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New Brunswick scraps data center plan

Suzanne Russell
MyCentralJersey.com | USA TODAY NETWORK – NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK – The City Council has scrapped plans for a data center and reinstated plans for a park as part of the redevelopment of the Jersey Avenue and Sandford Street area.

The amendment removing the data center was unanimously approved by council members present at the Feb. 18 meeting. Later in the session, the council also approved the overall redevelopment plan.

The decision drew applause from an overflow crowd, with some attendees holding signs opposing the data center.

For nearly an hour, residents praised the removal of the data center while urging city officials to improve safety and maintenance at city parks, expand affordable housing and better address homelessness.

The city planner said the Planning Board recently

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IT'S 'SNOW MOLD'

Snowed in cars remain stuck in the aftermath of the snow storm, Jan 26 Bloomfield.
YANNICK PETERHANS/NORTHJERSEY.COM

Why allergies are flaring as the snow is melting

Gene Myers
NorthJersey.com | USA TODAY NETWORK – NEW JERSEY

Temperatures are finally climbing. The mountains of dirty snow are melting.

So why are some of us still miserable in New Jersey, suffering from watery and itchy eyes, a wheeze, congestion or a cough?

Blame snow mold, the microbial menace hiding beneath the snowpack.

"People don't understand that there's something called a cold-weather fungus," said Dr. Robert Lahita, director of the Institute for Autoimmune and Rheumatic Disease at St. Joseph's Health in Wayne. "It thrives under melting, deep snow or damp, cold conditions."

Mold spores, a type of fungi, are a common outdoor trigger for seasonal allergies, alongside pollen. This winter's snowy conditions, followed by the recent thaw, have created conditions ripe for the spores to spread: It's been wet, and the snow has been the perfect incubator for the mold growing on moist grass, leaves and mulch underneath.

Snow mold thrives in wet environments when temperatures are in the 35 to 55-degree Fahrenheit range, according to Rutgers' Cooperative Extension service. As the ground is uncovered, you may be able to see two distinct species of the fungus: a matted pink variety known as Microdochium nivale and Typhula incarnata, a grey mold.

"Most people don't realize what it is," Lahita said. "You have all of this mold lying at bay. Then things begin to melt, freeze, melt, freeze. It creates a perfect environment for the mold."

What are the symptoms?

Doctors often miss the connection between the melting snow and allergies, he added. Sneezing, runny or stuffy noses, itchy or watery eyes, coughs, post-nasal drip or worsening asthma are all potential symptoms.

People with mold allergies, spring allergies, asthma sufferers and those with weakened immune systems or lung disease are especially sensitive to molds, according to the New Jersey Department of Health.

Health experts recommend rinsing off after yard work or shoveling, keeping windows closed on windy days, using HEPA filters indoors and showering before bed to remove spores from hair and clothing.

Treatment focuses on relieving symptoms with inhalers, anti-inflammatory medications and decongestants.

"Most of what you do is treat the symptoms," Lahita said.

Passenger killed in crash after high-speed chase

Suzanne Russell
MyCentralJersey.com | USA TODAY NETWORK – NEW JERSEY

WOODBRIDGE – A woman passenger died following a two-vehicle crash at the intersection of Route 1 and Gill Lane after the car she was riding in was involved in a police pursuit, authorities said.

According to a preliminary investigation, shortly before midnight Feb. 19, a Woodbridge police officer initiated a motor-vehicle pursuit of a Nissan Maxima that was traveling at a high rate of speed southbound on Route 1.

About one minute later, the Nissan crashed into another vehicle near Gill Lane. The passenger in the Nissan was pronounced dead at 12:25 a.m. Feb. 20, according to the Attorney General's Office.

The drivers and other occupants of the two vehicles involved suffered serious injuries and were taken to Robert Wood Johnson University Medical Center for treatment, officials said.

Investigators also found a dog dead inside the Nissan.

The Woodbridge police vehicle was not involved in the collision.

The identities of the police officer, drivers and passenger have not been released.

The fatal crash is being investigated by the Attorney General's Office of Public Integrity and Accountability, as required under state guidelines when a death occurs during an encounter with law enforcement. The investigation is ongoing, and no additional information was released.

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County SWAT captures Franklin convicted felon

Mike Deak
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FRANKLIN – A township man who fled after being convicted of drug and weapons offenses and failed to appear for sentencing was captured by the county SWAT team, prosecutors said.

Kenneth James, 34, was apprehended Feb. 18 after members of the Somerset County Prosecutor's Office Organized Crime and Narcotics Task Force Street Crimes Unit conducted covert surveillance at

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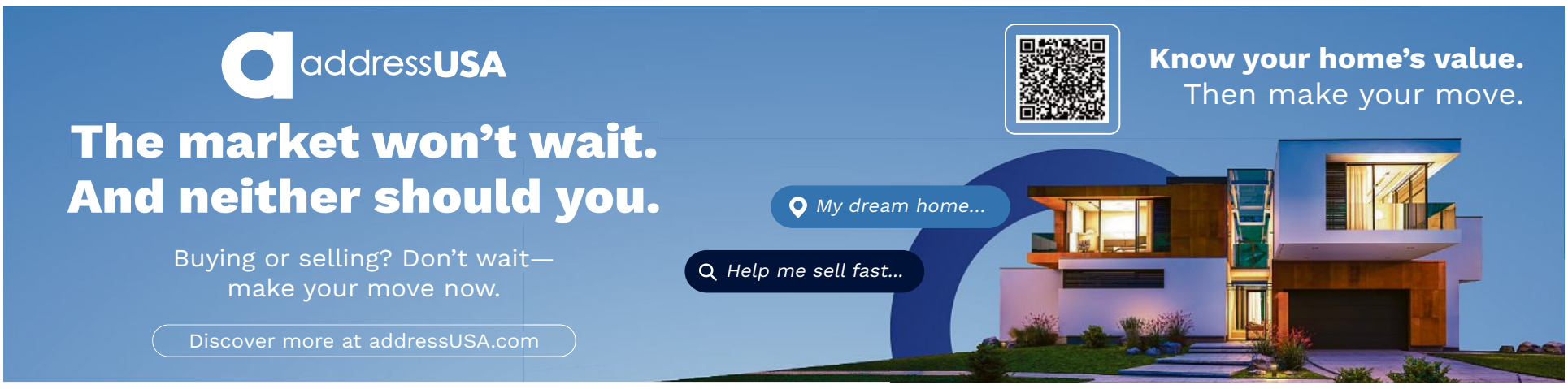

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