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Multiyear project will bring Lucy Terry Prince site to web



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Column: Why blame DEI? Because it means 'those people'

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WHITE HOUSE

Tariffs paused; experts call idea 'unsettling'

Should Trump's plan against Canada, Mexico go into effect in March, prices on numerous consumer products will jump

By SCOTT MERZBACH and SAMUEL GELINAS
Staff Writers

The ever-shifting tariff landscape took a turn late Monday, as the U.S. agreed to pause tariffs on Canada for 30 days, several hours after agreeing to do the same with

Mexico. China, meanwhile, was also preparing to talk trade with President Donald J. Trump about impending tariffs on its goods.

But local experts agree that should Trump move ahead with his tariff plan, residents will feel the economic pain up and down the Valley. A

favorite meal at an area restaurant, a necessary car repair and specialty items at local stores will all jump in price should tariffs on goods from the three countries take effect in March.

It's the almost immediate impact of a 10% tariff on energy resources from Canada,

though, including its natural gas, crude oil and hydropower, and adding to the already high costs of heating homes, businesses and other facilities like schools and hospitals in Massachusetts, that worries Anna Nagurney, the Eugene M. Isenberg Chair in Integrative Studies at Isenberg School of

Management at the University of Massachusetts Amherst.

"That is going to be felt very, very quickly," Nagurney said in a phone interview Monday. "That's bad."

And with some agricultural products coming from Canada, like cattle born there, the price for steaks and ham-

burgers is sure to rise, as will the cost of lumber, and consumer electronics, laptops, appliances and clothing, all of which arrives from China.

"We get half of our imports from Canada, Mexico and China," Nagurney said. "They

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ICE-COLD CELEBRATION



STAFF PHOTO/CAROL LOLLIS

Beth Mahoney, Kelly Sharpe and Georgiann Kristek all celebrate the first day of February at Musante Beach in Leeds on Saturday afternoon. After exiting the ice-cold water, the three women raced to their cars.

PIONEER VALLEY

Push on for fair pay for farm workers

Advocates try again to pass bill raising pay to state minimum, requiring OT pay

By EMILEE KLEIN
Staff Writers

SPRINGFIELD — Most Massachusetts farmworkers whose hard work puts food on the dinner tables for Massachusetts families have difficulty affording the produce they pick and process.

It's a reality that the Fairness for Farmworkers Coalition — a group of farmers, advocates, community groups and labor organizations across the commonwealth — is campaigning to change this legislative session by refiling the Fairness for Farmworkers Act. The bill will raise the minimum wage for farmworkers from \$8 an hour to the state minimum wage of \$15 an hour, requires paid overtime after 55 hours a week, offers workers two paid breaks before or after their lunch, and allows workers to earn up to 55 hours of paid time off.

"The notion arose from our direct work at Central West Justice Center with farmworkers working on the ground," Claudia Quintero, director of Central West Justice Center. "What we saw is that there is a

SEE FARMWORKERS B5

NORTHAMPTON

Mayor: Uncertainty looms over fed funds

In mid-year state of budget, Sciarra also acknowledges soaring property values

By ALEXANDER MACDOUGALL
Staff Writer

NORTHAMPTON — Mayor Gina-Louise Sciarra provided a review of the city's finances for the first half of the current fiscal year Thursday, amid concerns over rising property values, school staffing

cuts and uncertain federal funding.

The presentation came during a joint meeting of the City Council, the School Committee and the board of trustees the Smith Vocational and Agricultural High School. Sciarra started off the meeting by it saying that the days since the inauguration of Presi-

dent Trump had been "incredibly stressful, anxious, and disturbing," with Trump issuing a barrage of executive orders and the White House responsible for a since-withdrawn memorandum that sought to halt all federal funding. "In addition to being very con-

SEE MAYOR B5

GAZETTE FILE PHOTO

Gina-Louise Sciarra recapped how the city's current budget is playing out at a joint meeting with the City Council, School Committee and trustees for Smith Vocational and Agricultural High School last week.



WASHINGTON

USAID closes, workers kept out; court fight promised

Democrats push back against Musk, Trump administration moves to shut and gut agency

By ELLEN KNICKMEYER, FARNOUSH AMIRI and ADRIANA GOMEZ LICON
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Democrats have delivered a strong rebuke against the Trump administration's

attempt to gut an agency that provides crucial aid overseas to fund education and fight starvation and disease, calling it illegal, vowing a court fight and lambasting billionaire Elon Musk for wielding so much power in Washington.

Staffers of the U.S. Agency for In-

ternational Development were instructed to stay out of the agency's Washington headquarters, and officers blocked the lawmakers from entering the lobby Monday, after Musk announced President Donald Trump had agreed with him to shut the agency.

