



Meet The Daily Herald's 2026 All-Area girls basketball teams

SPORTS, 1B

The Daily Herald.

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THINGS TO DO

First Fridays, Bunny Land top list

Jay Powell

Columbia Daily Herald
USA TODAY NETWORK - TENNESSEE

Celebrate this Easter weekend with the return of First Fridays, Easter Egg hunts, vintage animatronic displays and a nostalgic trip back to 1977.

1. First Fridays returns

It's that time of year. Gather in downtown Columbia for the kickoff of 2026's First Fridays monthly events.

Shops will stay open late while streets will be closed to vehicle traffic to allow pedestrians, food trucks, vendors and music to fill the downtown Colum-

bia square. This month's theme is "Muletown Celebration."

Main First Fridays events will take place between 5-8 p.m. In addition to vendors, buskers and shopping opportunities, First Fridays will feature live music on the main stage, a game zone and more.

Just off the square at 510 N. Garden

St., Grinder's Switch Winery will partner with Bad Idea Brewing and Ollie & Finn's Counter for a First Friday Block Party from 6-9 p.m.

Vintage and old-school gamers will want to stop by Twisted Copper Brewing Company, 104 E. 5th St., as they host

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ANALYSIS

'Trump slump' hit U.S. tourism in 2025



The number of foreign tourists who came to the United States fell by 5.4% in 2025 – a sharper decline than in 2017-18, the last time, outside the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, that the industry was gripped by fears of a travel slump. GETTY IMAGES

Policies could continue to curb visits this year, impact World Cup

Frédéric Dimanche

Toronto Metropolitan University
and Kelley A. McClinchey
Wilfrid Laurier University
THE CONVERSATION

With an upcoming FIFA World Cup being staged across the nation, 2026 was supposed to be a bumper year for tourism to the United States, driven in part by hordes of arriving soccer fans.

And yet, the U.S. tourism industry is worried. While the rest of the world saw a travel bump in 2025, with global international arrivals up 4%, the United States saw a downturn. The number of foreign tourists who came to the United States fell by 5.4% during the year – a sharper decline than the one experi-

enced in 2017-18, the last time, outside the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, that the industry was gripped by fears of a travel slump.

Policy stances from the Trump administration on everything from immigration to tariffs, along with currency swings and stricter border controls, have seemingly proved a turnoff to travelers from other countries, especially Canadians – the single largest source of foreign tourists for the United States. Canadian travel to the United States fell by close to 30% in 2025. But it is not just visitors from Canada who are choosing to avoid the United States. Travel from Australia, India and Western Europe, among others, has also shrunk.

We are experts in tourism. And while

we don't possess a crystal ball, we believe that the tourism decline of 2025 could well continue through 2026. The evidence appears clear: Washington's ongoing policies are putting off would-be travelers. In other words, the tourism industry is in the midst of a "Trump slump."

Fewer Canadians heading south

The impact of President Donald Trump's policies are perhaps most pronounced when looking north of the U.S. border. According to the U.S. Travel Association, Canadian visitors generated approximately 20.4 million

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Full Senate votes on school voucher

House cuts 5K slots

Vivian Jones

Nashville Tennessean
USA TODAY NETWORK - TENNESSEE

A 20,000-seat expansion to Tennessee's statewide private school voucher program is headed for a Senate floor vote despite bipartisan opposition, as a House version now includes some transparency requirements and would expand the program by only 15,000 seats.

The Senate Finance Committee passed Senate Bill 2247 on March 31 in a vote of 6 to 4.

Sen. Jack Johnson, R-Franklin, on March 31 called the Education Freedom Scholarships voucher program established last year "a tremendous success," touting the 38,000 new applications this year for the \$7,400 vouchers.

First-year participants have not yet taken any standardized tests, nor have their test results been reported to the state. There is not yet any kind of objective measure of the program's results.

Two Republicans opposed the bill: Sens. Joey Hensley, R-Hohenwald, and Page Walley, R-Bolivar. Hensley is so far the lone Republican in the Senate who supported the program last year but has opposed expansion.

"It just seems like we're paying for some of these children twice," Hensley said. "We're holding the public schools harmless, so we're paying them for the students even though the students are not going to the public school."

If no other senators who supported the Education Freedom Scholarships last year flip, the bill is set to pass a Senate vote.

The story could be different in the House. While the bill is moving forward, a slew of changes were made to it in committee April 1.

A new House version of the bill would cap the voucher expansion at 15,000, rather than the Senate's 20,000, and bring the program total to 35,000.

The Tennessee Department of Education would also be required to annually report data on participants' prior school enrollment and the number of families that fall into different priority income categories: below \$57,000 for a

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