

Portland Press Herald

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WEATHER:
Mostly sunny
but colder
High 29°
Details, C6

pressherald.com

Maine organizers prepare for potential ICE surge

Businesses that employ immigrants brace for Maine enforcement action

By KELLEY BOUCHARD
Staff Writer

Across Maine, businesses that employ immigrants are making sure their paperwork is in order, holding staff training sessions and fine-tuning written response plans amid rumors of imminent actions by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents.

■ **HOW TO PREPARE:** Do's and don'ts from the Maine Chamber of Commerce / **A6**

Nothing has been confirmed, but officials in Portland and Lewiston said they are bracing for enforcement actions.

Please see **BUSINESSES**, Page A6

Volunteers with immigrant advocacy and civil rights groups report an uptick in calls from residents who are concerned for their safety as specifics remain scarce and rumors spread.

By DANIEL KOOL
and JOE CHARPENTIER
Staff Writers

Tensions have gripped much of Maine as rumors swirl regarding a potential surge of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement activities.

The Trump administration is considering sending immigration agents to Maine "in the coming weeks" to target the state's Somali community, MS Now reported

Thursday, citing two unnamed people "familiar with the planning."

That report followed a flurry of messages this week from Maine Gov. Janet Mills, Portland Mayor Mark Dion, Lewiston Mayor Carl Sheline and other officials who said they were preparing for a possible influx of federal agents.

Dion spoke to someone at the Please see **SURGE**, Page A6

INSURRECTION ACT:

President Donald Trump threatens to invoke 1807 law to quell protests in Minneapolis after shootings / **A2**

■ **Q&A:** What are your rights when interacting with immigration agents, and do they need a warrant before searching someone's private property. / **A6**

TODAY'S ALMANAC

January 16, 2026

Today is the 16th day of 2026. There are 349 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On Jan. 16, 1991, in a televised address to the nation, U.S. President George H.W. Bush announced the start of Operation Desert Storm, a combat operation that drove Iraqi forces out of Kuwait.

Also on this date:

In 1865, Union Maj. Gen. William Tecumseh Sherman decreed that 400,000 acres of confiscated land in the South would be divided into 40-acre lots and given to former enslaved people. (The order, later revoked by President Andrew Johnson, inspired the expression, "40 acres and a mule.")

In 1942, actor Carole Lombard, 33, her mother, Elizabeth Peters, and 20 other people were killed when their plane crashed near Las Vegas, Nevada, while returning to California from a war-bond promotion tour.

In 1989, three days of rioting began in Miami when a police officer fatally shot a Black motorcyclist, causing a crash that also claimed the life of his passenger. (The officer was convicted of manslaughter, but later acquitted in a retrial.)

In 1996, Wayne Newton performed his 25,000th Las Vegas show. Newton had performed more shows as a headliner in Las Vegas than any other entertainer.

In 2001, Congolese President Laurent-Désiré Kabila was fatally shot by one of his own bodyguards.

Today's birthdays: Opera singer Marilyn Horne is 92. Hall of Fame auto racer A.J. Foyt is 91. Country musician Ronnie Milsap is 83. Filmmaker John Carpenter is 78. Actor-dancer-choreographer Debbie Allen is 76. Singer Sade is 67. Boxing Hall of Famer Roy Jones Jr. is 57. Model Kate Moss is 52. Actor-producer-songwriter Lin-Manuel Miranda is 46. Baseball great Albert Pujols is 46. Singer-songwriter Yebba is 31.



A home for sale on Deering Street in Portland on Thursday. (SHAWN PATRICK OUELLETTE/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER)

Could Maine's housing market be cooling? Here's what the data says

The state recorded its highest-ever median sale price last year, but industry observers see signs of a calmer 2026.

By HANNAH LaCLAIRE
Staff Writer

At first glance, data from Maine's 2025 real estate market seems to tell a story that has been on repeat for years: A record high annual sale price and too few homes for sale have combined to push the dream of home ownership further out of reach for many Mainers.

But there were also small glimmers of hope that the state's affordability crisis could be waning: slower price

growth, lower interest rates, increasing inventory. Last year, more than 15,000 homes changed hands, with a median sale price of \$405,000, according to data released Tuesday by the Maine Association of Realtors. Here are five charts that take a closer look at the numbers that made up last year's market.

1. A SOFTER DECEMBER

Compared to the "irrational exuberance" of sales and prices during the height of the pandemic, the end of 2025 was considerably softer, said Tom Landry, owner of Benchmark Real Estate in Portland.

During those fevered months, seasonality didn't factor in, but Landry said normal patterns have returned.

Please see **HOUSING**, Page A5

The story unfolds in 5 charts
Page A5



Report: Hannaford prices higher in low-income Maine communities

Customers and critics have pointed to discrepancies across the state, but the supermarket chain says demographics don't affect how groceries are priced.

By DANIEL KOOL
Staff Writer

On a rare trip to a Scarborough Hannaford location early this month, Heather Robinson noticed something was up — literally — with the price of her usual shampoo.

A bottle of L'Oreal Elvive, which Robinson said she saw going for \$7.99 at the Gorham Hannaford that morning, was priced \$3 cheaper at the Hannaford on Payne Road, she said.

"It did seem like the prices over on the Payne Road one, (were) definitely



Some of the products from Hannaford in Scarborough used in a comparative assessment of grocery prices. (SHAWN PATRICK OUELLETTE/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER)

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Transgender athlete probe in Newport focuses on co-ed cheerleading team

The U.S. Department of Education announced a slew of Title IX-related investigations this week that include 2 school districts in Maine.

By BILLY KOBIN
and EMILY DUGGAN
Staff Writers

One of the complaints that drove the Trump administration to launch an investigation into a Maine school district this week alleged that a transgender athlete is competing on a girls cheerleading team.

But the superintendent of the school district at the center of the investigation said the team at issue is open to both boys and girls. "It's a co-ed cheering team. Boys can join, girls

can join. No one lost a place on the team because a transgender student joined," said Michael Hammer, the superintendent of Newport-based Regional School Unit 19, which covers eight communities in Penobscot County.

The U.S. Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights said Wednesday that it had launched investigations into 18 educational organizations in 10 states because they are

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