



How senior class led Polk County to NCHSAA 3A state title game

SPORTS, 1B

Times News

HENDERSON, POLK & TRANSYLVANIA COUNTIES | SERVING THE BLUE RIDGE SINCE 1871

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 20, 2025

BLUERIDGENOW.COM | PART OF THE USA TODAY NETWORK

Wentzell appointed Brevard police chief

She becomes first woman to take on role

George Fabe Russell
Hendersonville Times-News
USA TODAY NETWORK

Brevard has appointed a new police chief after a months-long search. City Council voted unanimously to confirm Christy Wentzell in a Nov. 17 meeting.

Wentzell is a captain at the Apex Police Department, outside Raleigh, and heads the Criminal Investigations Division there, Brevard City Manager Wilson Hooper told City Council.

Wentzell is set to be the first woman to serve as chief in Brevard when she begins the job the first week of January.



Wentzell

“In Apex, her position put her right at the intersection of in-the-weeds police work and administrative and executive

Over a 25-year career, she has served in departments in Georgia, Tennessee and North Carolina in roles from beat cop to filling in for a chief in their absence, Hooper said.

leadership ... She’s clearly got the paper experience we need but she’s also got the real-world experience,” Hooper said.

He said the emotional intelligence she demonstrated in evaluations was also an important qualification in the stressful job of running the department.

She was the top performer in assessments by the city’s consultants, Hooper

See WENTZELL, Page 3A

Arboretum hosts 12 trolls during annual Winter Lights



“Trolls: A Field Study” made its North American debut at the North Carolina Arboretum in Asheville on Nov. 15.

PROVIDED BY THOMAS DAMBO

Exhibit will run until Feb. 17, 2026

Will Hofmann
Asheville Citizen Times
USA TODAY NETWORK

ASHEVILLE - A group of trolls will soon take over the trails and gardens of the North Carolina Arboretum. They’re friendlier than the ones you might find online.

The 434-acre arboretum opened

“Trolls: A Field Study by Thomas Dambo” on Nov. 15, bringing a dozen of the Danish artist’s famed trolls made of recycled materials to Western North Carolina. Six will be in the arboretum’s gardens and six will be among its trails. The exhibit will run until Feb. 17, 2026.

It’s the first time “Trolls: A Field Study” has opened in the United States, though Dambo has unveiled other trolls across the nation and even in North Carolina. The exhibit is expected to draw thousands of visitors — commonly referred to as “Troll Hunters” — to the region as the arboretum also launches its

annual seasonal event, the Winter Lights, on Nov. 15. While viewing the trolls is included in a regular parking fee for visiting the arboretum, the Winter Lights is a ticketed event, with pricing starting at \$45.

During the June reveal of the exhibit, North Carolina Arboretum Executive Director Drake Fowler called it the “most exciting exhibit” in the arboretum’s history.

“I want to take trash and turn it into something that will open people’s eyes

See TROLLS, Page 3A

ANALYSIS

Trump’s second term at a crossroads

Affordability woes, Epstein saga affect approval ratings

Francesca Chambers and Joey Garrison
USA TODAY

WASHINGTON – The Epstein saga was dragging him down.

President Donald Trump wanted to talk about the economy and what he was doing to lower prices for Americans after his party was walloped in off-year elections that were defined by higher prices. Instead, he was staring down a revolt from inside his party over the release of the Jeffrey Epstein files.

Realizing that he was on the losing side of a looming House vote to compel the Justice Department to release the records it had been holding back, Trump switched sides and told Republican lawmakers to vote with Democrats.

“All I want is I want for people to recognize the great job that I’ve done on pricing, on affordability,” Trump said Nov. 18 in the Oval Office, a few hours before a bill forcing the release of the Epstein files passed the House by an overwhelming 427-1 margin and then later won unanimous approval in the Senate. “We’ve done a great job, and I hate to see that deflect from the great job we’ve done.”

Trump’s political dominance over the Republican Party is showing signs of slipping as he faces a pair of challenges over the Epstein controversy and Americans’ concerns about affordability. Just as a rare defiance of Republicans prompted Trump to change

See TRUMP, Page 3A

Rates are down, and the market’s heating up

Whether you’re buying or selling a home, this is the time to act. Don’t miss out.



Know your home’s value. Then make your move.
Scan this code for a free valuation and the insight you need to plan your next step.

Discover more at
addressUSA.com

addressUSA



Volume 131 | No. 274
To subscribe: 828-692-5763
©2025 **\$2.00**



6 54107 00001 4

Subscriber-only eNewspaper

The eNewspaper is an electronic copy of your print newspaper. Enjoy every page by going to blueridgenow.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!