BURT JONES
RURAL COMMUNITY
EXPERIENCE

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA | Division of Student Life
Blackburn Institute

Fall 2018 Travel Experience

Preparatory Materials

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Contents

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2017 Travel and Meeting Itinerary

Wednesday, October 24

12:00pm	Meet at Blackburn Office
12:30pm	Depart Tuscaloosa for Thomasville
3:00pm	Session I – International Corporations Panel at GD Copper USA with Mayor Sheldon Day (City of Thomasville), Dan Flippo (District Director, United Steel Workers) and KC Pang (Human Resources Director)
4:45pm	Session II – Rural Hospital Panel at Thomasville Civic Center with Mayor Sheldon Day, Dr. Frank Dozier (Physician, Family Medical Center) and Curtis James (Thomasville Regional Medical Center)
6:30pm	Session III – Dinner Panel on Community College Consolidation at Gaston's Grill with Rep. Thomas Jackson (Alabama House of Representatives), Amy Prescott (Executive Director, Thomasville Alabama Chamber of Commerce) and Dr. Chips Shepherd (Campus Director)
8:30pm	Reflections and Overview of Thursday
9:30pm	Depart for Hotel
10:00pm	Check in at Hometown Inn USA

Thursday, October 25

7:30am	Breakfast at Hotel
8:30am	Depart Hotel
8:45am	Session IV – National Center for Pulp and Paper Technology Training at Coastal Alabama Community College with Scott Dees (Chair, Division of Technical Education)
10:00am	Depart Thomasville for Grove Hill
10:30am	Session V – Children's and Youth Programs at Clarke County Courthouse with Mary English (Executive Director, Regional Children's Advocacy Center), Amelia A. Leonard (Regional Coordinator, Help Me Grow Care Alabama) Donna Nelson (Clarke County Director, Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters), Emma Perryman (Outreach Coordinator, Drug Education Council) and Diane Pruitt (Executive Director, Alpha Women's Resource Center)
11:45pm	Lunch at Clarke County Courthouse
1:15pm	Depart for Grove Hill for Monroeville
2:00pm	Session VI – Rural Schools Panel at Monroe County Board of Education with Tara Dean (Teacher, Monroe County High School), Duran Odoms (Instruction Supervisor), Marion McIntosh (Retired Educator, Monroe County Schools) and Maurice Woody (Principal, Monroe County High School)
3:30pm	Session VII – Literary Tourism Panel at Old Courthouse Museum of Education with Annie Marie Bryan (Director, Monroeville Main Street), Alisha Linam (Director of the Alabama Center for Literary Arts, Coastal Alabama Community College) and Mayor Sally Smith (City of Monroeville)
5:00pm	Session VIII – Clausell Community Panel at the Old Courthouse Museum with Rev. Ywell Cunningham (Pastor, Bethel #2 Baptist Church) and Rev. John Malone (Pastor Bethany Baptist Church, Burt Corn & Retired Teacher, Monroe County Board of Education)

Thursday, October 25 (Continued)

6:30pm Session IX – Dinner Panel on Regional Economic Development at Prop and Gavel with Pete Black (Alabama Business Development Manager, Parsons & Whittemore), Rev. Ywell Cunningham, Jess Nicholas (Associate Director, Coastal Gateway Regional Economic Development Alliance) and Will Ruzic (Executive Director, Coastal Gateway Regional Economic Development Alliance)
8:30pm Depart for Hotel
9:00pm Check-In at Country Inn & Suites
9:30pm Reflections and Overview of Friday

Friday, October 26

7:30am Breakfast at Hotel
8:30am Depart for Monroeville for Atmore
9:00am Tour of Holman and Fountain Correctional Facilities
10:30am Session X – Department of Corrections Leaders at We Care Facility with Mary Cooks (Warden, Fountain Correctional Facility) and Cynthia Stewart (Warden, Holman Correctional Facility)
12:00pm Lunch at Wind Creek Casino with tribal members of the Poarch Band of Creek Indians
1:30pm Session XI – Intergovernmental Relations Panel at Wind Creek Atmore with Robert McGhee (Vice Chairman, Poarch Band of Creek Indians) and Mayor Jim Staff (City of Atmore)
3:00pm Session XII – Public and Private Partnerships in Forestry at Hauss State Nursery with Benji Elmore (Regional Forester, Southwest Region) and Jessie Harrison (Nursery Manager, PRT USA, Inc.)
5:00pm Session XIII – Escambia County High School and the Alabama Accountability Act at Atmore Central Office with Beth Drew (Assistant Superintendent) and Willie J. Grissett (Chair, Board of Education)
6:30pm Session XIV – Dinner Panel on Civic Investment at Fairfield Inn & Suites with Dale Ash (Vice President, Pepsi-Cola Bottling Company of Atmore), Malcolm "Bub" Gideons (Realtor, PHD Realty) and Richard Maxwell (Chairman, Atmore Industrial Development Board)
8:30pm Check-In at Fairfield Inn & Suites
9:00pm Reflections and Overview of Saturday

Saturday, October 27

7:30am Breakfast at Hotel
8:30am Depart Atmore for Brewton
9:15am Session XV – Drug Court at Escambia County Courthouse with Officer Tyler Aaron (K-9 Officer, Brewton Police Department) Judge Bradley E. Byrne (Drug Court Judge) Denise Carlee (Director, Adult Drug Court), Wade Hartley, (Public Defender), Todd Stearns (Assistant District Attorney) and Treatment Provider from Southwest Alabama Behavioral Health Care Systems
10:30am Session XVI – Civic Legacy of Southern Normal School Panel at John L. Fisher Community Center with Rev. Willie Blue (Pastor, Second Saint Siloam Missionary Baptist Church), Marcus Hall (Co-Founder, Hall and Monroe STEM Initiative), Valerie Monroe-Hall (Co-Founder, Hall and Monroe STEM Initiative) and Mr. Jimmy Watson (Board of Director, Southern Normal School Historical Site)
12:00pm Session XVII – Lunch Panel on Rural Philanthropy: Civic Giving in Small Towns at Brewton Civic Center with Chris Griffin (CEO/Administrator, D. W. McMillan Memorial Hospital), Dan McMillan (Managing Trustee, D.W. McMillan Trust), Tom McMillan (President, Longleaf Energy Group, Inc.) and Stephanie Walker (Chair, Greater Brewton Foundation)
2:00pm Brewton Reborn Walking Tour in Central Business District with Connie Baggett
3:00pm Session XVIII – Downtown Economic Development Panel with Ethan Bennett (General Manager, Frontier Technologies), Carol Gordy (CEO, Natural Decorations, Inc.), Daryl Konsler (General Manager, American Axle & Manufacturing), Scott Sullivan (Senior Vice President, ProValus) and Julie VanDeWater (Manager for Communication and Public Affairs, Georgia Pacific)
4:30pm Reflections and Post-Trip Evaluation
6:00pm Dinner with Coastal Alabama Community College Students at Camp 31
7:30pm Depart Brewton for Tuscaloosa
11:00pm Return to Blackburn Office

Optional Hiking Itinerary

Saturday, October 27 (Continued)

7:30pm Depart Brewton for Atmore
8:15pm Check-In at Hotel

Sunday, October 28

7:30am Breakfast at Hotel
8:00am Depart Hotel
8:15am Hiking at the Claude D. Kelley Recreational Area at Little River State Forest
11:45am Depart Atmore for Tuscaloosa
3:00pm Return to Blackburn Office

Thomasville, Alabama

Thomasville, established in the late 19th century, was originally a railroad town and has transitioned into a 21st century commercial hub. The city was named after the former Union Civil War general Samuel Thomas for his contributions in building the cities first school which is recognized on the Alabama Register of Landmarks and Heritage.

Called the "City of Roses," Thomasville is known for its abundance of roses that run along Highway 43. The area was home to the popular author and journalist Kathryn Tucker Windham. Thomasville has also been called "Southwest Alabama's Success Story."

Quick Facts

Population: 4,209

Racial Composition: 51.7% African American, 47.2% White, 0.4% Native American, 0.8% Asian, 0.5% from other races, and 1.3% of the population were Hispanic or latino of any race.

Median Age: 45

County: Clarke

Random Trivia: In 1899, a fire destroyed the downtown district of Thomasville because all the buildings were constructed solely out wood. This led to a ordinance allowing only brick buildings downtown.

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Session I - Thomasville

Below are biographies of the panelists for Session I, discussing the use of incentives in recruiting international corporations and the economic and quality of life impact on the Thomasville area in Clarke and Wilcox Counties.

Mayor Sheldon Day

Mayor Day has served as Mayor of the City of Thomasville from 1996 to present day. He has worked diligently to assist in the growth of our community and the surrounding areas. Prior to becoming mayor, Sheldon served as Supercenter Store Director for Walmart in Thomasville as well as Dalton, GA. He also previously served as a manager for TG&Y and a volunteer fireman with the City of Thomasville.

Day is alumnus of Patrick Henry Junior College (Coastal Alabama Community College).

Daniel Flippo

Daniel Flippo is Director of District 9 of the United Steelworkers, headquartered in Gardendale, AL and covering the Southeast and the US Virgin Islands. A native of Amory, MS., Daniel was raised in a union household, the son of a Teamster truck driver. He began his career in 1980 as a production worker for Conoco Chemicals, now Georgia Gulf Chemicals, in Aberdeen, MS. Daniel joined Local 15198 and quickly became a union activist, taking on assignments including steward and grievance chairman before he was elected president of the local in 1986 and served three terms. He worked within Districts 36 and later District 9 from 1989 until 1996, when he became a staff representative for the International union. While a staff representative for Mississippi and Alabama, Daniel played a significant role in establishing the Mississippi Labor Management Conference and served on the conference board of directors. As a Sub-district Director for Florida and Georgia, hewas instrumental in integrating staff assignments following the 2005 merger of USWA with PACE.

Prior to becoming Director in November 2009, Daniel was named Assistant Director in 2007 and served as District 9 PAC coordinator, first contract coordinator and education coordinator. He serves as council chairman for Evergreen Packaging (formerly Blue Ridge Paper), BASF Chemical, WestRock, Kapstone and Honeywell. In August 2014, Daniel was awarded the Alabama Organized Labor Awards Foundation's 2014 Labor Person of the Year in Birmingham, Alabama because of his tireless efforts on behalf of the United Steelworkers and all of Alabama’s labor force.

Flippo attended Itawamba Community College and the Trade Union Program at Harvard University.

KC Pang

KC Pang was born and raised in Malasysia and came to the US in 1979 to attend The Unviersity of Alabama in Birmigham. He has over 30 years of experience in Human Resources, strategic planning, business development, and product devlopment/ marketing across the US and Asian-Pacific. Currently KC serves as the Vice President of Human Resources, Adminstration & Coporate Affairs at GD Copper USA, the largest copper tubing producer in the world. He is also a faculty member at UAB where he teaches International Business, International maketing and Mangagement Behavior courses and is Associate Director of Centre for International Afffairs. Prior to joining UAB, KC Pang served as the Executive Vice President-International at Johnson Partners International, he was responsible for business development and joint-venture partnerships/strategic alliance development with companies in the construction of logistics and waste water treatment facility in China.

At the World Development Federation, KC served as Vice Chairman overseeing the Asia-Pacific region. Representing the World Development Federation, he attended meetings organized by the United Nation Economic & Social Commission of Asia-Pacific (UNESCAP), and he also served as the International Adviser to the City of Wuhan in China. At FedEx, KC managed the sales and marketing functions covering 10 countries in Southeast Asia (ASEAN); he had P&L function of over US $100 million revenues, managed million dollars sales & marketing budget and served as a member in the senior management team. With Holiday Inn Worldwide, hewas a member of the team that developed and launched new hotel brands, and re-positioned the Crown Plaza as a premium hotel brand. KC has earned numerous honors for his work in business and can speak fluent in English, Mandarin and several Chinese dialects.

Pang is an alumnus of The Unviersity of Alabama in Birmigham (B.S. in marketing and a MBA).

PINE HILL, Alabama -- It's undisputed that Wilcox County, Alabama, had to be the most unlikely place for a foreign company to invest millions of dollars, building a copper tube manufacturing plant. But China's Golden Dragon Precise Copper Tubing Group, which had sold products in the U.S. before, chose the Alabama community west of Pine Hill to construct its first factory in the country, an investment of a reported $100 million.

The factory opened in May, with Alabama Gov. Robert Bentley presiding over a ceremony welcoming the firm to one of the most economically challenged corners of the state: "But it's not always going to be the poorest area," he said, "it's going to change." The firm has figured prominently in Bentley's campaign to win jobs for the state. It was another example that companies could be lured to the South where "right-to-work" laws are the norm, coupled with a reasonably lower cost of doing business.

Fast forward five months and it would seem at least a part of that ethos has been turned on its head. On Nov. 7, a slim majority of the 150 employed at the factory voted to join the United Steelworkers Union. Days before, Bentley had sent the employees what he characterized as a "soft letter," imploring them to vote "no." A single ballot tilted the election to favor organizing with 75 in favor; 74 against. GD Copper filed objections to the election, the merits of which will be heard by the National Labor Relations Board in Selma next week. Officials with the federal body that oversees the elections said the nature of those objections cannot be made public. A favorable decision would mean employees can negotiate with the plant's owners on working conditions.

