Business newsletter

Every Monday and Thursday, we'll share which stories are shaping Charleston and SC.

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BUSINESS

Sunday, October 18, 2026 **B1** Contact: John McDermott, jmcdermott@postandcourier.com

The Motley Fool

Investing advice and information with a little humor. **B2**



INSIDE: Charleston-rooted hotel firm has a new name — and $1.5B in investments and projects, **B3**



JOHN MCDERMOTT
On business

SC FedEx drivers are delivering suits in OT pay dispute

Federal Express drivers deliver tens of thousands of packages large and small each day.

Some of them are now dropping an oversized labor grievance in the company's lap, one at a time.

They include workers in South Carolina who have added their names to an unusually far-flung legal dispute that centers on unpaid overtime.

More than 200 drivers filed nearly identical lawsuits across the Palmetto State last week, joining thousands of other complaints that have been piling up in federal courthouses around the country since late summer.

They allege FedEx is violating the Fair Labor Standards Act by not paying them if they clock more than 40 hours a week, as they "routinely" do, according to legal filings. They're seeking restitution, interest, damages and legal fees to be determined. They've also requested jury trials.

The litigation takes aim at the transportation behemoth's use of "independent service providers" to hire and pay delivery drivers. According to attorneys for the workers, FedEx exerts so much day-to-day control over the outside intermediaries that under federal law it's a "joint employer" — and is responsible for overtime.

The complaints cited a long list of mandates the Fortune 50 company imposes on the contractors, such as requirements that delivery workers wear FedEx-issued uniforms, drive trucks bearing the FedEx logo and report to a FedEx distribution terminal.

"These businesses do not — and cannot — function independently of FedEx," according to one of the 38 lawsuits filed Oct. 8-9 in U.S. District Court in downtown Charleston.

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Airline ticket prices have soared



FILE/THE ARENA GROUP

More than $500 to fly from Charleston to Philadelphia and back? Frequent flier miles can offer some relief for soaring fares.

But bargains can still be found using frequent flier miles



DAVID SLADE
Personal Finance Advice

Like many travelers I have found recent airfare prices shockingly high.

The main reason is not a mystery — the Iran war has sent jet fuel prices soaring — but I recently priced nonstop round-trip flights to Philadelphia from several cities in South Carolina and North Carolina, on multiple dates, and could not find one for less than $500.

But here's where it got interesting.

Historically there's a close connection between the cash price for an airline ticket and the number of frequent flier miles required to buy that same ticket. If a ticket is priced at $500 I would expect to need at least 30,000 airline miles to book it on a legacy carrier.

Instead, I was able to buy an American Airlines flight priced just above $500 for only 19,000 frequent flier miles. For travelers who have the option of paying either way, the choice is obvious even if the disconnect in pricing is a mystery.

As an added bonus, tickets booked with loyalty program miles aren't subject to the 7.5 percent federal transportation tax, or "passenger facility charges." That leaves just the $5.60 Sept. 11 Security Fee for each one-way flight.

That's all important because, as regular readers know, I mostly pay for airline tickets and hotel stays with loyalty points I've accumulated, mostly through credit card sign-up incentives.

For context, as I write this the current sign-up bonus for a basic American Airlines credit card from Citi is 80,000 frequent flier miles, enough to have paid for four of those flights that would have cost more than $500 each.

Airline miles don't have to be gained by flying, or even by carrying an airline-branded credit card, so you might have access to frequent flier miles that you're unaware of. Major credit issuers that give cash-back in the form of points — American Express, Chase, Capital One, Citi and others — allow points to be transferred to airline and hotel loyalty programs, though rules on transfer partners vary by particular credit card and credit card issuer.

For example, if I didn't have 19,000 American Airlines miles, I would not have been able to transfer Chase Ultimate Rewards points and convert them to the "currency" I needed, because they aren't a Chase transfer partner. But I have transferred Chase points to Southwest Airlines Rapid Rewards in order to book tickets on that airline.

The big U.S. legacy airlines — American, Delta, United — use dynamic pricing for frequent flier tickets, so the cost fluctuates with demand and disconnects with the cash prices tend to be more common. Southwest has a more direct link between the cash and points prices, with points being worth about 1.3 cents no matter the flight or seat class.

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Pre-revolutionary mansion in Charleston lists for $12.5 million



ELLIS CREEK PHOTOGRAPHY/PROVIDED

The view from the pool to the back of the house at 69 Church St. in Charleston.

CHARLESTON — Only a handful of families have owned this downtown house despite it standing for more than 280 years.

