

The Florida Times-Union

Thursday
JULY 28, 2016
\$2



BACK TO CAMP

A primer as Jags return to practice field

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GROUP FILES SUIT TO KNOCK TAX PLAN OFF BALLOT

Metro, B-1

2018 court date set in liability case on El Faro

At issue: Whether ship operator can limit damages per 1800s law

By Sebastian Kitchen
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The remaining claimants against the operator of the cargo ship El Faro that sank last year, those who lost loved ones and those who lost cargo, might not know until May 2018 if a federal judge will limit the company's liability for the incident.

The parties agreed on Wednesday to a court date of May 7, 2018, for the sides to argue over whether Tote Maritime Puerto Rico and Tote Services Inc. can limit their liability to just over \$15 million using a law from the 1800s.

Then the plaintiffs would have to pursue the cases in state or federal court to determine the damages.

Also, in the next 20 days, attorneys for Tote will release 700,000 or more documents already provided to the U.S. Coast Guard onto a secure website for those seeking damages to begin sorting through as they make their cases.

Tote has settled with the estates of 21 of the 33 crew members and with about 36 cargo claimants, leaving about 25 cargo claims,

EL FARO continues on A-4

*** Election 2016 ***

Blaze more trails, president urges

Obama asks Democratic coalition that boosted him to rally for Clinton

By Julie Pace & Catherine Lucey
Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA | Their political fates now entwined, President Barack Obama is imploring voters to elect Hillary Clinton to the White House, joining a chorus of Democrats vouching Wednesday night for her readiness to be commander in chief at time of volatili-

ty around the world. "Even in the middle of crisis, she listens to people, and keeps her cool, and treats everybody with respect," Obama said in excerpts released ahead of his remarks at the Democratic convention. "And no matter how daunting the odds, no matter how much people try to knock her down, she never, ever quits."

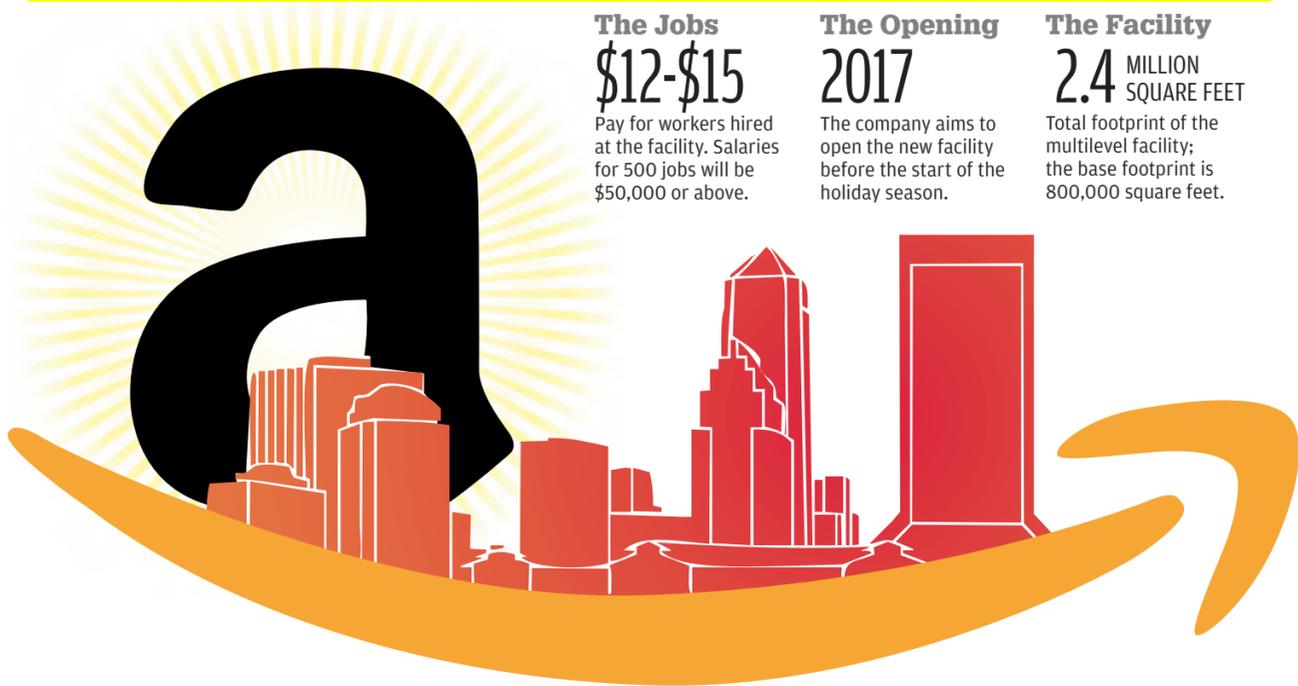
For Democrats, Obama's address moment was steeped in symbolism, the passing of the baton from a barrier-breaking president to a candidate trying to make history herself.