Bentley said he believes the episode could complicate recruitment efforts if things should go awry at the plant. The letter asked the employees to give the company time as management works out the kinks of getting the facility up and running. "We do live in a right-to-work state and people have the right to unionize if they wish," Bentley said. "I do not think, though, that that is the best way for me to recruit industries into the state of Alabama." The governor's stance is one that is repeated often when the subject of unions and industry emerge in conversation. But the situation puts a focus on potential culture clashes when a firm comes in from the outside, especially to the Deep South.

GD Copper was welcomed to the state with a generous $42 million package of incentives: $20 million in state economic development discretionary incentives; $8.5 million in property tax abatements; $5.1 million in sales and use tax abatements; $5.7 million for an industrial road and bridge to support the plant; $1.8 million in worker training services; and site purchase, prep and water and sewer improvements worth about $1 million, according to a previous AL.com report.

The bulk of the state's offering were capital income credits worth as much as $160 million over 20 years. GD Copper is just one of the many international employers that have found stateside homes in Alabama, joining steel mill AM/NS Calvert, Airbus, Hyundai and Mercedes-Benz, whose employees recently formed a local United Automobile Workers Union at the plant in Vance.

With so many foreign-owned firms now in the Southeastern U.S., two common forces have developed, says Mike Burnette, a former global supply chain executive at Procter and Gamble and professor at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville's Haslam College of Business. Faced with dwindling memberships in the Northeast and Midwest -- both union strongholds -- labor organizers are seeking new territory in the South, Burnette said.

And sometimes "there becomes a trust issue between the employees and the management," he said. "We've also seen this some with foreign companies when they come in their style of management -- in Malaysia, or Indonesia, or China or India -- may be different than the style of management an employee in Alabama or Tennessee may be used to." At least in one regard, GD Copper was different. "This is not an effort that started in Pittsburgh," -- the home base of the steelworkers union -- "from my understanding this was something that was very much a locally-driven issue," said Thomasville Mayor Sheldon Day, who played a role recruiting the company to the area.

Cultural and language barriers weighed heavily on the plant, Day said, "on both sides" -- the Chinese and local residents. An already complex process, Golden Dragon's use of proprietary methods at the copper tube manufacturing plant meant many of the engineers came from the parent company in China. "Some of the issues are easily remedied," he said. "It has been a little more of a challenge, and a little more frustrating for some of the employees because of the language barrier and just the newness of the facility."

Still, the unionization couldn't have come at a more inopportune time, Day said. Labor negotiations may not help the communication issues. "I'm not pro-union or anti-union. I'm pro-worker and pro-job," Day said. "I don't have a problem or a quarrel with unionization at any facility, but in this particular case I don't think the timing has been good because they're just trying to start the plant up."

Union activity in the state is not abnormal. In fact, several factories including chemical-maker BASF Corp in McIntosh; International Paper in Pine Hill; and Brazil's Akzonobel in Axis each have unions, according to Daniel Flippo, district 9 director for the United Steelworkers." There's actually several unions in the area," Flippo said. "Within a 60- to 70-mile radius, the steelworkers have a good bit of density there."

A number of GD Copper employees easily became interested. A small committee was formed in the spring to discuss how to cement the effort. Greg Canfield, Alabama's secretary of commerce said he, too, was disappointed with the union vote outcome. In an email, he said ultimately it's the state's "business-friendly climate, skilled workers, first-rate job training programs" that bring in major manufacturers.

GD Copper isn't the first industrial employer to move in that direction, and likely will not be the last. "Unionization attempts at large Alabama manufacturers are actually nothing new. Unions have launched repeated organizing campaigns at the state's auto assembly plants over the past 20 or so years, but none has succeeded," Canfield said. "We expect there will more campaigns directed at manufacturing companies in the future."

https://www.al.com/business/index.ssf/2014/12/nlrb_to_hear_gd_coppers_object.html

Sunny South, Ala. People here were so accustomed to the rural quiet, even the distant noises tipped off that something big was coming to the most impoverished corner of Alabama. First they heard chain saws buzzing through the forest, and then they heard trucks jangling along rutted roads, hauling away the timber. Next they heard pavers blazing new asphalt past a cow pasture. And finally they heard the rumblings of a different kind, the first rumors of what was planned for the clearing.

That's when James Deshler decided he had to go see it for himself. So one Friday night, after finishing his shift at the roadside quick mart that his family owned, Deshler told his girlfriend and two buddies to pile into his Crown Victoria, and they turned on the high beams and found the dirt beginnings of the best new opportunity in Wilcox County in a half-century.

Here, tractors and bulldozers were making way for a quarter-mile-long copper plant that would be owned and run by a Chinese company lured to the area with a massive package of state and local tax breaks. Five hundred people would have jobs, and Alabama's government called the project a "catalyst" that would "lift the fortunes" in a county where 1 in 5 workers could not get a job. Deshler scanned the site, snapping a few dark photos of the machinery. Though he could see his breath, he stood there for five minutes.

"A blessing," Deshler remembers saying. "This place is going to be a blessing." Two years later, Deshler, 29, looks back on that moment as a time when it was still easy to believe that his life, like his home town, was about to change markedly for the better. He hadn't yet started working at the copper plant at a wage nearly half of what he was expecting while saving coins so he could buy an engagement ring at Wal-Mart. He hadn't yet watched his bank account dwindle below $10, falling back on his father for help. And he hadn't yet started wondering if the Chinese flag towering in the employee parking lot in fact said something about the cost of economic progress not just in this southwest corner of Alabama but across the Deep South, a region that has increasingly enticed foreign companies with the prospect of lavish tax breaks, plentiful land and cheap American labor.

"I look up at that flag," Deshler says now, "and, man, I think about shooting a flaming arrow into it." Deshler's frustration reflects the desperate steps being taken in a part of America simply trying to survive economically. In wide swaths of the Deep South, public schools struggle, turning out workers who lack basic skills. Agricultural work has long faded, while job opportunities in once prosperous industries such as textiles and timber have been lost to cheaper options in Latin America or automation at home. Politicians say they must give freebies to lure companies here, or offer nothing at all and watch the region — which already lags behind the rest of the country on most measures of well-being — fall even further behind.

But in some cases, when opportunity arrives, it highlights a grim bargain: Jobs come at great cost but offer only a slightly better version of a hard life. The region's weaknesses — a low-skill workforce that doesn't expect particularly high wages — become its competitive strengths. And suddenly, the only opportunity for somebody such as Deshler becomes a Chinese company looking for a place from which to do more business in the United States.

Golden Dragon Precise Copper Tube Group, which is based in Xinxiang, China, and is one of the world's largest makers of coils for air conditioners, announced its arrival with blue and gold "Now hiring" posters pinned across southwestern Alabama in libraries and event halls. Deshler had been waiting for a job much like this one. Five years ago, he moved back in with his parents and enrolled in a machinist program at the only community college in the area, using his savings from a job in Montgomery for tuition. He figured he would raise his earning power.

Instead, he found himself stuck. He spent long shifts at the family's struggling quick mart, a place his grandmother had bought in the 1970s when it was the only liquor store for miles. Deshler worked the counter and ordered gasoline and sold barbecue and Bud. He split a minimum-wage salary with his brother, taking in $3.70 per hour.

And that's when he noticed the new trucks hauling by. Deshler applied online, as did 4,500 others, and he was among the first to get hired. He started at the copper plant on March 12, 2014, two months before the ribbon-cutting, and that morning he snapped a photo of himself as he headed into the factory. "GD Copper," his orange hard hat said, and Deshler — 6-foot-10, with red, curly hair — wore a plaid shirt and safety goggles. "First day on it!" he wrote on Facebook, where he shared the photo. "No more dollar menu for this guy," a friend commented. "He's gonna upgrade to the combo meals! LoL"

Wilcox county sits in the center of Alabama's Black Belt, a swath of dark-soiled farmland that over the previous decades had been drained of its economic blood: first with the mechanization of agricultural jobs, then with an exodus of people, finally with the shuttering of factories and mills. In a county that is 70 percent black, the historical inequities have dovetailed with a more modern inability to adapt economically. Between 2000 and 2010, Wilcox lost 30 percent of its jobs and 25 percent of its businesses. Its unemployment rate went from 8.7 percent to 26.3 percent.

By the time Wilcox turned to China, the median household scraped by with $23,000 per year, according to Census Bureau data, an income level almost half of the state average and 15th lowest among the 3,144 U.S. counties. Job applications from the area were riddled with basic errors, said Joy Norsworthy, head of the local employment center. Many didn't know to capitalize sentences. "The lack of education is severe," Norsworthy said, "and I'm comfortable using that term."

Wilcox had a rail line, but broad sections of the county lacked sewage, water, even cellphone service. There was no day-care center, no public transportation. The main town, Camden, was a grid of treeless streets where discount stores advertised in their windows that they accepted food stamps. "The entire county is back in the Dark Ages," said Jim Emerson, a board member at the Wilcox Chamber of Commerce. In this case, Golden Dragon — or GD Copper, as it would call the U.S.-based arm — started looking for a place to build a factory in the United States after it was slapped with tariffs in 2010. A U.S.-based consultant, Raymond Cheng, who specializes in Chinese business opportunities, encouraged the company to solicit multiple bidders.

"You really need to go to the South," Cheng recalled saying in one phone conversation with the chairman of Golden Dragon, Li Changjie. "You need a lot of land. You need cheap labor. You need to establish in friendly ground." Over several months in early 2011, giant three-ring binders arrived regularly at a law office used by Cheng's company, each one touting available real estate, low utility prices, easy highway access, laws that weren't friendly to organized labor. In total, five states and 62 towns submitted bids.

To help push the deal, Alabama Gov. Robert Bentley (R) dined with Li. Company executives visiting the region were greeted with imported Chinese tea and Mandarin video messages. Alabama's state workforce team explained how, if chosen for the job, they would visit Golden Dragon's Chinese headquarters, study the process, and make videos and training courses for the new U.S. employees. In Alabama, Golden Dragon wouldn't pay taxes for 20 years; it would get free roads and land.

Alabama also did something no other state was willing to try: Its legislature passed the "Made in Alabama" act, a tailored law that allowed the state to reimburse Golden Dragon for several prior years of tariffs. A version of the law had first been drafted by Cheng and a lawyer, according to Cheng and a lawmaker who sponsored the bill. Ultimately, the company was given the choice of the reimbursements or an extra $20 million in cash. Golden Dragon chose the cash.

All told, according to interviews and documents reviewed by The Washington Post, Golden Dragon received subsidies worth some $200 million — the bulk of it in local and state tax abatements, plus the cash, $5 million in land and road costs and nearly $2 million in worker training. County leaders say they had little choice: They had spent years trying to lure companies, reaching out unsuccessfully to more than 100. Even Golden Dragon only settled on Wilcox after a site in a neighboring county proved too small.

“When your hand is in the lion’s mouth, you act accordingly,” said John Moton Jr., the chairman of the county commission. “We have the highest unemployment rate in the state. Our hand was in the lion’s mouth.” Though many states recruit businesses with tax incentives, states in the Deep South pioneered the practice and remain aggressive users of the tool, pitching not just tax breaks but low costs and anemic union participation.

The strategy has both payoffs and potential downsides. Mercedes, Honda, Hyundai, Kia, Airbus and Boeing now have plants in the Deep South, providing tens of thousands of sturdy middle-class jobs. But while those high-profile plants attract much of the attention, experts say tax breaks often are used for the many companies offering lower-wage work. In South Carolina, several thousand people work for newly relocated Chinese companies, including textile plants that have been lured by subsidies to depressed areas. Some companies have also resorted to using temporary workers. Nissan, which by some estimates was given more than $1 billion to open shop in Canton, Miss., depends heavily on a staffing company where advertised jobs start at $12 per hour.

Politicians and industrial recruiters in the region portray the new jobs as transformational, capable of lifting families out of poverty and narrowing the divide between whites and blacks. Bentley said in an interview that his state’s deals “pay for themselves” within four years, by driving new jobs and new spending. His and other state offices declined to provide data supporting that claim and instead sent to The Post a single-page document with numbers from six particular projects.

“It contributes to a stream of continuous income,” Bentley said. Still, some regional experts and economic analysts say the strategy amounts to a flawed attempt at a quick fix that surrenders a source of much-needed tax dollars that could be used for spending on education, health, and infrastructure. “It’s a vicious cycle, because poorer states spend less on the things that would allow them to be less poor in the long run,” said Wesley Tharpe, a senior policy analyst at the left-leaning Georgia Budget and Policy Institute.

Golden Dragon’s main allure has been its willingness to bring on people without experience, with nothing more than a high school diploma. Shortly after the plant began hiring, in early 2014, it became a landing spot for some of the region’s most needy. A woman who had previously commuted two hours every day for a $7.75-per-hour job at a corn dog factory. A couple with five children that had roamed the country for years, filling in anywhere manufacturers were on strike. A single mother who had worked back-to-back eight-hour fast food shifts, rising every day at 3 a.m.

Golden Dragon’s chairman, Li, said in a phone interview that the quality of workers in Wilcox “is not very good.” The company’s head of human resources, K.C. Pang, said wages are based on market value and skill set, and were determined after discussions with state officials. Pang also said that roughly half of those who apply are rejected because of felonies or failed drug tests. “Realize, if these workers could get a job at the paper mill,” Pang said, referring to one of the last major sources of jobs in the town, “don’t you think they’d be there?”

