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Morning Sentinel

WEATHER:
Partly cloudy
and cool
High 43°
Details, C6

CentralMaine.com An edition of Central Maine Sunday

United Way child care centers aim to address crisis



Rebecca Alfredson, senior director of programs for United Way of Southern Maine, facilitates a tour of the organization's new child care facility on Gannett Drive in South Portland on Thursday. The United Way hopes to add 500 slots for working parents who are struggling to find child care. (BRIANNA SOUKUP/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER)

In a partnership with business interests, new facilities in South Portland and Freeport would add 200 spots to southern Maine's strained child care industry in early 2026, and 500 in the long term.

By RILEY BOARD
Staff Writer

The drywall is still unfinished, but in a few months, a building at the western edge of South Portland will become a new child care facility for about 100 infants and young children. It's one of two centers opening in early spring of 2026 as part of the nonprofit initiative United 4 Child Care. The other facility, in Freeport, will serve an additional 100 kids. Together, they hope to make a small

dent in what many in the state call a crisis: child care is expensive and inaccessible, which prevents adults with children from entering the workforce. "The reality is there are too many working families that aren't starting families in Maine because they don't have child care," said Josh Waxman, senior vice president of community impact at United Way of Southern Maine, the organization behind United 4 Child Care.

Child care access and affordability have been challenges in Maine for years. The United Way centers are using a public-private partnership model to address the need. Business partners, who have not yet been disclosed, will make charitable donations to the organization, which in turn will offer child care to the children of their employees, as well as the broader community.

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Del Arey, 85, of Harrison, left, embraces Vietnam War veteran Merle Wentworth after Arey delivered a box of food to the Fryeburg man's home Tuesday.



Harrison Food Bank Executive Director Sandy Swett navigates the facility's crowded parking lot Tuesday. "This is neighbors helping neighbors," Swett says.

HOW DO YOU FEED 1,100 MAINE FAMILIES A WEEK?

As demand hits new highs, **Harrison Food Bank** shows the way.



By GILLIAN GRAHAM
Staff Writer

HARRISON — The Harrison Food Bank wasn't scheduled to open for hours, but it was already busy inside. Dozens of volunteers, many in red shirts or aprons with the food bank logo, chatted with one another but never took their focus off the task at hand:

getting ready to feed more than a thousand Mainers. The first volunteers had arrived as dawn broke, and the last would leave well after dark. Over the course of 12 hours on Tuesday, they sorted and packaged thousands of pounds of food, delivered groceries to 425 homes, and distributed food boxes to more than 600

people who drove through the parking lot. This is what it takes to feed people in a region of Maine where food insecurity rates are high, incomes are low and residents are increasingly relying on the emergency food system for help.

Volunteers Robert Dow, left, and Steve McFarland load 65 boxes of food onto a delivery truck Tuesday at the Harrison Food Bank. The pantry is now consistently distributing 40,000 pounds of food a week to residents from 63 area communities. (PHOTOS BY DARYN SLOVER/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER)

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TODAY'S ALMANAC

November 14, 2025

Today is the 318th day of 2025. There are 47 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On Nov. 14, 1970, a chartered Southern Airways plane crashed while trying to land in West Virginia, killing all 75 people on board, including the Marshall University football team and its coaching staff.

Also on this date:

In 1851, Herman Melville's novel "Moby-Dick; Or, The Whale" was published in the United States, almost a month after being released in Britain.

In 1889, journalist Nellie Bly began an attempt to travel around the world in 80 days; she would successfully complete the journey in a little more than 72 days via ships, trains and other means of transport. In 1910, Eugene B. Ely became the first aviator to take off from a ship as his Curtiss "Pusher" biplane lifted off the deck of the cruiser USS Birmingham off Hampton Roads, Virginia. The flight by the civilian pilot marked the beginnings of naval aviation.

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MAINE'S WARMING WINTERS

Presque Isle faces dramatic change

The city's average temperature from December to February is 6.5 degrees higher than it was in 1970, marking one of the biggest shifts in the country.

By PENELOPE OVERTON
Staff Writer

When Jason Johnston began teaching ecology classes at the University of Maine at Presque Isle, the robins that made their nests on campus were reliable snowbirds, flying south each fall semester to escape the cold.

The avid birder wouldn't hear their



Snowmobilers ride through Solon in February 2024. Check out our graphic of county-by-county temperature changes in Maine / A5 (RICH ABRAHAMSON/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER)

telltale whistle again until spring. But now, two decades later, the robins usually stick around all winter. It just doesn't get cold enough to make an exhausting flight as far south as Mexico worth the effort, he said.

Please see **WARMING**, Page A5

Justice Dept. sues to block California US House map in clash over redistricting

Attorney General Pam Bondi calls the effort — pushed by Gov. Gavin Newsom in response to GOP tactics in Texas — 'a brazen power grab.'

By ALANNA DURKIN RICHER and MICHAEL R. BLOOD
Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — The Justice Department on Thursday sued to block new congressional district boundaries approved by California voters last week, joining a court battle that could help determine which party wins control of the U.S. House in 2026.

The complaint filed in California federal court targets the new congressional map pushed by Democratic Gov. Gavin Newsom in response to a similar Republican-led effort in Texas backed by President Donald Trump.

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