

PARTLY CLOUDY

High: 91
Low: 74
20% chance of rain



Tuesday: Storms, 90/74
Wednesday: Storms, 89/74
Thursday: Storms, 87/72

Details on the back of **Metro**

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

Credible. Compelling. Complete.

SPORTS, C1

WHERE THE FALCONS SAW IMPROVEMENT SUNDAY



NATION & WORLD, A9

REMEMBERING JERRY LEWIS

Legendary comedian, film star and humanitarian has died at 91

DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT

Impact of Falcons' new venue debated



Kyle Kessler, community program manager of the Center for Civic Innovation, leads a tour group during a South Downtown/Underground Atlanta walking tour earlier this month. Falcons owner Arthur Blank and city leaders promised residents who live in the shadow of the new Mercedes-Benz Stadium that they would be seeing plenty of positive changes to their neighborhoods. *HYOSUB SHIN / HSHIN@AJC.COM*

\$1.5 billion stadium could draw millions to downtown.

By **Michael E. Kanell**
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and **J. Scott Trubey**
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Mercedes-Benz Stadium is likely to add momentum to an already improving downtown, but how much push it will provide is a matter of debate among Atlanta's business and political leaders. As flashy, costly and imposing as it is, the stadium replaces another facility – the Georgia Dome – so by itself it probably won't reshape downtown, experts say. But the \$1.5 billion home of

AJC.com

The Falcons open Mercedes-Benz Stadium on Saturday when they play their first home preseason game. For more on the stadium and the Falcons, go to AJC.com/sports/mercedes-benz-stadium.

the Atlanta Falcons and Atlanta United is expected to draw millions of visitors, who will continue to bring economic energy to the rapidly changing core of the city. Downtown is booming unlike

any time since the 1996 Summer Olympic Games – with billions in new development underway or on the drawing board. New apartments are going up near Centennial Olympic Park. After the Georgia Dome is razed, the Georgia World Congress Center plans a luxury hotel and a new park space. The Hawks and partners could build a new mixed-use project near Philips Arena. "We feel as if everything is coming together," said Wilma Sothern, vice president of downtown busi-

Stadium continued on **A4**

U.S. MILITARY

Trump has new plan for Afghan war

President gives details tonight; more troops may be deployed.

Michael R. Gordon, Eric Schmitt and Maggie Haberman
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Defense Secretary James Mattis says President Donald Trump has settled on a new strategy after "rigorous" review. *HILARY SWIFT / NYT*

AMMAN, JORDAN — President Donald Trump, who has been accused by lawmakers of dragging his feet on Afghanistan, has settled on a new strategy to carry on the nearly 16-year-old conflict there, administration officials said Sunday. The move, following a detailed review, is likely to open the door to the deployment of several thousand troops.

"The president has made a decision," Defense Secretary Jim Mattis told reporters on an overnight flight that arrived in Amman, Jordan, on Sunday. "I am very comfortable that the strategic process was sufficiently rigorous." Mattis declined to say what steps the president had ordered, including on troop levels, saying that the president wanted to outline the new approach himself.

The defense secretary received the authority in June to send as many as 3,900 troops to Afghanistan so that the U.S. military could expand its efforts to advise Afghan forces and support them with U.S. artillery and air power. But Mattis has refrained from building up the U.S. force there until the Trump administration agreed on a broader strategy.

The White House said in a statement that Trump would address the U.S. public and U.S. troops "on a path forward for America's engagement in Afghanistan and South Asia" in a speech at Fort Myer, Virginia, tonight.

WAR IN AFGHANISTAN

- An estimated 9,800 American troops are deployed to Afghanistan.
- The Pentagon has been awaiting a final decision by the White House on a proposal to send nearly 4,000 more U.S. troops.
- The Afghan government only controls half of the country and is beset by corruption and infighting.

ALSO INSIDE

» Ohio Gov. John Kasich urges Trump to end staff chaos, **A4**

U.S. military commanders have argued during the monthslong policy assessment that the additional troops would enable the U.S. to reverse gains made by the Taliban and militant groups like

Afghan continued on **A5**

CONFEDERATE MONUMENTS

Statue removals imperil Marietta firm's legacy

Descendant of founder angered by destruction of his company's work.

