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GEORGIA GOVERNOR RACE

Poll: Cagle could face a runoff

STAFF REPORT

A new poll suggests Lt. Gov. Casey Cagle may not be able to avoid a runoff in Georgia's primary elections.

The February Mason-Dixon Poll shows Cagle may fall short of the 50 percent of the vote required to avoid a runoff, despite being the leading contender in the Republican gubernatorial primary.

The poll includes a sample of 500 likely Democratic primary voters and 500 likely Republican primary voters.

Cagle tops Republican polls with a double-digit lead over other candidates at 27 percent of likely primary voters' support, according to the poll. Brian Kemp, Clay Tippins and Hunter Hill essentially tie for second place at 13, 12 and 11 percent, respectively.

See POLL B5

BRIDGE CHATTANOOGA

Memorial hike honors founder

BY MARK PACE
STAFF WRITER

A local program that's introducing inner-city children to the outdoors will hold a memorial hike for the program's co-founder as it looks to transition out of the pilot stage and toward its future.

The group will meet Saturday at 11 a.m. at Pot Point Cabin on River Canyon Road, with the hike concluding at approximately 3 p.m. Bridge Chattanooga co-directors Clark Brewer

(who is also the co-founder) and Melissa Fitzpatrick will provide an update on the program and inform attendees how they can help the program in the future.

The hike is open to the public. Bridge Chattanooga is an after-school program currently for sixth-grade boys at Dalewood Middle School. The program aims to immerse the boys in nature and make an impact on their daily lives while teaching them to be positive citizens.

"This is a great experience," Dalewood student Darrell Jackson said. "I thought, 'How can I stay out of trouble?' And I think Bridge is going to keep me from doing things ... like ... stealing."

The event is being held to honor the 27th birthday of program co-founder Ryan Keller. Keller committed suicide at his Chattanooga home in August 2017.

See BRIDGE B5

Pro-gun Georgia lawmakers punish Delta

BY BEN NADLER AND R.J. RICO
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

ATLANTA — Pro-gun Georgia lawmakers Thursday took revenge on Delta for cutting ties to the National Rifle Association, killing a proposed tax break on jet fuel that would have saved the airline millions.

A sweeping tax-cut bill Republicans had amended to strip out the fuel-tax exemption passed the GOP-controlled House and Senate by wide mar-

Inside

States seek to lure Delta to relocate its headquarters, CI

gins, days after Delta reacted to the school massacre in Florida by saying it would no longer offer discount fares to NRA members.

Republican Gov. Nathan Deal criticized the Delta controversy as an "unbecoming squabble" but said he would

sign the broader tax measure in whatever form it passed.

Delta, which is based in Atlanta and has 33,000 employees in Georgia, would have been the prime beneficiary of the break, worth an estimated \$38 million a year to airlines.

The political battle at the Georgia Capitol was the latest in the debate over gun control and school safety that flared after the Feb. 14 shooting rampage in Parkland, Fla., that left 17 students and educators dead.

Delta did not immediately return messages seeking comment. NRA spokeswoman Catherine Mortensen had no immediate comment.

The state Senate's presiding officer, Republican Lt. Gov. Casey Cagle, set up the showdown between gun-rights supporters and one of Georgia's biggest private employers when he vowed Monday to stop any tax break that would benefit Delta.

See DELTA B3

RECORD RAINFALL
DOWNGOUR CAUSES LOCALIZED FLOODING



STAFF PHOTO BY TIM BARBER

A compact car bursts through standing water while traveling eastbound on Boy Scout Road Thursday near the intersection with Sandwich Road in Hixson.

BY DAVE FLEISNER
STAFF WRITER

After record rainfall of nearly 3.5 inches Wednesday, Chattanooga ended February with more than twice the normal rainfall for the month and localized flooding that delayed or shut down a number of area schools.

The National Weather Service expected nearly another inch of rain to fall in the Chattanooga area Thursday before the weather dries out through the weekend.

With even more rain in Alabama, Mississippi and West Tennessee, the Tennessee Valley Authority is implementing flood control mea-

"... in most of the Valley there has been two to three times normal rainfall in February!"

