



Should Titans have so many former head coaches on staff?

SPORTS, 1B

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NES had mixed messages on tree trimming

Different parts of company have said different things

Kelly Puente and Stuart Dyos
Nashville Tennessean
USA TODAY NETWORK – TENNESSEE

Nashville Electric Service has “traditionally” fallen behind on vegetation management, despite warnings that inadequate tree

trimming increases the risk of more frequent and longer power outages, according to board documents.
The concern comes as the utility faces intense scrutiny from elected officials and thousands of Nashvillians who remained without power for days following a crippling ice storm on Jan. 24 that at one point knocked out electricity for more than 200,000 customers.
Fallen tree limbs were a primary cause of

Inside

- U.S. Rep. Andy Ogles calls for NES takeover. **4A**
- Nashville residents dash to get repairs done for power. **4A**
- How to document winter storm damage through TEMA. **5A**

the outages, and as of Feb. 4, the city remained strewn with debris reminiscent of hurricane damage. More than 8,000 customers remained without power midday, according to the NES outage map.
NES, like most electric utilities, is responsible for managing vegetation around power lines to reduce the risk of downed lines and outages. The utility follows an industry-

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Musician Phil Vassar at his Nashville home on Jan. 20. DENNY SIMMONS/THE TENNESSEAN

Surviving was just a start for Phil Vassar

Musician talks recovery from a massive heart attack

Beth Warren Nashville Tennessean | USA TODAY NETWORK – TENNESSEE

Phil Vassar’s heart stopped beating. His eyes rolled back. His skin turned blue. ● Doctors told him he died. Twice. ● The odds of the Nashville singer-songwriter and pianist surviving a 2023 “widow-maker” heart attack, a complete blockage to the largest coronary artery, were not in his favor. If he did make it, he likely wouldn’t overcome substantial memory loss and return to the stage. ● He did all three. ● “It’s a crazy miracle,” said his girlfriend, Cari Freitag. “He can walk and talk and sing and perform and function.”

The fitness-minded country music hitmaker, who penned “Just Another Day in Paradise,” “Carleen,” and other chart toppers, had no known family history or obvious signs of heart disease before his severe attack. His harrowing experience underscores why heart disease can be especially dangerous for people who appear healthy, and why subtle symptoms are often easy to dismiss. By sharing his story, he hopes to save lives by drawing attention to the lesser-known warning signs before it’s too late.
“I’m just now feeling better and better,” said Vassar, after months of recovery. “I’m way calmer now. I learned to enjoy the moment.”
Vassar had never worried about heart disease. Growing up in Harrisonburg, Virginia, he stayed active, playing youth and high



Phil Vassar sings the national anthem before the start of the CMA Nightly Headliner’s concert at Nissan Stadium on the first day of CMA Music Festival in Nashville on June 8, 2017.
LARRY MCCORMACK / TENNESSEAN.COM

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New start times for most Metro schools

A later opening bell planned for the fall

Rachel Wegner
Nashville Tennessean
USA TODAY NETWORK – TENNESSEE

Nashville high schoolers will soon be able to hit the snooze button for another 20 minutes.
The Metro Nashville Public Schools board voted unanimously to move high school start times 20 minutes later during its regular meeting on Feb. 3. The change will take effect for the 2026-27 school year.
The school day will now run from 7:25 a.m. to 2:25 p.m. for high school students, moving the entire schedule back 20 minutes. Elementary school students will start and end 10 minutes later, with the day running from 8:10 a.m. to 3:10 p.m. Middle school schedules will not change, which means they’ll still run from 8:55 a.m. to 3:55 p.m.
It’s far from the first time MNPS

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Sen. Lowe says he’s no longer interested in ending TSSAA

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USA TODAY NETWORK – TENNESSEE

Less than a year ago, two Tennessee lawmakers considered a government push to dissolve the state’s high school athletics association.
Sen. Adam Lowe, R-Calhoun, is no longer pursuing that option, Lowe told The Tennessean. He and the TSSAA are more aligned now, with the association and a majority of its member schools behind state legislation efforts to loosen high school transfer rules.
Lowe said the TSSAA began listening to what parents and students wanted, citing the association’s creation of a student-advisory committee as a good-faith effort.

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