

Daily Press

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CHESAPEAKE

Inflation creates changes in priority

Infrastructure projects will now cost millions more, officials say

By Natalie Anderson
Staff writer

CHESAPEAKE — A new elementary school in Chesapeake will be \$15 million more expensive than previously projected. The cost to widen George Washington Highway has increased by \$12 million.

Those are two capital projects Chesapeake city leaders say are being affected by high inflation rates that have been felt widely among consumers across the nation. As Hampton Roads cities finalize budgets that will guide spending over the next year, local governments are feeling the pinch, too.

In Chesapeake, it's prompted city leaders to reprioritize capital projects as the cost of providing services and bidding for projects has increased with inflation.

Chesapeake Budget Director Jonathan Hobbs told city council members in March that though the rate of growth is down, overall inflation is still up. A graphic he presented shows inflation rose by 3.9% between January 2023 and January 2024, down from the 6.6% rate of growth in the prior year.

Those rates are based on the consumer price index measurement of inflation which tracks price changes of core goods and services, but excludes food and energy costs as they can be more volatile, according to Vinod Agarwal, an economist at Old Dominion University.

Turn to Inflation, Page 18



"I'll just be very candid: We're not at all confident in the fundamentals of the economy. The rate of inflation that we've had over the past several years is unsustainable."

— Chesapeake City Manager
Chris Price



A law enforcement officer holds a shield during a pro-Palestinian rally Monday at Virginia Commonwealth University. MIKE KROPP/AP

AS TENSIONS RISE, SO DO QUESTIONS

Schools' responses to war-related protests here, nationally scrutinized

By Nour Habib
Staff writer

As pro-Palestinian protests have spread across U.S. campuses in the past few weeks, the response of college administrations has come under scrutiny.

Protests began escalating when students at Columbia University in New York formed an encampment April 17, leading to the university president calling in police to clear the camp.

Since then, more than 2,400 students, faculty and other demonstrators have been arrested nationwide, according to a recent Associated Press tally. That includes more than 100 in Virginia over

the past 10 days, including at Virginia Commonwealth University, Virginia Tech and the University of Mary Washington.

On Saturday, the AP reported that police broke up a demonstration at the University of Virginia. Campus police called it an "unlawful assembly" in a post on the social platform X. Posts indicated arrests were made, but it was unclear how many.

In Hampton Roads, protests were held near Christopher Newport and Old Dominion University campuses last week. Both remained peaceful with no arrests.

Turn to Protests, Page 18



Pro-Palestinian protesters chant outside of Chartway Arena near Old Dominion University on Wednesday. BILLY SCHUERMAN/STAFF

PROGRESS REPORTED

Advances made in Gaza truce talks, though Israel downplays chances of ending war. **Page 6**



A self-driving tractor-trailer maneuvers around a test track March 14 in Pittsburgh. Aurora Innovation Inc. plans to roll out 20 driverless semis on Interstate 45 in Texas. GENE J. PUSKAR/AP

Coming to a road near you

20 driverless trucks to roll onto an interstate soon

By Tom Krisher
Associated Press

On a three-lane test track in Pittsburgh along the Monongahela River, an 18-wheel tractor-trailer rounded a curve. No one was on board.

A quarter-mile ahead, the truck's sensors spotted a trash can blocking one lane and a tire in another. In less than a second it signaled, then moved into the unobstructed lane and rumbled past the obstacles.

The self-driving semi, outfitted with 25 laser, radar and

camera sensors, is owned by Pittsburgh-based Aurora Innovation. Late this year, Aurora plans to start hauling freight on Interstate 45 between the Dallas and Houston areas with 20 driverless trucks.

Within three or four years, Aurora and its competitors expect to put thousands such self-driving trucks on America's freeways. The goal is for the trucks, which can run nearly around the clock without any breaks, to speed the flow of goods, accelerating delivery times and perhaps lowering costs. They'll travel short distances on secondary roads, too.

The companies say the autonomous trucks will save on fuel,

Turn to Trucks, Page 4

INSIDE



By a nose in Louisville

Mystik Dan edges Forever Young, Sierra Leone in a thrilling three-horse photo finish at the Kentucky Derby. **Sports**

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