

# 18 WNC players to watch for in 2026

SPORTS, 1B

SERVING ASHEVILLE 870

# CITIZEN-TIMES

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 2026 | CITIZEN-TIMES.COM

OF THE USA TODAY NETWORK



## STUDY: PLANET IS IN WATER BANKRUPTCY



### Much of world's population faces severe scarcity

Kaveh Madani

United Nations University | THE CONVERSATION

The world is now using so much fresh water amid the consequences of climate change that it has entered an era of water bankruptcy, with many regions no longer able to bounce back from frequent water shortages. • About 4 billion people – nearly half the global population – live with severe water scarcity for at least one month a year, without access to sufficient water to meet all of their needs. Many more people are seeing the consequences of water deficit: dry reservoirs, sinking cities, crop failures, water rationing and more frequent wildfires and dust storms in drying regions.

Water bankruptcy signs are everywhere, from Tehran, where droughts and unsustainable water use have depleted reservoirs the Iranian capital relies on, adding fuel to political tensions, to the United States, where water demand has outstripped the supply in the Colorado River, a crucial source of drinking water and irrigation for seven states.

Water bankruptcy is not just a metaphor for water deficit. It is a chronic condition that develops when a place uses more water than nature can reliably replace, and when the damage to the natural assets that store and filter that water, such as aquifers and wetlands, becomes hard to reverse.

A new study I led with the United Nations University Institute for Water, Environment and Health concludes that the world has now gone beyond temporary water crises. Many natural water systems are no longer able to return to their historical conditions. These systems are in a state of failure – water bankruptcy.

#### What water bankruptcy looks like in real life

In financial bankruptcy, the first warning signs often feel manageable: late payments, borrowed

See WATER, Page 4A



Remnants of a boat sit on the dry bed of Lake Urmia, once the largest lake in the Middle East, in northwestern Iran on Dec. 19, 2025. Droughts and unsustainable water use have also depleted reservoirs Iran's capital Tehran relies on, adding fuel to political tensions. MORTEZA AMINOROAYAYI/MIDDLE EAST IMAGES/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

## Officer charged on same day he is sworn in

Ryley Ober

Asheville Citizen Times  
USA TODAY NETWORK

ASHEVILLE - An Asheville police officer was arrested Feb. 21 on a warrant that alleges he assaulted a woman days before he was sworn in and while he was a trainee with the police department.

Duvernay

In a morning news release Feb. 21, the Asheville Police Department disclosed Paul Anthony Duvernay III, 39, of Asheville, was arrested by the Buncombe County Sheriff's Office in Swannanoa under a charge of assault on a female.

His arrest warrant alleges he grabbed a woman's arms and leg while pulling her off a bed. His actions allegedly caused "significant bruising,"

See OFFICER, Page 2A

## Cartel leader's death leads to violence across Mexico

Lauren Villagran and Kathryn Palmer  
USA TODAY

Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum said Feb. 23 that normal activity had resumed following a day of violence in several regions of her country.

"Today, there is tranquility," she said, adding that peace had been secured and blockades largely cleared.

The unrest was triggered by the Feb. 22 killing of a powerful cartel leader in a military operation.

Nemesio Oseguera, commonly known as "El Mencho," was Mexico's most-wanted cartel leader, with a \$15 million bounty for information leading to his capture. He rose through the ranks and launched a deadly coup to become the leader of the Jalisco New Generation Cartel, or CJNG. The

See VIOLENCE, Page 4A

### IT'S OUR BEST WINDOW SALE!



**CHAMPION**  
Windows • Sunrooms • Home Exteriors

a Great Day Improvements brand

BOOK YOUR  
FREE ESTIMATE TODAY!

828-785-4497

SCAN HERE



WINDOWS

BUY  
GET 2  
FREE\*

OFFER EXPIRES 2/28/26

\*Buy 2 Comfort 365 Windows® at regular price and get 2 additional windows of equal or lesser value free with participation in the Yes! Program. Offer applies to all window styles in white except nonrectangular shaped window styles. Window discount without participation in Yes! Program equals 40% off. Minimum purchase of 4 windows required. All prices include standard installation. All discounts apply to the MSRP cost. No adjustments can be made on prior sales. YES! Program valid only at the time of your initial demonstration and once per residence per term. Offer subject to change. See website or a Champion representative for details. Offer expires 02/28/26. Lic# CGC1537616 & CCC1336245. ©Champion Opco LLC, 2026

