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SUNDAY, NOV. 1 - SATURDAY, NOV. 7, 2026 WEEKLY EDITION DAILY NEWS AT COLUMBUSTIMES.COM

ELECTION 2026

Keisha Lance Bottoms Elected Georgia's Governor, Carrying Muscogee County With About 67% of the Vote



Keisha Lance Bottoms giving her victory speech after winning the 2026 Democratic primary for governor in May. SIKIS2021 / WIKIMEDIA COMMONS (CC0)

BY MARK G

COLUMBUS, Ga. — Democrat Keisha Lance Bottoms won Georgia's governor's race Tuesday, Nov. 3, becoming the first Black woman elected governor of the state and the first Democrat to win the office since 1998, according to unofficial results from the Georgia Secretary of State. The former Atlanta mayor defeated Republican businessman Rick Jackson with about 54% of the vote. The Associated Press and other news organizations called the race for Bottoms shortly after 9:15 p.m. Eastern.

Bottoms received 2,251,699 votes, or 54.32%, compared with 1,893,587 votes, or 45.68%, for Jackson, in the state's unofficial results late Tuesday night. All 159 Georgia counties had reported, and Bottoms led by 358,112 votes, a margin of about 8.6 percentage points.

Muscogee County voters favored Bottoms by a wide margin. The county's unofficial results showed Bottoms with 41,439 votes, or 66.6%, to Jackson's 20,763 votes, or 33.4%. That was 62,202 votes in the governor's race, and all 25 Muscogee precincts had reported. Bottoms' share in Muscogee was about 12 percentage points higher than her share statewide.

Bottoms served as mayor of Atlanta from 2018 to 2022. She ran against Jackson, who won the Republican nomination in a June 16 runoff over Burt Jones, in a race to succeed Republican Gov. Brian Kemp, who could not seek a third consecutive term under Georgia law. Her win changes the party that holds the governor's office after years of Republican control.

Polling before the election had suggested a close race. One polling average cited by MultiState showed Jackson ahead by about 1.2 percentage points. A polling average measures opinion before an election, while the vote count reflects ballots actually cast, and the two can differ.

Democrats also led the lieutenant governor's race in the unofficial results. Josh McLaurin had 2,310,238 votes to 1,818,461 for Republican Greg Dolezal statewide, and 42,034 votes to Dolezal's 19,873 in Muscogee County. Other reports Tuesday night showed Democrats winning the other statewide executive offices on the ballot, including attorney general, where Tanya Miller defeated Republican Brian Strickland, and U.S. Sen. Jon Ossoff winning a second term over Republican Mike Collins.

Bottoms is expected to take office in January 2027. Georgia's results remain unofficial until counties and the state complete certification, and the totals in this report were read from the Secretary of State's results site late Tuesday and may change. The Columbus Times election results page at columbustimes.com shows the full Muscogee County and statewide numbers for every race on the ballot.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Georgia Juvenile Justice Department Graduates 46 New Correctional Officers, With Posts in Muscogee County



Cadets in Basic Juvenile Correctional Officer Training Class 285 stand in formation before graduating Oct. 23. GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF JUVENILE JUSTICE

BY EMIL GERTJEGERDES

FORSYTH, Ga. — The Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice graduated 46 new juvenile correctional officers on Oct. 23 at the Georgia Public Safety Training Center in Forsyth. The department announced the class Nov. 2.

The new officers are now working at secure DJJ facilities around the state. They are assigned to detention centers and development campuses in 13 counties: Baldwin, Bibb, Chatham, Clayton, Cobb, Crisp, DeKalb, Fulton, Muscogee, Richmond, Thomas, Terrell and Ware.

The cadets completed Basic Juvenile Correctional Officer Training, a 200-hour program that teaches security practices and procedures. To graduate, each cadet had to meet standards on written examinations and in performance-based exercises.

"Juvenile Correctional Officers help provide a safe and secure environment for rehabilitating and transforming the young lives we serve," said DJJ Commissioner Shawanda Reynolds-Cobb. "We welcome them to our team of juvenile justice professionals."

DJJ serves young people in the juvenile justice system up to age 21. Anyone interested in a career with the department can call the DJJ Office of Human Resources at 404-294-3431 or email careers@djjcareers.org.

IN BRIEF

Columbus Scratch-Off Player Wins $10,000 on Veterans Parkway



A pile of scratch-off lottery tickets on a wooden table. JONATHAN CUTRER FROM SAN ANGELO, TEXAS, UNITED STATES / WIKIMEDIA COMMONS (PUBLIC DOMAIN)

BY MARK G

COLUMBUS, Ga. — A 5X The Money scratch-off ticket sold at Marathon Lotto Mart, 401 Veterans Parkway in Columbus, won a $10,000 top prize on Nov. 2, the Georgia Lottery said.

Elsewhere in Georgia that day, a Powerball ticket sold at QuikTrip, 5500 Buford Highway NE in Doraville, won $50,000 in the Nov. 2 drawing by matching four white balls and the Powerball. The winning numbers were 07-23-29-64-66 and Powerball 23. The Powerball jackpot was $835 million for the Nov. 4 drawing.

Georgia Lottery proceeds go to education, including the HOPE Scholarship and the state's Pre-K program. Players must be 18 or older.

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INSIDE Calvary Christian, A2 Miller and Singh, A4 Jobs and gas, A5 Restaurant scores, A6 Things to do, A7 Ernie Pitt, A8

EDUCATION

Calvary Christian School Names Myles Ivory Athletics Director and Director of Creative Media



Myles Ivory, the new athletics director and director of creative media at Calvary Christian School. CALVARY CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

BY EMIL GERTJEGERDES

COLUMBUS, Ga. — Calvary Christian School has named Myles Ivory its new athletics director and director of creative media, the school announced Nov. 2. Ivory will lead the school's athletic programs and expand its photography and video work across fine arts, academics, admissions and athletics.

Ivory comes to Columbus from Cranbrook Schools in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, where he spent the past three years as associate athletic director for communications and event operations. He is a former collegiate baseball player who began at Jackson Junior College in Jackson, Michigan, and earned a bachelor of science degree from Harris-Stowe State University in St. Louis.

Outside the school setting, Ivory has owned Painted Impression Media, a multimedia production company focused on sports, branding and ministry content, since 2020. He also works as video production specialist and national content coordinator for USA Prime National, a travel baseball and softball organization, and has been media specialist for Circle Ministry, a virtual ministry, since 2018. From 2018 to 2021 he was a regional scout for Prep Baseball Report.