His robust support for Clinton, his political foe-turned-friend, is also driven by deep concern that Republican Donald Trump might win in November and unravel the

president's eight years in office. To Obama and Clinton, Trump's comments asking Russia to hack Clinton's emails only fed their contention that the billionaire businessman is unqualified to be commander in chief. Trump has no national security experience and few ties to the norms that have governed U.S. foreign policy under presidents from both parties, including standing by NATO

CONVENTION continues on A-4

Amazon to deliver 1,500 jobs to Northside



The Jobs
\$12-\$15

Pay for workers hired at the facility. Salaries for 500 jobs will be \$50,000 or above.

The Opening
2017

The company aims to open the new facility before the start of the holiday season.

The Facility
2.4 MILLION SQUARE FEET

Total footprint of the multilevel facility; the base footprint is 800,000 square feet.

AMAZON IN JACKSONVILLE

Internet retail giant Amazon confirmed Wednesday its plans to open a \$200 million facility on Jacksonville's Northside near International Airport Boulevard and Pecan Park Road, just north of Interstate 295.



'Project Rex' negotiations with city, state were in the works for years

By Drew Dixon & Bill Bortzfield
The Times-Union

Amazon is bringing 1,500 jobs to Jacksonville, company officials confirmed Wednesday.

The announcement by Amazon officials from their headquarters in Seattle that the company is planning to build an 800,000-square-foot distribution center on the Northside culminates years of secret negotiations between the city and state and the giant online merchandise company.

"Becoming a member of the Jacksonville community is very exciting for us as we grow our presence in Florida," said Akash Chauhan, vice president of Amazon's North American operations. "We're proud to be creating more than 1,500 full-time jobs

to join the thousands we currently employ across the state. We look forward to continue building relationships in the community to make Jacksonville home."

JAX Chamber President Daniel Davis called it the largest single jobs announcement in our city's history. He issued an email statement that confirmed the planned Amazon facility is the same as "Project Rex," a pseudonym city officials dubbed the project as negotiations played out this year in an effort to land the facility here on a 170-acre site on International Airport Boulevard and Pecan Park Road, just north of Interstate 295. Northlake, a residential community, is just west of the site, but there's little other development around it.

AMAZON continues on A-4

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Barbie

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Saturday, July 30th | 10am - 3pm
\$8.00 Adult
\$4 under 10
Hyatt Regency Jacksonville Riverfront
225 East Coastline Drive
Jacksonville, FL 32202



Trump asks Putin to find Clinton emails

But Pence warns Russia not to commit cyber espionage

By Eric Tucker & Jack Gillum
Associated Press

WASHINGTON | Donald Trump encouraged Russia on Wednesday to find and make public missing emails deleted by his presidential opponent, Hillary Clinton, setting off an instant debate over hacking and his urging of a foreign government to meddle in American politics.

Shortly after Trump's extraordinary remarks, his Republican running mate, Indiana Gov. Mike Pence, took a different tack and warned of "serious consequences" if Russia interfered in the election.

Democrats — and some Republicans — quickly condemned the remarks by the Republican presidential standard-bearer.

