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ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE PHOTO

Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell on Friday opened the door to lowering interest rates in the coming months.

Powell signals Fed may cut rates

Inflation risks remain despite possible move

BY CHRISTOPHER RUGABER
AP economics writer

JACKSON HOLE, Wyo. — Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell on Friday opened the door ever so slightly to lowering a key interest rate in the coming months but gave no hint on the timing of a move and suggested the central bank will proceed cautiously as it continues to evaluate the impact of tariffs and other policies on the economy.

In a high-profile speech closely watched at the White House and on Wall Street, Powell said that there are risks of both rising unemployment and stubbornly higher inflation. Yet he suggested that with hiring sluggish, the job market could weaken further.

“The shifting balance of risks may warrant adjusting our policy stance,” he said, a reference to his concerns about weaker job gains and a more direct sign that the Fed is considering a rate cut than he has made in previous comments.

Still, Powell’s remarks suggest the Fed will proceed carefully in the coming months and will make its rate decisions based on how inflation and unemployment evolve. The Fed has three more meetings this year, including next month, in late October, and in December, and it’s not clear whether the Fed will cut at all those meetings.

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Buc-ee’s opening delayed



STAFF PHOTO BY LESLIE WESTBROOK

A billboard advertising the next Buc-ee’s store and gas station located 194 miles away in Baytown, Texas, is displayed at the site of a planned new Buc-ee’s at Louisiana Avenue and Interstate 10 in Lafayette on Friday.

Weather has affected construction, officials say

BY ADAM DAIGLE
Acadiana business editor

Construction of the Buc-ee’s store in Lafayette has been delayed and is now expected to be complete in 2028.

A document on the company’s website gives new expected opening dates for several locations across the United States and shows the Lafayette site is expected to open about two years later than the initially announced 2026 target date.

Buc-ee’s officials declined to comment Thursday.

When Buc-ee’s bought the 42 acres at the northeast corner of Interstate 10 and Louisiana Avenue in December, it indicated construction on the \$82 million project would begin early 2025 and the store would open in the second quarter of 2026.

Site work began earlier this year, but frequent rains and other factors resulted

in an initial delay on the project. There’s been no significant activity at the site for weeks.

Scott-based Triton Construction, the general contractor on the project, told Developing Lafayette last month that construction was paused temporarily because of a combination of design delays and poor weather conditions.

Messages left at Triton on Thursday were not returned.

Mandi Mitchell, president and CEO of the Lafayette Economic Development Authority, indicated last month that the fill dirt on the property needs to settle properly before the next step can begin, and because of frequent rains, the site now requires re-grading and more fill dirt.

Contacted Thursday, both Mitchell and Mayor-President Monique Boulet were unaware of the project’s revised completion date.

If construction takes 16 months, an estimate of when construction will start would be anywhere from mid-2026 to early 2027. Plans include a 74,000-square-foot store along with about 120 gas pumps and nearly 700 parking spaces, along with public infrastructure improvements to Louisiana Avenue.

LEDA predicts it to generate \$1.5 million in sales tax collections a year and employ 150.

The delay would not be in violation of the cooperative endeavor agreement between Buc-ee’s and the Lafayette Economic Development Authority, documents show.

It indicates the company “shall use its best efforts” to complete the project within 36 months after all permits required to construct the facility are obtained. The project has not been issued

➤ See DELAYED, page 4A

SafeSource to suspend operations

Broussard-based company to let go 541 employees

BY ADAM DAIGLE
Acadiana business editor

SafeSource Direct, the Broussard-based personal protective equipment manufacturer, has suspended operations in a move that will put 541 people out of work.

Company officials made the announcement late Friday that it was suspending activity immediately at its nitrile glove and man-made fiber PPE plants because of poor market conditions after it first began operations just over three years ago.

➤ See OPERATIONS, page 4A



STAFF FILE PHOTO BY DAVID GRUNFELD

A rock dam stretches across the Mississippi River Gulf Outlet near the Breton Sound Marina.

Deal furthers plan for wetlands restoration

‘Hurricane highway’ project still needs to be funded

BY MIKE SMITH
Staff writer

An agreement signed Friday by federal and state officials could help advance a stalled plan to restore wetlands destroyed by a notorious southeast Louisiana shipping channel labeled a “hurricane highway” after Katrina, but money must still be approved for the work.

The deal comes with the 20th anniversary of Hurricane Katrina approaching

next week and as coastal advocacy groups press the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to move forward on the plan for the Mississippi River Gulf Outlet, or MRGO. The agreement was signed by the state’s Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority and the Corps, a statement from both agencies said.

The original plan in 2012 aimed to restore and protect around 57,000 acres of wetlands and coastal habitat. It was estimated to cost \$3 billion at the time, though the first phase addressed in Friday’s agreement alone amounted to \$1.3 billion. The

➤ See WETLANDS, page 4A