The fast-moving developments come after thousands of USAID employees already have been laid off and programs shut down in the two weeks since Trump became president. And they show the extraordinary power of Musk and his Department of Government Efficiency in the Trump administration. Musk an-

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WEATHER TODAY

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TRADE

Mexico reaches agreement to delay US tariffs

Plan to impose 25% levy on all goods put off for a month

By KATE LINTHICUM and PATRICK J. MCDONNELL
Los Angeles Times

MEXICO CITY — Mexico has managed to avoid U.S. tariffs — for now — after its president came to a last-minute agreement with President Trump.

Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum, in a post on X, said she spoke to the American leader Monday and that they came to an accord that delays for at least a month Trump's threat of 25% tariffs on all Mexican goods imported to the United States.

In exchange, she said Mexico had agreed to reinforce its northern border with 10,000 members of its national

guard in order to combat migration and the trafficking of illegal drugs.

Trump confirmed the agreement in a post on Truth Social.

"I just spoke with President Claudia Sheinbaum of Mexico," he wrote. "It was a very friendly conversation wherein she agreed to immediately supply 10,000 Mexican soldiers on the border separating Mexico and the United States."

Over the weekend, Trump announced that heavy tariffs on goods from Mexico, Canada and China would take effect Tuesday, raising the specter of a disruptive trade war that could damage the economies of all three nations and dramatically raise costs for U.S. consumers.

Trump signed executive orders placing duties of 25% on imported goods from Mexico and Canada, with a 10% rate on Canadian energy prod-

ucts. Those tariffs would have violated a free trade pact that Trump himself negotiated in 2020 and celebrated as "the fairest, most balanced and beneficial trade agreement we have ever signed into law."

Trump also imposed a 10% tax on all imports from China.

Trump said the tariffs were necessary because the three countries haven't done enough to stop the flow of unauthorized immigrants and drugs into the United States. The White House insisted the tariffs would remain in place "until the crisis is alleviated." Trump repeatedly said that "nothing" would stop him from imposing the tariffs.

Shortly after Trump's tariff announcement on Saturday, the leaders of Mexico and Canada announced they would respond by slapping retaliatory taxes on U.S. goods. China also

said it would "take corresponding countermeasures to firmly safeguard its rights and interests."

The last-minute deal with Mexico followed a now-familiar Trump script: Make a radical threat — in this case accusing the Mexican government of being in cahoots with drug traffickers — and then announce an eleventh-hour accord, saying that the targeted government had caved to Trump's demands.

A similar scenario unfolded last month with Colombia, which turned back U.S.-bound military flights filled with deportees from the United States, triggering a diplomatic crisis.

Trump immediately imposed tariffs on Colombian imports to the United States, but soon after declared that Colombian President Gustavo Petro had backed down and agreed to receive military flights with

Colombian deportees — something that the Colombian president never publicly agreed to.

Trump's tariffs against Canada and China were still slated to go into effect Tuesday.

Trump said that he spoke with Prime Minister Justin Trudeau of Canada on Monday morning and planned to do so again in the afternoon.

In a speech on Saturday after Trump announced his tariffs, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau urged his citizens not to buy American-made products and announced two waves of tariffs against the United States. He questioned Trump's claims that Canada is to blame for high levels of immigration and America's fentanyl crisis, saying: "Less than 1% of fentanyl and less than 1% of illegal crossings into the United States come from Canada."

Trump's tariffs paused; economics experts call push 'unsettling'

TARIFFS FROM A1

are our biggest trading partners and we need to work together. This is unsettling."

While the decisions being made by President Donald Trump at the federal level could soon begin affecting consumers and businesses, earlier Monday the United States and Mexico reached an agreement to delay the 25% tariff on all Mexican imports for one month. That came after Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum agreed to reinforce Mexico's northern border with 10,000 members of the National Guard, to address drug trafficking, particularly fentanyl.

Katherine Schmeiser Lande, who chairs Mount Holyoke College's economics department, was much more reticent about the possibility of impacts from tariffs, especially in light of Trump giving Mexico an additional month tariff free. With that, she said, it is impossible to ascertain "how serious" the U.S. president is.

"Price increases depend on what's rolled out," Lande emphasized. "Will it be a week? A month? We don't know."

Giving an example, Lande said a short-term tariff implementation may mean that a company such as General Motors may choose to keep prices stable, but tide over the time until the tariff is over. However, for some products even a short-term tariff may mean price increases, especially perishable food products, like avocados.

Adding to the complication was Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announcing

retaliatory tariffs and making an appeal to Canadians to avoid buying American products, when possible.

"Retaliatory tariffs will cause further pain for U.S. producers and consumers," Nagurny said. "Before long, workers in the underlying supply chains will lose their jobs."

