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DISTINGUISHED NEW ENGLAND NEWSPAPER

FRIDAY, APRIL 24, 2026 | PROVIDENCEJOURNAL.COM

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Matt Ursillo shows the Quonset Soil Solutions pyrolysis facility in North Kingstown on April 20. The plant uses a high-heat process to turn wood chips into a carbon-rich soil amendment. PHOTOS BY DAVID DELPOIO/THE PROVIDENCE JOURNAL

Foulkes leading McKee in new poll

Majority still undecided in Democratic primary

Patrick Anderson
Providence Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

Yet another poll shows Helena Foulkes leading this year's Democratic primary for governor against incumbent Dan McKee.

The latest poll, from the Rhode Island League of Public Charter Schools, found that 26% of likely primary voters would choose Foulkes if the election were held the day they were asked, and 14% would choose McKee.

A majority of primary voters, 54%, remain undecided, and 6% would choose restaurant owner Gregory Stevens.

The poll, of 800 likely general election voters, was conducted for the League by Expedition Strategies from March 24 to 29. It had an overall margin of error of 3.46% and larger for the Democratic primary questions, which were not asked to Republicans.

Among voters who said they are not sure yet whom they will vote for, 15% said they are leaning toward Foulkes

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HEATED DEBATE

Will ancient wood chip 'biochar' process work with sewage sludge?

Alex Kuffner
Providence Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

NORTH KINGSTOWN – A plant in the Quonset Business Park is using the latest technology to continue an ancient practice.

The sprawling facility, a maze of gleaming pipes, pumps and conveyor belts all painted in primary colors, was built by Quonset Soil Solutions to turn wood waste into biochar, a type of charcoal that can be added to soil to help retain moisture, lock in nutrients and store copious amounts of carbon.

Indigenous peoples in the Amazon are believed to have pioneered the use of biochar thousands of years ago to amend poor soils and increase crop yields by creating what's known as "terra preta," or dark earth. Environmental advocates are now resurrecting the practice to help modern farmers, while also addressing climate change.

The Quonset plant uses a process called pyrolysis that heats wood chips to such high temperatures that they break down into carbon and other elements. The process is different from incineration because it takes place in the absence of oxygen and doesn't subject the material to an open flame.

One benefit is lower greenhouse gas



A finished and bagged carbon-rich soil amendment made from wood chips by Quonset Soil Solutions' pyrolysis facility is shown on April 20.

emissions, say representatives of Quonset Soil Solutions, an affiliate of the Cranston-based renewable energy company Green Development.

"We're sequestering about 12,000 tons of carbon per year captured in the biochar product," Matt Ursillo, the company's vice president of construction and project management, said on a recent tour of the plant. "Normally in incineration, those 12,000 tons would go right into the atmosphere."

The facility was built over three years

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"We're sequestering about 12,000 tons of carbon per year captured in the biochar product. Normally in incineration, those 12,000 tons would go right into the atmosphere."

Matt Ursillo
Green Development vice president of construction and project management

Pawtucket drivers blame war, Trump for gas prices

Paul Edward Parker
Providence Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

PAWTUCKET – With gas prices hovering near \$4 a gallon, we spent some time in the middle of Wednesday, April 22, hanging around an Armistice Boulevard gas station to see what people thought.

To no one's surprise, nobody is happy that prices are so high.

"It sucks," said Gavin Adams, of Pawtucket, as he gassed up at Armistice Mart. "Especially with groceries going up, it's like we can't really afford a lot of things."

"I think they're ridiculous," Alisha

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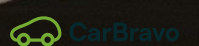
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Volume 197 | No. 239
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