Ivory will move to Columbus with his wife, Christa, and their one-year-old son, MJ.

"We are excited to welcome Myles and his family to the Calvary community," said Jonathan Norton, head of school. "His experience in athletics administration, communications and ministry brings a unique combination of skills that will benefit our school in many ways."

The school thanked Coach Jay Sparks, who has served as interim athletics director and will stay in that role through December. Sparks will then remain with the athletic department as a consultant through May. Carson Loyd will continue as associate athletics director, overseeing athletic operations and compliance.

Calvary Christian School has operated since 1975 and serves students from kindergarten through 12th grade. For more information, call 706-323-0467 or visit CalvaryKnights.com.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Columbus Police Got 630 Shoplifting Reports This Year: 152 Cases Assigned, 37 Arrests and a 41% Clearance Rate



A Brunswick, Georgia, police patrol car. The photo is a file image and does not show a Columbus Police vehicle. MICHAEL RIVERA / WIKIMEDIA COMMONS (CC BY-SA 4.0)

BY MARK G

COLUMBUS, Ga. — The Columbus Police Department has received about 630 shoplifting reports so far this year, according to a news release the department issued Oct. 1. The Property Crimes Unit launched a shoplifting initiative in June to address retail theft and to build closer working ties with local stores. The department said the push comes ahead of the holiday shopping season, when stores often see more theft.

THE NUMBERS SINCE JUNE

Since the initiative began, investigators have been assigned 152 shoplifting cases. Detectives have cleared 63 of them and arrested 37 people. Another 58 arrest warrants are outstanding, and the department puts the current clearance rate at 41%.

If cases tied to outstanding warrants count, 91 cases have been cleared or have had warrants issued. That brings the rate to about 72%, according to the department. Police said the figures do not include arrests made by patrol officers, so the total number of people arrested for shoplifting in Columbus is higher than 37.

Full story: ***columbustimes.com/story/527***

GOVERNMENT

Columbus Landfill Gas Plant Opens Nov. 12: Pinegrove Ribbon-Cutting at 10 a.m. Includes Public Tours



An aerial view of the capped Hickory Ridge Landfill in metro Atlanta, which has solar panels on its cover. It is a Georgia landfill, not the Pinegrove site (file photo). FORMULANONE FROM HUNTSVILLE, UNITED STATES / WIKIMEDIA COMMONS (CC BY-SA 2.0)

BY EMIL GERTJEGERDES

COLUMBUS, Ga. — The Columbus Consolidated Government will hold a ribbon-cutting at its new renewable natural gas facility on Thursday, Nov. 12, 2026, at 10 a.m. The plant sits at the Pinegrove Municipal Solid Waste Landfill, 9000 Pinegrove Way. The city announced the ceremony in a press release dated Oct. 29.

According to the release, construction of the methane gas extraction plant is complete. The facility is scheduled to become fully operational on the same day as the ceremony. It will capture methane that the landfill generates, process it and sell it to outside users as a renewable energy source.

Full story: ***columbustimes.com/story/523***

IF YOU GO

What	Ribbon-cutting for the renewable natural gas plant, with public tours
When	Thursday, Nov. 12, 2026, 10 a.m.
Where	Pinegrove Municipal Solid Waste Landfill, 9000 Pinegrove Way, Columbus

Details from the city's Oct. 29 announcement. Full story at columbustimes.com/story/523.

ROADS

Columbus Road Work Through Winter: Cherokee Avenue Lane Shut to Mid-November, Buena Vista Road Closed Until April 2027



The Thirteenth Street Bridge over the Chattahoochee River in Columbus (file photo). MCCUNICANO / WIKIMEDIA COMMONS (CC BY-SA 4.0)

BY MARK G

COLUMBUS, Ga. — Drivers in Columbus are dealing with several long-running road projects this fall, and three of them affect everyday routes. A lane of Cherokee Avenue near Cherokee Drive is closed for a retaining wall repair, Buena Vista Road remains shut at the Spiderweb, and a new roundabout is under construction at Northstar Drive and Kennedy Street. Here is what the city's own notices say about each one.

CHEROKEE AVENUE NEAR CHEROKEE DRIVE

The city said in an Oct. 7 release that the outside southbound lane of Cherokee Avenue would close starting Monday, Oct. 12. Crews are repairing a portion of the retaining wall next to Weracoba Creek. The closure was expected to last about one month, which puts the reopening in mid-November.

Full story: ***columbustimes.com/story/524***

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GOVERNMENT

Columbus Asks State for 3 Things in 2027: Election Costs, Paramedic Care and a Raise for the Probate Judge



Columbus city leaders listed three requests for the 2027 Georgia legislative session on Oct. 28. Shown: a Columbus city plaque (file photo). DEUTSCHLANDREFORM / WIKIMEDIA COMMONS (CC BY-SA 3.0)

BY EMIL GERTJEGERDES

COLUMBUS, Ga. — Columbus leaders are asking Georgia lawmakers to consider three priorities in 2027: state funding for election system changes, support for community paramedicine and higher pay for the probate judge. City councilors, state lawmakers and community partners discussed the requests Wednesday, Oct. 28, 2026, during the city's annual Hometown Connection legislative agenda meeting, according to WTVM. The meeting began the process of organizing Columbus' requests before the next state legislative session, with local lawmakers expected to meet again to determine who will handle each proposal.

Full story: ***columbustimes.com/story/536***

SCHOOLS

Muscogee County Schools Calendar: Progress Reports Nov. 10, No School Nov. 11, a 5-Day Thanksgiving Break and a 12-Day Winter Break



Muscogee County schools have no classes Nov. 11 and a 5-day Thanksgiving break. Shown: McBride Elementary at Fort Benning (file photo, a Department of Defense school, not a Muscogee County school). DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE EDUCATION ACTIVITY / WIKIMEDIA COMMONS (PUBLIC DOMAIN)

BY PETRA GERTJEGERDES

COLUMBUS, Ga. — Muscogee County School District students have progress reports scheduled for Tuesday, Nov. 10, a student and teacher holiday Wednesday, Nov. 11, and a five-day Thanksgiving break Nov. 23-27, according to the district's official 2026-2027 school calendar. The calendar also schedules winter break from Dec. 21, 2026, through Jan. 1, 2027, a 12-calendar-day period, followed by a teacher planning day Jan. 4 and the beginning of the second semester Jan. 5. Students are scheduled to receive another round of report cards Jan. 6, making November, December and early January an important stretch of the district's academic calendar.

