

BOAT STRIKE UPDATES

The Trump administration denied malicious intent behind the order that sent a second missile at an alleged drug boat in September

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COACHING CHAOS

The coaching carousel is spinning in the SEC, with Lane Kiffin off to LSU while Missouri sits comfortably with its coach secured

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COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

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Council OKs plans to build new recycling infrastructure

BY KALLI FOWLER, BRENDAN BERGER AND TOM FOLEY  
Columbia Missourian

Columbia leadership took the next step in rebuilding the city's recycling infrastructure after an EF1 tornado destroyed its former recycling facility in April. At its regular Monday night meeting, the Columbia City Council unanimously approved initial plans to build a new pre-engineered metal building on the same site as the former recycling facility. The construction would restore the city's ability to sort and process recycling materials as it did prior to the tornado. This work is estimated to cost the city \$3.6 million. City leaders said this site is part of a larger plan to expand recycling services. Operations will eventually include roll carts, but an exact timeline is not certain. "(This) is a temporary kind of solution to part of a longer plan to restore recycling, but also the opportunity to expand what it is that our community wants to continue to do," Mayor Barbara Buffaloe said. In the interim since the tornado, Columbia has been transferring some recyclables to a company in Jefferson City. The city's Utilities Department held an open house meeting in October to introduce the facility rebuilding plans to the public.

Council approves liquor license for new bar

A new bar and grill is expected to open at 132 S. Ninth Street, where El Rey Cocina Y Cantina used to be. The council granted a liquor license to Highball Kitchen & Cocktails, which is expected to open in January 2026. The new restaurant seeks to be a "modern take on the classic American Bar & Grill," according to its website.

Sidewalk will be constructed on Mills Drive

Council members unanimously approved construction of a new sidewalk on the north side of Mills Drive, between Forum Boulevard and Highridge Drive. The project will begin in summer 2026, and will provide a pedestrian connection from the neighborhood to the Forum Boulevard commercial area. The sidewalk construction is estimated to cost the city about \$130,000, according to a council memo. Pedestrian curb ramps will also be constructed at the intersections in the effected areas.

Other agenda items

The council also voted unanimously to establish a fire service mutual aid agreement between the Columbia Fire Department and the Fulton Fire Department, according to a council memo. Historically, the Columbia Fire Department has exchanged services with agencies around the region during emergencies. The council also authorized the city to accept nearly \$30,000 in grant money from the Missouri Arts Council for Fiscal Year 2026, according to a council memo.



CLAIRE NGUYEN/Missourian

A snow plow clears off Ninth Street on Monday on the University of Missouri campus. The snow left an icy layer on the road.

Columbia gets first taste of winter

BY OLAMILEKAN ANIFOWOSHE, ADELA RAKOSKI AND AUDREY ELLIS  
Columbia Missourian

Columbia got its first dose of serious winter weather Monday, as students and businesses geared up after the Thanksgiving holiday. The National Weather Service in St. Louis forecast between 3 and 5 inches of snow by late Monday evening, with a winter weather advisory in effect until 9 p.m.

The storm followed a wintry mix on Saturday. With students returning to town, employees downtown were hopeful that attention would be given to the potentially dangerous roads. The city brought a 24-person crew in Monday morning to begin plowing under established rules for which routes are addressed first. Karissa Simmons, a University of Missouri

sophomore and barista at the Starbucks on Ninth Street, said she was expecting the store to be busier with students coming back from break. "Our cafe orders were busier because people are being forced to walk instead of driving," Emi Huelskoetter, another barista, chimed in. They expressed concern about how soon Please see **WINTER**, Page 4A

Experts raise concerns over increased injuries on turf

BY KATE LEVERENZ  
Columbia Missourian

During the last 10 minutes of a summer league soccer game, Madison Hendershott was defending a player. When she reached for the ball, Hendershott turned awkwardly and felt a pop. She tore her ACL. "All throughout high school and before that, I never had injuries," Hendershott said about her time playing soccer. "I always thought I was going to be that person (who) never got injured." Hendershott is a redshirt sophomore on the University of Missouri's women's soccer team, but she has not played the last two seasons after tearing her ACL twice in the last two years. Her injury is part of a broader debate happening across college and professional sports about whether artificial turf puts athletes at greater risk, particularly for lower-extremity injuries.