The average worker at Golden Dragon, among the 200 that have so far been hired, makes $13 per hour. The company says it offers generous and regular raises. Deshler started at $11. Unlike the majority at Golden Dragon, Deshler had manufacturing experience. Straight out of high school in 2004, he got a job at Hyundai in Montgomery. He started at $17 per hour and ended up at $25 five years later. He bought Ralph Lauren polos and American Eagle blue jeans and a big truck. The lone downsides were the noise and rush of the city, which drove him crazy. For 208 weekends in a row, he fled Montgomery for Wilcox, where to relax he drove around at dusk looking for deer. He knew good jobs were easier to find outside rural areas, but figured this would be a compromise: He left Hyundai and began school at the community college in Clarke County, which neighbors Wilcox. He graduated in 2011 as a certified machinist.

Although he was relieved to have a job after years at the quick mart, Deshler felt he was overqualified and underpaid. Several months into the job, he applied for a promotion. He would go from operating a machine — “sitting down, pushing 30 buttons,” as he called it — to operating an entire machine shop, a crucial position in which you make the tools that keep the factory humming. Deshler had long wanted to be a machinist: He had used tools going back as far as his teenage years, when he fixed the family Jeep Cherokee, the one his dad had used for 360,000 miles while delivering mail on rickety back roads.

The day Golden Dragon managers told Deshler he had won the promotion, in the early summer of 2014, his dad, James II, rushed to the supermarket to buy ribs and pork and sweet tea, and everybody gathered in the back yard. Deshler figured the new position would help him pivot back toward independence: He talked with his girlfriend, Lauren, about buying a home and where they might live. Deshler hadn't pinned down his exact raise, but he guessed it would be big — maybe $16 per hour, up from $11. The average machinist in Alabama makes $19 per hour. And then, when Deshler checked his pay stub several days later, waking up to check the deposit on his smartphone, almost nothing had changed.

He thought it was a mistake. The company said it wasn't. He was now making $11.75 per hour. "It was like taking a big bite of lemon," Deshler said. Now Deshler wondered how any job at Golden Dragon could lead toward the middle class. He started looking differently at the factory, noticing its quirks, resenting its features: The several dozen Chinese engineers who helped supervise the plant couldn't speak English and lived in modular trailers on the factory grounds. The awkwardly translated Chinese slogans touting work ethic. ("One Quality escape erases all the good you have done in the past.") The oil spills that sat on the floor; the minor injuries that piled up.

Maybe, he wondered, this was why his father had long cursed Chinese made tools, always the low-budget option at Lowe's. Only this time, it was his life unfolding on the cheap. Deshler bought a $22,000 home on the foreclosure market, spent weeks yanking out the roach-infested interior, then months more rebuilding it by hand. He moved in with Lauren and her son because the couple were expecting a child. They got married at a courthouse, without a honeymoon. Even when Deshler's salary finally climbed to $14.50 an hour earlier this year — the result of meeting performance goals — it didn't cover a mortgage, insurance, light bills, baby food.

"Literally, going to Dairy Queen is a mini-vacation," Deshler said. "And if that's a mini-vacation, what am I supposed to do if I have bald tires?" "I feel for him," James II said. "He might as well be working at Wal-Mart." In the many weeks when money hit zero, they fell back on Deshler's father, who sometimes seemed to be the one person holding the family together. Deshler had only been able to buy the modest home — and the materials for the rebuild — with help from his dad.

James II had dropped out of high school, then spent four years in the Navy, six years in the Coast Guard and almost 20 years with the Postal Service. He had a night job, too: He took classes. First he earned a GED. Then a bachelor's degree. And finally, a law degree, for which he drove four hours round trip to Montgomery, coming home at 1 a.m. He quit the post office in 2008, on the same day he graduated from law school. He now billed clients $250 per hour and talked jokingly about starting a little "family dynasty" of wealth.

Deshler sometimes wondered what lesson to make of his dad's adult life. Was it proof that intense work pays off? Or used to pay off? He went back and forth. "I still believe I can do what my dad did," Deshler said. "I have to believe that a job with $40,000 or $50,000 isn't out of reach." Deshler applied for some other positions and was tempted by an Australian shipbuilding company in Mobile. But the work was two hours away, and pay started at $14 an hour.

One night in the summer of 2014, Deshler got off work, called his wife from the car and said he wasn't coming home just yet. He drove, instead, to his dad's law office, which held the only functional computer Deshler had access to. He pulled up Google on the browser and looked for what he called "only the most legitimate sites" — official releases, newspaper articles. For the next hour, he scrolled through the back story of his company. Here was the state's commerce secretary in 2012, saying wages would average "$15 to $17" per hour. Here was the governor touting Golden Dragon in his biggest speech of 2014, saying fresh hope was coming to "disadvantaged areas." Deshler called his dad.

"Our government, they sold us down the river," Deshler said. "They can go to hell." His dad asked Deshler if he wanted to quit. Instead, Deshler did something else. He started talking at work to Joseph Boykins, a fast-talking shift worker — "almost a televangelist type," Deshler said — who had been trying for weeks to drum up interest in a union. Unions in the South were far less common than in the rest of the nation, and Deshler's dad had always said that unions weren't worth the trouble.

But now Deshler sidled up to Boykins and said he was in. In the coming weeks, Deshler pulled aside colleagues at the factory, telling them a union could improve their benefits and pay. Golden Dragon, in turn, spawned a campaign to convince workers that unions weren't necessary. Deshler's viewpoint represented only about half the workforce. Others, including many who came from unemployment or minimum wage jobs, felt thankful for Golden Dragon and said they had no interest in disrupting the factory's work.

"For the first time, I can go out and have a steak," said Sue Thomas, 50, whose children are grown and who left a job in a neighboring county at a sewing plant and now makes $16 per hour at Golden Dragon. Days before the vote, Bentley wrote a letter to Golden Dragon employees, saying that unionizing could have a "negative impact on your community by discouraging other companies from locating there."

On Nov. 7, 2014, workers decided, 75 to 74, to form a union. Hours later, Deshler and Boykins wandered out of the factory and toward the employee parking lot. They shared a hug. But they had expected a landslide, and neither could quite shake the feeling that the moment felt like something less than a victory. If Golden Dragon had catalyzed anything in Wilcox, it was a division over how to feel about the opportunity they had. "Nobody wants to go back to less than nothing," Boykins said. "Nobody wants to work a damn job that pays them for the rest of their life like they were cutting grass in high school," Deshler said.

Nothing changed quickly in the next year; it wasn't until October that contract negotiations even started. Deshler did what he could to make Golden Dragon just a portion of his life. He turned himself into a homebody. Supper and bath time were the evening routine. He tried to be reliable at work: "No ass-kissing, but come in five minutes early and leave 10 minutes late." He tried to think less about money, because the stress of it was riling up an old back injury and he refused to pay for painkillers. But then, there were some mornings, like a Thursday in September, when he awoke with $1.15 left in his bank account, a gas tank needle pushing below "E" and 24 hours until the next paycheck.

"A royal pain," Deshler said. It had happened more than a half-dozen times already, this gas tank roulette, and Deshler knew the gauge well enough to know how it would end. He just barely made it to work. He spent eight hours at the factory. And just before heading home, he called his dad to meet him at a Phillips 66 gas station. Deshler's car was already waiting at the pump when James II pulled up, lowering his window and passing over a debit card. "Our little drug deal," Deshler said, jokingly.

They chatted for a few minutes while Deshler half-filled his tank, using $20. "Appreciate it," Deshler said, and he handed back the card. Deshler said he was heading home for dinner. James II said he was returning to his law office. Then, they drove off in different directions. Xu Jing in Beijing contributed to this report.

http://www.washingtonpost.com/sf/business/2015/12/01/a-grim-bargain/?utm_term=.5a400e28c38a

Alabama mayor shows rural communities can succeed

Bill Crawford | The Sun Herald (Opinion) *March 12, 2017*

Rural communities in the South can succeed. Thomasville, a small town in Alabama's poor "Black Belt," has thrived under the leadership of Mayor Sheldon Day. Indeed, Day has his folks believing it is "cool to be rural." Census data shows Thomasville with 4,209 residents and a low family poverty rate of 13 percent compared with 25 percent for the whole of Clarke County and 19 percent for Alabama. The town's poverty rate has been in steep decline since 2010 as median household income jumped 28 percent from $28,234 to $36,146.

The 500 student Thomasville High School, with 48 percent minority students and 63 percent who qualify for free and reduced lunches, boasts a stellar graduation rate of 95 percent. During his 20 years as mayor, Day has attracted more than $700 million in capital investments and increased the number of industrial parks from one to five. He estimated 50 percent of the businesses along the Highway 43 bypass in Thomasville have opened during his tenure and sales tax collections have tripled.

In 2013, Thomasville beat 62 other sites to secure the $100 million Golden Dragon Precise Copper Tubing plant, the first major manufacturer from China to set up in Alabama. Day is especially proud of the partnership he built among the high school, Alabama Southern Community College and industries. The dual enrollment program he championed in welding 14 years ago now offers industrial maintenance, information technology, pre-engineering, pre-nursing and sports medicine.

"Today there are more dual enrollment high school students at the Thomasville campus than regular students on Alabama Southern's main campus in Monroeville," Day said. Coupled with an intensive work-based learning program at the high school, the dual enrollment program, Day said, has been a "major catalyst to attract industry."

Fascinated by his success, Betsy Rowell, executive director of Mississippi's Stone County Economic Development Partnership, invited Day to tour her county and speak at her annual meeting. "He has obviously had great success with partnerships in his area. Our local leadership needed to hear his message." How is Thomasville succeeding in an area where most rural towns struggle?

Day said when he was first elected mayor in 1996, he spent time searching out the best models for rural development. He found that model in Tupelo. He studied Tupelo and became a disciple of Vaughn Grisham, director emeritus of the McLean Institute for Public Service and Community Engagement at the University of Mississippi. Day points to several similarities. One is the broad cooperative spirit he has nurtured. "In Thomasville, the school, chamber, industry and city are all partners," he said. "Everybody talks to each other to get things done."

Another has been his intense focus on developing the local workforce. And, as Tupelo did with Toyota, he collaborated with an adjacent county, Wilcox, to create an industrial park to house a major industry. Now, he is copying Tupelo's health-care model and will soon build a new regional hospital. No longer the student, he now lectures on how to succeed in rural communities at Auburn's Economic Development Institute. "His insight," Rowell said, "was invaluable."

https://www.sunherald.com/opinion/other-voices/article137689643.html

Session II - Thomasville

Below is the biography of the speakers for Session II, discussing innovative public and private partnerships to make hospitals viable in rural Alabama.

Mayor Sheldon Day

Mayor Day has served as Mayor of the City of Thomasville from 1996 to present day. He has worked diligently to assist in the growth of our community and the surrounding areas. Prior to becoming mayor, Sheldon served as Supercenter Store Director for Walmart in Thomasville as well as Dalton, GA. He also previously served as a manager for TG&Y and a volunteer fireman with the City of Thomasville.

Day is alumnus of Patrick Henry Junior College (Coastal Alabama Community College).

Dr. Frank Dozier

Mr. Frank Dozier is the current CEO of the Family Medical Center in Thomasville. Along with working for the Family Medical Center, Frank serves as the Chief of Staff at Southwest Alabama Medical Center, a physician at Grove Hill Memorial Hospital, and Medical Director of Thomasville Health Care and Rehabilitation Center and LHC Infirmary Home Care.

Dr. Dozier is alumnus of The Unviersity of Alabama and The University of Alabama School of Medicine.

Curtis James

Curtis James is the former President and Chief Executive Officer of St. Vincent's Helath System in Birmingham. The system includes five facilities, four acute care hospitals and one Health and Wellness Complex. Prior to joining St. Vincent's in 1976, he spent five years with Ernst & Young. James has received many awards for his work as a leader in healthcare along with being named one of Birmingham's Top 100 Healthcare Pioneers. He is also the founding member of the Thomasville Regional Medical Group and is currently working with the mayor of Thomasville, Shelton Day, to to build and operate a new $36,000,000 acute care hsopital for the Thomasville area.

James is a alumnus of the University of West Alabama (B.S. in Business Administration and Finance) and Samford University (MBA).

Mayor: Thomasville Medical Center on life support; some doctors, staff have not received paycheck

Casandra Andrews | Press-Register *August 11, 2011*

Amid financial woes that became public in recent weeks, Thomasville's Southwest Alabama Medical Center ended all patient care except for emergencies beginning last weekend. The Clarke County, Alabama, hospital, which is staffed for 30 beds, typically serves a 20-mile radius around Thomasville and portions of at least four other counties, according to Mayor Sheldon Day. "Most people who know me well know me as a very positive and encouraging person," Day said Thursday. "But if our hospital closes it will not be for lack of business or natural causes, but because, in my opinion, the facility was raped, pillaged and murdered."

Net-income figures for the year ending in March 2010 show that Thomasville's lone hospital lost more than a half-million dollars, although gross patient revenue exceeded $24.3 million. Day, who previously served on the hospital's Board of Directors, said it enjoyed a profit of $1.5 million three years ago. For at least one week in the past month, some doctors and many of the 75 hospital staff members have not received paychecks, Day said. He said that those who work at the hospital also have lost health insurance benefits.

Anne Thompson, who owns Southwest Alabama Medical Center, could not be reached for comment Thursday. She spoke to the Thomasville Times on Monday, explaining that a tough economy and reductions in payments from government insurers Medicare and Medicaid played a role in the hospital's troubles. "It's been devastating. All of my personal resources are in this hospital," she told the local newspaper. "Economically, it's been devastating for my family."