Full story: ***columbustimes.com/story/546***

CITY SERVICES

Columbus City Services Close Wednesday, Nov. 11, for Veterans Day: Garbage Stays on Schedule, METRA Buses Won't Run



The entry to the Ranger Memorial at Fort Benning near Columbus, photographed in 2004 (file photo). AIRBORNERANGER / WIKIMEDIA COMMONS (CC BY-SA 3.0)

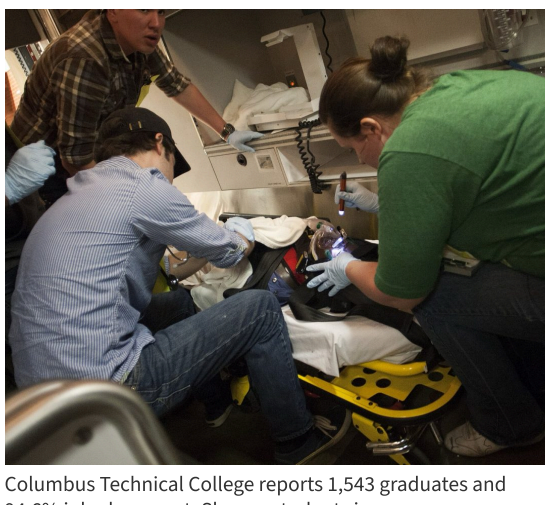
BY PETRA GERTJEGERDES

COLUMBUS, Ga. — Columbus city government will alter or suspend services on Wednesday, Nov. 11, 2026, for Veterans Day. The city issued a notice of holiday closing on Oct. 29. Emergency services such as fire, police and ambulance are not affected, and residents with an emergency should call 911.

Full story: ***columbustimes.com/story/526***

EDUCATION

Columbus Technical College Graduates Record 1,543 Students, Reports 94.6% Job Placement and Five Years of Growth



Columbus Technical College reports 1,543 graduates and 94.6% job placement. Shown: students in an emergency medical simulation (file photo, not Columbus Tech). COD NEWSROOM / WIKIMEDIA COMMONS (CC BY 2.0)

BY PETRA GERTJEGERDES

COLUMBUS, Ga. — Columbus Technical College graduated a record 1,543 students during Academic Year 2026, awarded 3,091 credentials and reported a record 94.6% in-field job placement rate, according to an announcement the college made in October. The college also recorded its fifth consecutive year of enrollment growth, reaching 5,108 students. The results mark the institution's highest graduate count and its largest number of credentials awarded in the past decade, according to the college's official release.

Full story: ***columbustimes.com/story/544***

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EAST COLUMBUS

East Columbus Business Owner Welcomes Action on Longstanding Clothing Bin Dumping Problem



Clothing donation bins in the 4.0 Fitness parking lot off Buena Vista Road, surrounded by a mattress, a headboard and other household items left behind. COURTESY OF TERRENCE FLOWERS



Terrence Flowers, left, owner of 4.0 Fitness, with a friend in the parking lot where the donation bins sit. COURTESY OF TERRENCE FLOWERS

BY MARK G

COLUMBUS, Ga. — Terrence Flowers, known to many as Coach, is the owner and operator of 4.0 Fitness, located off Buena Vista Road in East Columbus. He says he is encouraged by recent action to address a longstanding problem involving clothing donation bins placed in the business's parking lot.

For more than a year, the bins have repeatedly overflowed. People have left unwanted items around them, including car tires, mattresses, headboards, and other household goods that are not accepted according to the list posted on the bins. The buildup has become an eyesore for nearby businesses and residents, as well as children walking to Rothschild Leadership Academy and a nearby school.

Flowers says he has contacted city officials and arranged for the area to be cleaned up on multiple occasions, but the dumping continued.

"With the holiday season approaching, we had reached our limit," Flowers said. "I had contacted my district councilwoman several times and had not received a response. I reached out to Councilwoman Toyia Tucker, who represents District 4 across the street from us and has been responsive to concerns in the area."

According to Flowers, Tucker gathered information about the situation and contacted the people responsible for the bins. She later told him that the property owners had been notified that the site could be cited for being unkempt and that the bins would need to be removed. Flowers says he was told that someone would come out, and he saw a truck arrive.

The exact date for removal of the bins is not yet known, but Flowers understands that it is expected to happen soon.

"We're grateful to Councilwoman Tucker for stepping in and helping move this issue forward," Flowers said. "We're ready to see this makeshift dumping ground removed and our East Columbus community treated with the care it deserves."

GEORGIA ELECTION

Tanya Miller Wins Georgia Attorney General Race, Her Campaign Says, as Opponent Concedes



Tanya Felecia Miller, shown in a portrait as a member of the Georgia House of Representatives. GEORGIA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES / WIKIMEDIA COMMONS (PUBLIC DOMAIN)

BY EMIL GERTJEGERDES

ATLANTA - Tanya Miller, the Democratic nominee for Georgia attorney general, won the Nov. 3 election and will become the first Black woman to serve as the state's attorney general, according to a news release from her campaign. Her opponent, Brian Strickland, called Miller on election night to congratulate her and concede, the campaign said.

The release described Miller as the state's attorney general-elect. She is a homicide prosecutor, a civil rights attorney and the chair of the Georgia House Democratic Caucus, according to the campaign.

"Tonight, together, we made history," Miller said in the release. "But more importantly, tonight, we made a promise: that justice in Georgia will never be reserved for the wealthy, the powerful, or the politically connected."

Miller said she would work for all Georgians. "I did not run for Attorney General to represent half of Georgia. I ran to fight for all of Georgia," she said. "We will follow the facts, we will follow the evidence, we will follow the law, and we will not follow political orders."

According to her campaign, Miller ran on a pledge to take on violent crime, protect Georgia's elections and hold powerful interests accountable. The Georgia attorney general is the state's chief legal officer.

The campaign's release was the source for this report. Official results are certified by the Georgia Secretary of State, and readers can find the latest numbers at columbustimes.com and sos.ga.gov.

