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Amanda Little, environmental education specialist for the City of Rochester, shows a live black pine snake to children enrolled in R-Camp and explains why the nonvenomous constrictor flicks its tongue during a program at the Maplewood Nature Center in Rochester on July 16. PHOTOS BY TINA MACINTYRE-YEE, ROCHESTER DEMOCRAT AND CHRONICLE

NATURE RETURNS TO MAPLEWOOD

Center reopens after extensive renovation and upgrades

Tina MacIntyre-Yee Rochester Democrat and Chronicle | USA TODAY NETWORK

The Maplewood Nature Center, nestled in the lower portion of Maplewood Park, has quietly been open to Rochester youth enrolled in R-Camp since July 6. The public will be able to access the facility beginning July 21. • The building, located close to Route 104, was built in 1945 as the Maplewood Training Center and was used for several different purposes over the years.

The center sits within one of the parks designed by Frederick Law Olmsted and connects to the nearby Genesee Riverway Trail, said Jasmine Chastine, director of R-Camps. Work outside the facility remains ongoing, including revitalization of the nearby pond area. Chastine said the building's central area can be opened or closed to separate public spaces from areas used by



The Maplewood Nature Center in Maplewood Park in Rochester has been open for R-Camp since July 6 and opens to the public July 21. Work outside the facility, including revitalization of the nearby pond area, remains ongoing.

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Americans dip into savings for groceries

Research finds 1 in 20 also used payday loans

Marcia Greenwood Rochester Democrat and Chronicle USA TODAY NETWORK

In 2025, nearly one in five adults ages 18 to 64 – almost 20% – paid for groceries with savings, and nearly one in 20 – more than 5% – bought them with cash from a payday advance loan. Those are two of the findings of a survey by the Urban Institute, a Washington, DC-based nonpartisan think tank that conducts economic and social policy research. Its Well-being and Basic Needs Survey for 2025 also revealed that although nearly 35% of adults 18 to 64 who paid for groceries with a credit card paid the bill in full when it came due, more than 19% paid less than the full balance, and almost 9% did not always make the minimum payment. Contrast that with 2023, when around 7% did not make the minimum payment. “Groceries are one of the largest household budget items for families,” the survey states, noting that over the past five years, food costs have risen about 32%. “This means that families today face persistently higher prices when they go to the grocery store, and food affordability remains a key concern for many.”

Survey methodology

The Urban Institute does its Well-being and Basic Needs Survey annually. More than 7,500 adults 18 to 64 participated between 2017 and 2024. In 2025, the sample size was expanded to include 2,500 adults 65 and older for a total of 10,000.

New statistics show food costs up

New Bureau of Labor Statistics show that food costs have gone up over the past year. According to its July 14 report, food-at-home costs rose 2.7% over the 12 months ending in June. Over that same period: • The cost of fruits and vegetables rose 5.3%.

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Heat, smoke create dangerous mix, URMIC doctor says

Victoria E. Freile New York Connect Team USA TODAY NETWORK

Smoke from Canadian wildfires has once again drifted into New York, turning skies hazy and pushing air quality into unhealthy levels across much of the state. Here's what University of Rochester Medical Center pulmonologist Daniel Croft says New Yorkers should know:

URMC doctor: 'Unfortunately the wildfires are back'

"Unfortunately the wildfires are back," said Dr. Daniel Croft, a pulmonologist

with University of Rochester Medicine. Croft recalled the widespread wildfire smoke that blanketed western New York in 2023, when Air Quality Index (AQI) values climbed above 280, creating some of the worst air quality in the nation. During that event, doctors saw an increase in patients experiencing respiratory problems, particularly people with asthma, chronic lung disease and heart conditions. "When there's poor air quality, it places additional stress on the lungs and cardiovascular system," Croft said, noting that people with existing medical conditions are especially vulnerable.

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Inside How did the Canada wildfires start? 3A A kayaker heads for the Canandaigua Outlet underneath smoky skies on July 15. MIKE MURPHY/CANANDAIGUA DAILY MESSENGER

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