

EDUCATION



Civic Compass helps interpret of government information

BY MICHAEL WAYNE O'NEILL
EJ (MONROE, N.C.) REPORTER
MWONEILL@THEEJ.COM

WAXHAW, N.C. — A group of middle school students have been hard at work developing an app that is built towards making government information easy for people to understand.

The students, who are a part of Team Civic Compass, recently won the N.C. Middle School Track II — Technical/Built AI Technology category in the Presidential AI Challenge Competition.

The students — Kshetra Koti, Shanmukhi Malireddy, and Hasini Meruva — created an AI-focused project called “Civic Compass,” designed to help make



Photo provided

Waxhaw's Team Civic Compass, made up of (from left) Shanmukhi Malireddy, Kshetra Koti and Hasini Meruva, recently won the Presidential AI Challenge with the creation of the “Civic Compass” app.

complex government and civic information easier for people to understand and navigate. The platform emphasizes accessibility, simplified explanations, multilingual support, and improving access to government resources

through technology.

The competition encouraged students to combine innovation, teamwork, research, and technical problem-solving skills to address real-world challenges.

The team's supervising mentor, Venkat Mer-

uva, also Hasini's father, helped support the students with planning, deadlines, research guidance, and competition preparation, while the students themselves led the project development and presentation work.

Mr. Mervua did not have to give a lot of pointers once the team members came up with “Civic Compass”, but introduced the students to other AI concepts they could use for the app.

“When they came up with the actual concept, I didn't give much in inputs during the first level, I gave some pointers to them to do more research,” Mr. Meruva said.

The team jumped on the research and brainstormed ideas to

improve the app along the way along with mapping out features and key components.

“We had to take the inspiration from things around us,” Kshetra said. “And we basically built the app step by step and figuring things out one by one.”

Hasini said the team's mission was to improve civic information and make it easily accessible to civilians.

“We found that app idea, and then we decided to improve on it,” Hasini said. “Once we got the main gist of what our app would do, we went on into branching it out because this can't be one simple thing. It needs to have multiple features that everyone can use.”

Along the way, the team members also researched what it takes to understand the legal language of government documents. They based the app on the idea to make it easy to translate to other languages for users to better understand and comprehend government information and documents.

Mr. Meruva said the team plans to continue improving the app and allowing other trusted users to test the app. He also said the app is authentic if it is tested by trusted users.

Shanmuki said the team also plans to improve the tools the app already has and add more that “help reach more people” who would use it in a good way.

FOSTER

FROM PAGE A1

As of this week, the number of children in Union County in the U.S. Foster Care System is 137. Nationwide, there are more than 400,000 children in foster care at any given time.

“We had a neighbor that we knew of years prior, whose five children were coming into care,” Caldeira said. “Because we were somewhat acquaintances, we came on board and went to court not realizing that it was at the point of removal for the children, so we left court with five children. I had two, my parents had three, and that started the journey.”

Caldeira's grandmother started her foster parent journey with a welcoming heart as no one in her home were treated like strangers.

“They were loved and they were part of the family,” Caldeira said. “She fed them. She clothed them, and they had much less resources than than we do today.”

Once Caldeira started her own foster parenting journey, the family started with nothing and built it from there. She now has six children — five who have been adopted through foster care and one newborn who has been placed in her care since March.

Caldeira, a Waxhaw resident, loves seeing the women in her family being dedicated to helping children. She also likes seeing her impact carry through the legacy that her grandmother started with opening her home.

Today, Caldeira's children remind her to have resilience and understand that “every kid has a story.”

“It doesn't have to end

the way it looks like it needs to end based on their beginning,” Caldeira said. “If you give them a chance, you give them love. You can't erase their past, and you shouldn't erase where they've come from. But you have to help give them a starting point, a springboard so that they can have successful lives as they get older.”

TIME TO STEP UP

May is National Foster Care Awareness Month, which is a time to recognize foster and kinship families, honor the children in their care, and shine a light on the communities working to close a gap. Union County is one of those communities, and the gap is significant, Union County Human Services officials said.

Union County Human Services said the first step toward becoming a licensed foster family

is simply making a call. For more information, visit the Union County Department of Social Services website.

Union County's director of social services, Ashley Lantz, said the main goal with providing foster children a place of opportunity starts with providing safety before reuniting them with their biological families.

“If we can find them really good placement in a good foster home, then those social workers can work with the biological parents,” Lantz said. “That's one reason

we really need foster parents. The other reason is these kids deserve safety. They deserve love. They deserve knowing that somebody in the world loves and cares and wants them.”

While proper placement and safety measures remain top priorities for Union County Human Services, they are committed to following these steps with a nurturing understanding.

“The joys of being a foster parent are far greater than navigating the challenges children

faced in the past,” Lantz said. “It's the promise of something better every single day and I see that in our foster parents. I see that in our foster kids. I see that in every single program that we operate when we're able to meet whoever it is, where they are and give them a hand and help them through whatever it is that's happening. If we can find more foster parents that can assist us in helping foster kids find joy and love and support, then we will be making an impact.”