ELECTION 2026

Georgia Election Results 2026: Who Won, Who Lost and What Changes



Georgia Democrats sweep statewide offices, Ossoff wins Senate race and voters pass three amendments. See unofficial 2026 results. Shown: Sen. Jon Ossoff waving to supporters at a 2020 Georgia campaign event (file photo). JOHN RAMSPOTT / WIKIMEDIA COMMONS (CC BY 2.0)

BY MARK G

COLUMBUS, Ga. — Democrats won Georgia's governor's race, retained a U.S. Senate seat and captured every statewide executive office on the ballot in Tuesday's election, according to unofficial results reported Nov. 3 and 4. Former Atlanta Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms defeated Republican Rick Jackson to become Georgia's first woman elected governor, while incumbent Democratic U.S. Sen. Jon Ossoff defeated Republican Mike Collins. Voters also approved all three proposed constitutional amendments, changing rules for farmland tax benefits and probate judge elections while authorizing lawmakers to establish a dedicated emergency 911 fund.

The results mark a change in party control of Georgia's governor's office and several other statewide positions. Republican Gov. Brian Kemp did not seek another term, leaving an open contest that Bottoms won. All results remain unofficial until counties complete certification and the state certifies the election.

Full story: ***columbustimes.com/story/558***

GEORGIA ELECTION

Jyot Singh Wins Georgia House District 97, Becoming First Sikh and Indian American in the General Assembly



The Gwinnett Justice and Administration Center in Lawrenceville, Georgia. GWINNETTCOUNTY / WIKIMEDIA COMMONS (CC BY-SA 3.0)

BY EMIL GERTJEGERDES

DULUTH, Ga. — Jyot Singh won election to Georgia House District 97 with 68% of the vote, his campaign said Nov. 4. The campaign said he will be the first Sikh American and the first Indian American to serve in the Georgia General Assembly.

Singh, 27, was raised in Norcross and lives in Peachtree Corners, where he runs a consulting business. He is a graduate of Gwinnett County public schools and Yale University, according to his campaign. He will be among the youngest members of the General Assembly when he is sworn in.

Singh ran on funding public schools, addressing the cost of living, expanding Medicaid and protecting residents' civil rights, the campaign said. He will join the 2027 legislative session.

"Gwinnett is my home, and I know how much this community has given me and my family," Singh said. "I will never take that trust for granted."

The figures in this report come from the campaign. Official results are certified by the Georgia Secretary of State.

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WHAT COMES NEXT

Georgia Runoff Calendar: If a Race Goes to a Runoff, the Date Is Dec. 1, With a 3-Day Early Voting Window Nov. 23-25: 8 Questions Answered



Georgia's 2026 runoff date is Dec. 1, with early voting Nov. 23-25. Eight questions answered about deadlines, polling hours, ID rules and ballots. Shown: an AI-generated illustration of an empty polling place before opening, not a photo of the actual event. ILLUSTRATION: AI-GENERATED (GEMINI)

BY MARK G

COLUMBUS, Ga. — Georgia's general election runoff date is Tuesday, Dec. 1, 2026, if a race requires a runoff following the Nov. 3 general election, according to the state's official election calendar. The state has scheduled a three-day early voting period from Monday, Nov. 23, through Wednesday, Nov. 25, and runoff Election Day polling hours are 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Georgia's election rules require a runoff when no candidate wins a majority in the general election, with the top two finishers advancing to the additional election.

Full story: ***columbustimes.com/story/563***

COUNTING

When Muscogee County Counts and Certifies Nov. 3 Votes: Absentee Tabulation at 10 a.m., Certification Nov. 9



A Vote Here sign outside a school used as a polling place on Election Day 2020 in New Orleans, Louisiana (file photo). INFROGMATION OF NEW ORLEANS / WIKIMEDIA COMMONS (CC BY-SA 4.0)

BY EMIL GERTJEGERDES

COLUMBUS, Ga. — Muscogee County voters have until Tuesday, Nov. 3, to cast ballots, and the county has already published the schedule for counting and certifying them. Advance voting ran from Oct. 13 through Friday, Oct. 30, from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., according to the elections office. Here is when the work happens, where it happens and who can watch.

Full story: ***columbustimes.com/story/525***

JOBS

Survey: 62% Would Rather Their Child Become an Electrician Than a Software Developer, and Auto Mechanics Feel Most Secure



Two U.S. Air Force heating and cooling specialists work on an air conditioning unit. Skilled trades such as HVAC were among the careers in the survey. AIRMAN 1ST CLASS TAYLOR WAREHIME / U.S. AIR NATIONAL GUARD / WIKIMEDIA COMMONS (PUBLIC DOMAIN)

BY MARK G

A new workforce survey suggests many workers now see hands-on jobs as safer than computer jobs as artificial intelligence spreads. Careerminds, a workforce solutions company, surveyed 3,088 workers about how secure they feel in their careers. It released the results Oct. 26.

Asked to choose a career for their own child, 62% of respondents picked electrician over software developer. Among Georgia respondents, auto mechanic ranked as the most secure career over the next 10 years, followed by HVAC technician, nurse, doctor or surgeon, electrician, dentist, carpenter, physical therapist, paramedic and firefighter.

HVAC technicians reported the highest job satisfaction, at 7.5 out of 10, and 53% of them said AI would make their work better. Across all other careers, 40% expected AI to improve their work and 31% expected it to make it worse.

The survey also asked about pay. Forty-one percent of respondents said they would accept a pay cut for a guarantee that AI would never replace their job, and 26% would accept a cut of at least 20%. Among respondents 55 and older across all professions, 38% said they would retire early rather than risk being replaced by AI.

Two cautions apply. The survey was run by a company that sells career services, and participants were screened to confirm they felt happy and secure in their careers, so the results may not reflect all workers. The company's headline referred to Georgia workers, but its methodology does not say how many of the 3,088 respondents were in Georgia.

JOBS

Columbus Metro Has 122,600 Jobs, but Unemployment Rises to 4.3% in September 2026



The Columbus metro had 122,600 nonfarm jobs in September 2026, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Shown: the Aflac headquarters campus. JHELMSAFLAC (JOHN DAVID HELMS) / WIKIMEDIA COMMONS (CC BY-SA 4.0)

BY EMIL GERTJEGERDES

COLUMBUS, Ga. — The Columbus metropolitan area had 122,600 payroll jobs in September 2026, an increase of 500 jobs, or 0.4%, from September 2025, according to preliminary data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. The metro unemployment rate was 4.3%, up from 4.0% a year earlier, while Muscogee County's rate reached 4.4%. The figures show a local job market with modest employment growth and a higher share of workers unemployed than at the same time last year.

