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THE YEAR IN PHOTOS



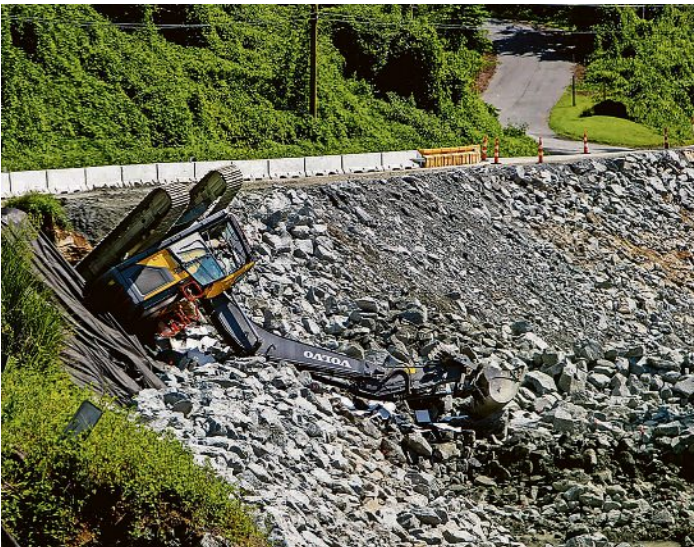
Construction worker Ramiro Martinez guides a roof truss into place atop a new house under clear skies along Edwards Avenue in Asheville on July 2.

TAKING A LOOK BACK AT 2025

From images of joy at celebrations and festivals, to heartaches of the continuing struggle to recover from Tropical Storm Helene and marchers taking to the streets in protest, here are some of Asheville Citizen Times photographer Josh Bell's memorable scenes from 2025. For more photos, visit www.citizentimes.com.



Sky Top Orchard owner-operator David Butler's daughter, Margaret, holds up a fresh peach in Flat Rock on July 23.



An overturned excavator can be seen along Chimney Rock Road in Hendersonville on Aug. 20.



Swannanoa resident Angie McGee's home was swept away in the floodwaters of Tropical Storm Helene.



A participant throws flour during the 2025 Asheville Holiday Parade on Nov. 22.

ANALYSIS

Working to preserve Native languages

Database could help revive Arapaho tongue before last speakers die

Andrew Cowell
University of Colorado Boulder
THE CONVERSATION

I was hired at the University of Colorado Boulder in 1995 as a language professor. I relocated from Hawaii, where I had learned the Hawaiian language.

When I arrived in Colorado, I decided I needed to learn about the Indigenous language of the Boulder and Denver area, Arapaho. The Arapaho people had occupied the area for many years until they were forced to leave in the 1860s.

I first visited the Northern Arapaho people on the Wind River Reservation in Wyoming in 1999. At that time, there were hundreds of speakers of the Arapaho language.

Today, there are less than 100, and all are over the age of 70.

The Arapaho people in Wyoming and Colorado believe their language can still survive, and so do I. That's why I am working to combine decades of language documentation with new technological approaches in order to help revive the language.

Loss of Native languages

Many Native American languages currently have few Native speakers, and the speakers are typically the oldest members of the community. The languages of the Wichita and Kansa people, for example, are among many that are no longer spoken at all.

Native American languages have been in decline in the face of Euro-American pressure for centuries.

On the Great Plains, this decline accelerated after World War II when Native soldiers came home after seeing prosperity off the reservation.

Arapaho elders tell me that bilingual parents decided to speak only English to their children to improve their chances of success in life. They were certain the tribal languages would come "later."

But "later" didn't happen. Boarding schools had already been suppressing the language, and now economic improvements brought cars, radios and televisions to Wind River, further promoting the use of English. Without language exposure in the home, children were not able to acquire good speaking abilities.

Today, however, tribal communities around the country increasingly want to maintain or reacquire their languages. Efforts to do this have been going on for several decades, with some successes, such as the Mohawk language of New York and Canada, Cherokee in Oklahoma and North Carolina and the Blackfoot language of northern Montana.

See **LANGUAGES**, Page 4A

