

The Breakfast Table Times

THE DAY'S NEWS, IN FULL

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TOP STORY

Congress and White House Negotiate 2026 Federal Budget

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Congress and the White House are negotiating the federal budget for fiscal year 2026, the yearly plan that decides how the government will spend public money. Lawmakers must approve spending bills for departments ranging from education to defense before current funding expires. Each year, this process determines funding levels for schools, transportation projects, health programs, and other services that touch millions of American households. Negotiators are working to reconcile differing priorities between the two major parties, a task that has grown more contentious in recent years.

If lawmakers cannot reach an agreement in time, parts of the federal government could shut down temporarily. During a shutdown, many federal employees are furloughed without pay, and some government services pause until funding resumes. Past shutdowns have disrupted national parks, delayed government paperwork, and created uncertainty for federal workers and their families. Because of these risks, congressional leaders from both parties have said they hope to avoid a lapse in funding this year, even as they debate the details of spending levels.

Budget talks are expected to continue over the coming weeks as deadlines approach. Analysts say the outcome could affect everything from infrastructure projects to social programs that families rely on. The negotiations also reflect broader disagreements in Washington over the size and priorities of federal spending. Many Americans are watching closely, since the final budget will shape government services well into next year.

BACKGROUND

The federal budget must be renewed every year through agreement between Congress and the President. Past disagreements have led to government shutdowns, including notable ones in 2013, 2018, and 2019.

Why it matters: *The budget determines funding for schools, health care, national parks, and many other services families depend on. A shutdown could delay paychecks for federal workers and disrupt government operations nationwide.*

What to watch: *Watch for whether Congress passes a funding bill before the deadline, and whether negotiators reach a compromise or risk a lapse in funding.*

Source: Wikipedia, '2026 United States federal budget,' https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2026_United_States_federal_budget

NATION & WORLD

State Department Schedule Highlights Ongoing U.S. Diplomacy

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The U.S. State Department released its public schedule for September 17, listing meetings between American diplomats and foreign officials. These schedules appear regularly, offering a glimpse into daily foreign policy work even when details stay private. Diplomats meet with counterparts worldwide to discuss trade, security, and other shared interests. The department publishes these schedules so citizens can see how officials spend their time.

News organizations worldwide also tracked other international developments this week, including diplomatic talks and policy announcements in various countries. Outlets covering world affairs reported that officials in several nations continued discussions that could shape future relationships. The outcomes of these talks were not always made public immediately. Still, analysts say steady diplomatic engagement helps nations manage disagreements and cooperate on shared challenges. Because diplomacy often moves slowly, changes are rarely immediate, though patterns over time can reveal shifting priorities.

Understanding these day-to-day diplomatic efforts helps students see how global relationships are built, one meeting at a time. Decisions made in these discussions can eventually affect trade prices, travel rules, and international cooperation that touches everyday life. Students who follow international news can watch for official statements, press briefings, or agreements that follow such meetings. Analysts say it's worth watching whether this week's talks lead to formal agreements or public statements soon.

BACKGROUND

The State Department regularly publishes schedules showing meetings between U.S. officials and foreign representatives as part of routine diplomacy.

Why it matters: *Diplomatic meetings can influence trade relationships, security cooperation, and international agreements that eventually affect everyday life.*

What to watch: *Watch for official statements or agreements that may follow this week's diplomatic meetings.*

Source: U.S. Department of State, 'Public Schedule – September 17, 2026,' <https://www.state.gov/releases/office-of-the-spokesman/2026/09/public-schedule-september-17-2026>; Havana Times, <https://havanatimes.org/news/international-news-briefs-for-thursday-september-17-2026/>

GOVERNMENT

Voter Guides and New Survey Shape Maine's 2026 Senate Race

AUGUSTA, MAINE — Maine residents will vote in a U.S. Senate election in 2026, a contest that has drawn interest from both state and national observers. Voter guides published by local news organizations, including the Maine Monitor, are intended to help residents understand the candidates and the issues at stake before they head to the polls. Efforts like these have become an important part of local election coverage in the state, especially as fewer traditional newsrooms are available to cover statewide races. Local newsrooms say helping voters access clear, nonpartisan information is one of their central goals this election cycle.