The Columbus, Georgia-Alabama metropolitan statistical area includes Columbus and the Phenix City area across the state line. Its employment figures count payroll jobs throughout the metropolitan area, not just jobs within Columbus city limits or Muscogee County. That distinction matters when comparing the region's largest industries, employment trends and unemployment rates.

Full story: ***columbustimes.com/story/537***

ECONOMY

Audi Picks Middle Georgia for $4 Billion, 4,500-Job Plant: What the Timeline Means for the Region



The Blue Bird bus assembly plant in Fort Valley, Georgia. The photo is a file image of an existing Georgia factory and does not show the Audi site. COMPUTERMUSIC1999 / WIKIMEDIA COMMONS (CC BY-SA 4.0)

BY MARK G

COLUMBUS, Ga. — Audi will build its first U.S. manufacturing plant in Georgia, a roughly $4 billion project expected to employ about 4,500 people. Gov. Brian Kemp and Audi CEO Gernot Döllner announced the plant on Saturday, Oct. 24, 2026. It is a Georgia-wide economic story, and Columbus-area workers and employers will be watching for what it means for training and hiring.

Full story: ***columbustimes.com/story/528***

GAS PRICES THIS WEEK

Area	Regular
Columbus metro	$3.52
Muscogee County	$3.48
Harris County	$3.63
Chattahoochee County	$3.70
Russell County, Ala.	$3.77
Lee County, Ala.	$3.71

CHEAPEST POSTED PUMP PRICES

RaceTrac, 4399 Victory Drive, Columbus	$3.39
RaceTrac, 3423 MLK Jr Pkwy, Phenix City	$3.69
RaceTrac, 1155 Columbus Pkwy, Opelika	$3.62

AAA averages as of Wednesday, Nov. 4 (latest data at press time); RaceTrac posted prices checked Wednesday, Nov. 4. Prices change daily.

GAS TAX

Kemp Extends Georgia Gas Tax Suspension Through Nov. 30, Covering Thanksgiving Travel



A RaceTrac sign posts gas and diesel prices (file photo). INFROGMATION / WIKIMEDIA COMMONS (CC BY-SA 4.0)

BY EMIL GERTJEGERDES

COLUMBUS, Ga. — Georgia drivers will go without the state's gas tax through Thanksgiving after Gov. Brian Kemp extended the suspension of the motor fuel excise tax through Nov. 30.

Kemp announced the extension Saturday, Oct. 24, along with an extension of the state of emergency he declared over global market volatility. The governor's office said the decision was made in consultation with Lt. Gov. Burt Jones and House Speaker Jon Burns.

The suspension had been set to end Nov. 5. It was first scheduled to expire Oct. 29 before an earlier extension.

Full story: ***columbustimes.com/story/506***

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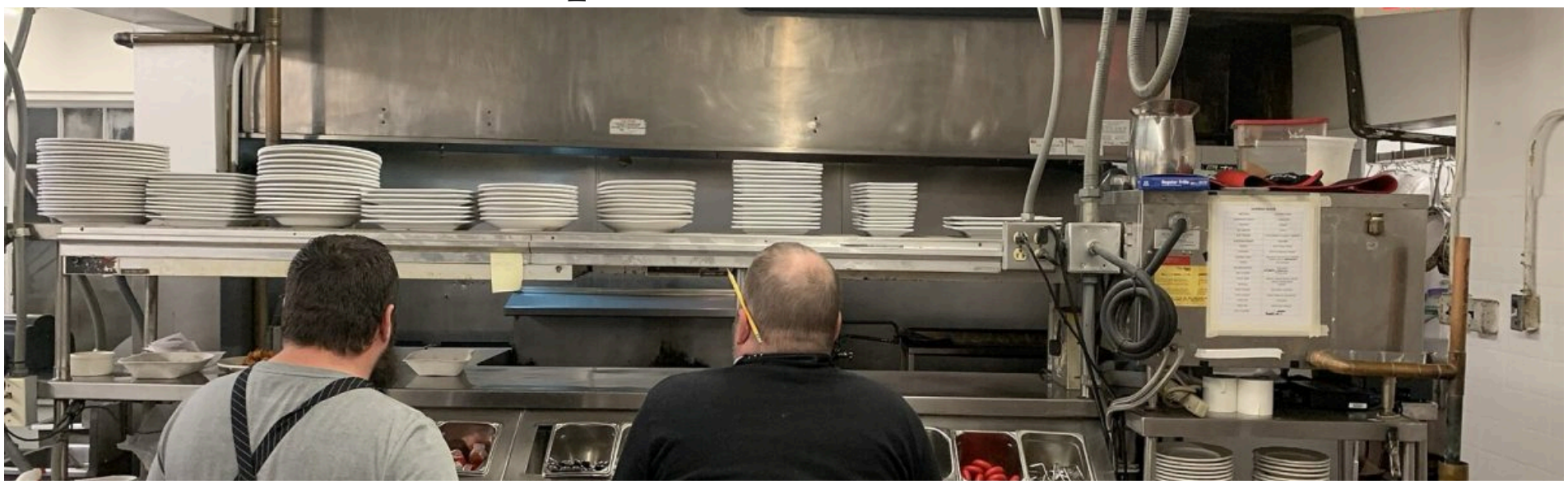
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RESTAURANT INSPECTIONS

3 Columbus Restaurants Get B Grades of 88 in Oct. 26-27 Inspections; 5 Kitchens Score 100



Kitchen workers stand at the dish and expo station of a restaurant kitchen, with stacks of plates on the shelves above (file photo). MARKBUCKAWICKI / WIKIMEDIA COMMONS (CC0)

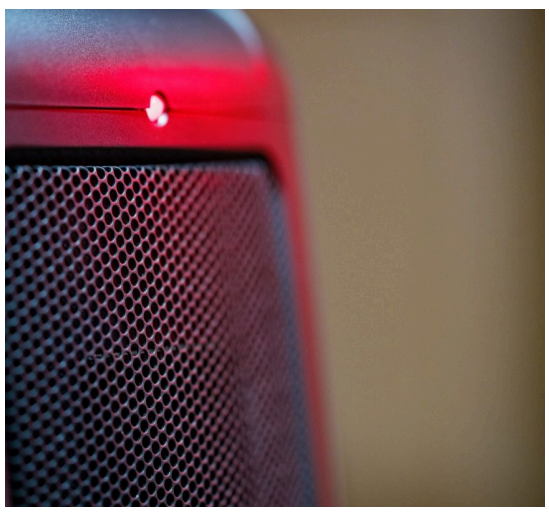
BY MARK G

COLUMBUS, Ga. — Three Columbus food service locations received B grades of 88 during health inspections Monday and Tuesday, Oct. 26-27, while five others earned perfect scores of 100. Inspectors documented handwashing and food storage issues at Players, missing supplies and pink residue on ice machines at AC Hotel - Columbus, and food temperature and equipment issues at El Carrizo. Each inspection is a snapshot of one visit, and several of the items were corrected while inspectors were on site.