By **Ben Brasch**
ben.brasch@ajc.com

Morgan McNeel didn't quite understand what he was seeing when the statue toppled to the ground. Protesters looped a yellow strap around the neck of a Confederate statue at the Durham County courthouse in North Carolina and yanked. When they did, a piece of McNeel's family history tumbled head-first into the grass. Two generations ago, his kin founded the McNeel Marble Co. in Marietta and grew it into one of the nation's most prolific Confederate monument makers. Often using Georgia granite and Italian marble, they built nearly 100 Confederate monuments, of which dozens are in Georgia. So far, eight people have been

ALSO INSIDE

» Decatur debates the fate of its Confederate monument, **B1**

arrested for destroying the Durham statue; all are charged with two felonies and some lesser charges. "These little snowflakes think that they can get away with whatever they want and they're going to protest and destroy and tear this country apart," said McNeel, 48. By the time the Durham statue was dedicated in May 1924, the McNeel Marble Co. had already distributed more than 140 monuments throughout the United States, according to a catalog from the time. Gould Hagler, a Dunwoody man who wrote the book "Georgia's Confederate Monuments," said McNeel made more of the state's monuments to the Confederacy – 42 – than any other company. And McNeel prospered, eventually

McNeel continued on **A6**

TODAY'S ECLIPSE

States in eclipse path fear total gridlock

Across country, areas large and small brace for influx of visitors.

By **Terena Bell**
Washington Post

HOPKINSVILLE, KY. — For months, state highway officials from 14 states have been meeting regularly via conference call to plan for – or more importantly try to head off – what could be the largest traffic jam in U.S. history today, when an estimated 200 million people will be within a day's drive of the path of the first total solar eclipse in 99 years. The roughly 70-mile-wide path of totality – where the moon will block 100 percent of the sun – stretches from Oregon to South Carolina. In North Georgia, officials were already seeing roads getting more crowded as travelers arrived over the weekend. In Oregon, where the totality begins at 10:16 a.m. at Depoe Bay, officials have ordered extra-wide-load trucks off the highways through Tuesday to ease conges-



Eclipse glasses were for sale Sunday along a road in Clayton, Georgia, one of the best areas in the state to watch today's eclipse. **More photos, B5.** *CURTIS COMPTON/AJC*

tion, and in Madras, which has been identified by many experts as one of prime viewing locations, the National Guard is being called in to help control traffic. The event ends this afternoon outside McClellanville, South Carolina, where the state is bracing for more than 1 million visitors. "Basically we'd all be on the phone and we'd go west to east around the group in the conversation and compare notes and bring up concerns, and then a light bulb

Traffic continued on **A4**

AJC.com

We've got your full guide to the eclipse coverage and how metro Atlanta and other Georgia sites plan to participate. Go to AJC.com/eclipse2017.

MORE COVERAGE

- » Few clouds expected during eclipse, **A4**
- » Apps help you prep for the big event, **Living, D1**



NATION & WORLD, A9
Comedian, activist Dick Gregory dies at 84

He broke racial barriers in the 1960s and used his humor to spread messages of social justice and nutritional health.

METRO, B1
STEM majors earn a HOPE boost to grades

Fear of losing HOPE Scholarships were cutting down on the number of Georgia students willing to pursue science and math degrees.

NATION & WORLD, A2
10 U.S. sailors missing after ship collision

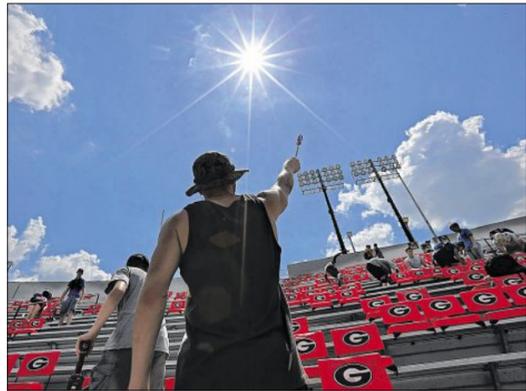
Five other sailors were injured today after a U.S. destroyer collided with an oil tanker off the coast of Singapore, the Navy said.

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FROM PAGE ONE



Jake Flynn helps direct workers preparing the home of the Georgia Bulldogs, Sanford Stadium, for eclipse viewing and the beginning of football season. CURTIS COMPTON / AJC

Traffic

continued from A1

would go off in someone's head. And we basically kept doing that until we felt we were completely prepared," said Matt Hiebert, assistant director of communications at the Missouri Department of Transportation.

Hiebert, who chaired the task force of state highway officials, said they agreed on a common message and communication strategy to educate the public. One of the biggest concerns: motorists stopping on the interstate or shoulder to view the eclipse, which in addition to being a safety hazard would cause massive gridlock.

The Federal Highway Administration has asked states to suspend all road construction today to ease the flow of traffic. The highway administration also is changing interstate dynamic message boards nationwide: A total solar eclipse is coming. The sky will get dark. The sun will appear to go away in the middle of the day. Do not slam on your brakes. Do not be afraid.