This week, the Siena Research Institute released a new survey as part of a project examining public opinion in Maine, sometimes called the 'Maine Progress Report.' Surveys like this ask residents about the issues most important to them, such as the economy, health care, or education, and can offer insight into how voters are thinking ahead of the election. Researchers say these ongoing surveys help track shifts in public opinion over time, giving candidates and reporters a sense of what matters most to Mainers. The survey drew responses from Maine residents across different regions and age groups, aiming to capture a broad snapshot of opinion.

As the election approaches, both political parties are expected to increase campaign activity across the state, including advertising, town halls, and door-to-door outreach. National political groups often pay close attention to competitive Senate races like Maine's, since the outcome could affect the balance of power in Washington. Voters can expect more polling, debates, and campaign coverage in the months leading up to Election Day. Local election officials also remind residents to check registration deadlines and polling locations well before voting day.

BACKGROUND

Maine's U.S. Senate seat is on the ballot in 2026. Local news organizations have increased efforts to publish nonpartisan voter guides as fewer traditional newsrooms cover statewide races.

Why it matters: *The election could affect Maine's representation in Washington and the broader balance of power in the U.S. Senate.*

What to watch: *Watch for additional polling, debates, and campaign events as Election Day approaches.*

Source: The Maine Monitor, '2026 Maine Voter Guide,' <https://themaine-monitor.org/elections/>; Wikipedia, '2026 Maine Senate election,' https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2026_Maine_Senate_election; Siena Research Institute, <https://sri.siena.edu/2026/09/17/special-maine-trust-for-local-news-siena-maine-progress-report/>

MONEY & WORK

Treasury Department Continues Regular Economic Communications

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The U.S. Department of the Treasury is responsible for managing the federal government's finances, collecting taxes, and overseeing policies that affect banks and financial markets. As part of its regular operations, the department publishes press releases to keep the public informed about its work, ranging from routine announcements to major policy decisions. This week, the Treasury added new releases to its public records, continuing its practice of regular communication with the public and financial markets. The department also plays a role in enforcing financial regulations designed to keep banks and markets stable.

Economists, investors, and reporters pay close attention to Treasury announcements because they can offer clues about the health of the U.S. economy and the direction of future policy. Decisions made by the department can influence interest rates, the value of the dollar, and the cost of government borrowing. Because financial markets react quickly to new information, even routine updates from the Treasury are closely analyzed by professionals who track economic trends. Even small changes in tone or wording within these releases can lead analysts to adjust their expectations for the economy.

For families, understanding the Treasury's role can help explain how national financial decisions eventually affect everyday costs, such as loan rates or prices for goods and services. While this week's releases did not include any major policy announcements, officials are expected to continue monitoring economic conditions and may issue updates on topics such as inflation, employment, or federal spending in the coming weeks. Analysts say it is worth watching whether upcoming reports signal any changes in the broader economic outlook. Families budgeting for the months ahead may want to watch for any Treasury updates on inflation trends, since these can affect the price of everyday goods.

BACKGROUND

The Treasury Department manages federal finances, collects taxes, and helps oversee the country's financial system.

Why it matters: *Treasury decisions and announcements can influence interest rates, borrowing costs, and the broader economy that affects household budgets.*

What to watch: *Watch for upcoming Treasury updates on inflation, employment, or federal spending.*

Source: U.S. Department of the Treasury, 'Press Releases,' <https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases>

SCIENCE & TECH

From Ancient Ruins to Distant Stars, Science News Keeps Rolling in 2026

NEW YORK, N.Y. — Throughout 2026, science news outlets have continued to report on discoveries across a wide range of fields, from outer space to ancient history. Publications that track ongoing research say this year has included notable developments in archaeology, astronomy, and other scientific disciplines, reflecting the steady pace of research happening around the world. Sites such as ScienceDaily, Sci.News, and Space.com regularly publish updates from research institutions and universities.

In archaeology, researchers have continued uncovering artifacts, tools, and remains that shed light on how ancient peoples lived, worked, and traveled. These discoveries often come from excavation sites around the world and can reshape our understanding of early human history. Archaeologists say each find adds a small piece to a much larger puzzle about the past, and that ongoing digs are likely to produce more findings before the year ends. Some archaeological projects use modern technology, such as ground-penetrating radar, to find buried sites without digging first.