Full story: ***columbustimes.com/story/514***

CONSUMER SAFETY

338,800 DREO Space Heaters Recalled for Fire Risk: Check the Bottom Label and What to Do If You Bought One at Costco



DREO recalls 338,800 space heaters after 17 fire reports. Check model DR-HSH015 and manufacturing dates for free replacement details. Shown: close-up of the grille and red power light of an electric ceramic space heater (generic file photo, not the recalled DREO model). TONY WEBSTER FROM MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA, UNITED STATES / WIKIMEDIA COMMONS (CC BY 2.0)

BY PETRA GERTJEGERDES

COLUMBUS, Ga. — About 338,800 DREO space heaters sold in the United States are being recalled because they can overheat and catch fire, according to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission. The Oct. 29, 2026, recall covers certain model DR-HSH015 heaters manufactured between April 2025 and January 2026, including units sold at Costco stores nationwide and several online retailers. The manufacturer has received 17 reports of the heaters igniting, including three incidents involving property damage and one involving a burn injury to a hand, according to the federal agency.

Full story: ***columbustimes.com/story/549***

MILITARY HEALTH

TRICARE Open Season Runs Nov. 9 to Dec. 8: Who Can Switch Plans, How to Enroll Online and What Happens if You Do Nothing



TRICARE open season runs Nov. 9-Dec. 8, 2026. See who can change plans, how to enroll through milConnect and what happens if you keep your coverage. Shown: four uniformed officers walk past the entrance of a US Army Health Clinic building in Germany; file photo, not Fort Benning. ARTHUR MONDALE / WIKIMEDIA COMMONS (PUBLIC DOMAIN)

BY PETRA GERTJEGERDES

COLUMBUS, Ga. — TRICARE open season begins Monday, Nov. 9, 2026, giving eligible beneficiaries until Dec. 8 to enroll in or change certain military health plans for coverage beginning Jan. 1, 2027. According to TRICARE's official open season guidance, the annual enrollment period applies to people who have or are eligible for TRICARE Prime options or TRICARE Select, while several other categories of beneficiaries cannot make changes through this process. Those who are satisfied with their existing coverage generally do not need to take action because their enrollment continues automatically.

Full story: ***columbustimes.com/story/561***

MONEY

Are Data Centers Raising Your Georgia Power Bill? 8 Questions Answered With What Georgia Power Says



Georgia Power says data centers do not raise residential bills and estimates $180 in annual savings. Here are 8 questions about its claims. Shown: plant Bowen, a Georgia Power coal-fired plant near Cartersville, Georgia, with its cooling towers and smokestacks (file photo). SAM NASH / WIKIMEDIA COMMONS (CC BY-SA 3.0)

BY EMIL GERTJEGERDES

COLUMBUS, Ga. — Georgia Power says data centers are not raising residential electricity bills in Georgia and estimates that additional revenue from large electricity users will provide benefits equivalent to approximately $180 annually for a typical residential customer using 1,000 kilowatt-hours per month. The utility makes those assertions on its official data center information page, where it describes contracts, infrastructure requirements, electricity rates and plans for its power grid. The statements are Georgia Power's own claims and have not been independently verified in the source material used for this report.

Full story: ***columbustimes.com/story/556***

RESTAURANT INSPECTIONS THIS WEEK

LOWEST SCORES

Restaurant	Date	Score
Old Chicago 6581 Whittlesey Blvd.	Oct 29	**85 B**
Little Caesars 5762 Milgen Road	Nov 2	**90 A**
Kiku Asian Express 7000 Riffie Way	Nov 3	**92 A**
Comfort Inn 3460 Macon Road	Oct 29	**96 A**
Pour Decisions Sports Bar 5870 Veterans Pkwy. Suite G	Oct 30	**96 A**
Gardens At Calvary 7595 Moon Road	Nov 3	**99 A**

PERFECT SCORES (100), INCLUDING SCHOOL AND CARE-HOME KITCHENS

South Columbus Elementary; Kendrick High School; Carver High School; Stars & Strikes; Gong Cha; Chili Thai Uptown; Trevioli; Trevioli Food Trailer; Trevioli Octopie

Georgia Department of Public Health inspections, Oct. 29 - Nov. 3, 2026 (latest posted at press time). Inspections are snapshots of one visit. Look up any restaurant at columbustimes.com/restaurants.

LEGAL NOTICES

RFB No. 27-0002
Fox Senior Center Roofing & Wall Project
Due: December 9, 2026 – 2:30 PM
Heather Biddle, Buyer
Mandatory Site Visit: 10:30 AM, Thursday, November 19, 2026.

RFP No. 27-0014
Consultant Services for Historic District Design Guidelines
Due: December 2, 2026 – 5:00 PM
Heather Biddle, Buyer

Columbus Consolidated Government is requesting submittals for the above solicitation. Electronic responses must be submitted via OpenBids by the due date shown above.

Specifications may be obtained by visiting the webpage of the Finance Department/Purchasing Division at https://www.columbusga.gov/finance/Bid-Opportunities, notifying the respective Buyer via BidOpportunities@ColumbusGa.org or calling 706-225-4087. Bid opening information is listed on page 1 of the RFB document.

Published: Friday, November 6, 2026

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MUSIC

Anthony Hamilton and Leela James Bring R&B and Soul to Columbus Civic Center Nov. 14



Anthony Hamilton and Leela James play the Columbus Civic Center on Saturday, Nov. 14. Shown: Hamilton in a 2007 photo and James performing in 2009. PHOTOS: GCBROWN (ANTHONY HAMILTON, CC BY 2.0) AND PATRIK HAMBERG (LEELA JAMES, CC BY-SA 2.0) / WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

BY MARK G

COLUMBUS, Ga. — R&B and soul singers Anthony Hamilton and Leela James will perform at the Columbus Civic Center on Saturday, Nov. 14, 2026, with doors opening at 7 p.m. and the concert scheduled to begin at 8 p.m., according to the venue's official event calendar. The performance brings Hamilton, a Grammy Award-winning singer-songwriter known for songs including "Charlene," "Can't Let Go" and "The Point of It All," together with James, a soul and R&B vocalist from Los Angeles. Tickets are available through a link on the Civic Center's event page that directs customers to Ticketmaster.

