

The Florida Times-Union

Tuesday
JANUARY 24, 2017
\$2



LOCAL FBS STARS

The 5th annual look at how area players fared

Sports, C-1



GEORGIA STORMS

Suspected tornado knocks down trees, damages homes in Camden County

Metro, B-1

Circuit Judge Hulsey resigns

Accused of making racist, sexist remarks

By Larry Hannan
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Jacksonville Circuit Judge Mark Hulsey III, embroiled in an investigation into allegations of making racist and sexist remarks, resigned Monday.



Circuit Judge Mark Hulsey III resigned Monday

Chief Judge Mark Mahon confirmed that Hulsey, who could not be reached for comment, had emailed his resignation to Florida Gov. Rick Scott. Hulsey was facing potential impeachment by the Florida Legislature and Judicial Qualifications Commission.

Hulsey, who narrowly won re-election in August, is accused of saying black people should "go back to Africa" and female staff attorneys are "like cheerleaders who talk during the national anthem."

The Judicial Qualifications Commission also cited Hulsey in the misuse of his judicial assistant and staff attorneys responsible for helping all the judges in the Jacksonville-based 4th Judicial Circuit. The complaints say he used staff attorneys to prepare scripts for routine judicial tasks and required one to regularly do his work for him.

HULSEY continues on A-3

House bill adds another wrinkle to city pension saga

It would stop city enrolling new hires in state plan

By Nate Monroe & Tia Mitchell
The Times-Union

A Jacksonville state representative filed legislation Monday that would kill the city's chances of enrolling new employees into the state's pension plan, a new wrinkle as City Hall and union leaders are locked in high-stakes negotiations over the retirement plans for future employees.

Mayor Lenny Curry — who came into office confronting \$2.85 billion in pension debt — is in the middle of an effort to make Jacksonville the first major city in America to offer only 401(k)-style plans to all government employees, including police and firefighters.



Curry

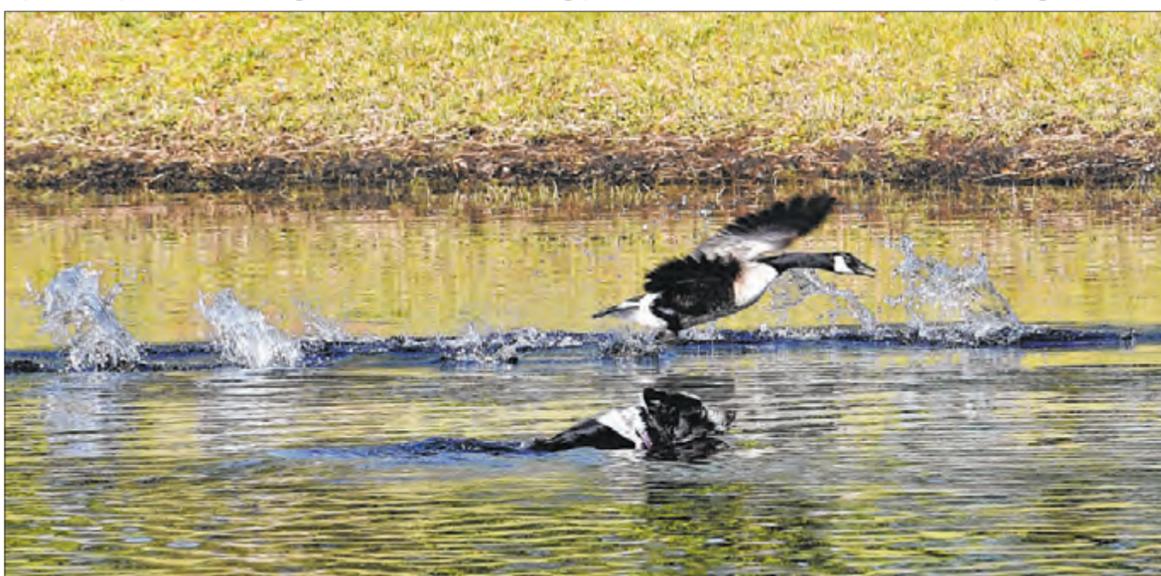
The police and firefighter unions in particular have vigorously challenged Curry's plans and insist that offering anything less than the chance to enroll future hires into the Florida Retirement System's pension plan will hurt recruitment and retention.

