

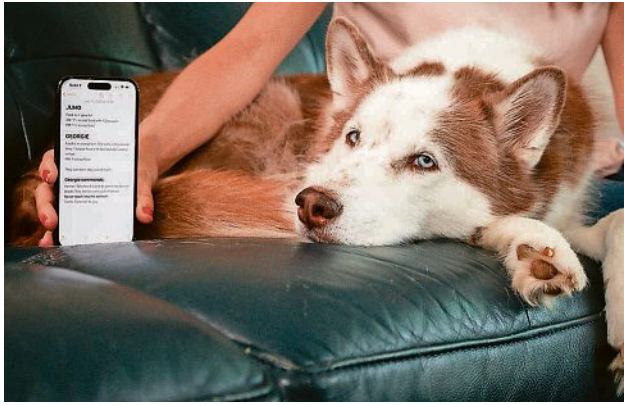


Oakland defeats Bradley Central

SPORTS, 1C



The Daily News Journal



Where to look for a pet sitter

LIFESTYLES, 1B



Derrick Henderson, a food distribution ambassador with Metro Social Services, and Samantha Donelson, a co-worker, unwrap frozen meals for delivery at a kitchen/warehouse in Nashville on Nov. 5.

PHOTOS BY DENNY SIMMONS/THE TENNESSEAN

Nashvillians feel economic ‘pinch’

Stress continues from SNAP delay, rising costs

Molly Davis Nashville Tennessean | USA TODAY NETWORK – TENNESSEE

Marvin Vaughn squinted against the sun as he called out to the man wearing the blue Metro Social Services jacket. His dog, Bull, wagged his tail and sniffed at the patch of browning grass under his paws. • “I called them last week,” he said to Metro Social Services employee Derrick Henderson, who delivers hot meals and frozen food to seniors and disabled residents of Davidson County. “I’m trying to get on your list.”

Vaughn, a 63-year-old Nashville resident, relies on Social Security and disability benefits. He has seen Henderson deliver food to his neighbors in a South Nashville apartment complex during his morning walks. He hopes to eventually receive home meal delivery for an added layer of food security as grocery prices, rent and other monthly expenses spike. But the waitlist is long, with new names added every day. “I’m worried about the children and the people with families more than myself,” Vaughn said about the growing issue of food insecurity.

The abrupt and unprecedented funding lapse in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) this month because of the federal government shutdown dealt a heavy blow to many working-class families in Tennessee, where the program typically serves about 690,000 people statewide, including nearly 60,000 in Nashville.

The disruption comes during a five-year surge in grocery costs alongside steep increases in housing, transportation, childcare and health care expenses.

Wages, too, have grown in business-friendly Tennessee, where the gross domestic product, job and population growth have all been positive. But for many people, wages haven’t grown enough to cover the rising costs, and their experience of the economy is starkly different from the headlines.

Kara Smith, an economist with Belmont University, said while many experts don’t believe a recession is on the horizon, the economic conditions are painful for people who can’t find work, are on a fixed income or whose monthly expenses are squeezing them of all they have.

“For lower income households, they’re facing a



Derrick Henderson puts together meals for delivery at a kitchen/warehouse in Nashville on Nov. 5.

math problem to meet all their basic needs,” she said.

Low income families feel ‘pinch’ as Tennessee economy booms

Tennessee’s economy has grown steadily over the past five years. The U.S. economy more broadly is also doing relatively well by traditional measures.

Cotality senior economist Molly Boesel said most economists agree the U.S. is not entering a recession, but consumer sentiment surveys show a more complex picture.

See ECONOMY, Page 9A

TBI confirms investigation of Rutherford Property Assessor’s Office

Scott Broden Murfreesboro Daily News Journal USA TODAY NETWORK – TENNESSEE

A Tennessee Bureau of Investigation spokesperson confirmed this week a TBI investigation of Rutherford County Property Assessor’s Office.

“At the request of 16th Judicial District Attorney General Jennings Jones, the TBI is investigating the Rutherford County Property Assessor’s Office,” said Carley Gordon, the deputy communications director for the TBI operations in Middle/East Tennessee.

“The investigation remains active and ongoing.” The spokesperson comment came through a Nov. 10 email reply to The Daily News Journal question asking if the TBI was investigating the deletion of administrative log files involving Rutherford County Property Assessor Rob Mitchell.

The TBI confirmation follows Tennessee Comptroller Jason Mumpower accusing “someone” of deleting property assessor records while the state official spoke for nearly an hour to the Rutherford County Commission Oct. 16.

Mitchell welcomes ‘a full investigation’

Mitchell provided the following response to the DNJ Nov. 12 about the TBI investigation:

“We attribute the deletion to batch changes mandated by the comptroller but welcome a full investigation, having nothing to hide,” Mitchell said.

“The comptroller never fully shared their concerns with us prior to October 16th’s public presentation, so we might collaboratively resolve any concerns.

“While my office made mistakes, we have since corrected, I expect the investigation to confirm they were unintentional and simple human error. We have also made procedural changes to eliminate them in the future.”

Mitchell speaks about records issue with police, podcast

Mitchell also recently responded to questions from interviewers on the “Patriot Punkcast” about the accusation of “manually deleting files” by saying his Chief Deputy Russell Key was updating an assessment for a shopping center that had a fitness center business replace a grocery store and then deleted the original file. “That is a normal process,” Mitchell said on the podcast and then suggested that comptroller’s staff members responded by saying they “understand that” and “that makes perfect sense.”

Mitchell also requested an Aug. 27 Murfreesboro Police Department officer report pertaining to records being hacked.

“Mr. Mitchell stated that during an audit, the comptroller’s office found that there was potentially over four million codes breached in Rutherford County Assessor’s Office, which might affect an unknown number of citizens and their personal information,” the officer’s report said.

Rutherford County Chief Information Officer Cody York, who oversees the Office of Information Technology, told the DNJ that his office would be aware if there was a software breach in the property assessor’s office Aug. 25-27.

“We have no reason to believe if there was any kind of breach or external hack in that time period or before then,” York said.

Comptroller accuses Mitchell of 25% error rate on records

In addition to the records issue, Mumpower accused Mitchell of failing to work with the comptroller’s office for two years to correct a 25% error rate on Rutherford County property assessments for tax billing.

See ASSESSOR, Page 9A

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