

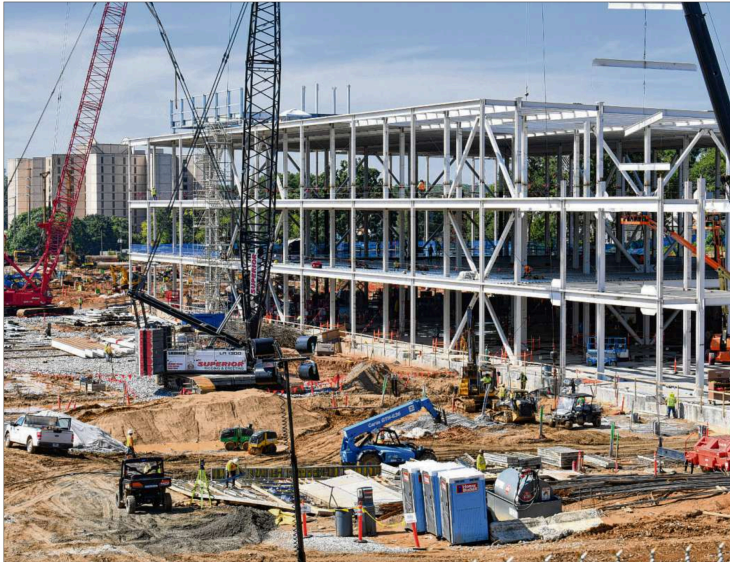


The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

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State's job market likely to slow in 2025

Still, Georgia has key advantages as country faces uncertainty.



Data center construction, such as QTS in Atlanta, is one area of expansion in Georgia despite the slow job market forecast. Job cuts and pullback of two planned EV projects will have an effect, but other factors could work in Georgia's favor. PHOTOSUBSHIN/AJC FILE

By Kelly Yamanouchi and Mirtha Donastorg
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Experts are forecasting slower job growth in Georgia and nationally as well as fewer interest rate cuts in 2025 amid uncertainty over President Donald Trump's tariff and fiscal policies, though some see potential positives from the administration's approach.

Economic uncertainty is expected to slow job growth across the country this year, but there are some redeeming factors in Georgia's economy, according to a report Thursday from the Economic Forecasting Center at Georgia State University.

Georgia will add 50,900 jobs this year, down from 57,700 in



Rajeev Dhawan, director of the Economic Forecasting Center: Georgia will add 50,900 jobs, down from 57,700. Growth "will slow because of international and national factors." AJC FILE

2024, Rajeev Dhawan, director of the center, predicts.

Dhawan cited multiple job cut announcements in metro Atlanta in recent weeks that show weakness in the job mar-

ket. They include layoffs at CNN, closures of three Atlanta-area Macy's locations, job cuts at the Atlanta-based Centers for Disease Control and Pre-

vention and pullbacks of two major electric vehicle battery plant projects — Freyr Battery's canceled \$2.6 billion plant in Newnan and Aspen Aerogels' halted factory near the coast.

Key sectors that drive the middle class and their spending in Georgia — including corporate, information technology and business-to-business sectors — have lost nearly 9,000 jobs in the past 12 months and more than 31,000 jobs since the start of 2023, according to Dhawan.

In Georgia, one area of expansion is data center construction — though once the data centers are built and begin operations, they are not major job centers like office buildings, he noted.

Economy continued on A6



President Donald Trump said the tariffs he plans to impose are to stem fentanyl smuggling.

Trump: Tariffs expand Tuesday

In addition to China, Canada and Mexico to face import taxes.

By Josh Boak and Fabiola Sanchez
 Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump plans to impose tariffs on Canada and Mexico starting Tuesday, in addition to doubling the 10% universal tariff charged on imports from China.

In a Truth Social post Thursday, Trump said illicit drugs such as fentanyl are being smuggled into the United States at "unacceptable levels" and that import taxes would force other countries to crack down on the trafficking. "We cannot allow this scourge to continue to harm the USA, and therefore, until it stops, or is seriously limited, the proposed TARIFFS scheduled to go into effect on MARCH FOURTH will, indeed, go into effect, as scheduled," the Republican president wrote. "China will likewise be charged an additional 10% Tariff on that date."

The prospect of escalating tariffs has already thrown the global economy into turmoil, with consumers expressing fears about

Tariffs continued on A6

MORE INSIDE

Few schools rush to change as deadline to end DEI looms

Many schools believe they're on solid legal ground to thwart threatened loss of federal funds, A2

Trump confident that Putin will keep his word on Ukraine

The president said the talks to end Russia's invasion of Ukraine are "very well advanced," A3

European Union pushes back hard against tariff threats

Trump disparaged the EU as the group vows to stand up to retaliate with tariffs of its own, A3

'We're not going anywhere,' priest says after blaze

Catholic clergy vow to rebuild home destroyed by lightning-fueled fire.

By David Aaro | david.aaro@ajc.com

Each morning, Scott Reilly would pray a specific prayer as the sun beamed through the windows at the home he shared with several of his fellow priests and missionaries in Forsyth County. The sunshine helped illuminate the rectory's chapel, full of golden wooden trim that accented a marble white altar.

Now, the remnants of that pristine altar are littered across the ground, and the walls and trim are either gone or covered in black ash.

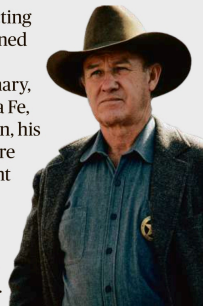
As the sun was nearing the horizon on Feb. 16, a lightning bolt struck the roof during severe storms that hit metro Atlanta, causing the home of the Legionaries of Christ's community to be engulfed in flames, officials said. About a dozen Catholic priests had lived in the home for roughly six years.

Fire continued on A6

INSIDE, A8

Hollywood grieves for Gene Hackman, found dead with wife and dog

Gene Hackman, an acting giant who was renowned for making ordinary characters extraordinary, died at age 95 in Santa Fe, New Mexico. Hackman, his wife and their dog were found dead in different rooms of their home and apparently had been dead for some time, according to an ongoing investigation.



Officials drop ballot harvesting case from 2020

True the Vote group had admitted it could not identify its 'whistleblower.'

By Caleb Groves | caleb.groves@ajc.com

The State Election Board on Wednesday withdrew an investigation and dismissed a lawsuit demanding a conservative voting group turn over evidence of an alleged ballot collection scheme in the 2020 election in Georgia.

In a unanimous vote, the State Election Board dismissed an investigation and a lawsuit seeking enforcement of subpoenas issued to True the Vote. The group alleged that unnamed organizations paid individuals \$10 per absentee ballot delivered to drop boxes across metro Atlanta. The accusations were never proven.

"It is apparent that the whistleblower will not be identified or cannot be identified," said Janice Johnston, a Republican appointee.

It's a move that ended a yearslong investigation

Elections continued on A6

TODAY'S TALKER, A7

Star trackers: Katy Perry, Gayle King book spaceflight

Celebrities will join Jeff Bezos' fiancée, Lauren Sanchez, and three other women for an adventure with Bezos' Blue Origin.



GO GUIDE, B1

Here comes Mardi Gras, so let the good times roll

Fat Tuesday is almost here, and if you can't make it to the party in New Orleans, metro Atlanta offers plenty of fun, too.

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