State Rep. Jason Fischer, R-Jacksonville, filed a bill to close the state's pension plan to any city that had not joined by Jan. 1. The bill is retroactive, so if it became law Jacksonville would have no chance of placing future employees in the plan.

PENSION continues on A-3

BORDER COLLIE NEVER DUCKS BIG THRILL OF CHASING GEESE

Specially trained dog latest UNF strategy to control sometimes annoying birds



Bee, an almost 4-year-old border collie, hits the water on command of her handler and Goose Masters of Northeast Florida company Vice President David Bennett on the University of North Florida campus. Bee worked a flock of geese that had landed on the lake on the north end of campus and chased them away. UNF is using a border collie, owned and trained by a private company to control Canadian geese on campus. (Photos by Bob Mack/Florida Times-Union)

By Beth Reese Cravey
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Bee has the stare. Sometimes the stare is all the nearly 4-year-old border collie needs to convince Canada geese to fly away from the busiest 100 or so acres of the University of North Florida campus.

Recently she employed her entire arsenal on five loudly honking geese that landed on a UNF pond near where she was showing visitors her skills. Despite her stare, they stayed put.

So following the commands of handler David Bennett, she stalked them from land and then jumped into the pond and herded them in the water. Eventually, she annoyed them so much they flew off.

"That'll do," Bennett said, using the command that tells her the mission was completed. "Good girl."

Bee and Bennett, vice president of Goose Masters of Northeast Florida, are UNF's latest strategy to keep resident Canada geese away from people and traffic. The goal is to prevent harm to both people and waterfowl — the hundreds of resident geese add to the scenic aspect of the 1,200-acre campus, but also have been known to chase people — and also control what is referred to as "carpet bombing."

Geese poop. On sidewalks, parking lots, everywhere. The unfortunate byproduct of resident geese.

There were about four pairs of geese living on campus in 2005, when Chuck Hubbuch took over as assistant director of facilities. Since then, he said the population has increased to as many as 100 pairs, as more and more of the geese were lured by the many ponds, lush landscaping and wide expanses of grass at UNF.

UNF continues on A-3

GOOSE MASTERS OF NORTHEAST FLORIDA

The regional office serves Jacksonville, Orange Park, Fernandina, St. Augustine, Ponte Vedra, Crescent, Green Cove Springs and Palatka. For information, call (904) 806-0620 or go to goose-masters.com.



Bee shakes off after successfully chasing off a flock of five geese at UNF.

Trump takes aim at trade deal, federal workers

The president has portrayed federal agencies as bloated

By Jenna Johnson & David Nakamura
The Washington Post

WASHINGTON | President Trump delivered on more campaign promises Monday by implementing a hiring freeze for most federal agencies, withdrawing from a major trade agreement and urging corporate executives to keep jobs in the country.

But his aides also signaled the new administration will not

move as quickly as Trump had promised earlier on other top priorities, including renegotiating the long-standing North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and undoing President Barack Obama's executive orders on immigration, including a policy that allows some undocumented immigrants who came here as children to stay lawfully.

Trump's clearest shot at what he has derided as Washington's broken system of governing came in the form of the hiring freeze. The president and his aides have portrayed federal agencies as bloated and wasting money.

But even the hiring freeze may promise more than it can deliver. It provided exemptions for those

working in the military, which could include civilian employees, potentially leaving a large part of the federal workforce untouched by the order.

Trump kicked off his first full workweek with a whirlwind of activity — a breakfast with corporate leaders followed by a call with Egyptian President Abdel Fatah al-Sissi and meetings with union workers and congressional leaders.

Throughout the day, Trump maintained a heavy focus on trade, which was at the heart of his presidential campaign and one of the few areas where he did not shift among positions. And he often seemed comfortably at home in the White House as he entertained, signed orders,

posed for photos and promised to disrupt Washington, just as he had electoral politics.