- JAMES EVERETT, MANAGER OF TVA'S RIVER FORECASTING CENTER IN KNOXVILLE

sures on its network of 49 dams to help limit flooding.

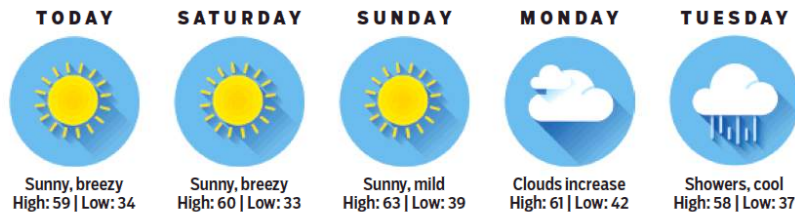
James Everett, manager of TVA's river forecasting center in Knoxville, said TVA is temporarily limiting the amount of water flowing through its mainstream dams, including Fort Loudoun and Watts Bar upstream of Chattanooga on the Tennessee River, "to provide some

relief downstream where we've seen the greatest rainfall."

"In the western and southern parts of the Tennessee Valley, we have already seen 5 to 6 inches of rainfall since Tuesday and it is still raining," Everett said. "The rainfall has been lighter in Chattanooga and the eastern part of the Valley, but in most of the Valley there has been two to three times normal rainfall in February."

The National Weather Service issued a flood warning in northern Alabama and Mississippi as heavy rainfall continued to cause widespread flooding of rivers and tributaries.

See RAINFALL B5



Clouds and cannons



STAFF PHOTO BY ROBIN RUDD

Heavy clouds scud over the cannons and monuments that dot the National Park Service's Orchard Knob Reservation in Chattanooga recently. Orchard Knob was the site of Ulysses S. Grant's headquarters during the Battle of Missionary Ridge in 1863.

Baker seeks District 2 commission seat

STAFF REPORT

Chip Baker, the longtime executive director of the Riverbend Festival and a former District 2 school board member and chairman, is seeking election to the Hamilton County Commission.

Baker is unopposed in the May 1 Republican primary and will face Democrat Elizabeth Baker, who is no relation, in the Aug. 2 county general election.

Baker said in a news release that over his 20 years



Chip Baker

as Riverbend director, the festival has grown to more than 400,000 spectators and provides a \$29.6 million boost to the Hamilton County economy.

"Growing up in a small community, I was taught that actions speak louder than words," Baker said in a news release. "That's why I believe it is not enough to talk about economic development. We must work together to help push Hamilton County to greater heights."

See BAKER B3



Welcome

### Rainfall

CONTINUED FROM B1

Forecasters said the Tennessee River could crest almost 5 feet above flood level in Florence, Ala., inundating some low-lying areas by early today.

The National Weather Service said the 11.7 inches of rain last month in Memphis was a record high for the month. Half of that rainfall occurred in just the past week.

In Chattanooga, rainfall in February totaled 9.7 inches, more than double the usual 4.84 inches of rain for the month.

"The good news is that we should have a dry and clear weekend and not see more rain until late Monday," said Tod Hyslop, a meteorologist at the National Weather Service in Morristown, Tenn.

All of the rain also is helping the area get out of moderate drought conditions, "which is a key thing, because you do not want to be dry in the winter," said Paul Barys, chief meteorologist for WRCB-TV.

"The winter months are the wettest time of the year," Barys said. "If we don't get our rain now, we're in trouble usually in the spring and summer."

TVA expects the Tennessee River in Chattanooga to remain above nor-



STAFF PHOTO BY DOUG STRICKLAND

Floodwaters from Lookout Creek rise around a pavilion in a camping center at the foot of Lookout Mountain after heavy rainfall caused flooding throughout the region Thursday in Wildwood, Ga.

**"The winter months are the wettest time of the year. If we don't get our rain now, we're in trouble usually in the spring and summer!"**

— PAUL BARYS, CHIEF METEOROLOGIST FOR WRCB-TV

mal and the Chickamauga Reservoir could rise above summer pool levels. But the

river and major TVA reservoirs in East Tennessee remain below flood stage.

"With the ground so saturated, we're seeing almost 100 percent runoff from these rains," TVA spokesman Travis Brickey said.