They came as the Democrats met on the third day of their national convention in Philadelphia, where Clinton will accept the presidential nomination

Thursday night to face Republican Trump in November.

Trump's comments raised the question of whether he was condoning foreign government hacking of U.S. computers and the public release of information stolen from political adversaries — actions that are at least publicly frowned upon across the globe. His brief remarks managed to divert attention from an embarrassing leak of other hacked emails that exposed sensitive internal political communications that had divided Democrats.

"Russia, if you're listening, I hope you're able to find the 30,000 emails that are missing," Trump said. He was referring to emails on Clinton's private server that she said she deleted — because they were private — before turning other messages over to the State Department. The Justice Department declined to prosecute Clinton over her email practices, but FBI Director James



Trump

Comey called her "extremely careless" in handling classified information as President Barack Obama's secretary of state.

The Clinton campaign called Trump's statement the "first time that a major presidential candidate has actively encouraged a foreign power to conduct espionage against a political opponent."

At a news conference in Doral, Fla., after Trump's initial remarks, he was asked whether he had any qualms about asking a foreign government to hack into computers in the United States. Trump did not directly respond except to say, "That's up to the president. Let the president talk to them."

He later added: "If Russia or China or any other country has those emails, I mean, to be honest with you, I'd love to see them."

Trump's invitation was immediately contradicted by his running mate. Pence condemned any possible cyber espionage, breaking from Trump for the first time since being selected to run with him.

"If it is Russia and they are interfering in our elections, I can assure you both parties and the United States government will ensure there are serious consequences," Pence said in a statement.

Brendan Buck, a spokesman for Republican House Speaker Paul Ryan said bluntly: "Russia is a global menace led by a devious thug. Putin should stay out of this election."

A Trump campaign communications adviser, Jason Miller, sought to clarify Trump's statements, saying on Twitter that Trump never urged or invited Russia to hack Clinton's emails. Instead, he said, Trump was "clearly saying" that if Russia or anyone else already had Clinton's deleted emails they should share them with the FBI.

Trump never mentioned the FBI in his comments.

Wednesday's exchange occurred hours after Obama identified Russia as almost certainly responsible for hacking the Democratic National Committee in a different case.

EL FARO

Continued from A-1

according to attorneys for the company.

The attorneys for those who suffered the losses argue the limited liability law is antiquated and allows Tote to prolong the case and push the families to settle for less than they deserve.

"It's not just the money. It's the truth," said Kurt Arnold, whose Houston-based firm represents families of four El Faro crew members who died when the ship sank Oct. 1 during a hurricane. "... You want to hold them accountable."

His firm, Arnold & Itkin, represents the families of Anthony Shawn Thomas of Jacksonville, Joe Edward Hargrove of Orange Park, Howard John Schoenly of Cape Coral and German Cortes of Orlando.

ORDER ISSUED ON LIFEBOAT

The sides also discussed the fate of a recovered lifeboat sitting in storage in Miami. Tote attorney Jerry Hamilton said it is in fragile condition and could be damaged if transported to Jacksonville.

Robert Spohrer, attorney for the family of crew member Jack Jackson of Jacksonville, said the boat is "very important physical evidence."

"I don't want anybody messing with the boat," he said.

U.S. District Judge Harvey Schlesinger agreed to issue an order not allowing anything to be done to the boat without 20 days' notice.

Hamilton said the boat has no relevance to Tote.

NTSB LIMITED DOCUMENT ACCESS

Several dozen attorneys were in a 10th-floor courtroom in federal court in Jacksonville on Wednesday to work through the issues before Schlesinger as they prepare for the complicated case.

The El Faro, with much of its crew from Northeast Florida, sank on its route from Jacksonville to Puerto Rico.

Previously, according to the attorneys, the case was stalled because the National Transportation Safety Board limited the materials that could be shared by Tote. The NTSB has since revised its stance and agreed, with some caveats, to allow Tote to share those documents.