"We don't really know exactly how many might be out there driving around ... but we know that there will likely be several million," said Martin Knopp, associate administrator for operations at the highway agency.

In most states, it's an "all hands on deck" situation for highway workers and law enforcement and they will be out in force to both keep traffic moving and help motorists who might need assistance. From there, "each state works a little differently" Hiebert said.

In Missouri, for example, the eclipse coincides with the end of the state fair on Sunday and the first day of classes for the state university today. Highway work zones have been suspended in key areas to ease traffic flow, but they can't ban wide-load trucks when there are roller coasters and other fair rides to break down and move out.

The eclipse will reach its point of greatest duration in Carbondale, Illinois, and officials there have a "bring it on, we're ready" attitude when it comes to visitors, Hiebert said. But once all those people arrive where do you put them?

Carbondale officials are asking visitors — estimated to be around 70,000 — to park outside the city.

"One of the key strategies we developed ... is to establish remote parking areas on the periphery," City Manager Gary Williams said. The city has contracted with a local bus company to shuttle passengers to and from downtown.

State officials estimate 100,000 to 200,000 people will visit southern Illinois for its prime viewing locations and they've suspended most road construction through Tuesday evening.

Eventually, all those visitors will return home, which means they will need gas.

Amy Inama, a spokeswoman with the Wyoming Department of Transportation, is an East Coast native. She points out that drivers from that part of the country are used to cities — and gas stations — being a lot closer together.

"Out here, there's not a lot of cities between cities," she said, "so we're really urging motorists to make sure they have plenty of fuel. Stop, fuel up as often as you can, because sometimes there's miles and miles of road that there's no cities in between."

WHITE HOUSE

Ohio governor tells Trump: 'settle it down'

John Kasich, others react to departure of adviser Bannon.

By Darlene Superville and Kevin Freking
Associated Press

BRIDGEWATER, N.J. — Republican Ohio Gov. John Kasich urged President Donald Trump on Sunday to stop the staff chaos at the White House and "settle it down."

Strategist Steve Bannon last week became the latest top White House official to follow Trump's national security adviser, a chief of staff, two communications directors and a press secretary, and others, out the door.

"You can't keep putting new people in the lineup and think you're going to win a world championship," said Kasich, who is among those who think the staff churn is hampering Trump's ability to notch a major legislative victory. He voiced his concerns on CNN's "State of the Union."

The White House said Bannon and new White House chief of staff John Kelly had "mutually agreed" that Friday would be Bannon's last day. Bannon immediately resumed his role as executive chairman of the conservative Breitbart News web-

MNUCHIN DEFENDS TRUMP STATEMENTS

Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin, under fire from Yale classmates and Jewish critics of President Donald Trump, strongly defended the president's equivocating response to the racially charged violence in Charlottesville, Virginia, in a written statement this weekend.

"I strongly condemn the actions of those filled with hate and with the intent to harm others," Mnuchin said in a statement on Saturday. "They have no defense from me, nor do they have any defense from the president or this

administration." He continued, "While I find it hard to believe I should have to defend myself on this, or the president, I feel compelled to let you know that the president in no way, shape or form believes that neo-Nazi and other hate groups who endorse violence are equivalent to groups that demonstrate in peaceful and lawful ways."

His words marked perhaps the most vociferous defense of the president from anyone in the administration.

THE NEW YORK TIMES



Speaking on CNN Sunday, Ohio Gov. John Kasich said he believes staff turnover hampers the president's ability to make legislative gains. JAY LAPRETE / AP

lot of people on the White House staff and NSC that shouldn't be there, people like Miller and Gorka and others, who not only, I think, represent the same thing that Steve Bannon did but also aren't capable of doing the job well," Schiff said, also on CNN. "So, yes, I think there's more cleaning house that ought to take place," he added.

Schiff also questioned Trump's capability. "There's some attribute of his character that makes him seemingly incapable of introspection and a broad understanding of what the country really needs. And I think ... people are asking, 'What is going on with this president?'"

The lawmakers and others spoke Sunday as Trump prepared to return to the White House after more than two weeks away. Trump spent most of what he said was a "working vacation" holed up at his private golf club in central New Jersey. He also spent two nights at his home at Trump Tower, his first visit to the New York skyscraper since taking office.

Stadium

continued from A1

ness group Central Atlanta Progress. "This is a great new asset for our community and our city."

The Atlanta Braves and Falcons each built new facilities with the public picking up much of the tabs, while the city is also ponying up big money for the refresh of Philips Arena.

Public financing of stadiums has come under fire for years as being a drain on public coffers and not fulfilling promises for jobs and economic revitalization.