Monday opened with a "listening session" with leaders of some of the country's largest corporations — who stayed longer than planned to continue talking with Trump in the Oval Office. The president promised the group he would cut taxes, fast-track their plans to open factories and wipe out at least 75 percent of government regulations.

"We're going to be cutting regulation massively," Trump said during a brief portion of the meeting that was open to the press. "Now, we're going to have regulation, and it'll be just as

TRUMP continues on A-3

Weather Sunny
Forecast on A-2

72

Today's high

55

Wednesday morning's low



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4 SECTIONS
30 PAGES



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Bee, an almost 4-year-old border collie, and her handler and Goose Masters of Northeast Florida Vice President David Bennett ride around campus on a golf cart to wrangle the geese. (Photos by Bob Mack/Florida Times-Union)

UNF

Continued from A-1

The geese eat about 1½ pounds of grass a day and poop that much every day, too, Bennett said. So as the population increased, so did their droppings.

Complaints about that — and concerns about potential health hazards — have long been made to UNF staff, who researched the wide range of humane geese-control methods. The options include statues of herding dogs or predators, laser lights, repellents, motion-sensory squirt guns, sonic sound systems and electric fencing.

Ultimately UNF contracted with Goose Masters, a North Carolina-based company that uses highly trained working border collies, called “Goose Dogs,” to shoo away geese from land and water. Controlled by experienced dog handlers, the collies convince the geese to seek alternate locations. The cost is \$350 a week.

“They possess some unique characteristics that make them the most superior of the herding and hunting breeds of dogs,” according to the company website. “Unlike other



After successfully chasing off a flock of five geese, Bee rests in the sun.

herding breeds that do a lot of barking and move along with rapid bounding movements, the border collie is a quiet worker that uses its eyes and a stalking manner to persuade the geese to move along. It is that stare that unnerves the birds into flight. ... The geese tire of being pestered and simply choose to move to another place in order to find a safer haven.”

The company has 31 dogs between its multiple locations, two of which serve Northeast Florida, Bennett said. Training began at 5 or 6 months old, with the first

step herding sheep or goats. To handle a site like UNF, with lots of distracting cars and noises, they undergo three years of training. Other local clients include golf courses and corporate campuses.

Bee will stay on duty until she is 7 or 8 years old.

Bennett and Bee began work at UNF in December, during holiday break, with an “intense” initial presence that he said “established the threat” of Bee. Within a few weeks, the geese came to recognize the threat and some of them now fly away as soon

as they see the dog riding around campus with Bennett in a golf cart, before they even get the stare. Now the geese are mostly keeping to the outer areas of campus, but Bennett makes an appearance twice a day, deploying Bee and her arsenal when necessary to keep them in line.

They do not “harass” nesting geese or bother geese with goslings, unless herding is necessary to keep them out of traffic, Bennett said.

Specially trained dogs working with a handler are “the most effective way to scare geese away” as long as they don’t catch or harm them, according to the Humane Society of the United States.

Meanwhile, the amount of wayward geese poop is declining.

A UNF facilities employee used to spend much of his time pressure washing it from sidewalks and removing it from grassy and other areas where people congregated, Hubbuch said. Now that employee spends more time pressure washing actual facilities, he said.

“We’ve seen a significant drop,” Bennett said, “in droppings.”

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TRUMP

Continued from A-1

as strong and just as good and just as protective of the people as the regulation we have right now.”

In exchange, Trump said companies must stay in the country and continue employing Americans. He again threatened to impose a “substantial border tax” on companies that move production out of the country. International-trade analysts said Trump may not have the authority to punish individual companies, while broad-based tariffs would violate existing treaties. Trump defended his idea as “fair.”

“Don’t leave,” Trump said. “Don’t fire your people in the United States. We have the greatest people.”

After the meeting, Andrew Liveris of Dow Chemical told reporters that Trump and the chief executives discussed the border-tax proposal and the industries it would help or hurt. But Liveris added that Trump “is not going to do anything to harm competitiveness. He’s going to actually make us all more competitive, recognizing there’s a transition here. You can’t get things done overnight.”

