

THUNDERSTORMS

High: 84
Low: 74
50% chance of rain



Tues.: Partly cloudy, 89/71
Wed.: Mostly sunny, 88/70
Thur.: Partly cloudy, 89/71

Complete weather: B6

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

Credible. Compelling. Complete.

NATION, A3
SPACE X CAPSULE MAKES WATER LANDING IN FLORIDA

METRO, B1
PRISON IN SOUTH GEORGIA LOCKED DOWN AFTER RIOT



METRO, B1
JOHN LEWIS STATUE TO BE UNVEILED IN VINE CITY

AJC TOP STORY: CORONAVIRUS OUTBREAK

STATE BUDGET

States could see years of financial difficulty

Budget cuts unlikely to help states offset their revenue losses.

By James Salzer
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As Congress struggled last week to reach a deal on the latest coronavirus relief package, alarms were again being raised that the lack of fed-

eral aid could mean years of service cutbacks, layoffs and employee furloughs for state and local governments across the country.

Georgia, which has avoided mass furloughs, has fared better than many other states. Nationally, about 1.5 million college, school and other government workers were laid off or furloughed during the early months of the COVID-19 reces-

sion, eclipsing the declines during the Great Recession, according to U.S. Department of Labor figures.

Without federal assistance to fill holes in state and local budgets, some analysts have said spending cuts and tax increases that communities may need to continue providing services could delay the country's recovery.

"The federal government

is the only institution in the position to dig us out of this hole," said Steven Kreisberg, the director of research and collective bargaining for the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, the largest trade union of public employees in the country. "If Congress doesn't act, the outlook is exceedingly grim."

Budgets continued on A7

ONLY IN THE AJC LOCAL SCHOOLS

Campus cops' roles might get overhaul

Marietta, other metro districts may make job less about discipline.

By Kristal Dixon
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The Marietta city school system is considering a plan to refocus the work of their campus police to make their jobs less about school discipline and more about working as counselors and educators. The change was proposed after a group of former students called on the school board to remove all police officers from schools, citing the need to address racial concerns.

While the Marietta School Board has taken no action on most of the students' requests, emailed to them in early July, board members on July 14 adopted a list of steps proposed by Superintendent Dr. Grant Rivera to address racial inequities in the district.

Among them: refocusing the work of campus police so that their roles are less about discipline.

Rivera said he wants to redefine campus officers' roles from being primarily used to enforce school discipline and giving orders to students. He wants the officers' work to align with the National Association of School Resource Officers model as counselor, educator and officer.

"I feel like we don't have to disregard all of their value," Rivera said. "We have to get back to the right balance of what their role should be."

The push to reform school policing has popped up in other metro school districts in Gwinnett, Fulton and Atlanta, and around the nation following nationwide protests that began following the May 25 killing of George Floyd, a Black man, while in Minneapolis police custody. So far, no metro school systems have removed police officers from their campuses.

The Marietta Police Department employs five school resource officers and a full-time patrol officer who teaches a course on law enforcement and criminal justice at the high school. Police Chief Dan Flynn said the department has always worked cooperatively with teachers and administrators with the goal of maintaining a safe

Campus continued on A10

BUSINESSES



Reid Zeising said he had to permanently close Genki Noodles & Sushi in Atlanta's Virginia-Highland after being unable to negotiate a lowered rent with his landlord, who said Zeising closed without giving him advance notice. BEN GRAY / FOR THE AJC

Unpaid rents mount, straining Atlanta businesses, landlords

Evictions loom as federal relief loans start running out, courts reopen, COVID-19 surges.

By Andy Peters
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Many of Stuart Meddin's commercial tenants are struggling to pay rent on time. Two are handling the crisis in completely different ways.

Sales at Highland Tap and Fontaine's Oyster House in Virginia-Highland have dropped 60% since COVID-19 hit in March, said owner Chip Ney. His restaurants have little outdoor seating, and Highland Tap isn't conducive to handling carry-out orders.

Ney called Meddin early in the pandemic to explain his predicament. Meddin agreed to defer a portion of Ney's rent.

Three doors down North Highland Avenue, Reid Zeising closed Genki Noodles & Sushi in early July. Zeising couldn't persuade Meddin to lower his \$12,000 monthly rent, but he said it wasn't for lack of trying.

For an increasing number of business owners and landlords, the outcome with Genki Noodles & Sushi might soon become

Evictions continued on A8

THE VIRUS IN GEORGIA

As of Sunday afternoon

193,177

CONFIRMED CASES

3,840

CONFIRMED DEATHS

3,069

CURRENT HOSPITALIZATIONS

AJC.com

For daily statewide updates, go to ajc.com/cvupdate

NURSING HOMES

Families desperate to resume visiting loved ones

By Helena Oliviero
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and Carrie Teegardin
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In January, Teresa Williams moved her 90-year-old father to an assisted living facility about five miles from her house

in Snellville to make it easier for regular visits.