The Enquirer-Journal Weather

Today	Tonight	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday
Showers Likely	Showers Likely	Showers Likely	Showers Likely	Showers Likely	Showers Likely
79°	66°	83° 68°	82° 69°	84° 67°	83° 66°

In-Depth Forecast

Today we will see cloudy skies with a 95% chance of showers, high temperature of 79°, humidity of 85%. South southeast wind 7 mph. The record high temperature for today is 92° set in 2004.

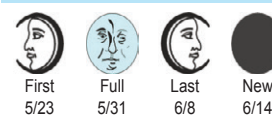
Almanac

Thursday's Temperatures
High 92
Low 67
Thursday's Precipitation
Precipitation 0.85"

Sun and Moon

Sunrise today 6:13 a.m.
Sunset tonight..... 8:25 p.m.
Moonrise today 1:21 p.m.
Moonset today 1:59 a.m.

Moon Phases

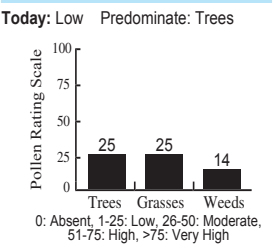


Local UV Index



UV Index
0-2: Low, 3-5: Moderate, 6-7: High, 8-10: Very High, 11+: Extreme Exposure

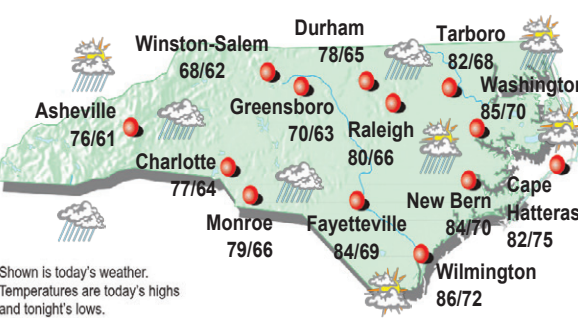
Pollen Forecast



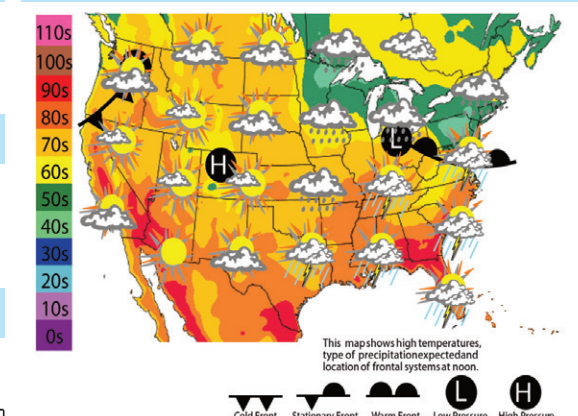
Around the State

City	Today	Sunday
	Hi/Lo Wx	Hi/Lo Wx
Albemarle	77/62 sh	82/64 sh
Burlington	73/61 sh	81/64 sh
Emerald Isle	78/68 t	77/69 sh
Gastonia	76/63 sh	82/65 sh
Greenville	85/70 sh	84/71 sh
Hickory	73/61 sh	81/63 sh
Kinston	85/68 t	84/69 sh
Mount Mitchell	73/58 sh	79/59 sh
Southern Pines	81/67 sh	84/68 sh

North Carolina State Forecast



Today's National Map



National Extremes
High: 107° in Tecopa, Calif. Low: 13° in McKinnon, Wyo.

Around the Nation

City	Today	Sunday
	Hi/Lo Wx	Hi/Lo Wx
Atlanta	82/66 t	83/67 sh
Baltimore	61/51 sh	73/62 sh
Chicago	66/55 mc	72/58 t
Cleveland	69/60 sh	80/62 sh
Denver	72/48 pc	82/52 s
Detroit	65/53 sh	77/58 sh
Houston	83/72 sh	81/73 t
Indianapolis	76/61 sh	79/62 sh
Los Angeles	73/55 fg	72/56 fg
Miami	86/76 pc	85/78 t
Minneapolis	71/52 mc	81/59 s
New York	57/51 sh	63/57 r
Orlando	92/75 t	90/76 t
Philadelphia	58/50 ra	69/57 sh
Reno	84/51 s	85/52 s
Sacramento	86/54 s	85/55 s
Salem, OR	78/50 mc	80/53 pc
Salt Lake City	82/57 s	86/58 sh
San Francisco	66/54 pc	65/53 pc
Seattle	72/53 mc	69/54 mc
Syracuse	60/46 ra	70/55 sh
Tampa	94/77 t	93/78 sh
Washington, DC	62/54 sh	74/61 sh

Around the World

City	Today	Sunday
	Hi/Lo Wx	Hi/Lo Wx
Acapulco	87/77 pc	86/77 s
Athens	73/62 ra	79/64 mc
Baghdad	96/72 s	100/83 s
Beijing	84/61 mc	90/68 pc
Berlin	81/57 pc	76/62 mc
Cairo	91/70 s	90/70 s
Hong Kong	88/79 ra	83/80 ra
London	82/62 ra	87/63 pc
Madrid	89/61 cl	88/68 mc
Mexico City	77/63 ra	77/66 ra
Moscow	75/62 ra	73/59 pc
Nassau	80/79 ra	80/79 ra
Paris	86/59 pc	88/66 s
Rio de Janeiro	77/66 ra	76/68 mc
Rome	83/63 pc	84/61 pc
San Juan	82/76 ra	82/75 ra
Stockholm	74/57 mc	69/54 pc
Tokyo	65/55 ra	71/62 cl
Toronto	52/46 ra	61/47 ra