Businesses to feel pinch

At the Amherst Area Chamber of Commerce, Executive Director Jacob Robinson said increased tariffs will be felt at the numerous locally owned restaurants in Amherst, many of which source ingredients from Mexico and Canada, and have few options other than to raise menu prices and pass those costs onto their customers. Similarly, independent retailers that carry goods and specialty items from abroad will likely have to pay more to stock their shelves.

"The impact of tariffs on Canada, Mexico and China could certainly have ripple effects in the Amherst area, particularly for businesses that rely on imported goods, construction materials and food products from these markets," Robinson said.

He points to a report from Associated Industries of Massachusetts showing that the commonwealth's annual trade with Canada in 2023, including agriculture, equipment and machinery and services, was \$17.1 billion, while trade with Mexico tops \$8 billion annually.

Likewise, since tariffs will affect the cost of materials like lumber, steel and electronics, developers and contractors in the region, and auto dealer-

ships and repair shops, could see price shifts on vehicles and parts sourced internationally.

In fact, Nagurny observes components for cars, even those assembled in the United States, will be affected. "I worry about layoffs in the automotive sector. That will be big," Nagurny said.

The chamber is providing advice to members, many of which are small businesses, about the proactive steps they can take. That includes communicating with customers in a transparent way about the price adjustments necessary to stay solvent, seeking alternative suppliers should there be disruptions to the supply chain and working with the Massachusetts Small Business Development Center on strategies. The chamber is also connecting business owners with policymakers and in-

dustry groups to ensure their voices are heard.

Other impacts

Short-term financial challenges will include price increases for alcoholic beverages, maple syrup and eventually the costs for housing, cars, clothes, laptops and smartphones.

Since primary imports into Massachusetts are machinery and oil, Lande imagines the Massachusetts consumer being mostly impacted by price hikes for both goods. Trump's plan lays out a 10% tariff on Canadian oil, which she said would mean, "they can choose to hit us hard on that, and that would suck for the winter."

In the scenario that tariffs become a long-term measure to replace the federal income tax, as Trump has repeatedly teased the possibility of doing,

Lande said, "some would be hurt more than others," as cars, produce and so-called "fast fashion" would predictably see the highest price hikes. Lande also sees China clapping back at the United States by taking legal measures through the World Trade Organization, which makes it illegal to tariff counties for reasons other than national security.

Lande also broadened the horizons of consequences to Trump's ambitions. For example, his approach could potentially lead to an alliance between Mexico and China forming in the wake of what could be seen as American economic aggression on the global stage, just to name a single potential scenario.

While Lande waits to see the fallout, she explained one thing is certain for all political observers: tariffs are an infla-

tionary measure.

Nagurny said tariffs have occasionally been used alongside quotas as a protectionist measure, such as nudging forward an industry in the early stages of development, or to protect a certain product, like when India placed export quotas on onions and garlic during the COVID pandemic.

After the inflation of recent years and the numerous supply chain disruptions, though, the imposition of tariffs will cause unnecessary harm, Nagurny said.

"Many consumers have suffered enough," Nagurny said. "It's time to give people a breather, not this kind of economic upheaval."

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New CEO at nonprofit

TREEHOUSE FROM A3

Cockerton and the organization's board members to ensure a smooth transition — not only in Treehouse's leadership, but into the depths of its expansion phase.

"Having familiarity with the role has been very helpful," said Kuester.

The organization had been preparing for a period of transition for some time, bolstering leadership and infrastructure so plans for its two new communities could move forward unfettered.

The foundation's most imminent plans for expansion lie in Boston, with the Olmsted Village development, set to open in 2028. Following Boston, Treehouse will open another community in Worcester. Kuester said that an exciting facet of both communities is that they will include apartments for transition-aged youth — or those who are aging out of the foster care system — so that they may still live in the Treehouse community and have access to its support system.

"These would be our first urban settings, which is very exciting," said Kuester.

But moving from a rural to an urban setting might make these new Treehouse communities look a bit different, she noted. For one thing, the Boston and Worcester locations are going to be "vertical communities," rather than sprawling across many acres

like the Easthampton location. With this in mind, Kuester said it has been a priority to ensure that residents have access to outdoor recreation.

"As we move to more urban centers, it's going to be important to find sites that have access to green space," she said.

Kuester brings a deep history of community organizing work to her new role, previously working for organizations such as Leadership for Educational Equity, National Community Reinvestment Coalition, and Direct Action & Research Training. Throughout her years of work and advocacy, she has found that issues relating to children and childhood welfare have resonated very deeply with her.

Yet even with her wealth of experiences, Kuester immediately recognized Treehouse's mission and model as something special.

"This is one of the truest manifestations of community that I've ever experienced," she said of the Treehouse Community. Within the community, she said she consistently witnesses people stepping up to meet one another's needs, creating a system of support.

As CEO, Kuester says she looks forward to scaling that impact, and seeing even more children and families benefit from the Treehouse model.

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