At first, it went swimmingly. Williams saw her father, Maurice Collier, at least three times a week. She helped him shave, keep his two-room suite tidy, and communicate his wants and needs, including his pre-

ferred bedtime at about 9 p.m. All the while, Williams was by her father's side, keeping him company and keeping his spirits up. "My dad's a real talker," Williams said.

But the visits at Sunrise of Webb Gin abruptly stopped just days after Collier's 91st

birthday in March as the coronavirus started spreading in Georgia, and nursing homes and assisted living centers, particularly vulnerable to the pandemic, went into lockdown. At first, barring all vis-

Visits continued on A9



MORE TOP NEWS, A3
Isaias loses strength but still soaks Florida

Facing a COVID-19 resurgence, the state keeps a wary eye on the storm as it drops rain before heading up the coast.

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Volume 72, Number 216



MORE OF TODAY'S TOP NEWS: CORONAVIRUS OUTBREAK

Visits

continued from A1

itors seemed sensible, even a necessary step to protect residents.

As the COVID-19 pandemic stretches into the fifth month with no end in sight, some families in Georgia are now vigorously challenging visitor bans, saying the restrictions are unhealthy.

"I feel like I'm in prison," said Collier by phone.

Meanwhile, Williams fought back tears as she talked about a noticeable mental decline, saying her father seems confused and anxious.

Some families strongly support keeping senior care homes in lockdown, given how vulnerable residents are if they are exposed to the coronavirus. More than 1,600 long-term care residents in Georgia have died with COVID-19, about 45% of the state's total deaths.

But many other families are passionately advocating for long-term care homes to resume face-to-face interactions, even if strict measures remain in place. Several states including New Hampshire, New Jersey and Indiana are relaxing visitation rules.

Families are calling and writing letters to Gov. Brian Kemp urging him to ease restrictions. They've organized a Georgia chapter of a Facebook group called, "Caregivers for Compromise because Isolation Kills Too."

Even in nursing homes without COVID-19 cases, communal dining and group activities have been restricted, which deepens residents' social isolation and feelings of loneliness.

There is strong evidence older adults who are socially isolated face significantly higher rates of heart disease and stroke and a 50% increased risk of dementia, according to a recent report by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine.

"We are social animals. It is part of our species and it's almost built into our DNA, and when you take away that critical part of our environment, that changes our bodies," said Dr. Dan Blazer, the committee chair and a psychiatrist at the Duke University School of Medicine.

Kemp has reopened much of Georgia, but he has repeatedly extended his emergency order that placed restrictions on long-term care settings because COVID-19 can be so deadly for seniors, especially those with health issues. Along with prohibiting visitors, the order says senior care homes should provide in-room dining and cancel all group activities.

Federal guidance for reopening nursing homes says infection rates should be low in the community and access to tests and hospital beds should be adequate. Georgia's current trendlines for these standards argue against reopening.

The Georgia Health Care Association, which represents long-term care providers, had proposed some plans for reopening homes to visitors, said Tony Marshall, the association's president and CEO.

But with the recent spike in cases both inside long-term care facilities and across Georgia, Marshall said, homes shouldn't reopen soon.

Marshall said the industry is working with the state to ease some of the isolation by allowing residents to have communal dining and group activities at some homes without outbreaks.

"We're trying to find that fine line between protecting the residents from community spread and at the same time allowing them to have some enhanced interaction," Marshall said.

He said long-term care providers believe families will accept ongoing limits on in-person visits if they are convinced that safety remains a priority and that the psycho-social needs are being addressed by lifting some of the restrictions within the centers.

Senior care homes have tried to get creative to combat isolation. Some bring special snacks and games from room to room. Others have



Maurice Collier, a 91-year-old resident at Sunrise of Webb Gin in Gwinnett County, displays a message for his family. Yet he sometimes wonders why they don't visit him.



Sally Hoynacki does a window visit with her mom, 92-year-old Edna Taylor, in a nursing home in Dahlonega. Taylor misses being able to get together with other residents. CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

offered concerts by musicians in their parking lots that residents can view from windows or balconies.

"All of our members have been concerned about the emotional well-being of the residents, and they want to help them hold safe visits with their family members," said Ginny Helms, president and CEO of LeadingAge Georgia, which represents nonprofit and mission-driven senior care organizations. "But we still have a major concern about the coronavirus in the community at large."

Helms said her members want Kemp to mandate masks statewide to lower the spread of the virus. Members of LeadingAge are "starting to get frustrated that we don't have a better plan in place."

Blazer said he believes the time has come to try to find ways to allow some visits, whether it's outdoors with physical distancing or

with family members who get tested.

"We are not talking about totally opening up," he said.

"We need to be seriously thinking about the consequences of loneliness and social isolation the way we have been thinking about COVID-19," he said.

Skype and window visits

Jill Davis of Lawrenceville said while she understands nursing homes' desire to keep residents safe, she sees the continued restrictions as "inhumane."

She now worries her mother, Edna Taylor, who is 92, may never leave her nursing home in Dahlonega.