Full story: ***columbustimes.com/story/538***

STAGE

6 Columbus Stage Shows in November: Improv, Mystic Pizza, Rock Orchestra and Kids' Rocket Show



Six shows are scheduled at the RiverCenter and Springer Opera House in November. Shown: volunteers at the Springer Opera House in Columbus (file photo). SGT. TANANGACHI MFUNI / WIKIMEDIA COMMONS (PUBLIC DOMAIN)

BY PETRA GERTJEGERDES

COLUMBUS, Ga. — Six productions and performances at the RiverCenter for the Performing Arts and Springer Opera House will bring improv comedy, musical theater, orchestral music, rock arrangements and children's theater to Columbus from Nov. 7 through Nov. 23, according to the venues' official event calendars. The lineup includes "Whose Live Anyway?" on Nov. 11, the musical "Mystic Pizza" on Nov. 14, and four performances of "Ready, Set, Rocket" at the Springer between Nov. 7 and Nov. 15. Other scheduled performances include the Columbus Symphony Orchestra's "Wagner & Strauss" program on Nov. 21 and "The Rock Orchestra by Candlelight" on Nov. 23.

Full story: ***columbustimes.com/story/539***

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Lunch & Lecture
Thu, Nov 5, 12 PM, OxBow Meadows

Cuff Links & Pearls
Thu, Nov 5, 7 PM, Not listed. Free

Vets Town Hall
Fri, Nov 6, 12 PM, 662 Forest Road, Salem, AL 36874. Free

Fountain City Classic Tailgate party
Fri, Nov 6, 1:20 PM, Columbus Civic Center

Fountain City Classic Parade
Sat, Nov 7, 9 AM, Downtown Columbus. Free

Mosaic Lamp & Ceramic Painting Workshop in Columbus, GA
Sat, Nov 7, 10 AM, Holiday Inn Express Hotel & Suites-Columbus At Northlake

Fountain City Classic
Sat, Nov 7, 2 PM, A.J. McClung Memorial Stadium

Brunch in the Garden and Sunset in the Garden
Sun, Nov 8, 12 PM, Warehouse 9. Free

Rock N Roses Hair & Barber Battle
Sun, Nov 8, 6 PM, See flyer. Free

Elegance and Entertainment
Fri, Nov 13, 8 PM, Columbus Convention and Trade Center. Free

Anthony Hamilton + Leela James
Sat, Nov 14, 12 AM, Columbus Civic Center

Approved listings as of Wednesday, Nov. 4. Add your event free at columbustimes.com/events.

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OUTDOORS

Georgia Duck Season Opens Nov. 21, With an Early Hunt Nov. 14-15 for Youth, Military and Veterans



A hunter and a hunting dog wait in a boat during waterfowl season. GEORGIA DNR WILDLIFE RESOURCES DIVISION

BY EMIL GERTJEGERDES

SOCIAL CIRCLE, Ga. — Georgia's duck season opens Saturday, Nov. 21, the state Department of Natural Resources said Nov. 3. Youth, active-duty military and veterans get a special early hunt Nov. 14-15.

The season runs Nov. 21-29 and Dec. 12 through Jan. 31. The second segment ends several days later than in past years, giving hunters the most late-season days possible, said Kara Nitschke, the division's migratory gamebird biologist. Hunters should check the regulations for daily bag limits by species.

On the early days, hunters 15 or younger, or active-duty military or veterans, may hunt certain migratory birds, including ducks, Canada geese and mergansers. A youth hunter must be accompanied by an adult 18 or older, and only the youth may hunt.

Waterfowl hunters need a Georgia hunting license, a Georgia migratory bird license and the federal duck stamp. The state offers a Waterfowl Hunter Package at GoOutdoorsGeorgia.com that includes the licenses. Hunters who harvest a banded bird should report it to the U.S. Geological Survey Bird Banding Lab.

Regulations are at GeorgiaWildlife.com/migratory-bird-info.

OUTDOORS

Hunters Can Donate a Deer to Feed Georgia Families Through Hunters for the Hungry



A Georgia Hunters for the Hungry trailer used to collect donated venison. GEORGIA DNR WILDLIFE RESOURCES DIVISION

BY MARK G

COVINGTON, Ga. — Georgia hunters can donate harvested deer to families facing hunger through the Georgia Hunters for the Hungry program, the Department of Natural Resources' Wildlife Resources Division said Nov. 3. Hunters can donate at no cost.

The program has supplied protein to hungry Georgians since 1993. Last season donations topped 144,000 pounds of venison. The division said this year there are more participating processors and a higher donation goal.

"Through the Hunters for the Hungry program, they have an opportunity to share their harvest and make a meaningful difference in the lives of fellow Georgians," said Chris Harper, director of the Wildlife Resources Division.

Hunters can also help by promoting the program, pointing out new processors in underserved areas, or becoming a participating processor. The program is a partnership of the Georgia Wildlife Federation, the Wildlife Resources Division, the Georgia Food Bank Association and Municipal Development Services, LLC.

To find a participating processor, visit gwf.org/ghfth.

BLACK PRESS

Ernie Pitt, Co-Founder of the Winston-Salem Chronicle and Longtime Black Press Publisher, Dies at 80



Ernest H. "Ernie" Pitt, co-founder and longtime publisher of the Winston-Salem Chronicle, who died Oct. 23 at age 80. COURTESY

BY EMIL GERTJEGERDES

WINSTON-SALEM, N.C. — Ernest H. "Ernie" Pitt, co-founder and longtime publisher of the Winston-Salem Chronicle, died of natural causes on Friday morning, Oct. 23. He was 80. The National Newspaper Publishers Association, the national trade group of the Black press, told its member publishers of his death on Oct. 28.

"We are saddened to report that NNPA Publisher Ernie Pitt ... has passed away," NNPA President and CEO Benjamin F. Chavis Jr. wrote to members. "On behalf of the NNPA we express our condolences and prayers to the Pitt family."