According to Day, Thompson has sought potential buyers for the hospital. He said he knows of at least two groups that submitted letters of intent to purchase it. "The problem is there are more than $1 million in liens on the facility; tax liens with the IRS," Day said Thursday. "I don't know how things could have gotten so bad." Day said that some doctors and other staff members have purchased their own supplies in recent days. "We owe a great debt of gratitude to the employees," Day said. "They are working without pay. They worked without benefits." Earlier this week, the Alabama Department of Public Health inspected the hospital, according to Dr. W.T. Geary, interim director of the Bureau of Health Provider Standards for the health agency.

Geary said it would be at least a month before the findings are made public. He did not say why the Thomasville hospital was inspected, but said that the agency undertakes many such surveys as a response to complaints. "We did a full survey in March of 2011 in this hospital and they had a very good survey," Geary said. "They were in substantial compliance with all the conditions that the federal government has." In June 2009, Southwest Alabama Medical Center announced plans to replace its nearly 50-year-old building by constructing a new hospital anchoring a 60-acre medical and professional park on U.S. 43, at Thomasville's south end. Construction of the new hospital has not begun.

http://blog.al.com/live/2011/08/mayor_thomasvilles_hospital_on.html

Thomasville mayor says process to bring new hospital to city is underway

Cassie Fambro | al.com *July 24, 2013*

Thomasville mayor Sheldon Day took to his Facebook page today to announce good news for the city that has been without a hospital for two years. "Formal paperwork was filed yesterday to begin the complicated process of bringing a new hospital to Thomasville to replace our closed one," said Day. The city's 49-bed hospital shut its doors in August of 2011 after serious financial woes plagued Southwest Alabama Medical Center.

"Like many small rural hospitals, the facility has struggled economically over the years. The facility was not able to generate sufficient revenue to cover operating expenses," said a hospital release in 2011. Net income figures from 2011 showed that the hospital lost more than half a million dollars. Near its close, the hospital was unable to make payroll and some doctors and staff did not receive paychecks. Tax liens of over $1 million are credited with the inability to sell the facility.

For the past two years, the nearest hospital and emergency room has been located in Grove Hill, more than 15 miles away. The original hospital opened 49 years ago and the mayor says its anniversary fell on the same day as paperwork was filed. Mayor Day says he has the community's support. "We are blessed to have support from hundreds of citizens who have written letters of support. Every major industry and many political leaders in the region have joined our effort," he said. Day says the process will take time. "Thank you again to everyone who has given their strong support for this project. We will keep you up to date on our progress!"

http://blog.al.com/live/2013/07/thomasville_mayor_says_process.html

Premature death and poor health rates increase in some Alabama counties

Amy Yurkanin | al.com *March 29, 2017*

Monroeville's most famous resident, Harper Lee, lived to the ripe old age of 89 before she died last year. But data released today by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation ranking the health of Alabama's counties shows that long lifespans like Lee's are quickly becoming less common in Monroe County. While premature death decreased in most of Alabama between 1997 and 2014, it increased in Monroe County. The county, which ranked 34th for health outcomes in 2011, dropped to 60th for 2017, according to the foundation's County Health Rankings released today. That's the largest drop of any county in Alabama.

The study's authors noted that premature death rates have been climbing across the country, driven in large part by drug overdose fatalities among young adults. Rural counties have the highest rates of premature death - which happens any time someone passes away before age 75. Many of those deaths are preventable, according to the study. The statistics for Monroe County do not include any information about the cause of the county's premature deaths. They do show a steady uptick in years lost to early death since 2007.

Dr. William Curry, associate dean for Rural and Primary Care at UAB, said trends that include increased rates of substance abuse and suicide have had an impact on rural health across Alabama. "It's big, and it's under the radar in a lot of ways," he said. Alabama's rural areas have long struggled with a shortage of physicians and other health providers. A hospital in Clarke County, right next to Monroe County, abruptly closed in 2011. Clarke County's health rankings have also fallen dramatically in recent years, although its rate of premature death has improved since 1999. In Clarke County, the decline in the rankings has been driven more by an increase in reports of poor health by its residents.

Clarke County has lost several doctors in recent years, said Dr. Frank Dozier, a family practitioner in Thomasville. "There are not enough doctors and not enough structural support for doctors," Dozier said. "Our patients are older and sicker and have less income." Southwest Alabama Medical Center in Thomasville delivered good care to patients when it was open, Dozier said. "Years ago, Thomasville Hospital was one of the top 100 hospitals in the nation," Dozier said. "Five years after that, it closed. The outcomes were good. But the demographics couldn't support that hospital." The county still has two hospitals, but Dozier said it's unclear whether the remaining population can support them both.

Curry said rural hospitals provide vital infrastructure for local physicians, providing administrative services for practices across the state. The loss of that support can drive physicians from an area, he said. Both Clarke and Monroe Counties have lost residents in recent years as populations shrink. They share similar demographics and low average household incomes. The unemployment rates in both counties are above 10 percent, compared to 6.1 percent for the state.

Clarke and Monroe Counties still rank much higher than many of the counties directly to the north. Wilcox County, which borders both of them, landed in last place on the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation list for the second time in a row. The counties' health rankings also reflect economic conditions in the communities. Shelby County, which always ranks at the top of the list, has the highest average family income in Alabama and low rates of smoking and obesity compared to the rest of the state.

Dozier said high rates of unemployment have contributed to poor mental and physical health among its citizens. Residents with low incomes often cannot afford necessary medical care. The health picture looks much different in Russell County, which sits about 180 miles to the east of Monroeville. According to the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, health outcomes in Russell County have shown the most improvement in the last seven years.

Russell County, which sits right next to Columbus, Ga., has become one of the fastest growing counties in Alabama, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Its ranking has improved from 51 in 2011 to 20 in 2017. The number of years lost to premature death has plunged since 2011. Health has also improved in some of the state's most populous counties. Jefferson County jumped from 29 to 17.

The poorest residents of Jefferson County have made impressive gains in life expectancy in recent years, although the county has also experienced spikes in overdose deaths that aren't yet reflected in the statistics used in the latest county health rankings. Mobile County improved to 36 from 48, driven by improvements in life expectancy. Madison County ranks near the top of the list at number 3, virtually unchanged from its spot in previous studies. Rates of early death are much lower in Madison County than most of the state.

The authors of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation study suggest policies that can help reduce early death, including distribution of naloxone, a drug that reverses opioid overdoses, and school-based suicide awareness programs. Young people in rural counties die from suicide far more often than those in urban and suburban areas.

In Clarke County, medical care is hard to come by, but psychiatric help is even scarcer, Dozier said. "In all of Alabama, we're about 30 years behind when it comes to mental health," he said.

https://www.al.com/news/index.ssf/2017/03/premature_death_and_poor_healt.html

Avoiding 'ghost town': Saving Alabama's rural hospitals becoming a top campaign concern

John Sharp | al.com *September 3, 2018*

Confederate statues, the Ten Commandments, legalized gambling: They're tried-and-true political hot-buttons in the Alabama of recent times. A discussion about Alabama's sickly rural hospitals is more nuanced and much less sexy. But, as more of the hospitals struggle to keep the lights on, there soon may be no avoiding it. The state has had few resources, and few answers, to stop the bleeding: Five smaller towns have seen hospitals shut down just since 2010, among 87 such closures nationally.

And several other communities have had close calls. In Haleyville, Thomasville and Camden, local leaders jumped in to increase sales taxes to stabilize hospital books or to get new hospitals up and running to replace ones that gone dark. In Sumter and Chilton counties, voters themselves green-lighted new sales taxes for hospitals, decisions that won wider attention simply because of the Alabama electorate's well-known aversion to tax increases of any kind. But politicians will tell you that, in much of rural Alabama, hospitals are community bedrocks. If it's abandoned and empty, what does that say about the community's own future?

"When an area is suddenly without a hospital, the chances of becoming a ghost town are significantly increased unless local leaders and legislators unite to address it," said state Rep. Randall Shedd, R-Cullman. "And even then, they need the state to be a partner." Alabama has proven to be a difficult landscape for rural hospitals, underscored by Medicaid reimbursement rates that remain among the lowest in the country. Almost all of the state's rural hospitals are cash-strapped, and operating with deficits. The alarming facts are reflected in an Alabama Hospital Association survey of hospital CEOs two years ago. Among the findings: 88 percent of the rural hospitals were operating in the red, meaning revenue received for patient care wasn't enough to cover the cost of care.

The vast majority of hospitals were keeping their heads above water thanks to investment income and charitable donations. But a quarter of the hospitals had encountered slippage charitable donations. 63 percent were treating larger numbers of uninsured patients. And 48 percent reported an increase in Medicaid - or low-income-patients. 72 percent were seeing more patients flowing into emergency rooms, a highcost activity for hospitals to shoulder.

Meanwhile, 53 percent had experienced a drop in regular inpatient admissions. "If all things stay the same, I predict our hospitals won't make it through next year," said Danne Howard, chief policy officer with the Alabama Hospital Association, which is launching a campaign next week in support of expanding Medicaid through the 2010 Affordable Care Act, better known as "Obamacare."Said Howard, "I've been with the hospital association 23 years and have never seen things so fragile as they are now."

The Medicaid expansion question is entering the state's 2018 election arena as well. In the gubernatorial race, Democratic nominee Walt Maddox promises to expand Medicaid on "Day 1." His pledge: Call a special session and unveil a financial plan to pay for the expansion, as well as addressing other issues his campaign is talking about, such as a lottery. Medicaid expansion is also likely to surface in the 2020 race for U.S. Senate: Sen. Doug Jones, D-Birmingham, favors it, while his possible Republican opponent, U.S. Rep. Bradley Byrne, R-Fairhope, says the state would have to up taxes to do so.

But both Jones and Byrne are advocating for changes in the wage index, which is a formula that determines reimbursements from Medicare, and has left Alabama's hospitals with the lowest reimbursement rate in the country. Byrne said the current system favors urban hospitals. He said, "It's a 20 percent discrepancy. You can be at South Baldwin (Regional Medical Center in Foley) and get an MRI and the hospital will be reimbursed 20 percent less than a hospital in Pensacola. That doesn't make any sense at all."

In the gubernatorial race, Maddox is starting to make Medicaid expansion a central theme during speeches. "Funding for all hospitals depends primarily on insurance reimbursements," said Chip Hill, Maddox's campaign spokesman. "Medicaid expansion adds a major layer of insurance coverage and reimbursements for patients who currently don't qualify for Medicaid yet cannot in reality afford insurance. Their treatments are not reimbursed, which adds enormous strains to hospital budgets."

Maddox, if elected, would face a difficult situation in pushing a Medicaid expansion through the Republican Legislature unless he finds the revenue sources to compensate for the new expense. Expansion talks have gone nowhere, thus far, at the Statehouse. In 2016, lawmakers dipped into the state's BP oil spill settlement to patch an already existing $85 million Medicaid funding gap. Former Gov. Robert Bentley once pegged the Medicaid expansion cost at around $710 million for six years. Alabama is one of 14 states that have opted not to go along with the expansion.

Hill did not dive into details of the Maddox team's funding plan, other than to say it, along with a state lottery and legalized gambling, would be revealed at a special session. "Watching hospitals close around the state -- and several communities entertaining new taxes to keep their local hospitals open -- is all the information we need to know it's long past time to take action," he said.

Maddox's opponent, Republican Gov. Kay Ivey, has assembled a three-member team that will produce a report recommending ways to address rural health woes. This working group has been traveling the state and meet with health professionals and to gather information. There is no timetable on when the report will be finished. The team includes Medicaid Commissioner Stephanie Azar, Alabama's Health Officer Dr. Scott Harris, and David White, senior policy adviser to Ivey.

"This is a very complex issue that touches and affects many components of the healthcare system in Alabama," said Azar. "As more information is obtained on the struggles facing rural healthcare, it is our goal to consider potential solutions to address this important issue." Thus far, the Ivey administration has proposed new work requirements for some able-bodied Medicaid recipients, a move that would require federal approval, and would affect only a small fraction of Medicaid recipients.

But it's a similar strategy that is playing out in conservative states that have yet to expand Medicaid under ObamaCare. States which have passed Medicaid expansion -- Arkansas, Indiana and New Hampshire -- have federally-approved work requirement waivers in place. Non-expansion states -- like Utah, Mississippi, South Carolina, Tennessee, and others -- want to require recipients to work. The federal government gave Kentucky permission in January to impose work related requirements for Medicaid, but a judge blocked the program in June. The Republican governor is now considering eliminating the expansion, and saving the state $300 million.

"Alabama would be following in a fine tradition of reflecting on the common judgement of what is fair by putting a requirement in there," said Len Nichols, a health economist at George Mason University's Center for Health Policy Research and Ethics and the former health care adviser to President Bill Clinton. "The question becomes, 'Can you make the requirements and judgements reasonable?' I believe there are quite a few cases that there are. But that is the thing it could take to help more people to get access to health care."

Alabama Republican lawmakers, especially those representing rural constituents in areas where hospitals are facing financial distress, say the work related requirements are important. They anticipate the fate of rural hospitals becoming a hot topic of discussion and debate during the 2019 legislative session. "We need to make it a priority to put people to work and hopefully for people to come off Medicaid rather than put people on it," state Rep. David Standridge, R-Hayden, and chairman of the House Rural Caucus, said.