"My mom is mentally with it and well aware of what's going on," said Davis. "We Facetime and she tells me she's so bored."

Davis said her mom desperately misses social dinner get-togethers with her friends at the nursing home,

and other little life pleasures.

"She wants to get her hair done and a Wendy's Frosty," Davis said.

Meanwhile, Maxine Williams (no relation to Teresa Williams) has felt a particular sting because her mom, who is in a nursing home in southeastern Georgia, ended up getting infected with the coronavirus — several weeks after visitations stopped.

Williams, who lives in Woodbine, a small town in southeastern Georgia, said her mother was transferred to a nearby hospital and is mostly recovered.

Williams is advocating for carefully planned visits with

a designated visitor and recommends they start with at least weekly visits, with the visitor required to wear PPE. She has also asked for a point of contact in the administration for concerned family members.

She longs for the days she could bring her mom her favorite foods, including fried okra and homemade cornbread, and curl her mother's hair before bingo games.

Williams, who is a registered nurse, also made a point to be with her mom on Fridays during weekly appointments with a physician. She could help answer questions, review medica-

tions and help put her at ease.

Meanwhile, Teresa Williams said she regularly drops off essential items such as toothpaste along with cookies and popcorn in a box outside the Sunrise facility.

"But sometimes, my dad will call me and say, 'Why didn't you come see me?'"

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NOTICE

The Atlanta Board of Education does hereby announce that the millage rate will be set at a meeting to be held virtually at: <https://www.facebook.com/apsboard> on August 17, 2020 at 9:00 a.m. pursuant to the requirements of O.C.G.A. 48-5-32 does hereby publish the following presentation of the current year's tax digest and levy, along with the history of the tax digest and levy for the past five years. In addition to the live stream, the public may sign up for public comment via: <https://tinyurl.com/aboemillagehearing> and may also attend the meeting via telephone.

Dial in: 1-312-626-6799 - Webinar ID: 835 0726 4433

CURRENT 2020 TAX DIGEST AND 5 YEAR HISTORY OF LEVY (in thousands)

COUNTY SCHOOL	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Real & Personal	27,246,506	27,888,559	29,383,566	34,900,022	39,029,949	40,711,683
Motor Vehicles	573,302	400,565	278,888	191,111	145,745	111,007
Mobile Homes	324	314	320	383	390	396
Heavy Duty Equipment	47	324	83	391	207	3,359
Gross Digest	27,820,179	28,289,762	29,662,857	35,091,907	39,176,291	40,826,445
Less M&O Exemptions	2,846,783	2,697,886	2,882,788	2,573,730	4,021,327	4,264,367
Net M&O Digest	24,973,396	25,591,876	26,780,069	32,518,177	35,154,964	36,562,078
Adjusted Net M&O Digest	24,973,396	25,591,876	26,780,069	32,518,177	35,154,964	36,562,078
Gross M&O Millage	21.640	21.715	21.740	21.740	20.740	20.740
Less Rollbacks				-1.000		
Net M&O Millage	21.640	21.715	21.740	20.740	20.740	20.740
Total School Taxes Levied	\$540,424	\$555,728	\$582,199	\$674,427	\$729,114	\$758,297
Net Taxes \$ Increase		\$15,303	\$26,471	\$92,228	\$54,687	\$29,184
Net Taxes % Increase		2.83%	4.76%	15.84%	8.11%	4.0%

NOTICE OF PROPERTY TAX INCREASE

The Atlanta Board of Education has tentatively adopted a 2020 millage rate, which will require an increase in property taxes by 1.13 percent.

All concerned citizens are invited to public hearings on the tax increase to be held virtually at: <https://www.facebook.com/apsboard> Monday, August 10, 2020 at 10:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m.

August 10, 2020 10:00 a.m. Additional Hearing Details:

- The link to sign up for Public Comment is: <https://tinyurl.com/aboemillagehearing>
- Call-in Info: **Dial-in: 1-312-626-6799 -- Webinar ID: 854 7559 3604**

August 10, 2020 6:00 p.m. Additional Hearing Details:

- The link to sign up for Public Comment is: <https://tinyurl.com/aboemillagehearing>
- Call-in Info: **Dial-in: 1-312-626-6799 -- Webinar ID: 868 5817 6796**

An additional public hearing on this tax increase will be held on Monday, August 17, 2020 at 9:00 a.m. This meeting will be held virtually at: <https://www.facebook.com/apsboard>

- The link to sign up for Public Comment is: <https://tinyurl.com/aboemillagehearing>
- Call-in Info: **Dial-in: 1-312-626-6799 -- Webinar ID: 835 0726 4433**

This tentative increase will result in a millage rate of 20.740 mills, an increase of 0.231 mills. Without this tentative tax increase, the millage rate will be no more than 20.509 mills. The proposed tax increase for a home with fair market value of \$300,000 is approximately \$30 and the proposed tax increase for a non-homestead property with a fair market value of \$600,000 is approximately \$60.