"It's hard to make a case for there being any economic benefit for replacing an old stadium with a new stadium," said J.C. Bradbury, a Kennesaw State University economist who studies sports venues.

The stadium will be home to Atlanta United, the city's new Major League Soccer franchise, which will add 17 home matches in the new building each season. The stadium hopes to draw international soccer exhibitions, the World Cup and concerts.

Mercedes-Benz Stadium also will play host to the Super Bowl in 2019, the upcoming college football national championship game and the NCAA Men's Final Four in 2020.

But large events such as a Super Bowl aren't the economic drivers boosters claim they are, Bradbury said, and often displace business such as conventions that would have already used the hotel rooms and filled restaurants in any normal week.

However, some area business leaders say they can already see a positive impact from the stadium and expect to see more.

'No minuses'

Less than a mile from the facility, Bruce Teilhaber, owner of Friedman's Shoes on Mitchell Street, said the stadium is bringing more people to the area, many of them likely to park from some distance or come by MARTA.

Anything that adds to foot traffic is good for businesses, he said.

Also, a new development group has taken over Underground Atlanta with plans for apartments and retail shops. A German group, Newport US, has acquired dozens of downtown buildings with plans to rehab them, turning the aging structures into refreshed retail, office space and residences.

"There are no minuses," said Teilhaber. "I just don't see any."



Participants head to south downtown during a walking tour of the area. Some city, civic and business leaders say the new Falcons stadium will provide momentum to revitalize surrounding neighborhoods and help boost development and other businesses.

HYOSUB SHIN PHOTOS / HSHIN@AJC.COM



Steve Saenz, founder of Urban Explorers of Atlanta, holds up a photo of the federal courthouse building (also shown in background) during one of the social club's treks through the city on foot and bike.

His son, Brett Teilhaber, echoed the hope that the stadium is part of a long-coming change to downtown Atlanta.

"We have all the hotels we need in downtown, but there's not that big city vibe — like in Nashville. If the city does it right, if Newport does what it says it is going to do, we can have that here. We can have that lit-up feel."

One person watching and investing in downtown is developer Joel Roth.

He purchased Fulton Supply Company on Nelson Street in 1987 and he also owns some parking lots near the new stadium.

"Back in the '80s the area was dead," he said. "If you walked out after five at night or the weekends it was dead. Plus there was a lot of petty crime."

After the Olympics, things started to change. Castleberry Hill, a neighborhood near the stadium, emerged as a hub for the arts, with new galleries, restaurants and condos.

The movie industry found Castleberry Hill, too, and over the years about a dozen other film and television proj-

ects filmed at Fulton Supply. Sensing a wave of new residents downtown, Roth moved the supply business to Stone Mountain and decided to redevelop the building into apartments.

The new Falcons stadium, he said, was a big part of that decision.

"I always felt that part of downtown was a sleeper that was going to come alive," Roth said.

He's ready to double down, with plans for a six-story building with offices and residences that he hopes will have a ground-breaking in 12 to 24 months.

Lift to neighborhoods

On a recent Saturday, Steve Saenz led a few dozen people who trekked through downtown to see the stadium, a broad swath of south downtown and Underground Atlanta. Saenz started a group called Urban Explorers Atlanta, a social club that tours the city on foot and bike.

"The trend of what is happening with the growth of this city is what makes the development of downtown different this time," Saenz

said. "Downtown (growth) isn't Beltline-driven, but frankly I don't think it is stadium-driven. I think this redevelopment would be happening on its own."

Estimates predict some 2.5 million people are expected to move into the metro Atlanta area by 2040. They'll have to live somewhere, and many will choose to live in the city, he said.

Perhaps the biggest lift the Falcons stadium will provide, he said, is the momentum to revitalize west side neighborhoods and build Rodney Cook Sr. Park, a new park similar to the Historic Fourth Ward Park along the Eastside Beltline Trail. That park helped solve some of the flooding problems there, much as its twin will on the west side.

"I think that will lift those neighborhoods," he said.

Kyle Kessler, an architect who lives downtown, said he hopes the optimism is justified.

"It is surely not for everyone — many people do want to drive up, attend an event, then drive away — but there seems to be a growing desire for an 'urban' experience," Kessler said. "A lot of people want to hang out with friends, get something to eat, to drink, find other activities."

Still, he is a little skeptical about how much the new stadium has actually changed the equation.

"Unfortunately, there is nothing immediately adjacent to the new Mercedes-Falcons Stadium and the question is, will we fill it in?" he said. "I do think we are going to see some different effects than with the Dome, but it's unclear how different it will be."