Later in the morning, reporters witnessed Trump signing three pieces of paper that were briefly described aloud by White House Chief of Staff Reince Priebus as he handed them to the president. These documents, labeled executive orders by aides, were not released to the media or the public until late in the day, leaving many to wonder for hours what exactly the president was implementing.

First Trump signed a memorandum ordering the

formal end of the United States’ participation in the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), a long-standing campaign promise, although the move at this point is considered largely symbolic because the trade deal had little chance of being approved by Congress.

“We’ve been talking about it for a long time,” Trump said as he held up the order. “Great thing for the American worker.” Trump had also promised to take steps on his first formal day in office to begin renegotiating NAFTA, but that deal went unmentioned Monday. Trump earlier said he will meet soon with the Canadian prime minister and the Mexican president to discuss renegotiating the agreement.

Then came an executive order that would implement a hiring freeze for many jobs in the federal government, another promise Trump made on the campaign trail.

“Except for the military,” the president said as he signed the order. “Except for the military.”

Finally, Trump signed an order resurrecting an abortion-related rule known as the Mexico City policy. The policy forbids foreign nongovernmental organizations that receive federal funding from performing or promoting abortion services through their work in other countries. The policy takes its name from the location of a conference at which President Ronald Reagan instituted the restriction in 1984.

Since that time, the rule has been in place under Republican presidents while being repealed by Democratic residents of the Oval Office.

This signing seemed more like a party tradition

than a new push by Trump, who had never mentioned the rule on the campaign trail. But he promised evangelical voters he would remain opposed to abortion.

As reporters left the Oval Office, one asked the president about the lawsuit filed by a liberal watchdog group that alleges Trump is in violation of a little-known constitutional provision that bars him from taking gifts or payments from foreign governments.

“Without merit,” Trump said. “Totally without merit.”

Soon attention shifted to Trump’s press secretary, Sean Spicer, who endured rounds of criticism and mockery for delivering a blistering statement Saturday in the White House briefing room that accused the media of underestimating Trump’s inauguration crowd size and relied on a number of statistics that quickly proved to be inaccurate.

Spicer held his first formal briefing Monday afternoon to a standing-room-only crowd, opening with a joke about being less popular than his predecessor, Obama spokesman Josh Earnest.

The joke fell flat. Spicer proceeded to answer questions for nearly 80 minutes, calling on more than three dozen reporters from a wide range of news outlets.

Even as he patiently worked the room, Spicer did not back down from his contention that the press was out to “undermine” the president, and he continued to insist that Trump’s inauguration was the most watched in history, after television and Internet viewers were accounted for, without offering full evidence to back his claim.

HULSEY

Continued from A-1

The commission panel said Hulsey’s “indifference to your judicial duties” created problems for other staff and that he “exploited” his judicial assistant by having her pay personal bills, write letters and phone people on his behalf.

Hulsey denied doing anything inappropriate and said he never made any racist or sexist statements. He did acknowledge having his judicial assistant handle personal tasks for him and admitted that he listed people as supporting his 2016 re-election campaign whom he didn’t get permission in writing as required under Florida law.

But Hulsey resigned a day before the The House Public Integrity & Ethics Committee was scheduled to open an investigation into his behavior that could have led to his impeachment. A judge hasn’t been impeached in Florida since the 1970s.

Hulsey said his assistant never complained about the tasks, and said the endorsement list was an oversight.

A hearing panel led by West Palm Beach Circuit Judge Krista Marx was scheduled to listen to the evidence against Hulsey and make a finding of whether he did anything wrong. That hearing is scheduled to occur the week of June 12, but officials with the Judicial Qualifications Commission said it would likely be dismissed now that Hulsey is no longer a judge.

Had the hearing gone forward, the panel’s recommendations would have gone to the Florida Supreme Court, which would have had the final say in whether Hulsey faced any punishment.

Hulsey was a veteran family law attorney in private practice before he was elected judge in 2010, defeating Assistant State Attorney Sam Garrison. He was re-elected narrowly last year after the charges against him had become public, barely defeating attorney Gerald Wilkerson. He was helped by a number of prominent black lawyers who spoke up on his behalf, expressing doubt that the charges are true.