A national debate

Hendershott's initial ACL tear happened on a turf field located at Columbia College. While athletes can get injured on any surface, some studies show artificial turf increases player injury risk. "Although there aren't holes like on worn-down grass, it just isn't very natural," Hendershott said. "It can be hard on players' bodies." In a study conducted by the National Institutes of Health, when combining injuries of NFL players from the 2021 and 2022 seasons, athletes were 60% more likely to have a season-ending surgery when playing on artificial turf than natural grass. The study also found the most common surgery after a lower-extremity injury on artificial turf was ACL reconstruction. The National Football League Players Association has raised its

own concerns about the safety of players on artificial turf. According to the NFLPA, NFL injury data collected from 2012 until 2018 showed a 28% higher rate of noncontact, lower-extremity injuries occurred playing on artificial turf compared to natural grass. Currently, 15 NFL stadiums have turf fields. ACL tears are usually noncontact injuries, said Steven DeFroda, MU Health Care orthopedic surgeon with a specialty in sports medicine. "The knee pivots or catches in the turf, creating a load and rotation that tears the ACL — sometimes with additional damage like a meniscus injury," DeFroda said. On Hendershott's team, five players are currently out with ACL injuries, an injury DeFroda said is more common in women. "We know that female athletes

in particular are at higher risk of ACL tears due to their generalized anatomy they may be a little bit more ligamentously lax than their male counterparts," DeFroda said. "So female soccer players ... female basketball players are generally like our high risk populations." DeFroda said he and a few of his colleagues at MU Health Care have looked into this theory, finding that although risk of injury associated with playing surfaces is a concern for athletes, it is challenging to correlate the two. "There's no great way ... to fully attribute increased injury risk to the surface," DeFroda said. "A lot of it is anecdotal from players. Does it lead to injury? That's the million-dollar question leagues are trying to answer." Please see **DEBATE**, Page 4A

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How Columbia deals with code violations

BY ALEC MARTIREZ  
Columbia Missourian

Jim Stark, a code enforcement specialist with Columbia's department of Housing and Neighborhood Services, points out a problematic yard while walking through the East Campus neighborhood on a recent morning. He is accompanied by Neighborhood Services Manager Leigh Kottwitz, who takes a picture of the yard for further review. The yard appears to feature indoor furniture and a trailer parked in the grass that does not appear to be in use — potential violations of the city's public health nuisance and unified development codes. "We'll find out what's going on, especially with the trailer in the yard. Unless, of

course, the owner's doing something here, but I don't see much work going on," Stark said of the residence. "I would want (the trailer) gone by the end of the day." Another inspector took a look at the residence and determined the furniture was not in absolute violation of city code, but decided to continue monitoring the trailer. Columbia's Neighborhood Services staff handled 4,782 code enforcement cases in the 2025 fiscal year, down nearly 20% from the previous year. But the agency has also experienced a 12% increase in citizen complaints in FY25. How does the department resolve these complaints and code violations? About 30% to 40% of code violation cases are received by Neighborhood Ser-

vices through citizen complaints, Kottwitz said. The majority of cases are otherwise identified by Neighborhood Services workers themselves. Often, code enforcement specialists will find code infractions while driving around the city. Code enforcers, who each specialize in areas like rental inspection or health code, will examine the property with complaints stemming from something visible outside of a home, Code Enforcement Specialist Adam Friesz said. If a violation is found on the property, a violation notice and documentation for changes needed will be given to the property owner. Inspectors also use their Please see **VIOLATIONS**, Page 4A