



Independent Tribune

The local voice of Greater Cabarrus County

Vatican visitors slam Trump over attacks on the US-born pope

FAITH & VALUES, A6



Charlotte 49ers continue spring work with open practice Saturday

SPORTS, B1

Thursday, April 16, 2026

WHERE YOUR STORY LIVES

independenttribune.com

Cabarrus Brewing goes statewide

FROM STAFF REPORTS

CONCORD — Cabarrus Brewing Company, based at the historic Gibson Mill in Concord (329 McGill Ave. NW), is marking its 10-year anniversary with the launch of statewide distribution across North Carolina through a new partnership with Johnson Brothers Mutual Distributing of N.C.

Founded in 2016, Cabarrus Brewing has grown from a local favorite into one of the region's most recognized craft

breweries, known for its approachable, high-quality beers and strong regional following. Its products will now be available statewide starting Wednesday, April 15.

"As we enter our second decade, this next step is about building a smarter, more sustainable growth model," said Steve Steinbacher, managing partner of Cabarrus Brewing. "Growth for growth's sake has never been the goal. After evaluating several partners,

Johnson Brothers stood out for their scale, craft portfolio experience and statewide reach. This partnership allows us to expand more efficiently while maintaining our focus on quality and consistency. In a challenging craft beer market, efficiency and focus are critical, and this positions us well for long-term success."

Johnson Brothers Mutual Distributing of N.C. will lead distribution, bringing Cabarrus Brewing's portfolio

to restaurants, bars, grocery stores and bottle shops across the state. The rollout will be supported through its Charlotte distribution network, with initial emphasis on the Charlotte metro area, Triad, Hickory, the foothills and western North Carolina.

Over the past decade, the brewery has built a strong regional presence, known not only for its beer but for its taproom

Please see BREWING, Page A9

CONCORD

23 RESIDENTS GRADUATE ACADEMY



CITY OF CONCORD

These are the 2026 graduates of the city of Concord Citizen Public Safety Academy.

Participants learned what it takes to keep city safe

FROM STAFF REPORTS

The city of Concord celebrated 23 residents who completed the 2026 Citizen Public Safety Academy, recognizing their dedication to gaining a deeper understanding of the people, services and teamwork that help keep Concord a safe and thriving community.

Concord is one of the largest and fastest growing cities in the state, and despite its size, continues to be recognized nationally as one of the safest and best places to live, work and raise a family. Earning these accolades is a testament to the dedication of the city's public safety professionals and to the community partnerships formed through programs like the Citizen Public Safety Academy. These programs help build relationships with residents and encourage residents to take an active role in strengthening their neighborhoods.

"We are incredibly proud of our graduates for their commitment over seven weeks to spend time with our public safety

departments and learn more about the important work they do every day to keep us safe," said Mayor Steve Morris during remarks at the graduation ceremony held at City Hall.

"It takes all of us working together to create a safe and vibrant community, and it would not be possible without our incredible first responders and residents like you," continued Morris.

During the seven-week Citizen Public Safety Academy, participants gain an inside look at what it takes to keep Concord a safe and thriving community. The program offers hands-on experiences and face-to-face interactions with the city's police, fire and emergency communications departments, giving participants a better understanding of the challenges first responders face and the critical services they provide.

Graduates leave the program with a greater appreciation for public safety and

Please see ACADEMY, Page A9

Hip-hop single aims to support Barber-Scotia

FROM STAFF REPORTS

A newly released hip-hop single is doubling as a fundraising effort for Barber-Scotia College, the historically Black college in Concord that has faced ongoing financial challenges.

Artist Var Don released "Do Wid It" on April 10 across major streaming platforms, pledging that all proceeds from the song will go to support the college. The track was created in collaboration with Jay Davis, the 144K Collective and 9th Ward Productions.

According to a press release, 100% of the song's revenue — in perpetuity — will be directed to Barber-Scotia College to aid in efforts to stabilize and sustain the institution.

"This wasn't about following a trend; it was about creating something real," Var Don said in a statement. "Every lyric, every beat came from us. And to be able to take that and turn it into something that supports Barber-Scotia ... that's bigger than music. That's legacy work."

Barber-Scotia College, founded in 1867, is one of the nation's oldest historically Black colleges and universities. In recent years, the Concord-based institution has struggled financially, prompting renewed attention and support efforts from community partners and advocates.

Please see SINGLE, Page A9

CATAWBA COLLEGE

Students and faculty take top honors

FROM STAFF REPORTS

Catawba College students and faculty brought home a slate of top honors from a regional scientific conference, underscoring the school's strength in undergraduate research and mentorship.

A delegation of 25 students and six faculty members attended the 87th Annual Meeting of the Association of Southeastern Biologists, held March 25-28 in Mobile, Alabama. The annual gathering draws participants from across the Southeast for research presentations, workshops and networking opportunities. Catawba's Tau Eta chapter of the Beta Beta Beta Biological

Please see BIOLOGY, Page A9

Africa proves resilient after cut in US aid

PERSPECTIVE, A4

Obituaries • A9

- Harold McKenzie Eagle Jr.
- Ralph "Guy" Hendren

Inside

Advice	B7	Lifestyles	B6-7	Puzzles	B8
Comics	B8	Morning Brew	A2	Sports	B1
Faith & Values	A6	Perspective	A4	What to Watch	B7



7 65161 17450 1