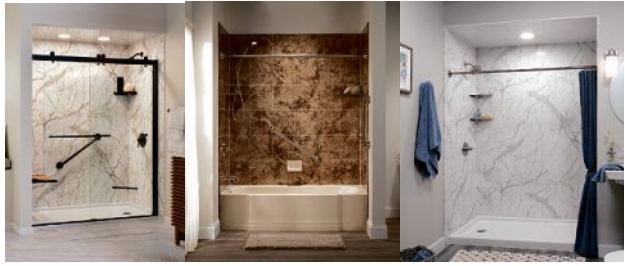


**mad city**  
WINDOWS & BATHS

#1 REMODELER  
YOUR LOCAL EXPERTS!

PROUDLY SERVING THE MIDWEST SINCE 1998

**BATH OR SHOWER REMODEL**



**70% Off Installation on a new bath or shower\***

**Zero Payments & Zero Interest for 18 Months!**



Call Now! Limited Time Offer!  
**828-617-0481**

*Our team is ready to take your call 7 days a week.*



\*70% Off promotion does not include material costs. Not valid with any other offer, or previous job. See representative for details. New orders only for appointments completed by 7/31/2026. Offer expires 7/31/2026. Financing available with minimum purchase and approved credit. Mad City Windows & Baths, LLC, is neither a broker nor a lender. Financing is provided by third-party lenders unaffiliated with Mad City Windows & Baths, LLC, under terms and conditions arranged directly between the customer and such lender, all subject to credit requirements and satisfactory completion of finance documents. Any finance terms advertised are estimate only. Ask for details. New orders only. Not valid with any other offer, or previous job. Interest will be charged to your account from the purchase date if the purchase balance is not paid in full within the 18-month period or if you make a late payment. New orders only for appointments completed by 7/31/2026.

SERVING ASHEVILLE SINCE 1870

# CITIZEN TIMES

FRIDAY, JUNE 26, 2026 | CITIZEN-TIMES.COM

PART OF THE USA TODAY NETWORK

## New data center construction halted

Asheville City Council passes yearlong moratorium on development

**Will Hofmann**  
Asheville Citizen Times  
USA TODAY NETWORK

ASHEVILLE – Asheville City Council passed a yearlong moratorium on data center development on June 23, as local resistance to the energy consuming buildings grows across Western North Carolina.

Data centers are expected to make up between 6.2%-12% of all energy consumption in the United States by 2028, according to a 2024 report from the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory. As their development has boomed across the nation, local communities, including those in WNC, have sought to prevent them from being built, an effort stemming from years of frustration and

worry.

In 2021, a cryptocurrency mining facility in Cherokee County sparked controversy for its noise and the lack of local control over its development, the Citizen Times reported. In March, Canton passed a moratorium after residents spoke against the potential development of data centers, worrying that a big tech company could swoop in and

replace the town's historic paper mill, which closed in 2023. Clay, Madison and Swain counties have passed moratoriums, as have the towns of Boone and Woodfin. On June 17, the town of Marshall passed an ordinance creating stricter regulations on their development.

The region's largest data center is in Lenoir, where Google recently announced it would spend an additional \$1 billion expanding the center and would

See DATA CENTERS, Page 6A

### WORD FROM THE SMOKIES



Will Kuhn, far left, director of science and research for Discover Life in America, leads a group in a search for Smokies species. PROVIDED BY DISCOVER LIFE IN AMERICA

## Diverse partners and united efforts

Four dedicated groups serve as Smokies' official nonprofit associates

**Holly Keys**  
Special to the Asheville Citizen Times  
USA TODAY NETWORK

When President Franklin Delano Roosevelt dedicated Great Smoky Mountains National Park in September 1940, all of America was contemplating what the metastasizing international conflict we now know as World War II might mean for the future. In his speech at Newfound Gap, Roosevelt urged all Americans to do their part to preserve the nation and, by extension, the national park.

"To conserve our liberties will not be easy," he said. "The ask will require the united efforts of us all."

Those words have since proven prophetic in a way Roosevelt could not have foreseen. The park's average visitation has increased 20-fold since then — but federal funding has not grown accordingly. In 2024, for example, congressional appropriations worked out to less than \$2 per visit recorded that year, while the park carried \$259 million worth of deferred maintenance projects.

See NONPROFITS, Page 8A



A student holds up a salamander captured during an environmental education program at Great Smoky Mountains Institute at Tremont. PROVIDED BY JOYE ARDYN DURHAM

## Strait of Hormuz ship traffic rebounds

Tala Ramadan, David Morgan and Patricia Zengerle  
REUTERS

DUBAI – Oil prices fell to prewar levels on June 25 as the United States said flows through the Strait of Hormuz were nearing normal and its top diplomat wrapped up a Gulf tour aimed at winning support for a preliminary Iran deal.

Energy Secretary Chris Wright said shipments through the strait were approaching levels seen before the United States and Israel launched strikes on Iran on Feb. 28, with at least 20 million barrels exiting the strait in the previous 24 hours.

During the conflict, Iran took effective control of the vital choke point, disrupting oil flows and rattling global energy markets and the wider economy. Despite the recovery in traffic, Iran signaled it would continue to assert control. Its Revolutionary Guards on June 25 warned vessels to stick to routes through the strait designated by Tehran, rejecting newly announced shipping routes not coordinated with Iran as unacceptable and dangerous.

The warning came after Oman announced temporary shipping lanes through the strait in coordination with the United Nations' shipping agency. Data from the United Nations' International Maritime Organization showed that 57 ships carrying about 1,100 seafarers have transited the strait since June 23 under the evacuation plan.

Secretary of State Marco Rubio sought to reassure Gulf allies wary of Washington's preliminary accord with Tehran. After meeting with Gulf Arab foreign ministers in Bahrain — home to the U.S. Navy's Fifth Fleet — he told reporters that Gulf allies shared some serious concerns and that they wanted to be informed of every step of the peace accord, which includes provisions on the Strait of Hormuz.

If Iran threatens or blocks ships in the strait, "then we're going to have a problem," Rubio said, having earlier told ministers that "no country on Earth has the right to charge for the use of international waterways" and that fees for shipping would never be part of any deal.

See HORMUZ, Page 6A