According to The Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation, only 6 percent of those on Medicaid would have to get a job or participate in training or volunteer activities to meet the new work-requirement rules pushed in states like Alabama. Of those on Medicaid, 43 percent are working full-time and 19 percent are working part-time, the group's research found. Said Standridge: "I think that is the reason we have to do job training and all of these other things for people so they can get good-paying jobs and not just a working-poor job. We need to look to the future to move those people out of that class."

But Standridge and Shedd of Cullman, both say that all options on rural health care remain "on the table." Shedd noted that in Georgia, which has not adopted an expansion of Medicaid, state lawmakers endorsed a bill authorizing the concept of "micro-hospitals." This program allows that if a hospital in a county of fewer than 50,000 people closed or is closing within 12 months, a neighboring hospital can buy the rights to operate it, but on a smaller scale. Media reports indicate that it's unclear how much interest there is in the program. "We'll see how that works out," said Shedd.

Shedd said he believes the issue will be a priority for House leaders next spring. "I think the Legislature will be proactive this coming year and I expect legislators form rural areas to stick together to make sure solutions are found," he said. Standridge said he's looking forward to the governor's report coming back to lawmakers, saying that it would be "good to hear a report about the state in general" and that it would be a good resource. But the report, according to the Hospital Association's Howard, should include plenty of references from hospital officials advocating for Medicaid expansion.

It's unclear whether expanding Medicaid would be endorsed under Ivey's administration, if she's elected in November. Ivey's spokespeople did not respond to requests for comments. "That was the first thing out of everyone's mouth when meeting with (Azar) and (Harris)," she said. "It was the No. 1 thing that everyone brought up that could be one of the things that could help our rural hospitals survive." Howard admits that hospital administrators "don't have all the answers" when it comes to finding revenue sources to pay for it. Instead, they are advocating for the economic benefits of expansion which includes boosts to the state budget, and improve the state's lagging rankings in obesity, infant mortality rates, among other issues.

William Ferniany, CEO of the University of Alabama at Birmingham Health System, said there isn't a hospital administrator in the state who doesn't support Medicaid expansion. But, he said, it's an issue that goes beyond the governor's race. "It takes the Legislature to do it, you have to have $200 million to fund it," said Ferniany. "More than anything we talk about, that will be needed to expand rural hospitals."

For now, Ferniany and the UAB Hospital System are rolling out a new resource center that was approved by lawmakers last spring. The new center will support nonprofit, rural and public hospitals in the state that are facing economic pressures. But the legislation establishing the new center came without funding, and Ferniany said that staffing it will be important for lawmakers next year. He said it will take "less than $1 million" from the state. "It's designed to be a support structure," said Ferniany.

"If a rural hospital is part of a large system like Community Health or with us, they will get (that support) anyway. But this is designed for community hospitals who are independent and need resources." He added, "What happens in rural health care is critical because if (the state) hopes to attract good industry, they need a good health system. It's also the largest employer in the community. And if you have an emergency, you need a place to go. You don't need a place two hours away."

Prospects of long drives to emergency rooms and acute medical facilities were what was keeping a worried Haleyville Mayor Ken Sunseri up until 4 a.m. some days. A year ago, the mayor was dealing with the likelihood that the 59-bed Lakeland Community Hospital was shutting its doors. "We were 50 minutes to an hour and 10 minutes away to the closet emergency room," said Sunseri. "It was critical." Indeed, the Northwest Alabama city of slightly more than 4,000 residents had to scramble and find creative financing mechanisms to afford to keep Winston County's only hospital open.

The process happened fast. In November 2017, the hospital announced its closure due to dwindling reimbursements. One month later, Haleyville leaders approved a 1-cent sales tax, which Sunseri says will bring anywhere between $850,000 to $950,000 annually. The revenue is dedicated solely for the hospital: A loan repayment for purchasing the building, and a subsidy to pay for its operations. Voters in this conservative county where nearly 90 percent backed Donald Trump for president in 2016, didn't blink an eye about the tax, the mayor said.

"We put it in place in January and it went into effect in February," said Sunseri. "I did not receive one phone call over it. As a matter of fact, I've had people stop me at Walmart and the grocery store - and this is coming from people who have never support me before - telling me how much they appreciated the fact that we've done that." He added, "You have to realize, without a hospital, first of all, workman's compensation goes through the roof. In order to recruit industry here, we need health care available. A hospital is a vital part of economic development and the sustainment of a community."

In Thomasville, a Clarke County city of 4,000 residents, a $36 million hospital is under construction and will open next August thanks, in large part, with a sales tax increase. The 1-cent hike will raise enough revenue to support the $19 million dedication the city made toward building a new hospital that replaces Southwest Alabama Medical Center, which closed in 2011. Thomasville Mayor Sheldon Day said that the closure had little to do with the low volume that harms rural hospitals nationwide. Instead, he said the issue had more to do with a "problem" with the medical center's former owner.

"The day our hospital closed, it had 15 patients in it," said Day. "Most hospitals around us will tell you, 'Glory Hallelujah' if they had 15 patients a day. It's a difference set of circumstances." Day said his community simply could not wait for the state to decide if it was investing in rural health care. He also said the days of the "little private provider" operating a rural hospital in Alabama without government help "is a thing of thepast."

Said Day: "Whether folks agree with what we are doing or not, I hope we can have some consideration that we are at least not sitting down and waiting on the state and federal government to do something." But in Wilcox County, which is the poorest county in Alabama and among the poorest in the country, a 1-cent sales tax to keep J. Paul Jones Hospital in Camden afloat is "a burden," according the County Commissioner John Moulton. "We had no choice," said Moulton. "We'd definitely love to receive some help especially with our hospital so we can take this regressive tax off the books." Wilcox County adopted a 1-cent sales tax to keep the hospital open after its acute care facility targeted for closing in 2017.

"I'd love to see the Legislature step up and do more for a rural hospital," said Moulton. "The Medicaid expenses really hurt the communities like ours." Moulton said he would like to see Ivey, a Wilcox County native, "step up" on the issue and roll out a plan. Otherwise, he said, an annual $700,000 tax burden will continue in a county where 48 percent of youths under age 18 are below the federal poverty line. "There is really no reason why we shouldn't (expand Medicaid)," said Moulton. "It's life and death. That is what it boils down to."

https://www.al.com/news/index.ssf/2018/09/avoiding_ghost_town_saving_ala.html

Thomasville Regional Medical Center (TRMC)
Renderings

Session III - Thomasville

Below is the biography of the speaker for Session III, discussing the impacts of the consolidation of Alabama Southern, Faulkner State and Jefferson Davis Community Colleges into Coastal Alabama Community College.

Representative Thomas Jackson

Rep. Thomas Jackson is a native of Thomasville and is a retired educator having served 30 years in the field. His roles include past employee with the Clarke County Board of Education, former teacher at Jackson Middle School and from 1997 to 2007 he worked as the Director of Upward Bound at Alabama Southern Community College – Thomasville Campus. Thomas is an Evangelist, and the host of the Old Ship of Zion Gospel Program. He also serves as the Interim Pastor at Grace Temple Community Church in LeRoy, Alabama. Thomas was elected to the Alabama Legislature in 1994 making him the first African American to hold the seat for District 68 in Southwest Alabama. His district includes Clarke, Conecuh, Marengo, and Monroe Counties.

Jackson is an alumnus of Knoxville College (B.A.), and Alabama State University (M.Ed.).

Amy Prescott

Amy Prescott is Executive Director for the Thomasville Alabama Chamber of Commerce.

Dr. Chips Shepherd

Dr. Charles “Chips” Shepherd’s career in education spans almost forty years. He holds Mississippi, Tennessee and Alabama K/12 teaching license’s and is certificated in English, Social Studies, Science, Career Tech and Educational Administration. Chips has served as a classroom teacher, career tech director, high school administrator, and superintendent. He was the principal investigator and executive director for a $5 million grant from the National Science Foundation Center of Excellence that developed workforce training strategies in the pulp and paper industry. Chips has published an article on “curriculum development,” and coauthored a technical paper for the National Science Foundation. He is a member of the Black Belt Commission-workforce committee, appointed to the Board of Directors of the Mississippi Association of School Superintendents and in that capacity served in an education advisory role for Mississippi Governor Kirk Fordice. In 2013, he was part of a team that travelled to China working to establish workforce and training opportunities in West Alabama. Currently he serves as campus director and director of workforce development at Coastal Alabama Community College where he was recently named “Administrator of the Year”.

Shepherd holds a Master’s, Specialist’s and Doctoral degrees from Mississippi State University’s Department of Career and Technical Education

Alabama Community College System approves merger of 3south Alabama schools

Jim Little | Opelika-Auburn News *September 14, 2016*

Although the merger of Southern Union Community College, Chattahoochee Valley Community College and Central Alabama Community College has been postponed indefinitely, the Alabama Community College System board of trustees gave its final approval for the merger of three schools in south Alabama. Faulkner State Community College, Alabama Southern Community College and Jefferson Davis Community College will merge to become Coastal Alabama Community College based in Bay Minette at Faulkner's main campus.

Following action by the ACCS Board of Trustees in a meeting Wednesday, the merger now must win approval from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges before it goes into effect. "We are combining two of the state's smallest community colleges with a larger campus to create an institution of more than 7,000 students, all of whom will benefit as a result," said Jimmy Baker, acting chancellor of the Alabama Community College System, in a press release on the merger. "Money not spent on duplicated administrative functions can be used to expand course offerings for transfer students, to hire expert faculty in more technical fields, and to respond to an ever-changing marketplace to make sure our students get the skills they need to succeed."

No estimate of the cost savings of the merger were released in public documents about the merger. The lack of information troubled Terri Carter, mayor of Repton, who urged the board to delay the merger. "The biggest red flag for me, we have no idea whether this consolidation will be beneficial or detrimental to our students and to our communities," Carter said. "And why is that? That is because, unless you can tell me where to find it, there have been no studies done on this and there have been no long-range projections to give us any idea whether or not this is going to be good or bad."

Repton is a small town south of Monroeville, home of Alabama Southern Community College. Carter said the public hasn't been properly informed about the merger, and records and documents about the merger have been released at the last minute. "And sometimes not all the documents are even there," Carter said. Meetings that were supposed to be held to inform the public were not held, according to Carter. "There were meetings with public officials, faculty and luncheons with specific organizations, but no public meetings," Carter said.

No documents have been released to show how the school will be organized, Carter said. Rep. Alan Baker, R-Brewton, told the board he strongly supports the merger. "I'm one that does have grave concerns with the community interests, but I'm also one that recognizes that we at the state level are constantly scrapping for dollars and looking for better efficiencies and not trying to duplicate." Baker said the merger was an opportunity to elevate the system and improve it. Gary Branch, president of Falkner Community College, said he didn't know what else could've been done to inform the public about the merger.

"I've had over 50 community meetings, telephone conversations, newspaper interviews, radio interviews, so this process has been going on a long time," Branch said. Branch said he presented the board letters of support from the mayors of Atmore and Thomasville. "I've met a lot of people, answered a lot of questions," Branch said. "And I still believe, as a higher education administrator for over 55 years, this is what's best for this area." The Alabama Commission on Higher Education unanimously approved the merger on Sept. 9, and Branch said the executive director of the commission told him the process Faulkner used in organizing the merger "should be used as a template for any further consolidation and mergers."

The board of trustees agreed with Branch and Baker, and the vote to approve the merger was unanimous with trustees Susan Foy and Chuck Smith absent from the meeting. "You never want to fly a plane while you're building it," Carter said. "And right now with this documentation, I feel like we're flying a plane before it's been fully built."

http://www.oanow.com/news/state/alabama-community-college-system-approves-merger-of-south-alabama-schools/article_f08023ac-7ad4-11e6-84a8%E2%80%A6

Coastal Alabama CC consolidation in effect

Staff Reports | Atmore Advance *January 12, 2017*

The consolidation of Jefferson Davis Community College, Alabama Southern Community College and Faulkner State Community College is in full effect. After 13 months, the preparation for the merger hit pay dirt on Tues., Dec. 6, 2016, when the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) voted to approve the consolidation of the three institutions into what is now known as Coastal Alabama Community College. “Each of the colleges has been proudly serving their communities for more than 50 years,” Dr. Gary Branch, president of Coastal Alabama Community College, said. “This is not a new mission for our colleges; however, it is a new beginning for Coastal Alabama Community College.”

The new college is serving more than 10,000 students, and provides more than 100 programs of study across 15 campuses and instructional sites. The Bay Minette Campus will serve as the regional main campus for the new college. Branch said in a release that Coastal Alabama Community College will serve communities from the Mississippi line to the Florida line. Coastal Alabama Community College was the result of a careful and deliberate decision to expand program offerings, student leadership opportunities and course availability to students in its multi-county service area.

Over the last year, committees with representation from all three of the previous colleges met to develop policies and procedures for the new system. Everything from a steering committee to committees for student services, instruction/academic affairs and even technology services was developed to ensure the students’ experiences are comprehensive and beneficial to their higher education and career goals.

Recently, some 400 fulltime employees of the new college met for professional development meetings. “Together, we will continue providing students across south Alabama with an affordable and accessible higher education experience like none other while expanding workforce development opportunities for our students and our communities.” Branch said. “We are ready.”

https://www.atmoreadvance.com/2017/01/12/coastal-alabama-cc-consolidation-in-effect/

BURT JONES
RURAL COMMUNITY
EXPERIENCE

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA | Division of Student Life Blackburn Institute

Session IV - Thomasville

Below are the biographies of the speakers for Session IV, discussing the lumber industry in Southwest Alabama and workforce development needs met through National Center Paper and Pulp Technology Training.

