



Same-sex marriage cases head back to court

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The News Leader

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Volunteers pack boxes of food at the Greater Lansing Food Bank in Lansing, Michigan, on Oct. 27.
MATTHEW DAE SMITH/LANSING STATE JOURNAL

Food banks brace for millions of users

Officials expect lack of SNAP benefits to hit hard

Sarah D. Wire
USA TODAY

At a food bank in Des Moines, Iowa, clients who used to come occasionally are now regulars. The number of visitors has steadily risen in the last two years as COVID-19 pandemic relief programs ended, said Andrea Cook, executive director of the Johnston Partnership, which runs the food bank.

And now, benefits received through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP, aren't expected to arrive in full in November because of the government shutdown. The shortfall would leave 42 million people scrambling to find sustenance, and food banks like Cook's are bracing nationwide for a wave of new clients desperate for a meal.

See **FOOD BANKS**, Page 2A

We need everyone who is in a position to give and to support to do so. Please donate to your local food bank."

Linda Nageotte
President and COO of Feeding America

Time for residents to get a flu shot



The best way to stay protected this flu season is to get a flu shot.
PROVIDED BY WALGREENS

Monique Calello
Staunton News Leader
USA TODAY NETWORK

With the 2025-26 influenza season officially underway, the Central Shenandoah Health District encourages everyone six months and older who lives, works or plays in the Shenandoah Valley to receive their annual influenza vaccine, according to a press release from the health district. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported a severe 2024-25 flu season with record high hospitaliza-

tion rate in the United States and the highest number of pediatric deaths during a regular, non-pandemic season. Last season, Virginia reported six flu-associated pediatric deaths and 366 influenza outbreaks. CSHD reported over 2,000 cases of flu last season. "The flu is not a mild illness," says Dr. Allison Baroco, acting health director for CSHD. "Even though we experience flu season every year, it's important to make sure you are

See **FLU SHOT**, Page 2A

SHENANDOAH COUNTY

Drivers on I-81 should expect slowdowns

Monique Calello
Staunton News Leader
USA TODAY NETWORK

Controlled blasting will remove large areas of rock in the median of Interstate 81 in Shenandoah County. The location is near mile marker 297 in the Strasburg area. the blasting is scheduled to start the week of Oct. 27-31 and take place once or twice a week between 10 a.m. and noon, Tuesdays to Thursdays through early December, the Virginia Department of Transportation said in a press release.

Just before each controlled blast, Virginia State Police will use a slow roll to briefly stop I-81 northbound and southbound motorists between exit 296 (Route 55) and exit 298 (Route 11). A slow roll is a traffic management operation where a traffic gap is created by reducing approaching traffic speeds to as low as 10 mph. This gap allows work to safely take place free of live traffic. Traffic can also be temporarily stopped and held by a lead vehicle in each lane. Each slow roll operation typically lasts no more than 15 minutes. During the controlled blasts, which may be audible in the Strasburg area, flaggers will briefly stop traffic on Route 55 (John Marshall Highway) near the I-81 interchange.

No blasting will take place on Election Day (Nov. 4), Veterans Day (Nov. 11) or during the week of Thanksgiving. The controlled blasts are part of construction for the I-81 widening just south of the I-66 junction at exit 300. The project adds a third southbound lane for about four miles, replaces a bridge over Cedar Creek, widens a bridge over the CSX railway, and builds one mile of sound-barrier wall along northbound I-81 just south of exit 296. Monique Calello is a reporter at The News Leader. Story ideas always welcome. Connect with her at mcalello@newsleader.com.

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