

The Minnesota Star Tribune

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2026 PULITZER PRIZE



FOR BREAKING NEWS

H: 78° L: 57° | FRESH AIR RETURNS

SMALL FIRMS HAVING TO MAKE BIG CHOICES



Jesse Kirkeeide works at industrial machine maker Straub Design in New Hope. The company laid off five of 50 workers after costs went up for supplies, fuel and health care. CARLOS GONZALEZ • The Minnesota Star Tribune

With inflation increasing costs, businesses face difficult options.

By DEE DePASS • The Minnesota Star Tribune

The co-owner of Ingebretsen’s stopped taking a salary for a year and cut her inventory of imported Norwegian sweaters after tariffs and other costs increased by more than she could afford.

A New Hope manufacturer laid off five workers when hit with higher costs of necessary items from fuel to health insurance.

A Minneapolis ad agency switched health plans and went into overdrive to find new clients to pay for added costs.

The same inflationary forces that have been hitting household budgets the past few years are causing an “affordability crisis” for small businesses, said Allie Palmer, senior strategist of the 3,000-member Main Street Alliance in Minnesota.

“They’re kind of at the epicenter,” Palmer said.

The Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis found steep increases in health care and insurance costs among inflationary challenges for small businesses, according to its six-month business conditions report that was released late last month.

“Small businesses are saying that price increases for their inputs have been a major and consistent issue,” Federal Reserve

SEE COSTS ON A8 »



Julie Ingebretsen, co-owner of the 105-year-old Ingebretsen’s Scandinavian Gifts and Foods in Minneapolis, has cut her inventory of imported Norwegian sweaters after tariffs and other costs increased. ANTHONY SOUFFLÉ • The Minnesota Star Tribune

An Iranian port city feels the pain of Washington’s economic moves

By AMIR VAHDAT
The Associated Press

BANDAR ABBAS, IRAN - In the Iranian port city of Bandar Abbas on the Strait of Hormuz, a waterfront once busy with boats, trucks and workers has fallen quiet. It’s a front line of the economic pain that the United

States now hopes to intensify after six months of war.

The Associated Press visited the city shaken by new U.S. airstrikes targeting coastal areas in the past week and found anger along with growing anxiety about simply getting by as a U.S. blockade of Iranian ports continues.

A taxi driver, Hamid Hajizadeh, said he does not understand Americans. “They are heroes in movies, but here they killed people in schools, wedding ceremonies and other places. They bombed roads and bridges,” he said.

In this city of over 700,000

SEE IRAN ON A5 »



People examine embroidered fabric Sunday at a textile shop in a traditional bazaar in Bandar Abbas, Iran, on the Strait of Hormuz. VAHID SALEMI • The Associated Press

GOP casts Trump as hero of its party rally

Convention will portray president as candidate.

By WILL WEISSERT
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON - President Donald Trump is embracing his inner cowboy, seeking to gallop into this week’s Republican convention in Dallas and save the midterm elections for his party just in the nick of time.

As first-of-their-kind festivities open Wednesday, Trump wants to stoke his core supporters’ enthusiasm by making Election Day on Nov. 3 all about himself – a referendum on his record at an event he conceived to help his party, even if he’s not actually on the ballot.

The question is whether he’ll do more to fire up Republicans or Democrats at a moment when his popularity has reached historic lows.

The president is planning to take the stage both nights of the convention, giving a keynote address Wednesday and then closing remarks after Vice President JD Vance gives his own speech the following night.

That means effectively staging a two-day Trump show with a supporting cast that includes some of the party’s most vulnerable lawmakers.

“If Trump is in the orbit then everything gets swallowed up into a black hole. It’s just unavoidable,” said Rick Tyler, a Republican strategist and a critic of the president.

The Republican Party is so enamored with the prospect that it is selling \$16 beer cozies online depicting the president as the Marlboro Man. They feature the 80-year-old on horseback, with a white Stetson and the word “Dallas” under the trademark red-and-white triangle peak logo where the cigarette maker’s name would normally be.

House Speaker Mike Johnson, who will address the convention, noted that the gathering was Trump’s idea and should be “very instructive, very exciting.”

“We’ll parade our stars across the stage,” he said, making it sound like a political version of the beauty pageants Trump once helped organize.

Republicans familiar with the process said the president was involved in the event’s every detail. His control over the program was such, in fact, that anyone pressing for information in recent weeks was told it wasn’t yet known because Trump was still making choices.

Despite all the cowboy imagery, it’s unclear if the cavalry is coming, however.

MAGA Inc., the president’s political organization with a nearly \$400 million war chest, announced it is spending \$10 million on television and digital advertisements in the Texas Senate race. But that’s the first

SEE TRUMP ON A5 »



Cyclists pedal through Minneapolis during the 47th Midnight-to-Dawn bike ride. The event is one of Minneapolis Community Education’s unexpected offerings.

Minnesota community education aims to go beyond a passing grade

Story and photo by RACHEL HUTTON
The Minnesota Star Tribune

A little after midnight, on a Sunday in August, what looked like a swarm of red fireflies blinked through the black, empty streets of Minneapolis. It was, in fact, 100-plus cyclists embarking on the 47th annual Midnight-to-Dawn bike ride.

Teenagers, retirees, spandex-swaddled diehards and jean-shortened newbies alike traversed the Twin Cities. There was palpable camaraderie among the pedaling mass, awake and

alive, wind on their faces, cheered on by screeching crickets.

The most surprising thing about the ride might be its organizer: Minneapolis Community Education. But not if you know that Minnesota is a star student when it comes to lifelong learning.

Minnesota is the only state that designates funding for every school district to operate community education programs, which augment K-12 and higher ed learning. And its offerings are far more expansive – and quirky – than the typical pottery

or senior driving courses.

In addition to Essentials of Buying Your First Home or Write and Publish Your Own Children’s Book, Minneapolis Community Ed offers instruction on glass blowing and foraging for edible insects. You can star in “RENT,” chat with a James Beard-awarded chef during dinner at Bûcheron and take a trip to the city’s water treatment plant or even Lake Itasca.

Still socially bruised by the pandemic, Americans are spending a lot of time by themselves, much of it on

SEE COMMUNITY ON A4 »