Hamilton pointed out the case is not standard with two ongoing federal investigations by the NTSB and the U.S. Coast Guard and documents still being produced. The Coast Guard conducted two two-week hearings in Jacksonville, calling more than 40 witnesses. Another hearing is planned this fall.

'THEY WANT TO KNOW WHAT HAPPENED'

The judge agreed to a request that the outstanding claims should go before mediators by Dec. 15.

"We'd like to have the opportunity to meet with the remaining families and their lawyers," said George Gabel, a Tote attorney whose clients include The Times-Union.

Spohrer said for his clients, the brother and sister of Jackson who have sat through the four weeks of Coast Guard hearings, this is not about settlements.

"They want to know what happened to the ship," he said. "They want to know what happened to their brother."

Sebastian Kitchen: (904) 359-4161



Matt Rourke Associated Press

Delegates hold up signs as they cheer during the third day session of the Democratic National Convention in Philadelphia on Wednesday.

CONVENTION

Continued from A-1

allies threatened by countries including Russia.

Wednesday night's Democratic lineup was aimed at emphasizing Clinton's own national security credentials, a shift from two nights focused more on reintroducing her to voters as a champion for women's issues, children and families. Democrats spent little time discussing terrorism or the Islamic State group this week, though there was significantly more focus on those threats Wednesday.

The convention's third night was also a time for Democrats to celebrate Obama's eight years in office. Vice President Joe Biden, who decided against running for president this year after the death of his son, called it a "bittersweet moment."

He appealed directly to the working class white voters who have been drawn to Trump's populism, warning them against falling for false promises and exploitation of Americans' anxieties.

"There's only one person in this election who will help you, there's only one person in this race who will be there for you,"

he declared. "That's Hillary Clinton's life story."

Of Trump, he said, "This guy doesn't have a clue about the middle class."

Clinton's running mate, Virginia Sen. Tim Kaine, was also addressing the convention, his highest profile opportunity to introduce himself to the nation. A video introducing him emphasized his working-class roots and his service as Virginia's governor and senator.

The video said his life was "built on selfless humble service" and that he had a "Midwestern start in a working-class home in Kansas City."

The tribute noted his work as a civil rights lawyer, commitment to family and work to bring unity after a shooting at Virginia Tech while he was governor.

Kaine told the convention that he formally accepted the nomination on behalf of his wife, Anne, "and every strong woman in this country," their three children and everyone in the military.

He said he'll run for vice president on behalf of families working to get ahead, for senior citizens hoping for a dignified retirement and for every person who wants America to be a beloved community.

In a move aimed at broadening Clinton's appeal, New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg — an independent who considered launching a third party bid — endorsed the Democratic nominee. A billionaire businessman himself, Bloomberg took aim at Trump's bankruptcies and other economic experience: "The richest thing about Donald Trump is his hypocrisy."

Clinton's campaign believes Trump's unorthodox candidacy will turn off moderate Republicans, particularly women, who worry he's too unpredictable to take the helm in a turbulent world. They recognize that Republicans, as well as many Democrats, have questions about Clinton's character but hope to ease those concerns.

Still, the core of Clinton's strategy is putting back together Obama's winning White House coalition. In both his campaigns, Obama carried more than 90 percent of black voters, the overwhelming majority of Hispanics, and more than half of young people and women.

That coalition was vividly on display in the first two nights of the convention in Philadelphia. Women lawmakers were prominently featured, along with

young activists, immigrants, and mothers whose black children were victims of gun violence or killed during encounters with law enforcement.

Gun violence continued as a theme Wednesday night as families of mass shooting victims took the stage. Delegates rose in an emotional standing ovation for the mother of one of the victims in last month's Orlando nightclub shooting, who asked why "commonsense" gun policies weren't in place when her son died.

"I never want you to ask that question about your child," Christine Leinonen said.

Capping the somber section of the program focused on gun violence, a group of Broadway singers performed a rousing rendition of "What the World Needs Now Is Love," as the audience sang and swayed in unison.

Clinton's convention has been awash in history, with energized delegates celebrating her formal nomination as the first woman to ever lead a major political party. Some supporters of Clinton's primary rival, Bernie Sanders, continued to voice their displeasure.