Scott Dees

Scott Dees is Chair of the Division of Technical Education at Coastal Alabama Community College.

npt2 Putting education to work.

For all non-technical questions & requests:

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Hosted by Alabama Southern.

Learn more at npt2.org

Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the National Science Foundation.

The Advanced Technology Education (ATE) program endeavors to strengthen the skills of technicians whose work is vitally important to the nation's prosperity. In ATE centers and projects, two-year colleges have a leadership role, and work in partnership with universities, secondary schools, business and industry, and government agencies to design and carry out model workforce development initiatives.

Photographs generously provided by:

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Alabama Southern Community College
Domtar
Metso
Northeast Wisconsin Technical College
Weyerhaeuser

NPT2's training works because it makes your workers more valuable from day one.

To compete in today's global economy, every organization needs to implement innovative technologies, optimize manufacturing processes, and develop the next generation of materials and products. Yet the most sophisticated system is only as effective as the workforce managing it.

Our industry is facing an alarming skills gap due to the intensive application of automation technologies and intelligent production systems. This is magnified by a generation of experienced workers set to retire, taking decades of knowledge with them. Industry executives agree that a skilled, educated workforce is the most critical element of success and the most difficult to acquire.

NPT2 offers unique and proven training and education products, services, and programs that address critical workforce challenges facing the pulp, paper, and allied manufacturing industry. These solutions are designed to enable your organization to achieve optimum performance and profitability.

You don't have to get people up to speed. They are ready to work.

We enhance the proficiency of your current workforce and prepare the next generation of technically advanced process and maintenance technicians so they deliver, day one.

Our flexible and accessible training and education modules and curriculum address the complex and challenging demands of organizations and their employees. We provide a cost-effective approach to training and education through NPT2's distinctive partnerships with community colleges, universities, suppliers, and industry associations.

The operator of the past is now a process technician who needs 21st-century skills.

The skills and knowledge acquired through an NPT2 program result in superior performance in safety, productivity, innovation, process efficiency, and profitability. The depth and breadth of this education has leading companies now referring to these advanced machine operators as "process technicians."

Dr. Martin A. Hubbe, Professor of Forest Biomaterials, North Carolina State University, said, "Today's mills are really run by what most people call process technicians. The more they know, the better they are able to keep the line running when problems come up."

Save money by decreasing downtime.

Shortening the learning curve of your people is a huge benefit. We dramatically speed up the time it takes for your workers to be proficient at tasks which makes them better able to troubleshoot right out of the gate.

NPT2's curriculum works because you helped create it.

NPT2 exists today because you made it clear that you needed us. To make sure that we created effective solutions, we brought together the best people in the industry, added educational heavyweights, and received the support of the National Science Foundation. This joint effort has enabled us to develop the right curriculum with the right instructors. We match classes to levels of worker experience, and focus on everyone from new employees to your most experienced people.

NPT2 equips your workforce with 21st-century skills. These include the essential skills of communication, teamwork, information technology, innovation, diversity, critical thinking, and time management. They learn the STEM skills of science, technology, engineering, and math. We also provide them with the key applied/runability skills of process control, quality, basic maintenance care and condition monitoring, and troubleshooting.

Give your mill an edge. NPT2 saves you money on training and develops a more skilled workforce, making you more competitive.

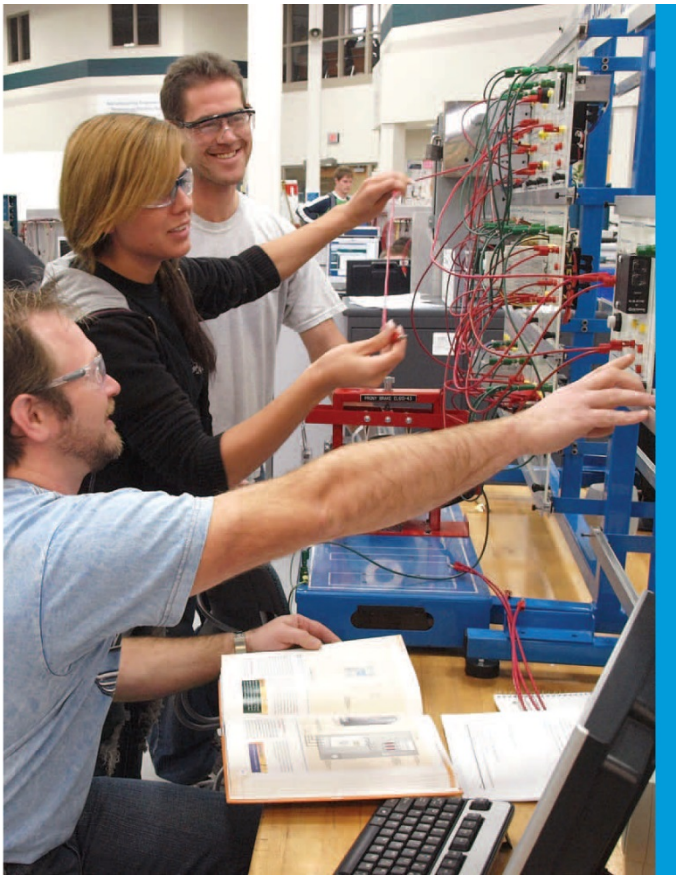
NPT2's training and education works because we make it accessible.

NPT2's curriculum is unique in several ways. First is the flexibility it provides. Some mills utilize our two-year degree program, taught to incumbent workers and traditional students through local community colleges. Others ask us to assemble a combination of instructor-led classes at these institutions, classes on-site at their mill, and in self-guided online courses.

One industry-leading organization thinks so highly of their custom curriculum that they require all new employees to complete the program within a few years of employment. It's so integrated into their organization that representatives from the community college administering the program are housed within the mill.

We also frequently work with a variety of subject-matter experts, supplier companies, and industry organizations to add a level of cohesion that is unique in any industry, and extremely efficient.

Regardless of how our curriculum is taught, it is consistently rigorous and always utilizes integrated academics and proven, work-based learning.



NPT2 works by providing training that lets you get to the quality your customers demand, faster.

Will NPT2 programs improve your quality? Yes. But what these programs really accomplish is that they allow you to reach your quality standards faster, often a lot faster. Graduates of NPT2's programs quickly apply what they learn. Whether it's cutting downtime, increasing your crew's troubleshooting speed, or finding efficiencies, these programs require a low investment while delivering a dramatic impact on performance. You get high quality, quickly.

NPT2 works because it is in the perfect position to connect all the stakeholders.

NPT2 is in a unique position to be able to create strong, positive alliances between industry and education.

Our programs are attracting, developing, and continuing to train the technologically advanced workforce you need. We're bringing best practice principles into all our efforts. More and more mills and community colleges are partnering with us because they see the benefits of the connection.

NPT2 acts as a bridge, representing the interests of each group and developing programs that benefit everyone.

You also benefit from our local and national perspective. While our customizable curriculum covers the specific needs of one of your mills, it takes into account your company's needs on a national scale. This allows you to benchmark your training so best practices can be imbedded throughout your organization.

One size doesn't fit all. We train the workforce you need.

The relationship we have with all stakeholders gives us the opportunity to develop programs that deliver clear financial benefits. You can choose from our proven standard curriculums, or we can create customized programs to meet your specific needs. Please contact us to find out what classes are available through our continually expanding curriculum.

NPT2's program works because of the unique relationship we have with community colleges.

A key part of NPT2's success has been our partnering with community colleges. This network of schools, all near mills across the nation, provides the ideal environment and infrastructure to train both process and maintenance technicians.

To be in our network, community colleges need to provide state-of-the-art equipment and instructors with years of industry experience. They also need to respond to changes in the industry. Through our integrated learning system, your maintenance technicians will acquire the latest techniques in industrial maintenance, leading to superior asset utilization and performance.

Community colleges provide hands-on experience.

You may be surprised at all the resources available to students in community colleges. They have access to the same technology and equipment found in your mill. Thanks to this hands-on experience, your workers will walk into the job with skills that otherwise would take years to develop. This is a game-changing strategy for your organization. And it is how NPT2 is putting education to work.

NPT2 works for everyone, from your mill to your community.

It's really pretty simple. You get the skilled workers you need. Your community values your significant role. And a bunch of bright kids don't have to leave home to have a great career.

Many of the mills we work with have found that by funding scholarships for NPT2 programs they not only get excellent employees, but they also get positive feedback from the community. These programs naturally allow for information to get out through newspaper articles in local papers and by becoming part of conversations around the dinner table.

NPT2 can change community perceptions of the industry.

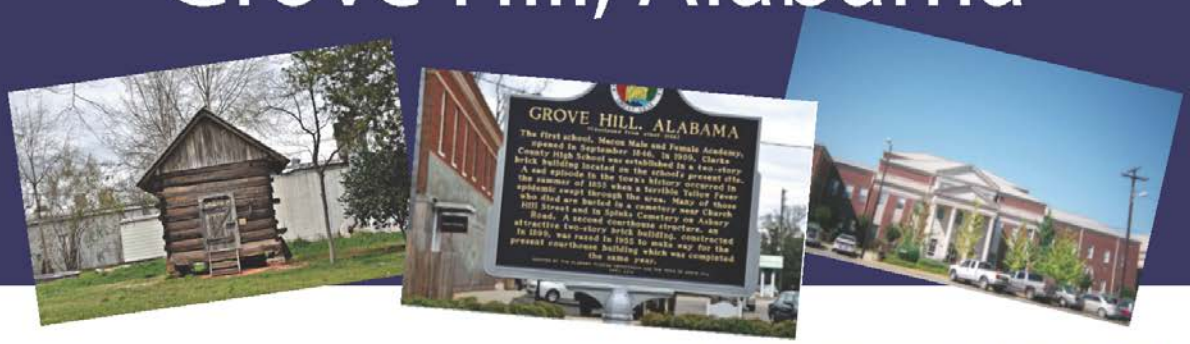
We developed our Summer Institute program to introduce middle and high school students and faculty to the opportunities of the industry. Before attending, only 44% of the faculty recommended the program to their students. After attending, 100% of them indicated that they would more likely recommend the program. Our industry has a great story to tell, and NPT2 is telling it.

People love living in your town. And they hate the idea that their children and grandchildren need to leave to find great jobs. Your message of providing great technical jobs in a sustainable industry is powerful. The best people to tell this story are the people themselves. They will help you be seen as an industry that cares about the community.

To learn more about how NPT2 can make a difference for your bottom line, call Michael J. Kocurek, PhD, NPT2 Executive Director, at 843.456.3698 or email him at mjkocurek@ascc.edu.

http://www.npt2.org/wp-content/uploads/NPT2_Brochure2.pdf

Grove Hill, Alabama



Originally inhabited by the Creek and Choctaw Indians, the city of Grove Hill began serving as the Clarke county seat in 1832. The town got its name in for the large grove of oak trees on its Plateau but did not become officially chartered until 1919.

The area, in the heart of Alabama's Timberland, is a geographic center for industrial and commercial activities. Grove Hill is home to the Clarke County Historical Museum located in the historic Alston-Cobb House. The town is also the hometown to David Mathews who served as United States Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare and was the president of The University of Alabama for two nonconsecutive terms.

Alabama

Quick Facts

Population: 1,570

Racial Composition: 56.6% White, 41.3% Black or African American, 0.3% Native American, 0.5% from other races, and 0.91% from two or more races. 2% of the population were Hispanic or Latino of any race.

Median Age: 39

County: Clarke (county seat)

Random Trivia: The town was known as Smithville and Macon before Grove Hill was selected in 1950.

Session V - Grove Hill

Below are the biographies of the speakers for Session V, providing an overview of children and youth programs in Clarke County, and exploring the networking of the Clarke County Resource Collaboration Council.

Mary English

Mary English is Executive Director and Forensic Interviewer of the Regional Children's Advocacy Center.

Amelia A. Leonard

Amelia Leonard is the Help Me Grow Regional Care Coordinator South Alabama, covering Mobile, Baldwin, Escambia, Washington, Monroe, Conecuh, Clarke, & Choctaw Counties. Previously she served six years at United Way as a 2-1-1 Call Specialist and Data and Resource Manager. As care coordinator, Amelia provides case management to families, advocating for parents and helping them navigate challenging situations. Her passion comes from her own experience as a parent of a child with special needs and not knowing what resources were available. Amelia enjoys the opportunity to offer hope encouragement, support, information and tools that will empower parents to help their children have a healthy start in life.

Donna Nelson

Donna Nelson is Clarke County Director for the Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY) Program. She is a native Alabamian having been born in Mobile, grew in Huntsville and currently live in Thomasville. Donna has taught for 39 years and her professional career includes the public (K-12) school systems, supervising an adult education program at Thomasville Mental Health Rehabilitation Center and the community college system where she taught remedial and adult education (GED) classes. Donna enjoys working with people to help them reach their true potential and HIPPY Clarke County has allowed her to stretch her skills working with parents to help them become their child's "first teacher."

Nelson holds a Bachelor degree in Emotional Conflict from the University of Alabama (1978) and a Masters in Multi-handicapped from the University of South Alabama (1998).

Emma Perryman

Emma Perryman is Outreach Coordinator for the Drug Education Council.