He previously lost an election in 2008 to Circuit Judge Adrian G. Soud.

Hulsey served in the criminal division from the time he took the bench in 2011 until the charges against him became public last year. On the day the charges were filed, Mahon reassigned Hulsey to the probate division, where he remained until Monday’s resignation.

The reassignment created problems for the judiciary, with Mahon acknowledging that he couldn’t put a permanent judge into an open spot in the juvenile division partly because of Hulsey’s situation.

Hulsey is the son of Mark Hulsey Jr., a prominent local lawyer who died in 2011.

Scott will now appoint a replacement for Hulsey. The process of selecting a successor is expected to take several months.

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PENSION

Continued from A-1

“Seeing how the local unfunded pension liability has crippled my hometown of Jacksonville, I refuse to allow the state of Florida to go down the same path on my watch,” Fischer said in a statement. “With this bill, entering the [pension] plan with the FRS will no longer be an option for local governments.”

Curry and Fischer have similar views on pensions — and on politics.

Curry backed Fischer’s state House bid last year, and the political consultants who ran his campaign — Brian Hughes of Tallahassee and Tim Baker of Jacksonville — are among Curry’s closest confidants.

Marsha Oliver, Curry’s communications director, said Monday the mayor had no involvement in developing the legislation. She did not say whether the mayor supported Fischer’s bill.

“I didn’t run it through their office if that’s what you’re asking. ... I have not met with anyone on the staff of the city of Jacksonville,” Fischer said. “This bill came up for me because I am genuinely concerned with what’s happening in the city of Jacksonville.”

Some union leaders were not convinced.

Steve Zona, president of the Fraternal Order of Police Lodge 5-30, slammed Fischer in a post on his Facebook page, saying, “While Fischer has enough hate in his heart for Police and Fire unions to file this bill himself I don’t believe a word he says.”

Randy Wyse, president of the Jacksonville Association of Firefighters, said the timing of Fischer’s bill was frustrating because it could imperil efforts in Jacksonville to fix the pension problem. “It looks like he’s trying to throw up roadblocks,” he said.

“I don’t think he grasps the seriousness of this issue or what this bill could do to future progress,” Wyse said. “It concerns me he put so little thought into what he did.”

Some Republicans in the Legislature have expressed a desire to close the Florida pension system before — efforts that Curry has referenced while discussing his own criticism of pensions — but past legislation has never been enacted.

State Sen. Jeff Brandes,

“This bill came up for me because I am genuinely concerned with what’s happening in the city of Jacksonville.”

State Rep. Jason Fischer, R-Jacksonville

R-St. Petersburg, who filed companion legislation in the Senate, said the bill would make sure “responsible taxpayers are not bailing out irresponsible policymakers.”

Curry has argued that pension plans are an outdated and unsustainable benefit that cities can no longer afford.

His efforts to close the city’s three pension plans are tied to his larger effort at paying down the pension debt. Voters approved a referendum last year allowing Jacksonville to dedicate the money generated by a future half-penny sales tax that would pay down the debt.

But unlocking that revenue and applying it to the three pension plans first requires that the city close them to new hires. Curry views that requirement as a chance to forever eliminate Jacksonville’s involvement in pensions.

The Police and Fire Pension Fund carries a bulk of the city’s pension debt, but its union leaders said they’re not interested in enrolling future employees into the 401(k)-style plans Curry has so far proposed.

Brandes cast the sole vote in the state Senate against legislation authorizing Jacksonville to hold the tax referendum and pledge the proceeds to pension debt.

“I think the policy of the state should be that if entities want to join the state’s defined contributions plan, it’s acceptable and appropriate,” Brandes said. “But bringing their potentially struggling plans into a plan like the Florida Retirement System that is striving to be a sound plan would potentially burden them down the road.”

Fischer and Brandes’ bill would still allow cities to enroll employees into the state’s 401(k)-style plan — sometimes called a defined-contribution plan — but the local unions have expressed no interest in that option.

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