

Weekly News for Sunday, July 19, 2026.

Business News

The business news this week focuses on several legislative issues and a mid-year report on the performance of the island's real estate market.

The Dare County Board of Commissioners unanimously approved a zoning text amendment that expands the number of unrelated individuals who may live together in a single-family dwelling from 5 to 8.

This action was taken to align the county's zoning ordinance with the current North Carolina residential building code.

In other legislative news, last week, North Carolina Governor Josh Stein signed a budget bill that includes a provision mandating that the state's Department of Transportation begin charging tolls on the state's four free ferry routes effective January 1, 2027. This measure did not set fare amounts.

The budget does include a provision that allows local residents and military personnel to acquire a commuter pass. The pass entitles the individual to travel any ferry route with no additional fees. The annual cost of the pass is \$150.00 per vehicle. Local officials have voiced opposition to the toll item in the state budget.

Turning to the Hatteras Island real estate market indicators for the first six months of the year, the cumulative results clearly show that the residential market in 2026 is not performing as well as it did in 2025. With the exception of homes for sale and properties under contract, every indicator was negative in every month from January through June.

Indicators for the unimproved lot market were mixed for the first half of the year.

To give the individual categories more perspective, consider the following benchmarks.

Since March, the number of residential properties for sale each month has been above 200.

The number of residential properties sold each month has averaged about 19 homes. Looked at another way, the monthly number of homes sold has averaged about 10 percent (or a little more) of the homes listed for sale.

The median residential sale price has remained in the \$500,000 to \$600,000 range with most of the months this year reporting selling prices

On a standalone basis, the median sale price for June in the undeveloped lot market was distorted by a single \$2.2 million dollar sale.

except for February, the monthly interest rate for 30-year fixed rate mortgages remained above 6.0 percent.

In other news associated with the Hatteras Island economy, meal tax receipts through May of this year were flat in comparison to the first five months in 2025. Occupancy tax receipts through May were down 2.66 percent relative to last year.

Storm approaching Florida, Alabama, Mississippi coasts

The National Hurricane Center has labeled the Gulf disturbance as Tropical Depression 2.

Associated winds are 30 miles per hour. The storm is moving North Northwest at two miles per hour.

The track shows the storm heading for Louisiana and Texas.

For the latest forecast, visit [Hurricanes dot gov](https://hurricanes.dot.gov) and Radio Hatteras Storm Coverage Plus on [Facebook.com](https://facebook.com)

Cape Point open

National Park Service reopened Cape Point was reopened July 14. Use the bypass road to get to the Point. Ramp 48 remains closed in Frisco but you can use Ramp 49 to access the Frisco beaches for about a mile towards 48. National Park Service has detailed off road vehicle route information on its webpage at [nps dot gov slash caha](https://www.nps.gov/caha).

Rules for the Endangered Species Act changed

A revision to the Endangered Species Act rules narrow the legal definition of “harm” to protected wildlife. The rule, issued jointly by the Departments of the Interior and Commerce, limits federal regulation of habitat destruction unless an action directly injures or kills a protected animal. Since the ESA became law in 1973, regulators have interpreted “harm” to include significant habitat degradation affecting breeding, feeding and shelter. Legal action is underway.

Red wolf pups born

Four litters of critically endangered red wolf pups, totaling about 23 pups, were born in the wild and on private land in eastern North Carolina this spring. Between 12 and 16 of these pups successfully survived their first few months, making the highest successful birth and survival rate for the species since 2013. Around 22 adult red wolves are known to exist in the wild. The wild population roams a 1.7-million-acre restoration area located on the Albemarle Peninsula, primarily in the Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge and Pocosin Lakes National Wildlife Refuge and nearby private lands.

Sea turtles nests numerous

As of July 18, 2026, National Park Service workers have counted and protected 319 sea turtle nests. The breakdown is 308 loggerheads, seven greens and four leatherbacks. Island Free Press has extensive article.

Protecting Dare County's coastline takes strong partnerships.

Last week, Dare County welcomed representatives from FEMA, NC Emergency Management and the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners' Disaster Recovery Technical Assistance Team for a firsthand look at beach renourishment projects along the Outer Banks. The tour included:

- The active beach renourishment project in south Nags Head near the Outer Banks Fishing Pier
- The recently completed project in Avon
- The Buxton shoreline, where FEMA recently approved Public Assistance funding to expand the upcoming beach renourishment project from approximately 1.35 million cubic yards of sand to roughly 2 million cubic yards.

The additional funding will help restore sand lost during “Potential Tropical Cyclone Eight,” which visited in September 2024. The additional sand will protect NC 12 and other infrastructure, says a Dare County media release.

Heated discussion at Waterways meeting

Mounds of dredge material left without warning in disposal areas in Pamlico Sound dominated heated discussion at the Dare County Waterways Commission meeting in Manteo on Monday,

July 13 with members demanding that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers address how it happened.

Following up on reports raised in June at the last commission meeting that some boats had been running aground in sound depths assumed to be the usual 12 feet, Chair Steve “Creature” Coulter didn’t waste any time asking the Corps’ Ryan McCadden, who was attending the July 13 meeting remotely, what the agency is going to do “to make sure that never happens again,” reports Katherine Kozak writing for Island Free Press

“There was definitely something on our end we could do a better job,” McCadden responded, agreeing that the Corps also doesn’t want to repeat the situation.

Coulter wasn’t reassured: “Everyone sitting in this room realizes (the contractor) took 6 feet of water and made it 12 feet, and put 4 feet of lumps in the channel,” he said, referring to the pipeline project that was recently completed by Cottrell Contracting in the Hatteras Ferry Channel.

Read the entire article on [Island Free Press dot org](http://IslandFreePress.org).

No August meet for Dare planning board

Dare County Planning Board has no new business for its Aug. 4, 2026, scheduled for 6 p.m. The meeting is previously scheduled for the first Tuesday of each month.

Living History

Each Thursday afternoon, the Chicamacomico Life-Saving Station presents life-saving history at 1:30 and the famed Breeches Buoy Re-enactment, a drill that lifesavers used 150 years ago. The station is located at 23645 NC 12 in Rodanthe.

Yum, something cold and books

For Cape Hatteras Elementary School students, the next stop on the Sweets tour is at Reel Swirly Frozen Yogurt in Buxton. The giveaway runs from 2 to 3 in the afternoon on Tuesday, July 21.

Now, stay safe out there. This is Radio Hatteras.