Weather (Wx): c/cloudy; fl/flurries; pc/partly cloudy; mc/mostly cloudy; r/rain; rs/rain & snow; s/sunny; sh/showers; sn/snow; ss/snow showers; t/thunderstorms; w/windy

NOTICE OF PUBLIC AUCTION

Date: May 27th, 2026
Address: 3504 N Rocky River Rd, Monroe NC 28110
Time: 12:00 PM Local Time

By virtue of default by K & W Logging LLC Digging Dirt Site Works, LLC Rushford Grading and Excavation LLC (Individually and collectively “Client”), under a Negotiable Promissory Note and Security Agreement(s), Security Agreement(s) Promissory Note(s), Lease Agreement(s) and related documents dated various, payable to Commercial Credit Group Inc. (“CCG”), which obligation is secured by the property described below (the “Equipment”), CCG will sell at Public Auction, to the highest bidder, AS-IS, WHERE-IS, WITHOUT ANY REPRESENTATIONS OR WARRANTIES, EXPRESS, IMPLIED OR STATUTORY, INCLUDING WITHOUT LIMITATION, ANY WARRANTY OF MERCHANTABILITY OR ANY WARRANTY OF FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE, all of its right, title and interest to the following Equipment:

(1) One 2013 Tigercat 234 Log loader (S/N: 2341391) w/ attached CSI 264 Delimber (S/N: 26413072752) all mounted on a 2013 Big John Log Loader Trailer VIN: 1B9MC4825DFBJ4840

(1) One 2016 Tigercat 620E Dual Arch Skidder S/N: 6206726

(1) One 2016 Tigercat 620E Dual Arch Skidder S/N: 6206766

(1) One 2016 Evan Log Trailer VIN: 1J9G142B3C0003913

(1) One 2016 Evan Log Trailer VIN: 1J9G142B1G0003912

(1) One 2016 Evan Log Trailer VIN: 1J9G142B3C0003911

(1) One 2021 Tigercat 234B Log Loader (S/N: 2343396) w/ attached Tigercat Grapple (S/N: LG5057T – 1480) mounted on 2021 Big John Kodiak Log Loader Trailer (VIN: 1B9MC5028MF105063)

(1)One 2015 Pitts Log Trailer VIN: 5JYLP4225FP152047

(1)One 2015 Pitts Log Trailer VIN: 5JYLP4020FP152055

(1)One 2024 Tigercat 720G Feller Buncher equipped w/ Tigercat 5600 Saw (S/N: 56W0673) S/N: 7207713

(1)One 2022 Komatsu D61PXi-24 Crawler Dozer with all standard equipment SN: 45692

(1)One 2015 Caterpillar CS56B Padfoot Vibratory Roller with all standard equipment SN: CATCS56BCL8H00988

(1)One 2020 Caterpillar 336 Hydraulic Excavator SN: CAT00336LYBN10552 with attached Caterpillar Coupler & pin SN: EA2203568, with attached Caterpillar 54 inch HD bucket SN: EA2203555, with Caterpillar 36 inch Bucket SN: EA2191579, with attached Caterpillar 60 inch bucket SN: EA2021412 and attached pin: EA2191533
(1)One 2022 Komatsu PC240LC-11 Hydraulic Excavator SN: A22706 with a JRB Hydraulic Quick Coupler SN: AKRPLR6T431129, with a Hensley 36 inch bucket with Manual thumb SN: 3000978 and a Hensley 48 Inch bucket SN: 3001724
(1)One 2022 Komatsu WA320-8 Wheel Loader SN: A51290 with a TRK bucket with Solesbee 96x72 pipe forks SN: 214440-9 and a Hydraulic Coupler SN: C1992
(1)One 2022 Caterpillar 304 Compact Excavator S/N: AN400788

Terms:

Successful bidder must pay 25% of purchase price at time of sale via cash, certified or acceptable bank check, with the balance payable in good funds on the next business day, unless:

- The bidder has pre-qualified by presenting CCG with a written non-contingent, lending commitment from a source and in a form acceptable to CCG in its sole discretion, in which case we will entertain bids up to the amount of such written commitment; or
- The bidder has obtained from CCG written credit approval in advance of the scheduled public sale.

CCG reserves the right to bid at the sale. Contact Alec Schmidt at (704) 912-4561 for additional information or to arrange an inspection of the Equipment.

DFT.PubAuc.0725F
Commercial Credit Group Inc.
525 N Tryon Street, Suite 1000 • Charlotte, NC 28202
Phone (704) 731-0031 • Fax (704) 973-9528
www.commercialcreditgroup.com

Locations: NC | Charlotte (HQ) • IL | Naperville • NY | Buffalo • ON | Hamilton
California Finance Lender #603J992