

PH slated to move to Class 6

HIGH SCHOOLS, SPORTS, B1



6 movies playing in theaters in August

EXTRA, B8



THE ROANOKE TIMES

Friday, August 7, 2026

WHERE YOUR STORY LIVES

roanoke.com

NEXTERA-DOMINION MERGER

Spanberger intervening in case

Governor has ‘serious questions’ about what deal means for Virginia

DAVE RESS
Richmond Times-Dispatch

RICHMOND — Concerned that NextEra Energy’s acquisition of

Dominion Energy will boost electric bills, cost jobs and slow progress toward reducing greenhouse gas emissions, Gov. Abigail Spanberger wants to be heard as regulators review the deal.

She said she’s intervening in the State Corporation Commission review of the \$67 billion merger, which means she can file arguments in the case, present evidence about issues of concern

and challenge assertions of other participants.

“As a Virginian, I am deeply skeptical about whether selling our primary, state-regulated utility to an out-of-state company is good for the commonwealth,” Spanberger wrote in an op-ed essay announcing her plan in the Washington Post, a newspaper that circulates in Northern Virginia.

“I have serious questions about what this deal would mean for us. And as governor, I intend to get answers and be a voice for Virginians in the process,” she wrote.

Spanberger said she will tell the SCC that the deal must produce long-term energy cost savings for Dominion’s residential and small-business customers.

She’ll also want assurances that Dominion employees won’t lose

their jobs if the SCC approves the deal.

Spanberger said she also wants to see “a clear plan to accelerate progress toward producing affordable, reliable, local and clean power — not slow it down or trade it away.”

NextEra and Dominion have promised that shareholders will

Please see SPANBERGER, Page A6

TheBrightSide



HEATHER ROUSSEAU, THE ROANOKE TIMES

Jeff Baxter, owner of Covenant Coffee Company, looks out from his trailer located at the intersection of Franklin Road and Wiley Drive where he has served craft espresso beverages, Italian sodas, specialty teas and sweets since March.

‘I’m living my dream’

Entrepreneur’s Covenant Coffee brings local ingredients to Roanoke

SAM MOSTOW
The Roanoke Times

Walk up to Jeff Baxter while he’s at work and ask how he’s doing. On Thursday, his answer was simple:

“I’m living my dream,” he said. Baxter owns and operates Covenant Coffee Company, a trailer situated on weekdays on a patch of grass at the intersection of Franklin Road and Wiley Drive. The establishment offers craft espresso beverages, Italian

sodas, specialty teas and sweet treats. Baxter opened the business March 15 and has been humming along ever since.

“Everything has been exciting. It’s not easy to open up a business in Virginia because of the laws and the taxes and all the business licenses for different counties where you

The Bright Side highlights uplifting moments across our community. Visit our website to read more and share your ideas.

The Bright Side: Where good news lives.

operate,” Baxter said. “It’s a lot of startup costs and it’s a lot of headache, but it’s all alleviated by the community that we found here in Roanoke.”

While he was attending Liberty University, Baxter served as a manager at The Muse Coffee Company in Lynchburg and met his future wife, Meredith, who was a baker at the shop. In 2016, he dropped out

WATCH: For a brief video interview with Covenant Coffee owner Jeff Baxter, point your smartphone camera at the QR code and click to connect.

NEWSVU

of school and went back to his hometown in Pennsylvania to work in construction. He married Meredith in 2018, then the two of them lived in Tampa, Philadelphia and Washington, D.C. for various stints.

As Baxter moved around, he

Please see COFFEE, Page A5

COVID-19 RESPONSE

Panel votes to hold Fauci in contempt

Dems call Paul’s move to bypass full Senate vote unprecedented

AHMED ABOULENEIN
Reuters

WASHINGTON — Sen. Rand Paul, R-Ky., said Thursday he will ask the Justice Department to prosecute Dr. Anthony Fauci for refusing to answer questions about the COVID-19 pandemic after a Senate committee voted to hold the former top infectious disease official in contempt of Congress.



Fauci

The Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, which Paul chairs, approved a contempt resolution on a party-line vote with Republicans in favor and Democrats opposed. The resolution accuses Fauci of failing to obey a congressional subpoena.

The move followed a hearing last week where Fauci, who retired in 2022 as the head of the national infectious-disease agency and a presidential adviser, invoked his Fifth Amendment constitutional right against self-incrimination more than 100 times.

Paul sent the referral, a formal request to consider criminal charges, after the contempt finding. But the Kentucky senator, a longtime Fauci antagonist, bypassed a referral vote by the full Senate.

Please see FAUCI, Page A6



EVELYN HOCKSTEIN, REUTERS
President Donald Trump gestures Wednesday after delivering remarks at Red Rock Casino Resort Spa in Las Vegas.

MIDDLE EAST | WAR IN IRAN

Poll says Americans brace for more chaos

Reuters/Ipsos poll shows just 35% in US approve of war

JASON LANGE AND SIMON LEWIS
Reuters

WASHINGTON — Five months into the U.S. war with Iran, Americans who expect the Middle East to slide toward chaos

outnumber those who see the war bringing more stability by three to one, according to a new Reuters/Ipsos poll.

The six-day poll concluded Monday, as Republican President Donald Trump again backed away from threatened “massive attacks” on Iran, underscoring uncertainty surrounding a conflict he initially predicted would bring a swift victory.

Fifty percent of poll respondents said they thought U.S. military action in Iran would destabilize the Middle East over the next year, about three times the 17% who said the war would lead to more stability in the region. Another 16% said stability would stay about the same and 17% said they were unsure or

Please see IRAN, Page A6

New AI policies at Roanoke Co. schools
VIRGINIA, A2

Wildfires spread in western Canada
NATION & WORLD, B6

Weather
A shower and thunderstorm
High: 86 Low: 70
Forecast: A10

Inside

Obituaries	A6	Opinion	A7	Lottery	A2
Comics	B9	Nation/World	B6	Sports	B1
Puzzles	B9	Extra	B8	Classified	A8