But Sanders, meeting with New England delegates, said, "As of yesterday, I guess, officially our campaign ended."

AMAZON

Continued from A-1

The company's total investment for the Jacksonville project is touted to be up to \$200 million in a combination of equipment, furniture, land and real estate improvements.

Jerry Mallot, president of JAX USA Partnership and executive vice president of JAX Chamber, was a key negotiator in landing the deal. He said the pursuit of the Amazon facility was a "marathon" that lasted seven years and included joint efforts from the chamber, the city and the state.

HUGE FACILITY

Mallot said while the footprint of the Amazon distribution center calls for 800,000 square feet, the real size of the facility will be much bigger.

"It's going to be a 2.4 million-square-foot building. It's a got a footprint of 800,000 square feet, but it's multilevel in its character," Mallot said Wednesday.

"The project is now underway out there, doing site preparation, which will be immediately fol-

lowed by construction. The goal is to open the facility prior to the [2017] holiday season. We can't project the exact time," Mallot said. "It takes time and frankly it's an aggressive schedule, which I'm sure they will reach by late summer or early fall [in 2017] at the latest."

The city has committed \$13.4 million in incentives, most of which are paid through a state tax-refund program and the city's Recaptured Enhanced Value Grant program, which rebates a portion of the taxes that come from increased property value. The incentive, known as a REV grant, amounts to \$10 million rebated over 12 years.

The city is also committing \$300,000 from its share of a Qualified Target Industry Tax Refund (QTI), which provides tax refunds in exchange for the creation of "high-wage" jobs.

The state is providing another \$1.2 million in QTI refunds.

That massive new project on the Northside took a major step forward Friday with the sale of the land for \$15 million.

The company that bought the land, USAA Real Estate of San

Antonio, Texas, has worked with Amazon for five years, funding, building and acting as landlord for Amazon's massive fulfillment centers.

\$15 MILLION FOR LAND

In deeds filed Friday, the company paid \$15 million for 155 acres, but only 110 acres are usable, said Steve Leggett, whose Broward Signature LLP sold the land. USAA Real Estate also bought another 20 acres from SunTrust Bank for \$700,000.

Plans for the facility call for employees to pick, pack and ship goods ordered online to customers. Books, electronics and consumer goods are expected to flow from the facility, Amazon officials said.

Mallot said the only other facility in Jacksonville that is remotely close to the planned Amazon project is the Fanatics operation. Fanatics, which ships sports apparel and memorabilia, has about a combined 800,000 square feet in shipping and manufacturing facilities in Jacksonville.

Mallot said it's not clear if the Amazon facility will impact the local manufacturing indus-

try since the company provides goods from all over the world. But it is likely to impact the area's shipping industry.

"I'm hoping there will be implications for our port and I'm sure there will be based on bringing goods in because many of the goods are coming from other countries," Mallot said.

Davis said JAX Chamber and city government officials are already "planning job-training programs to make sure everyone in our community has an opportunity to benefit from this monumental project."

"It is great news for our entire community and another example of what we can accomplish if we are working together with the common goal of growing jobs," Davis said.

500 JOBS TOP \$50,000

The pay scale for employees hired at the Amazon facility would range between \$12 per hour to about \$15 per hour for "the larger group of employees," Mallot said. "Those are folks that are in the center who are actually picking up and packaging products for delivery. In that industry,

that is a very competitive number."

Mallot said about 500 of the jobs will offer annual salaries of \$50,000 or above.

In the Amazon news release, Gov. Rick Scott praised the deal. "It is great news that Amazon continues to invest in Florida and create new jobs for our families. I look forward to their continued success in Jacksonville and across the state," Scott said.

Jacksonville Mayor Lenny Curry was equally excited about the news.

"This is a huge win for our city and citizens. I am incredibly excited about the opportunities Amazon is bringing to our city and specifically Northwest Jacksonville, a community that will now serve host to an international, state-of-the-art fulfillment and distribution center," Curry said in a written statement.

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