



NBA power rankings: Free agency, draft alter league hierarchy

SPORTS, 1B

StarNews

WILMINGTON, N.C.

MONDAY, JULY 14, 2025 | STARNEWSONLINE.COM

PART OF THE USA TODAY NETWORK

CNBC ranks NC first for business



Gov. Josh Stein at the Cotton Exchange in downtown Wilmington on July 10. Stein visited the area to celebrate CNBC's ranking of North Carolina as the top overall state for business. DANIEL SHEEHAN/STARNEWS

Gov. Stein speaks in Wilmington

Daniel Sheehan
Wilmington StarNews
USA TODAY NETWORK

North Carolina has regained the top ranking as the best state for business. The Tar Heel State received top honors in the annual CNBC rankings thanks to “a solid economy, a world-class workforce, and a wealth of corporate hospitality” according to a story from the network.

NASCAR driver and North Carolina resident Brad Keselowski was given the opportunity to make the announcement on CNBC show “Squawk Box” on Thursday, July 10. The show aired from Wilmington at Battleship North Carolina with Gov. Josh Stein in attendance. North Carolina finished first in 2022 and 2023 while coming in second in 2021 and 2024. In categories for this year’s results, it finished third for economy and fourth for workforce and business friendliness. The state also ranked sixth in education and eighth in access to capital. CNBC noted several major businesses coming to the state, including JetZero

and more Amazon centers. One of those centers is coming to the Wilmington area as local leaders celebrated a groundbreaking for a fulfillment center in March. “This confirms what we have known for a long time – that North Carolina is the best state in the country for business,” said Stein in a news release. “Our people, state’s business climate, top research universities and excellent community college system, infrastructure, and high quality of life help both companies and workers thrive.” Stein has announced business

See BUSINESS, Page 3A

Developer poses new plans for project off

Homes proposed near Leland off two-lane road

Savanna Tenenoff
Wilmington StarNews
USA TODAY NETWORK

Concerns about emergency service access, school over crowdedness and increases in traffic are on the table for a nearly 600-acre proposed planned development near Leland. After about two hours of discussion in June, the Brunswick County Planning Board tabled an over 1,700-home development between Leland and Wilmington until its next meeting while the developer worked to address concerns. The proposed Hooper Road Development is sandwiched between Hood Creek and Bay Branch, near Northwest and Navassa. Here’s what to know before the Brunswick County Planning Board takes the development to a vote during its meeting on July 14.

Development an ‘overload’ for two-lane Hooper Road

Originally, the proposed plan included 1,725 single-family lots along Hooper Road NE. Several neighboring residents, like Todd Willis, and board members expressed concerns on June 9 about the development overloading Hooper Road, a narrow, curvy and already busy road, since the project is expected to generate over 14,000 daily vehicle trips. “It seems like an overload,” said Willis, noting traffic is his biggest concern. Applicant Andy Mills with Colliers Engineering and Design, representing the project developer, said he has worked with both the North Carolina Department of Transportation and the Wilmington Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization to determine required traffic improvements.

See DEVELOPMENT, Page 2A

ANALYSIS

Trump-Putin bromance flowered, then soured

U.S. president appears to be shifting his thinking

Kim Hjelmggaard, Francesca Chambers and Cybele Mayes-Osterman
USA TODAY

President Donald Trump said he would end the war in Ukraine within his first 24 hours in office. But now, more than 4,000 hours in, Trump’s patience with Russian President Vladimir Putin, whom the U.S. president in June called “very kind,” appears to be wearing thin.

Relations have hit a wall as Russia’s leader has pushed forward with intensifying drone and missile attacks on Ukrainian cities while appearing to repeatedly rebuff Trump’s attempts to broker a ceasefire. “We get a lot of (expletive) thrown at us by Putin, if you want to know the truth,” Trump told reporters on July 9, summing up what Ukrainians and other seasoned Russia watchers have been saying for two decades. “He’s very nice to us all the time, but it turns out to be meaningless.”

See PUTIN, Page 2A



President Donald Trump, right, has spent years praising and appearing to carefully avoid criticizing Russian President Vladimir Putin.

MARCOS BRINDICCI/REUTERS

Subscriber-only eNewspaper

The eNewspaper is an electronic copy of your print newspaper. Enjoy every page by going to starnewsonline.com/enewspaper or scan this code on your mobile device. You will also find late news and sports in the bonus sections. Check it out today!



Volume 158 | No. 248
To subscribe 910-343-2071
©2025 \$3.49

