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SPORTS, 1B

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AI enhances ‘Wizard of Oz’ for Las Vegas Sphere



A promotion for the upcoming “The Wizard of Oz at Sphere” is displayed on the massive Sphere, a globe-shaped entertainment venue featuring advanced technology, in Las Vegas on Aug. 20. STEVE MARCUS/REUTERS

Critics worry about altering a classic, but creators defend project

Dawn Chmielewski
REUTERS

LAS VEGAS – When “The Wizard of Oz at Sphere” opens off the Las Vegas Strip on Aug. 28, audiences will experience the 1939 film classic in a way its creators probably never thought possible. Thousands of people will find themselves in the eye of the swirling tornado

that rips Dorothy’s Kansas farmhouse off its moorings and hurtles it onto Munchkinland. The film has been enhanced to fill a 160,000-square-foot wall of LED panels that spans three football fields, encircling the audience and reaching 22 stories high, as 750-horsepower fans kick up wind and debris to simulate the twister. The \$104 or more per seat spectacle is

more than meets the eye. “The Wizard of Oz” marks one of the most significant partnerships between a studio and technology company to use artificial intelligence to forge a new media experience. Reuters spoke with nine people, including principals directly involved in

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ANALYSIS

New maps could bring decades of GOP rule

Population trends in U.S. favor Republican states

David Morgan
REUTERS

WASHINGTON – President Donald Trump’s push for Republican-led states to redraw their U.S. House of Representatives districts to protect their majority in next year’s midterm elections could set the stage for Republicans to dominate the chamber in decades to come, political analysts and experts said. Republicans hold a 219-212 House majority and Trump is looking to break the streak of midterm House losses for the sitting president’s party – as happened to him in 2018 and to Democratic President Joe Biden in 2022 – by pushing states starting with Texas to aggressively redistrict. Democratic states, led by California, have threatened to retaliate by redrawing their own districts for partisan gain, a longstanding feature of U.S. politics known as gerrymandering that has grown far more potent thanks to modern data analysis tools. But Republicans hold the advantage, with control of the state legislatures and governorships of 23 states, compared with 15 for Democrats. Further, independent analysts say, population shifts could create as many as 11 new congressional seats in Republican

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Aryan Freedom Network is riding high in Trump era

Reelection ushers in new wave of far-right activists

Aram Roston
REUTERS

HOCHATOWN, OK – Wearing cargo shorts, flip-flops and a baseball cap shading his eyes from the sun, Dalton Henry Stout blends in easily in rural America. Except for the insignia on his hat. It

bears the skull and crossbones of the infamous “Death’s Head” SS units that oversaw Nazi Germany’s concentration camps – and the initials “AFN,” short for Aryan Freedom Network, the neo-Nazi group Stout leads with his partner. From a modest ranch house in Texas, the couple oversee a network they say has been turbocharged by President Donald Trump’s return to the White House. They point to Trump’s rhetoric – his attacks on diversity initiatives, his hard-line stance on immigration and his

invocation of “Western values” – as driving a surge in interest and recruitment. Trump “awakened a lot of people to the issues we’ve been raising for years,” Stout told Reuters. “He’s the best thing that’s happened to us.” While the Aryan Freedom Network and other neo-Nazi groups remain on the outermost edges of American politics, broadly regarded as toxic by conservatives and mainstream America, they are increasingly at the center of

far-right public demonstrations and acts of violence, according to interviews with a dozen members of extremist groups, nine experts on political extremism and a review of data on far-right violence. Several trends have converged since Trump’s reelection, Reuters found. Trump’s rhetoric has galvanized a new wave of far-right activists, fueling growth in White supremacist ranks.

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