Diane Pruitt

Diane Pruitt is the Executive Director at Alpha Women's Resource Center, a nonprofit medical pregnancy resource center located in Jackson, AL. The center offers free resources including pregnancy tests, limited diagnostic ultrasounds, confidential options counseling, prenatal and parenting education, and material resources. Living in a rural county, many of the center's clients have transportation barriers, making it difficult for them to access prenatal care. Diane oversaw a capital campaign and in 2017, the center purchased a medical mobile unit which travels to designated sites in four counties to provide pregnancy resources. Diane has served at the center since 2006 and works passionately to achieve the center's goal to: Save the life of a child today; Transform the family, Do it again tomorrow.

Diane is a Dale Carnegie Public Speaking graduate and is the main spokesperson for the Alpha Center. She also serves as the interim sexual risk avoidance coordinator and works with volunteers to present programs to students in grades 8-12 in public and private schools. Prior to working at the Alpha Women's Resource Center, Diane worked as an administrative assistant at several local businesses. She is also a real estate agent and works with her husband, Gary, in his real estate and appraisal business. They have five children and two grandchildren and enjoy traveling and cruising with friends and family.

Clarke County Resource Collaboration Council

Who We Are

The Clarke County Resource Collaboration Council (CCRCC) began soon after the formation of the Clarke County United Way in the early 1990's. Originally established to provide a system for local United Way directors to meet and discuss local needs in the county, it soon grew to include county and state agency heads and other interested human service and business entities. In 2008, the CCRCC became an arm of the Clarke County Development Foundation (CCDF).

Now comprising over 22 different entities, the CCRCC meets quarterly to update members on current activities of their respective agencies, hear a presentation from a selected agency, and collaborate with each other to best meet the needs of Clarke County citizens without duplicating services.

Members of the CCRCC include many agencies based in Mobile but serving Clarke County as part of their catchment area.

Council Members

Agency	Contact #
Aids Alabama South	251-272-8921
AL Career Center	251-246-2453
Alpha WRC	251-246-7750
American Red Cross	251-222-0608
Catholic Soc.Services	251-246-0131
CCDHR	251-275-7039
Communities of Transformation	334-357-0034
Comm. Action Agcy	251-275-8498
Comm. Found. SA	251-438-5591
Ctr for Fair Housing	251-479-1572
Drug Ed. Council	251-478-8768
Feeding the Gulf Cst	251-653-1617
HIPPY of CC	251-463-5139
Ind. Living Center	251-460-0301
Lifelines Counseling	251-431-5100
RSVP	334-637-2841
So.Poverty Voting Rts.	334-235-4029
TACC (The Arc of CC)	251-246-3000
United Way of SA	251-431-0108
Vol.Lawyers of SA	251-433-6693

How to Join the Council

The CCRCC is open to any person or agency interested in collaborating with others to meet specific needs in the county. It has no dues or membership fees and meetings are coordinated and facilitated by local volunteers. Quarterly meetings are held in January, April, July and October on the fourth Tuesday of the month. Meeting times are 10:00 a.m. at the Clarke Washington Electric Coop office in Jackson. For more information, please call Graham Braswell at 251-246-9261 or Diane Pruitt at 251-769-0912

Help Me Grow Alabama

- Alabama ranks in the top 5 states for high rates of obesity, diabetes, stroke, & poverty
- Alabama also faces high rate of crime, substance abuse, teen parenthood, & poor mental health
- **ALL** of these risk factors have roots in early childhood because young children's health lays the foundation for adult health
- Nurturing young children is the best prevention and hope for better outcomes
- It is more effective & cost-efficient to grow healthy children than to rehabilitate adults

Early Detection & Referrals

When we talk about young children's development, an ounce of prevention is worth more than a pound of cure. Because of rapid development during the first few years of life, this is the time where there is the greatest opportunity to positively change a child's trajectory.

- Help Me Grow (HMG) is proven to support young children's healthy development by connecting children and families to resources
- HMG is a national network of 23 affiliates & Alabama has been a member since 2010
- HMG Central Alabama has been a successful pilot under a state leadership team

Making sure young children develop well is our best investment in education and a healthy workforce.

Help Me Grow Alabama has accomplished much with very little funding. Building on this success, the leadership team has prepared a statewide expansion plan. There are few investments we can make in Alabama that have the potential for real cost savings – both in reduced costs AND in improved lives. Partners are committed to developing a long-term financing strategy that builds on existing resources, leverages new investments, and results in an enhanced "system" that works for young children. We have proven the model works and are working to expand it statewide.

HELP ME GROW CORE COMPONENTS

- **Making the Connection** Receive calls regarding a child's developmental concerns, assess needs & available resources, & refer families to services
- **Building the Network** Develop relationships within the community & maintain an accurate list of local resources
- **Educating Providers** Educate professionals about developmental surveillance & screening while promoting access to services
- **Identifying Gaps & Barriers** Collect & analyze data to identify needs & effectively connect families to resources

- Nearly one-third of Alabama parents say they have a concern about their child's health or development
- Nearly 85% of brain development occurs in the first few years of life, before children get to kindergarten
- Regular, appropriate screenings can identify concerns earlier, when interventions are less costly and more effective
- Health care and early learning providers support screenings and need support to make the most appropriate referrals
- Cost savings from early attention to concerns follow children throughout life

Help Me Grow makes sense out of a complicated & confusing "system" of services & identifies areas where few services and programs exist.

. . . *Help Me Grow* is elegant in its simplicity . - -

Community-Based Case Management

Help Me Grow is an intentional and focused set of strategies that builds on existing resources and programs. The 2-1-1 network will be the single point of entry for families and providers and will facilitate appropriate referrals and connections. A care coordinator will continue to interact with the family to ensure assistance is obtained. Continuing outreach and education of health care and early childhood providers will ensure

TIMELINE OF SUCCESS

2008 – AABCD results include: physician ASQ screening increase from 4% to 78%; referral rate grew from 5% to 11%
- ALL Kids sees a 600% increase in children who are given recommended screenings
- Referrals to services for developmental concerns more than doubles in one year.

2010 – Early Intervention adopts ASQ-3 & trains staff
- AL Partnership for Children provides ASQ-3 training for early childhood, home visiting & other community partners

2011 – AL becomes HMG affiliate
- HMG Central AL launches in partnership with 2-1-1 and United Way of Central AL
- Awarded funds from Community Foundation of Greater Birmingham for HMG Central AL with Reach Out and Read/AAP
- 97% of county health departments adopt the ASQ-3 as assessment tool

2012 – Worked with 2-1-1 & Parenting Assistance Line to evaluate phone options; Books, Balls, and Blocks events across the state: hundreds of children screened with referral rates for concerns ranging from 6-12%
- Quality Improvement model engaged 5 pediatric practices in HMG Central AL

2013 – Developed & provided trainings on AL Access Guide to Early Childhood Resources with service referral processes & contact information
- 5 more pediatric practices engaged in HMG Central AL

2014 – Partners awarded a federal Project LAUNCH grant to support expansion of HMG into Tuscaloosa and 8 surrounding West Alabama counties

(continued on back)

Help Me Grow
Alabama

The Alabama Partnership for Children is a proud member of the *Help Me Grow* National Network. *Help Me Grow Alabama* is a free information and referral line that utilizes 2-1-1 Connects Alabama to help connect families of children birth to age eight to health and developmental resources in their community.

How does *Help Me Grow* work?

The four program components are:

- **Making the Connection.** Partner with 2-1-1 Connects Alabama to receive confidential calls from family members regarding a child's developmental or behavioral concerns, assess the child's needs and available resources, and refer families to developmental services.
- **Building the Network.** Develop ongoing relationships with programs in the community and support the maintenance of an updated resource inventory.
- **Educating Providers.** Educate professionals about the importance of developmental surveillance and screening while promoting access to developmental services.
- **Identifying Gaps and Barriers.** Collect data and analyze to document and identify needs to more effectively connect families to community resources.

Who Can Use *Help Me Grow*?

Anyone can call if they are:

- Wondering about a child's development, behavior or learning
- Needing support to access services
- Assisting a client, family member, or friend seek information about developmental services
- Requesting inclusion of an organization in the developmental services database for referrals

***Help Me Grow* will:**

- Listen to concerns and help decide which referrals are right for your family
- Find services that are appropriate and available for referrals
- Connect children to services
- Follow up to find out if a successful connection was made

smartSTART Alabama Partnership for Children

Alabama Department of Human Resources

Alabama PROJECT LAUNCH

Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education

Help Me Grow Alabama is funded by the Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education through the Preschool Development Grant, the Alabama Department of Human Resources, and the Alabama Department of Mental Health through a Project LAUNCH Grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Association.

Help Me Grow Alabama Regional Map

Alabama 2-1-1
Get Connected. Get Answers.

1. Northwest Alabama
Direct Line: 256-764-5892 ext. 106
Fax: 256-764-0088
Email: helpmegrownwal@gmail.com

2. North Alabama
Direct Line: 256-705-6768
Fax: 256-716-0663
Email: helpmegrow@csna.org

3. West Alabama
Direct Line: 205-348-4026
Fax: 205-348-0660
Email: helpmegrow@ches.ua.edu

4. Central Alabama
Direct Line: 205-458-2070
Fax: 205-458-2196
Email: helpmegrow@uwca.org

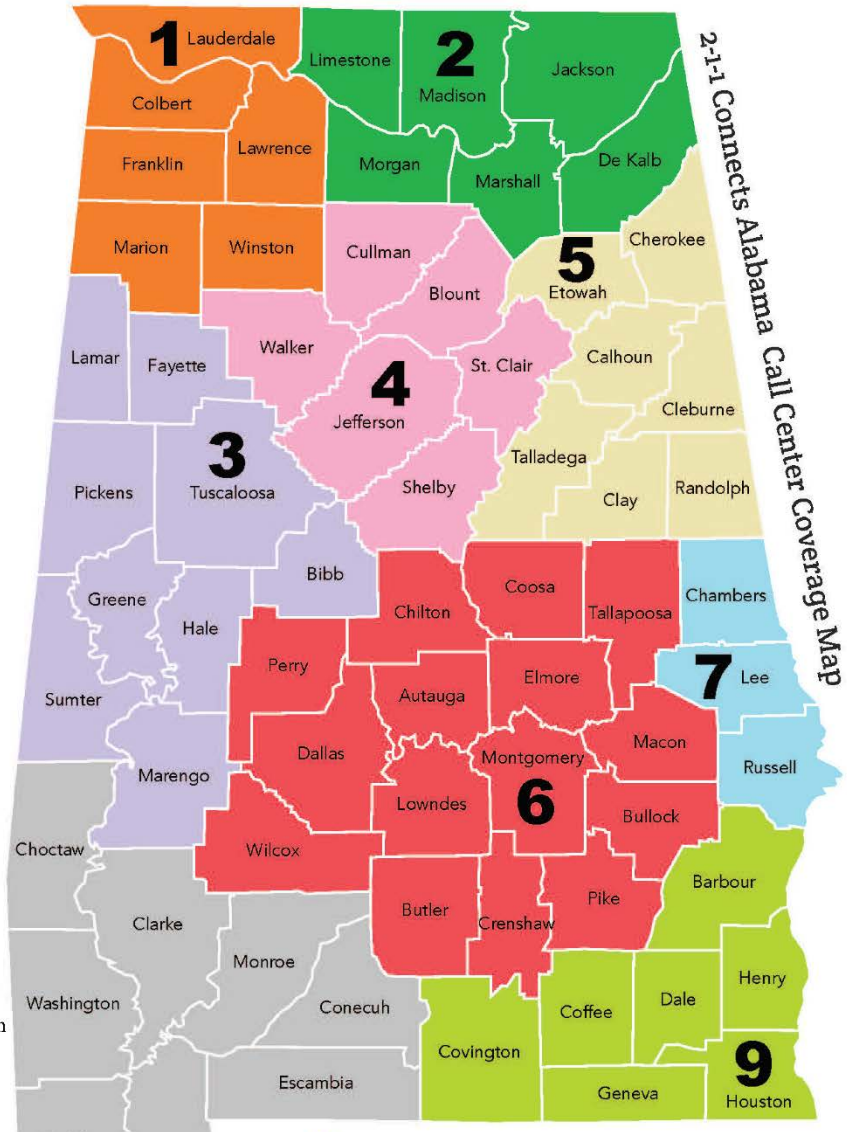
5. Northeast Alabama
Direct Line: 256-547-2581
Fax: 256-546-4360
Email: helpmegrowec@uwoec.org

6. River Region
Direct Line: 334-264-3335
Fax: 334-264-9182
Email: helpmegrow@handsonriverregion.org

7. East Alabama
Direct Line: 334-745-5540 ext. 12
Fax: 334-745-5606
Email: helpmegrow@unitedwayofleecounty.com

8. South Alabama
Direct Line: 251-431-5100
Fax: 251-431-5117
Email: helpmegrow@lifelinesmobile.org

9. Wiregrass
Direct Line: 334-836-1963
Fax: 334-836-1965
Email: helpmegrow9@gmail.com



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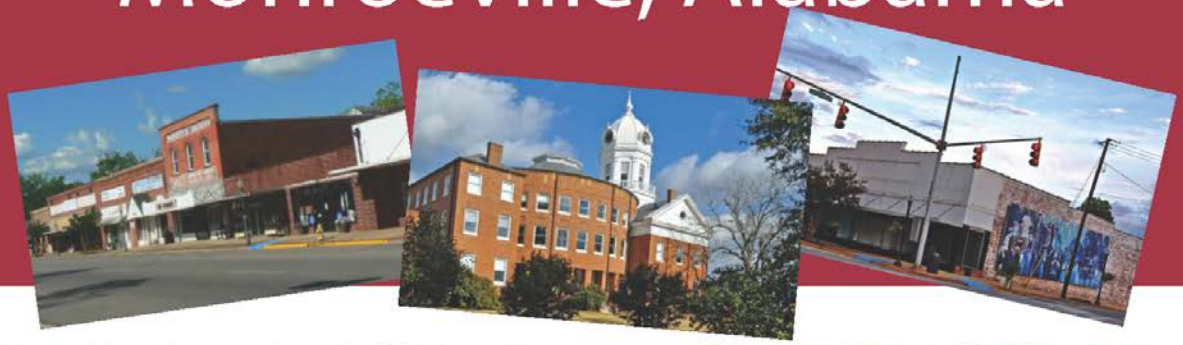


Named the "Literary Captial of Alabama" in 1997 by a joint proclamation of the Alabama House and Senate, Monroeville serves as the county seat of Monroe County and is home to many famous writers, such as, Nelle Harper Lee, Truman Capote, Mike Stewart, and Cynthia Tucker.