The first issue of the Chronicle appeared Sept. 5, 1974, with the front-page greeting "We Salute All the People of Winston-Salem." It cost 20 cents. The paper's own remembrance of Pitt says the Chronicle's mastheads credit him and Ndubisi Egemonye with founding it.

Pitt was born in Raleigh and raised in Greensboro. He graduated from Dudley High School in 1964, briefly studied architecture at North Carolina A&T and served in the Army in Vietnam from November 1964 to December 1965. He graduated from UNC-Chapel Hill in journalism in 1974. The Chronicle reported that he served two years in state prison after a 1970 felony drug conviction and was later pardoned by Gov. Jim Hunt.

In its remembrance, the Chronicle said Pitt came to start a newspaper after an investigative project he wrote as a UNC student, on bar exam pass rates for Black law graduates, could not find a publisher. He worked as an education reporter in Greensboro while building the paper and devoted himself to it full time in 1978, the Chronicle reported. As the business grew he bought a printing press and moved the operation to North Liberty Street.

The Chronicle's editorial pages covered public accountability, Black-owned business and political representation, and the newspaper also gave space to church news, school achievements and youth events. A Chronicle writer called Pitt's work "a place where Black Winston-Salem could make its arguments, recognize its children, question its institutions and find evidence that its experiences belonged in the news."

The Chronicle's full remembrance is online at wschronicle.com. The Columbus Times is a member of the NNPA.

HISTORY

Columbus's Linwood Cemetery at 198: The 1828 Burial Ground and Its Estimated 14,000-18,000 Graves



Tall marble monuments and obelisks stand in family plots at Linwood Cemetery, also known as Old City Cemetery, in Columbus. CYNTHIA JENNINGS / WIKIMEDIA COMMONS (CC BY-SA 3.0)

BY MARK G

COLUMBUS, Ga. — Linwood Cemetery has stood in Columbus for 198 years, dating to 1828, and contains an estimated 14,000 to 18,000 gravesites. The 28.7-acre burial ground at 721 Linwood Boulevard is Columbus's oldest public cemetery, according to a 1978 National Register survey. Its history reaches from the original survey of Columbus through the Civil War, the growth of local industry and nearly two centuries of public remembrance.

Full story: ***columbustimes.com/story/510***

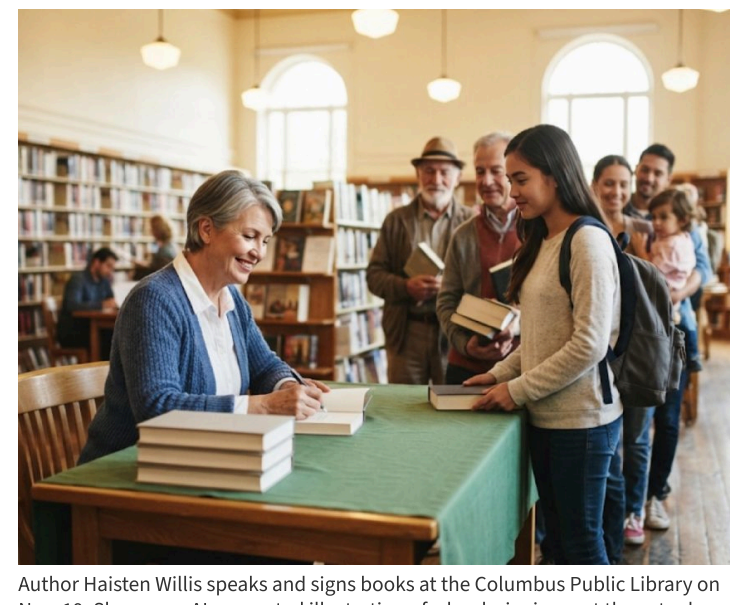
LINWOOD CEMETERY AT A GLANCE

Established	1828
Current name	Since 1894 (also called Old City Cemetery)
Size	28.7 acres
Address	721 Linwood Boulevard, Columbus
Graves	An estimated 14,000-18,000
National Register	Listed in 1980
Owner	City of Columbus; the nonprofit Historic Linwood Foundation helps preserve it

Details from the Linwood Cemetery story at columbustimes.com/story/510.

BOOKS

Columbus Native Writes the Tom's Foods Story: Author Haisten Willis Speaks and Signs Books at Columbus Public Library Nov. 19



Author Haisten Willis speaks and signs books at the Columbus Public Library on Nov. 19. Shown: an AI-generated illustration of a book signing, not the actual event. ILLUSTRATION: AI-GENERATED (GEMINI)

BY PETRA GERTJEGERDES

COLUMBUS, Ga. — Columbus native and journalist Haisten Willis will discuss his book about Tom's Foods at the Columbus Public Library on Thursday, Nov. 19, 2026, from 6 to 8 p.m. The event, titled "A Legacy in Peanuts," will take place in the library auditorium at 3000 Macon Road, according to the Chattahoochee Valley Libraries event listing. Willis will give a presentation about the Columbus snack food company, followed by a book signing, with copies available for purchase at the event.

Full story: ***columbustimes.com/story/542***

LANDMARKS

5,850 Acres North of Columbus: Lake Harding by the Numbers, From a 2,052-Foot Dam to 187 Megawatts



A 1939 aerial file photo of Bartletts Ferry Dam and the reservoir above it on the Chattahoochee River near Columbus, Ga. NATIONAL ARCHIVES / WIKIMEDIA COMMONS (PUBLIC DOMAIN)

BY EMIL GERTJEGERDES

COLUMBUS, Ga. — Lake Harding covers 5,850 acres of the Chattahoochee River about 15 miles north-northwest of downtown Columbus, while its Bartletts Ferry hydroelectric project includes a 2,052-foot dam and 187.1 megawatts of generating capacity. The reservoir crosses the Georgia-Alabama state line and has produced electricity since January 1926, making it part of a century of hydroelectric development along the river. Georgia Power operates the project, which has two powerhouses and parts dating to the 1920s.

Lake Harding sits in a chain of Chattahoochee River lakes that includes West Point Lake upstream and Lake Oliver closer to Columbus, both covered earlier by Columbus Times. Georgia Power counts Lake Harding among its West Georgia lakes, along with Lake Oliver, Lake Worth, Goat Rock Lake and North Highlands. Here are 15 numbers that explain Lake Harding's size, engineering, electrical output, history and public access.

Full story: ***columbustimes.com/story/517***

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