Built in 1745 and set on a 0.29-acre lot, the house at 69 Church St. is a Georgian double house and one of the largest surviving residences of its era in the city. It was built three decades before the start of the Revolutionary War.

"It's one of the largest pre-revolutionary houses in Charleston, which is really special. I think when things predate the founding of the U.S. that's really cool," said **Leslie Turner**, who co-listed the property with **Mary Lou Wertz**, both of **Maison Real Estate**.



TERI ERRICO GRIFFIS
Real estate

The house has four principal rooms on each floor, centered around a main stair hall that scales four stories. There's a second-floor ballroom, a drawing room, a cypress-paneled library and the main of seven bedrooms spans the entire east side of the house. There are nine bathrooms.

Ceilings span 11 feet through three floors. The house also features 15 fireplaces, King of Prussia marble surrounds, Delft tiles, original shutters and preserved woodwork throughout the house.

The house was built by **Richard Capers** in the mid-1700s and later occupied by Col. **Jacob Motte**, who served as the treasurer for the South Carolina colony and later was battered during the Civil War, according to historic research. The **Commons House of Assembly** also met on site before the construction of the historic **Statehouse**.

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The house at 69 Church St. in Charleston.



ELLIS CREEK PHOTOGRAPHY/PROVIDED PHOTOS

The kitchen at 69 Church St. in Charleston.

Circa 1745 mansion lists for $12.5 million

REAL ESTATE, from B1

Sometime in the late 18th century, **Eliza Middleton Huger Smith** restored the property. Her granddaughter, Charleston Renaissance artist **Alice Ravenel Huger Smith**, grew up in the home and many of her watercolors and sketches represent views from the windows of the house.

Wertz and Turner said the grounds — and the ballroom, which few downtown homesstill have — is one of their favorite features.

The current owners, listed as **Daniel and Ellen Kiser** who bought the house for $2 million in 1998, according to county real estate records, are gardeners and maintained the grounds with its original privvies and privacy, has been a labor of love. They bought the now 8,524-square-foot house from a couple who ran it as a bed and breakfast previously.

The property, known locally as the "**Capers Motte House**," is surrounded by high brick walls and landscaping that includes heirloom camellias, Podocarpus, citrus and pomegranate trees, and a secret garden. A large oval swimming pool is also one of the earliest private pools downtown. The feature is surrounded by historic brick and Gothic Revival privies.

When trying to find a buyer, Wertz said all historic homes deserve great stewards.

This house in particular, Turner said, has only been owned by three families in the last 150 years and each has taken care to protect the home's architectural integrity and history while modernizing it.

Around 1999, the current owners spent millions on major renovations to restore and update the home, installing five HVAC units, updating electrical and plumbing and adding an en suite bathroom for each bedroom. They also connected the original kitchen to the house with a glass-covered walkway.

It's hard to put a price tag on such a space with such a story, Wertz said.

"We have been in many of the other homes of this stature downtown and know what they've sold for and what people have invested to them to date," she said. "We start with using statistics and then go with experience and what the market tell us … a lot of intangible factors."

A blank slate

A **Kiawah River** homesite has closed for a record $4.5 million.

The property at 1715 Legacy River Way in the **East Meadows** neighborhood marks the highest-priced offering in the Johns Island development to date. The buyer is a family trust from Ashburn, Va.

East Meadows made its debut in May and has since recorded three homesite closings, according to a press release. At the time, Kiawah River released only a portion of the phase 7 lots, which will have 163. Currently available homesites start at $900,000 and reach upward of $3.25 million.

Kiawah River, a luxury waterfront community and agrihood off of Betsy Kerrison Parkway, includes 20 miles of shoreline and a 100-acre working farm.

East Meadows includes will join the 2,000-acre development's existing enclaves, which is almost sold out with 12 home sites remaining out of the overall 499 available.

Kiawah River is being developed by **Kiawah River Investment LLC**, an affiliate of **The Beach Co.** of Charleston

Compass Point

Compass, the largest U.S. residential real estate broker, has acquired Charleston-based boutique brokerage **Oyster Point Real Estate Group**.

Led by **Carl Mabry**, **Oyster Point** specializes in luxury and off-market properties. The transaction gives the King Street firm access to Compass' national network, technology and marketing tools, while maintaining its boutique model.

Joining the bigger organization "allows us to elevate what we do best: helping people find their place in this extraordinary city while preserving the personal, neighborhood connection that makes Oyster Point special," Mabry told **Real Estate News**.