TVA's Kentucky Lake in the western part of its service territory is expected to rise 8 to 10 feet above normal next week because TVA is trying to hold back water from the rain-swollen Ohio River.

"We are using our dams

to store water to provide some relief for areas downstream so people should expect to see lake levels rise at all locations," Everett said.

TVA likely will continue spilling through its dams well into next week as it tries to prepare for spring-time rains, Everett said.

Staff writer Rosana Hughes contributed to this story.

Contact staff writer Dave Flessner at [dflessner@timesfreepress.com](mailto:dflessner@timesfreepress.com) or at 423-757-6340.

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### Poll

CONTINUED FROM B1

On the Democratic side, Stacey Abrams shows 29 percent support, while Stacey Evans comes in at 17 percent. But more than half of Democratic voters — 54 percent — are still undecided.

It's still hard to assess the general election at this point, the poll report notes, as most candidates are not well known yet. The exception is Cagle, who only slightly leads

both Democratic candidates, but only by single digits.

In a separate section of the survey, pollsters interviewed a total of 625 registered Georgia voters by phone over the course of three days in February.

Respondents were shown different combinations of Democratic and Republican candidates and asked who they'd vote for if the general election were held that day. In each matchup, roughly 20 percent of respondents

were undecided.

When Abrams was against the Republican candidates, she came out on top in each matchup, except for Cagle. With Evans as the Democratic candidate, however, Republican candidates mostly led. Evans led Hill by 1 percent.

The margin of error for the survey's two sections is 4 and 4.5 percent, respectively. Voters in north, central, south and Atlanta metro areas were interviewed, with 62 percent of them being white.

### Correction

A story on B1 of Wednesday's edition titled "Kelvin Scott seeks 4th District commission seat" should have said Scott is currently pursuing dual master of arts and Ph.D. degrees in Christian leadership from Antioch University.

### Bridge

CONTINUED FROM B1

Keller moved to the city from Memphis after high school to attend the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga. He immediately fell in love with the area and all its surroundings, his mother, Grace McLaren, said.

He decided to stay in Chattanooga after school to continue helping the community. When it came time to find somewhere to live, he searched for the area with highest crime.

"If I want to bring about change, I have to be in the middle of where it's needed," he told his mother.

His home became a safe haven for the neighborhood, she said, and he lived by the teachings of the Gospel of Matthew: embodying God's command to feed the hungry, provide for the sick, visit those in prison and house those who need a place to stay, his mother said.

Keller spent his time and energy helping others. His home belonged as much to his neighbors as himself, and looking back, McLaren doesn't believe he took proper care of his mental health.

"It was almost like he gave his soul away. When I hear all of the stories of all of the things that a young boy at 26 years old had done, it's just incomprehensible," she said.

It was out of Keller's generosity that Bridge Chattanooga was founded.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Ryan Keller points out Raccoon Mountain to Bridge students during an excursion with Tennessee River Gorge Trust staff in April 2017.

The program was sponsored by Tennessee River Gorge Trust and First Cumberland Presbyterian Church in Brainerd.

"He wanted to do something meaningful," McLaren said. "He wanted to start a nature program designed to help inner-city kids in defusing the conflict potential that was there between them and among them and within them. He really wanted to help them find a level of peace I think can only come from nature and God."

Keller, Brewer and their partners launched the pilot program at the beginning of 2017. The partners had enough resources for one group of no more than 12 students. The goal was to work for one year to immerse the students in the outdoors.

The groups want to continue the program next school year and plan on doing so. However, there

will be some reorganization. The groups are planning to shift the day-to-day operations from TRGT to First Cumberland Presbyterian. The trust will continue to partner with the program and work to connect the boys to the outdoors.

"The river gorge trust is excited to continue being the outdoor partner," TRGT Associate Director Sarah Quattrochi said. "We're going to have the same trio of partners. We're just reorganizing a bit. Bridge has provided a way for the church to organically connect with the community and the neighborhood in a new way. They understand the needs right outside their doors that these boys can help fulfill."

Today is Quattrochi's last day at the trust. She has taken a position at the church and will continue to help with the program.

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