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STAFF PHOTO BY MATT HAMILTON

Novonix decided against purchasing a 17.5-acre property adjacent to its big blue Chattanooga headquarters, pictured Monday.

Novonix nixes plan to buy property next to plant

BY DANIEL DASSOW
STAFF WRITER

Novonix decided not to purchase a 17.5-acre property adjacent to its Chattanooga plant and headquarters, the company told investors in a report on Monday.

The synthetic graphite manufacturer plans to invest \$1 billion in a second local plant as it ramps up production at its first plant. Novonix calls the big blue former Alstom factory off Riverfront Parkway its “Riverside” facility.

In March, Novonix entered an exclusive 150-day period to explore buying a factory building next door to the Riverside plant for \$26.5 million instead of expanding at Enterprise South Industrial Park.

The company announced in January 2025 it would build a second plant at a 182-acre parcel at Enterprise South, near the Volkswagen plant. Elected officials in Chattanooga and Hamilton County then approved a property tax break for the expansion

valued at \$54 million over 15 years.

The neighboring plant at 959 Windtower Drive was formerly home to Aerisyn, which made towers for wind turbines. The property is owned by a company called Aerisyn Opportunity Zone Business, LLC, and several companies lease space at the plant, including Scenic City Mechanical and TS USA.

“Novonix has decided not to proceed with the potential purchase of 17.5 acres adjacent to Riverside at this time but plans to maintain the ability to evaluate future opportunities with the property owners,” the company said in its half-year report.

Company officials were not available on Monday to discuss why Novonix decided not to make the purchase or whether the announcement means it will expand at Enterprise South.

Novonix leaders said in March the alternative expansion site would likely save the company money and be more efficient than expanding across the county.

The neighboring site came with a business uncertainty. Novonix’s valuable tax break may not have transferred to the Aerisyn property because the site is inside a special tax district where the city wants new property tax revenue.

The tax district is designed to attract development to The Bend, a 120-acre mixed-use district planned for the former Alstom and Combustion Engineering site. Developers who build at The Bend can be reimbursed for infrastructure upgrades through future property and sales tax revenue.

Jimmy White, the managing partner at The Bend, has said a second Novonix plant would not align with his vision for the district. White holds minority stake in the Aerisyn property.

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Novonix is based in Chattanooga,

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School leaders to honor Parton

BY JOAN MCCLANE
STAFF WRITER

The Hamilton County Board of Education will meet Tuesday for a special meeting to recognize the contributions of the late Dolly Parton.

A resolution honoring Parton, sponsored by Ben Connor, D-North Chattanooga, is being presented to the school board in the wake of the music legend’s death last week.

The resolution highlights Parton’s contributions to literacy in Tennessee.

Parton’s Imagination Library, established through the Dollywood Foundation in 1995, originally provided free books to children in Sevier County but was expanded statewide in 2004.

Now, more than 14,000 children in Hamilton County — ages birth to 5 — receive free books through the program each month.

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Connor told the Times Free Press on Monday that his daughters used to eagerly await

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Parton estate announces festival, **A6**

Man with machete killed by deputy

BY BEN BENTON
STAFF WRITER

A Coffee County, Tennessee, man is dead, and a Coffee County Sheriff’s Office investigator is recovering from wounds allegedly sustained in a machete attack.

Sgt. Ray “Butch” Stewart was one of three Coffee County officers who located a man allegedly wanted on a warrant in the 400 block of Spring Circle in the Lakewood community at 7:45 p.m. Friday, according to the sheriff and the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation. The officers attempted to serve the warrant on Eric Thurman, 43, who was found in a tent on Spring Circle, which makes a loop around a wooded area off of Birch Lane.

The Lakewood community is about 12 miles northeast of the Coffee County seat of Manchester.

“For reasons still under investigation, Thurman cut a deputy in his chest and in his

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The Wilcox bridge project could get started by 2027

BY BEN BENTON
STAFF WRITER

State transportation officials this week provided a more detailed timeline for the multimillion-dollar Wilcox Boulevard Bridge replacement project, extending the anticipated start of construction to 2027 and completion of the project to 2030.

In August 2025, the Tennessee Department of Transportation and Chattanooga officials estimated construction could begin in fall 2026 and finish in 2029, but as planning has progressed, the timeline has been refined.

State transportation officials declined to provide estimated costs for the two-phase project, citing state law requiring pricing and cost estimates to remain confidential until contracts are awarded to the winning bidders, said spokes-

person Rae Anne Bradley.

“This protects the integrity of the bid process and helps to ensure fair competition,” Bradley said in an emailed answer to questions about the project sent Aug. 20. “Once awards are made, TDOT will be able to share full cost information publicly.”

The bridge replacement will be completed as a single project with two distinct phases, she said, describing an estimated timeline.

“Design work for the first phase of construction, the replacement of the bridge over the Norfolk Southern rail yard, has progressed to construction-level plans,” Bradley said. “Wright Brothers Construction Company Inc., selected as the construction manager in early 2025, submitted their proposal for this portion earlier this month, and TDOT is currently reviewing it. If accepted, con-



STAFF PHOTO BY SETH CARPENTER

The support on a dented guardrail is seen Aug. 21 detached from the Wilcox Boulevard Bridge.

struction on phase one could begin in early 2027.

“Design work for the second phase, which includes construction of a ramp bridge into the rail yard, will continue through spring 2027, with review and award by TDOT to follow, once plans are complete,” she said. “The project is currently planned for completion in spring 2030.”

The project is being delivered through the construction manager/general contractor process, which Bradley described as an alternative delivery method allowing TDOT to work closely with the contractor during design

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