At the same time, space agencies and astronomers have kept studying the universe, tracking missions to explore planets, moons, and distant stars. Space exploration projects often take years to plan and carry out, meaning that discoveries reported this year may be the result of research and missions launched long before 2026. Scientists say these projects help answer basic questions about how the universe works and whether other planets could support life. Robotic spacecraft and telescopes send back data that scientists analyze for months or even years after a mission launches.

For students, following science news can be a way to see how curiosity and careful research lead to new knowledge over time. Because scientific discoveries are announced throughout the year, readers can expect more updates in the coming months from both archaeology digs and space missions already underway. Teachers and students can follow these stories through science news websites to see how research unfolds step by step.

BACKGROUND

Science news outlets track ongoing research throughout the year in fields such as archaeology, astronomy, and space exploration.

- Why it matters:** *These discoveries expand our understanding of both human history and the universe, often building on years of prior research.*
- What to watch:** *Watch for new findings from ongoing archaeological digs and results from active space missions.*

Source: ScienceDaily, <https://www.sciencedaily.com/>; Sci.News, <https://www.sci.news/>; Space.com, <https://www.space.com/>; Wikipedia, '2026 in archaeology,' https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2026_in_archaeology

SPORTS

Giants Down Cowboys 28-20 in NFC Rivalry Matchup

ARLINGTON, TEXAS — The New York Giants defeated the Dallas Cowboys by a score of 28 to 20 in a National Football League game played this week. The matchup pitted two longtime NFC rivals against each other, and the Giants came away with the win after a competitive four quarters. The result added to the Giants' record as they continue through the 2026 regular season schedule. The win improved the team's overall record for the season.

Games between the Giants and Cowboys often draw significant attention from fans because of the two franchises' long history as division opponents. A win against a rival can carry extra weight for players and fans alike, even though every game counts the same in the standings. Coaches for both teams are likely to review game film in the days following the matchup to identify areas for improvement heading into future games. Rivalry games like this one are often marked by physical play and high energy from both fanbases.

Looking ahead, the Giants will continue their season with more games scheduled throughout the fall. NFL teams typically play seventeen regular season games before the postseason begins, meaning both the Giants and Cowboys still have much of their schedule remaining. Fans will be watching to see whether the Giants can build on this win and put together a strong stretch of games as the season progresses. Team performance over the next several weeks could play a significant role in determining playoff positioning later in the year. Analysts say consistent execution on both offense and defense will be key if the team hopes to remain competitive down the stretch.

BACKGROUND

The Giants and Cowboys are longtime NFC rivals who have faced each other regularly for decades.

Why it matters: *Wins against rivals can boost team morale and affect playoff positioning later in the season.*

What to watch: *Watch for the Giants' next games as they continue their 2026 regular season schedule.*

Source: ESPN, 'Giants 28-20 Cowboys (Sep 13, 2026) Box Score,' https://www.espn.com/nfl/boxscore/_/gameId/401872930

SPORTS (CONT.)

Yankees Set for Late-Season Series Against Diamondbacks

PHOENIX, ARIZONA — The New York Yankees are scheduled to open a series against the Arizona Diamondbacks on September 19, with additional games following on September 20, according to the team's 2026 regular season schedule. The series will be played at Chase Field in Arizona, marking one of the Yankees' final road trips of the regular season. As the calendar moves toward October, every remaining game carries added weight for teams still working to secure a spot in the playoffs. Team officials have not announced any changes to the pitching rotation ahead of the series.

The Yankees and Diamondbacks, who play in different leagues, meet only a handful of times each season, making the series less familiar to fans than games against longtime division rivals like the Boston Red Sox or Tampa Bay Rays. Even so, interleague games like this one count fully in the standings, and a strong showing could help either team's postseason positioning. Both clubs are expected to rely heavily on their regular starting lineups given the stakes of late-season baseball. Scouting reports suggest both teams will lean on their bullpens in close, late-inning situations.

Analysts who follow the American League say the Yankees' performance over the final weeks of the season will be closely tied to their pitching depth and ability to stay healthy. Fans will be watching not only the final score of each game but also how key players perform under late-season pressure. With the playoff picture still taking shape across baseball, series like this one against Arizona could end up playing a meaningful role in determining which teams advance to October. The results from Chase Field this weekend will offer another data point as the Yankees try to close out the season strong. Baseball fans across New York will likely follow the results closely as the postseason picture comes into focus.

