



When Rutgers’ Kelvin Troy trash-talked Larry Bird at the RAC (and won)

SPORTS, 1B

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Report: Inflation cooled in January



The food-at-home index increased 0.2%, down from a 0.7% increase in December, meaning grocery prices still rose in January but at a slower pace than they did in the last month of 2025. NATHAN HOWARD/REUTERS FILE

Data reflects dip in food, energy prices

Rachel Barber
USA TODAY

Inflation cooled a bit more than forecasters expected in January, with prices rising 2.4% from a year earlier, the Labor Department said Feb. 13. The report, which was delayed two days because of a brief government shutdown, revealed that inflation fell in the first month of 2026 after holding steady at 2.7% in December. The slightly lower number for January reflects smaller price increases for shelter and

food, as well as a decrease in the index for energy, which fell 1.5%. Prices are still rising, but inflation remains well below the pace seen in 2022, and far from the rate consumers and businesses expected after President Donald Trump imposed broad tariffs on nearly all U.S. trading partners. In a New York Times and Siena University poll released Jan. 22, Americans ranked the economy as their top concern, and 51% said the president’s policies have made their lives less affordable.

Oxford Economics lead economist Bernard Yaros said the January Consumer Price Index delivered “a welcome surprise” to start the year. “In recent years, residual seasonality, along with delayed price adjustments in response to pandemic-era shocks, have led to upside CPI surprises in January,” Yaros said in a note following the report’s release. “These were no longer on full display this time around, further reinforcing our view [that] tariff-induced price increases on the goods side are largely behind us.” On a monthly basis, prices increased

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Stanley and Alice Vetter - married 69 years. PHOTOS BY MIGUEL FERNANDEZ/NORTHJERSEY.COM

‘Love is always in the air’

Seniors share their secrets to lasting love

Deena Yellin
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USA TODAY NETWORK – NEW JERSEY

PARAMUS — Alice Vetter clasped hands with the love of her life and pondered the qualities that drew her to him at their first meeting. “He was tall. He had these big broad shoulders,” the 87-year-old said, dreamily. “I liked his body.” Her husband, Stanley Vetter, 93, smiled, recalling that he was “intrigued” by Alice’s beautiful red hair. The pair, who met on a blind date arranged by Stanley’s best friend, have been married for 69 years and lived in Bergenfield for much of their life. They were among the handful of long-married couples at Juniper Village, an assisted living and memory-care community in Paramus, who spoke to a reporter just days before Valentine’s Day about the secrets to a happy union. Those secrets are in ample supply at Juniper Village, where 17 couples have been married for at least five decades, according to administrators. “When you are happily living your life in your third



Herb Bloom and Karen Lambert Cole - dating two years.

act with your sweetheart by your side, love is always in the air,” said Elizabeth Morocho, the village’s executive director. In a round of interviews, the couples sat side by side. They discussed their long journeys, unexpected meetings and the passions and tribulations of growing old together. Some suffer from dementia or other ailments and are no longer able to speak; they sat, staring into the eyes of partners.

Others squeezed hands, exchanged meaningful glances and finished one another’s thoughts. They offered sage advice and shared love stories that spanned decades. Among the most oft-repeated advice: Long, happy relationships don’t come easy. You have to “work” on a marriage, and treat your partner the way you want to be treated.

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Stay NJ payments for 2026 are here

Katie Sobko
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After three years of funding, the state’s Treasury Department is sending out the first payments for the Stay NJ property tax relief program for 2026. With a price tag of about \$1.2 billion each year and guaranteed funding only through June of this year, the program may see changes moving forward. For now, the program, open to qualifying seniors and disabled residents, is underway. Checks are being mailed to about 430,000 qualifying taxpayers who applied last year as part of the combined Stay NJ, ANCHOR and Senior Freeze application process, state officials said. The payments will be distributed in quarterly installments as opposed to a lump sum and will see an average benefit for the first installment of about \$637.

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Morristown Medical Center named among 50 best

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Two Central Jersey hospitals have been named in the list of America’s 50 Best Hospitals while another two have been ranked in the Best 250. Morristown Medical Center and Overlook Medical Center in Summit have landed in the Best 50 in the annual rankings by Healthgrades.

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