

Jeep’s controversial AI ads transform car marketing

Despite ethical and taste concerns, experts praise execution of technology. **In Money**

Podcast changed the way Maury Povich saw himself

Talk show icon says “On Par” and stars helped him realize how far his name extends. **In Life**

Predictions on where QBs end up in 2026

The transfer portal will be filled with talented throwers, including Brendan Sorsby, left, and Aidan Chiles. See where they fit in best. **In Sports**



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New batch of Epstein files refers to Trump

Justice Department downplays allegations

Bart Jansen, Cybele Mayes-Osterman and Nick Penzenstadler

USA TODAY

WASHINGTON – The Justice Department released a new trove of 29,000 documents Dec. 23 from its investigation into accused sex trafficker Jeffrey Epstein – including one in which a man accused Epstein and President Donald Trump of raping a woman he knew.

The FBI report from Oct. 27, 2020, records a call to the National Threat Operations Center. The man said he met Trump as his limousine driver in 1995. On Dec. 24, 1999, the man was discussing that experience with a woman who turned “stone cold” at the mention of Trump’s name.

“Donald J. Trump had raped me along with Jeffrey Epstein,” the man quoted the woman as saying.

When the man urged the woman to call the police, the woman said, “I can’t they will kill me.”

Trump has denied any wrongdoing and hasn’t been charged with any crime in relation to Epstein. The Justice Department issued a statement

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Tariff rebate checks face uncertainty in Congress

Holiday shoppers mixed on prospect of \$2,000

Christopher Cann, Trevor Hughes, Phaedra Trethan, Eduardo Cuevas, Alysa Guffey and Daniel de Visé

USA TODAY NETWORK

For the last year, Ruby and Nathaniel Jumper have tried saving up for a cross-country move.

The couple living in Mercedes, Texas, decided in January to relocate to Tennessee for better work opportunities and a bigger apartment for their family. But bills, surprise expenses and the high cost of groceries have set them back over and over again.

“It’s been rough, honestly,” said Ruby Jumper, adding that the financial squeeze meant hard decisions this holiday season. “Usually they get three or four gifts,” she said, speaking about her three children, ages 17, 11 and 8. “This year they’re only going to get one.”

As the Jumpers stow away money when they can, they’re closely watching one idea being floated in Washington: \$2,000 rebate checks.

In recent months, President Donald Trump has repeatedly previewed the idea of a tariff dividend that would

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Since November, Christal Wright, 33, has spent days inside a barren, frigid storage facility in Gaithersburg, Maryland, one of more than 800 Toys for Tots centers across the country, sorting, bagging and distributing millions of donated presents to children in need. “I just wish we could see their faces,” she says. PHOTOS BY JACK GRUBER/USA TODAY

Santa’s workshop?

How magic is made from the nuts and bolts of Toys for Tots

Karissa Waddick

USA TODAY

GAITHERSBURG, MD

Tucked away at the end of a narrow industrial park, inside the former warehouse of a heating and air conditioning company, sit piles and piles of Barbies, Legos, toy trucks, art kits, stuffed animals, baseballs and basketballs, board games and books. ● To the untrained eye, it might look like a southern outpost of Santa’s workshop, though would-be head elf Elizabeth Scott brushes off the comparison. ● “It’s a workshop – I don’t know if it’s Santa’s or not,” Scott, 78, said with a full-bellied laugh. ● This building has no whimsical machines, conveyor belts or elaborate tube systems that suck up and move presents from one station to the next. There are no festive decorations, no glowing fireplaces.

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Gerri Wright, 74, mother of Christal Wright, sorts and packs toys on Dec. 16 with Christmas fast approaching. Her family has volunteered with Toys for Tots for decades.



Elizabeth Scott, 78, works the phones in the warehouse, talking with donors and families in need. “It’s a workshop – I don’t know if it’s Santa’s or not,” she jokes.

A little of everything for Christmas: Warm, cold, wet, windy, rainy, snowy

Doyle Rice

USA TODAY

Forget snow boots. Ask Santa for flip-flops instead.

Christmas 2025 will be memorable for tens of millions of Americans because of record warmth forecast for much of the central United States, where highs could approach 75 degrees as far north as Kansas City, Missouri.

Meanwhile, for Californians, memories of a wetter sort are likely as a pair of potent storms known as atmospheric rivers take aim on the Golden State, where widespread flooding rain is in the forecast.

As for dreams of a white Christmas, folks in the Great Lakes and Northeast

could still see snow on the ground from a pair of fast-moving storms.

The warmth will be widespread this week, forecasters said. “Close to two dozen states, from parts of the Rockies to portions of the Appalachians, northward through much of the Plains and part of the Midwest, are forecast to experience temperatures that are 15-30 degrees above the historical average by Christmas Day,” AccuWeather’s Alyssa Glenn said in an online forecast. “At this level, the warmth will be comparable to late April or early May.”

How warm? Highs in Missouri, Kansas City and St. Louis were forecast in the mid-70s for Christmas Day, according to a National Weather Service forecast map.

In the southern Plains, “Oklahoma City will challenge or break record highs over multiple days in a row for the middle and latter part of this week,” Glenn said. “For this city in particular, highs are forecast to be roughly 30 degrees above the historical average, which is in the upper 40s. Highs this week are projected to be in the upper 70s.”

Though the lack of cold means frozen precipitation will be lacking, persistent low clouds and fog from the Gulf Coast to the Appalachians and Atlantic Coast were expected to reduce visibility, disrupt road travel and cause flight delays, AccuWeather warned.

A pair of powerful systems known as

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