonpublic information obtained through their jobs, and in an accompanying

statement, highlighted allegations of insider trading tied to actions by President Donald Trump's administration.

The other involves artificial intelligence in the workplace and is more technical. State employees face no blanket ban on using AI but operate under significant guardrails, according to policy records recently obtained by the Tribune.

The prediction market order in particular appeared to be a backhanded callout of the recent eyebrow-raising bets on the strikes in Iran and the removal of Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro,

which some critics have cited as signs of potential insider trading. Two days after Pritzker's order, the Justice Department announced an Army soldier was charged with using classified information to profit from prediction market bets tied to Maduro's arrest.

But while Pritzker's actions may be read through the lens of his potential 2028 presidential ambitions, the broader issue of who can regulate prediction markets has been building for months. The booming industry allows users to

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