



# Takeaways from Hawks’ first 6 games

SPORTS, 1B

THURSDAY 10.08.26



ASBURY PARK PRESS

PART OF THE USA TODAY NETWORK

# Fight over NJ E-ZPass contract goes to courts

The program oversees all toll roads throughout Garden State

Colleen Wilson

NorthJersey.com | USA TODAY NETWORK – NEW JERSEY

New Jersey toll road users, the New Jersey Turnpike Authority and two competing companies are awaiting a decision from a New Jersey court that could determine the future of the state’s lucrative E-ZPass contract.

At stake is the \$1.7 billion contract to oversee the E-

ZPass program that affects toll roads touching practically every corner of the Garden State.

The winner of the contract will oversee everything from the bills issued and ensuring the overhead cameras are correctly tolling motorists to customer service and other administrative services, such as securing driver data.

Conduent, a Newark-based company, has held the contract since 1999 and faced scrutiny over the years for billing errors, poor customer service and outdated technology.

See E-ZPASS, Page 2A

# Man accused in abuse case is kept in jail

28-year-old charged with sexually abusing a child over a decade

Kathleen Hopkins

Asbury Park Press | USA TODAY NETWORK – NEW JERSEY

TOMS RIVER – A judge on Oct. 6 ordered a 28-year-old Lakewood man to remain behind bars without bail after hearing what she said was “substantial proof” the defendant sexually abused a child over the course of 10 years.

At a detention hearing for Ronrenier Gavin, Superior Court Judge Kimarie Rahill noted the defendant admitted committing various sexual acts against the child in a recorded telephone call with her and in various text message exchanges.

Gavin was charged on Sept. 21 with aggravated sexual assault, sexual assault and endangering the welfare of a child and has since remained in the Ocean County Jail.

Lynn Juan, assistant Ocean County prosecutor, argued at the detention hearing that Gavin would pose a danger to the community if he were to be released from jail to await trial.

See ABUSE, Page 5A

# Leaders in AI struggle to answer for risks

New York City Council holds hearing on safety of technology

Greta Reich

USA TODAY

Leaders from OpenAI, Meta, Anthropic and Google said they could not quantify the risks imposed by artificial intelligence in the worst-case catastrophic scenario at a New York City Council hearing about AI on Oct. 5.

“I don’t know. I also don’t think it matters whether it’s 1% or 10% or 20% chance that something catastrophic will go wrong. None of these levels is remotely acceptable,” Morgan Dwyer, OpenAI head of policy development and operation, said in response to Council Speaker Julie Menin’s question of how to quantify risk.

Menin said she was “incredulous at that answer” and called it “flippant, at best,” asking how the companies can know that the product is safe if they can’t measure potential risk.

See AI, Page 7A

## Ocean County library open after delays from construction issues



People arrive at the new Ocean County Library Stafford branch after the ground breaking there on Oct. 5.

THOMAS P. COSTELLO/ASBURY PARK PRESS

# Filling a lot of needs

Amanda Oglesby

Asbury Park Press | USA TODAY NETWORK – NEW JERSEY

STAFFORD – The windows gleamed and the paint was spotless inside Ocean County Library’s newest branch as officials and community members gathered to watch the opening of a building that took years to complete.

The Stafford branch on Monday, Oct. 5, celebrated the most recent addition to New Jersey’s largest public library system, a 21-branch county system.

Contractors started construction on the Stafford library in 2023, expecting to be finished in 2025. But more than a year of delays added about \$1.75 million to the total cost.

Its construction was marred by cracked walls, elevator installation delays and concrete problems, but none of that was visible as librarians and county officials gathered at the blue and white building to celebrate the completion of this \$13.25 million

See LIBRARY, Page 10A



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