BACKGROUND

The Yankees and Diamondbacks are interleague opponents who play each other only a few times each season.

- Why it matters:** Late-season performance can determine which teams qualify for the MLB playoffs.
- What to watch:** Watch how the Yankees perform in Arizona and whether the results affect the postseason picture.

Source: ESPN, 'New York Yankees Schedule,' https://www.espn.com/mlb/team/schedule/_/name/nyy/new-york-yankees; Baseball-Reference, <https://www.baseball-reference.com/previews/2026/ARI202609190.shtml>

SOUTHERN MAINE

Maine Transitions From Summer Warmth to Autumn Chill

PORTLAND, MAINE — Maine is transitioning from summer warmth into cooler fall weather this September, according to local weather coverage. Meteorologists say the shift typically brings gradually dropping temperatures, cooler overnight lows, and shorter daylight hours as the month progresses. While early September can still feel like summer in southern Maine, the later weeks of the month usually bring a noticeable chill, especially in the mornings and evenings. Southern Maine communities near the coast often experience a slightly slower cool-down than inland areas.

The seasonal change also affects daily life across the state, from wardrobe choices to outdoor activities. As temperatures cool, many Mainers begin swapping summer clothing for warmer layers and preparing homes for the colder months ahead. The shift is also an important time for the state's agricultural community, as orchards and farms move into harvest season. Apple picking, pumpkin patches, and other fall traditions become popular activities for families across southern Maine as the weather cools. Local farmers markets also begin featuring more fall produce, such as squash and apples, during this transition.

Weather forecasters caution that the transition from summer to fall can be unpredictable, with warm and cool days sometimes alternating within the same week. Residents are encouraged to watch local forecasts closely, especially as the season moves toward the colorful foliage that draws visitors to Maine every autumn. Tourism officials say the fall foliage season, which typically peaks in early-to-mid October, remains one of the state's most popular times of year for visitors hoping to see the changing leaves. Travelers planning fall visits to Maine are often advised to book accommodations early, since foliage season draws large crowds each year.

BACKGROUND

Maine's climate typically shifts from warm, humid summers to cooler, drier autumns beginning in September.

- Why it matters:** The seasonal shift affects daily routines, agriculture, and Maine's tourism industry, which relies heavily on fall foliage visitors.
- What to watch:** Watch local forecasts for the timing of peak fall foliage and any early cold snaps.

Source: WGME, 'September in Maine: From summer warmth to fall chill,' <https://wgme.com/news/arc-maine/september-in-maine-from-summer-warmth-to-fall-chill>

GOOD NEWS

Small Town of Lamoine Rolls Out Fall Community Calendar

LAMOINE, MAINE — The town of Lamoine, Maine, has published its calendar of community events for September. The calendar gives residents an updated list of local activities this fall. Town websites across Maine often maintain these calendars for residents. They help people stay informed about meetings, gatherings, and seasonal activities close to home. Town staff update the calendar regularly to reflect scheduling changes. Residents can usually find it posted on the town's official government website.

Small towns throughout Maine often host community events in fall. Cooler, comfortable weather before winter makes outdoor gatherings easier. These gatherings can range from local government meetings to family-friendly activities that bring neighbors together. Community organizers say these events help residents feel connected. This matters most in small towns, where word-of-mouth and calendars are the main news source. Some towns use these calendars to announce volunteer opportunities, like clean-up days or fall festivals.

For Lamoine residents and similar communities, checking the town calendar is often the easiest way to get involved locally. Town officials encourage residents to check municipal websites regularly, since new events are often added throughout the season. As fall continues, more Maine communities are expected to announce their own seasonal activities. This gives families plenty of chances to get outside and connect with neighbors before winter. Families looking for low-cost ways to spend time together often like town-sponsored events. These events offer a simple, welcoming option close to home.

BACKGROUND

Many small Maine towns maintain online event calendars to keep residents informed about local activities and meetings.

Why it matters: *Community events help build connections among neighbors, especially in smaller towns with limited local news coverage.*

What to watch: *Watch the town's website for newly added fall events and volunteer opportunities.*

Source: Town of Lamoine, Maine, 'Events for September 17, 2026,' <https://www.lamoine-me.gov/events/2026-09-17/?shortcode=f0b1cb7d>

Sources are listed with each story. Go read them.