The city was originally founded in 1815 on land ceded by local Native American Tribes and became a center for agriculture and timber. In 1937, Vanity Fair apparel manufacturers came to Monroeville, opening the first sewing plant in the area and serving as the town's first major industry. More recently, the health care industry has become a major contributor to the local economy.

Quick Facts

Population: 6,519

Racial Composition: 53.09% White, 44.84% Black or African American, 0.38% Native American, 0.58% Asian, 0.15% from other races, 0.96% from two or more races, and 0.90% of the population were Hispanic or Latino of any race.

Median Age: 39

County: Monroe (county seat)

Random Trivia: Monroeville hosts more than 30,000 tourists each year due to its literary heritage.

Session VI - Monroeville

Below are the biographies of the panelists for Session VI, discussing the unique challenges and opportunities of county school systems in rural Alabama.

Tara Dean

Tara Dean was born in Monroeville, AL and has taught math and worked in a federal program at Coastal Alabama Community College for 2 years and then worked in industry for a year. She returned to Coastal Alabama for another year before starting her career at Monroe County High School where she has been teaching advanced and standard science for over 17 years.

Dean is an alumna of Alabama State University (B.S. in chemistry) and Florida State University (Master's in chemical engineering).

Duran Odoms

Duran Oums is Instructional Supervisor for the Monroe County Board of Education. He is a 1988 graduate of Monroe County High School in Monroeville. Duran completed the Superintendent's Academy in 2011. Duran has spent 22 years working in education. During his tenure, he has been a Classroom Teacher, Assistant Principal, Principal, Director of Student Services, and Federal Program Director. Currently, he serves as a Curriculum Specialist, EL Coordinator, and Textbook Manager. Duran is married to Katina S. Odoms, and together they have four children ages 12 -23.

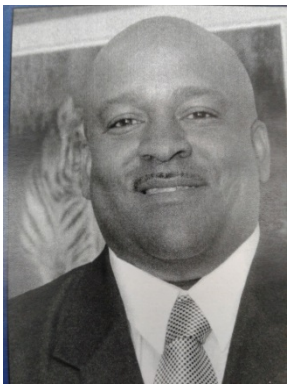
Odoms holds a B.S. in Civil Engineering from Alabama A & M University, a M.S. in Math and an Ed.S. in Administration & Leadership from Alabama State University.

Marion McIntosh, Sr.

Marion McIntosh, Sr. is currently the represents District 3 on the Wilcox County Commission. He is a retired educator from the Monroe County School System where he served as a teacher, coach, and principal. Marion serves as a deacon at St. Matthew Baptist Church in Chestnut, Alabama.

McIntosh holds a Bachelor's Degree from Gardner Webb University, a Master's Degree from University of West Alabama in Livingston and an Ed.S. Alabama State University.

Maurice Woody



Maurice Woody is the current principal of Monroe County High School. He is a 1988 graduate Springville High School, and he has his masters from the University of West Alabama. Maurice is a member of Kappa Delta Pi and Phi Beta Sigma. He also received his Ed.S. from Auburn University in Montgomery. He actively attends Hopewell Christian Methodist Episcopal Church in Monroeville.

West Alabama school featured in new documentary

Amanda Walker | Al.com *September 25, 2017*

Lower Peach Tree is a place time forgot. It is weathered, like the road that leads to it. Situated just within the southeast corner of Wilcox County there are parts of it that seems to spill over into Monroe County, Clarke County, and the Alabama River. Monroe Intermediate School has a Lower Peach Tree address, but is actually located in Packard's Bend which is just within Monroe County. It is a K-8 school and from there most students move on to Clarke County High School in Grove Hill.

Monroe Intermediate is one of the most rural schools in the nation. It gained attention in April of 2016 when a Washington Post article featured the struggles students and teachers were having with the lack of high speed internet. Even in classrooms equipped with Chromebooks for every student, limited bandwidth made them unusable. Driving thru now, there is only a whisper left of the plantation south that once dominated Lower Peach Tree. Now there are mostly tired houses and trailers. It is home to families who are of there and from there who have no interest in living anyplace else.

Some of the finest hunting and fishing opportunities Alabama has to offer is located in the far remote spots deep in the woods and waters of Lower Peach Tree and Packard's Bend. But they have little else to offer. There are no gas stations, no stores, and no restaurants. Drugs are present. Alcohol is popular. Most of the just over 900 residents who work, earn their living driving trucks or working within the logging industry. After the Washing Post article raised awareness about the problem of lack of quality internet service in economically deprived schools, Monroe Intermediate was again chosen to be included in a new documentary, "Without a net: The Digital Divide in America."

LaTonya Eaton-Norwood, a teacher at Monroe Intermediate, is featured in the film and explains how she and other teachers were composing two sets of lesson plans on a daily basis. One if there was internet access and another for if service was lagging or too slow to connect. The documentary will premiere Tuesday night at 9:00 pm and will re-air. The one-hour film, narrated by Jamie Foxx, illustrates the issues of equipping students for the digital world in poor school districts.

The silver lining, is that between the start of filming the documentary in mid-May and it's airing Tuesday night, Monroe Intermediate has had their broadband expanded and students are no longer forced to wait, start over, or change lessons due to lack of connectivity. "It was something we were almost ashamed of," Norwood said. "We were embarrassed by it. We did not want to admit to the public - to the world - the difficulties we were dealing with. But in doing so it was as if we revealed it and everyone came together to fix the problem."
"I thought it was just by chance that Monroe Intermediate was selected to be featured. By luck, if you can describe it that way, or destiny, if you prefer to look at it that way. But it has sure given us hope, a whole lot of hope for a brighter future for our students, for our school, and for our community. We are indeed closing the educational divide."

https://www.al.com/living/index.ssf/2017/09/west_alabama_school_featured_i.html

Failing Alabama public schools: 75 on newest list, most are high schools

Trisha Powell Crain | Al.com *January 24, 2018*

The newest list of Alabama's 75 "failing" public schools was quietly posted to the Alabama State Department of Education's web site today. As in 2017, most on the list are high schools, but 11 elementary schools are also on the list. In most high schools only the 10th grade is tested, and proficiency levels are much lower at the 10th grade level than in other grades.

The list shows schools whose spring 2017 test results in math and reading on the ACT Aspire are in the lowest 6 percent of all schools in Alabama. The state's board of education voted to drop the ACT Aspire last June and a permanent replacement test has not been named. That definition of failing school was created in the Alabama Accountability Act in 2013 and was tweaked in 2015 to exclude schools that exclusively serve special populations of students with disabilities.

The list typically reflects schools where a large percentage of students are in poverty. Eleven of these schools have been on the failing list before, but were not on the failing list last year. Thirteen of these schools have never been on the failing list until this year. Birmingham City has the highest number of schools on the list, with 14, up one from 2017.

Birmingham City Superintendent Lisa Herring, in a press release, said, "We are currently taking time to assess the failing schools data, as well as the data that will soon be publicly released on the state report card. Although these won't be our only indicators, the data will be used to drive our strategy, our plan of execution and our movement toward excellence." Seventy-five of Alabama's 1,325 schools landed on the list due to a poor showing on the state's standardized test in the spring of 2017.

Montgomery County has 11 schools on the list, also up one from last year. Mobile County has nine, up one from last year, and Jefferson County has two, down from five last year. Students who are zoned to attend a school on the list of failing public schools have options to transfer out of the failing school, including transferring to another non-failing public school within the district. Parents must notify school officials of their intent to transfer by May 1 for the 2018-2019 school year.

Parents of students who transfer from a failing school to attend a non-failing public or to a non-public school could have any expenses to transfer qualify for a tax credit on their Alabama income tax liability. Students who are zoned to attend failing public schools are also eligible to receive scholarships to attend participating non-public schools or public schools that accept students from outside of the district but require tuition payments.

Here's the full list.

DISTRICT	SCHOOL
Anniston City	Anniston High School
Barbour County	Barbour County High School
Bessemer City	Abrams Elementary School
Bessemer City	Bessemer City High School
Birmingham City	Barrett Elementary School
Birmingham City	Charles A Brown Elementary School
Birmingham City	George Washington Carver High School
Birmingham City	Hayes K-8
Birmingham City	Hemphill Elementary School
Birmingham City	Hudson K-Eight School
Birmingham City	Huffman High School-Magnet
Birmingham City	Jackson-Olin High School
Birmingham City	Parker High School
Birmingham City	Smith Middle School
Birmingham City	Washington Elementary School
Birmingham City	Jones Valley Middle School
Birmingham City	Wenonah High School
Birmingham City	Woodlawn High School-Magnet
Bullock County	Bullock County High School
Choctaw County	Choctaw County High School
Dallas County	Keith Middle-High School
Dallas County	Southside High School

Dallas County	Tipton Durant Middle School
Dothan City	Honeysuckle Middle School
Escambia County	Escambia County High School
Fairfield City	Fairfield High Preparatory School
Fairfield City	Robinson Elementary School
Greene County	Greene County High School
Greene County	Robert Brown Middle School (formerly Carver Middle School)
Hale County	Greensboro High School
Hale County	Hale County High School
Huntsville City	Mae Jemison High School
Huntsville City	Lee High School
Huntsville City	Ronald McNair 7-8
Jefferson County	Center Point High School
Jefferson County	Minor High School
Lanett City	Lanett Senior High School
Linden City	Linden High School
Lowndes County	Calhoun High School
Macon County	Booker T Washington High
Macon County	Notasulga High School
Marengo County	Amelia L. Johnson High School
Midfield City	Midfield High School
Midfield City	Rutledge School
Mobile County	Ben C Rain High School
Mobile County	Booker T Washington Middle School
Mobile County	Mattie T Blount High School
Mobile County	Mobile County Training Middle School
Mobile County	CL Scarborough Model Middle School (formerly CL Scarborough Middle School)
Mobile County	John L Leflore Magnet School
Mobile County	Chastang-Fournier Middle School (formerly Elizabeth S. Chastang Middle School)
Mobile County	CF Vigor High School
Mobile County	Lillie B Williamson High School
Monroe County	**Monroe County High School**
Montgomery County	Bellingrath Middle School
Montgomery County	Capitol Heights Middle School
Montgomery County	Carver Senior High School
Montgomery County	Davis Elementary School
Montgomery County	Fews Secondary Acceleration Academy
Montgomery County	Highland Avenue Elementary School
Montgomery County	Jefferson Davis High School
Montgomery County	Lanier Senior High School
Montgomery County	Lee High School
Montgomery County	Nixon Elementary School
Montgomery County	Park Crossing High School
Pickens County	Aliceville High School
Selma City	Selma High School
Selma City	R.B. Hudson Middle School
Sumter County	York West End Junior High School
Sumter County	Sumter Central High School
Tuscaloosa City	Paul W Bryant High School
Tuscaloosa City	Central High School
Walker County	Carbon Hill High School
Wilcox County	Wilcox Central High School
Wilcox County	Camden School Of Arts & Technology

https://www.al.com/news/index.ssf/2018/01/failing_public_schools_75_on_t.html

20 Alabama schools with the lowest average ACT scores

Ivana Hrynkiw | Al.com *June 20, 2017*

The ACT (originally known as American College Testing) measures knowledge gained in high school and college readiness, as most colleges require a test for admission. The 2016 ACT Results for Alabama public schools and systems was released earlier this year, and formed into a rankings list by the Public Affairs Research Council of Alabama. Below are the schools with the worst average ACT scores, with the worst ranking listed first. These results are from the 2015-2016 school year.

J.F. Shields High School, part of the Monroe County school district, had an average ACT score of 11. According to the school website, it serves grades K4-12 with approximately 260 students, and is a 1-A provider of public education.

Southside High School, in the Dallas County school district, had an average ACT score of 12 in 2016. The school is located in Selma and recently received an award from the Air Force Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps, recognizing "personal growth and accomplishments of the cadets, contributions of the instructors as mentors, and the support of the school and local community."

R.A. Hubbard High School in the Lawrence County district ranks in the bottom of the ACT scores, with an average score of 12. Its mission statement is, "Our mission is to assure that each student is highly educated, prepared for leadership, service and empowered for success as a citizen in a global society."

Lanier Senior High School is located within the Montgomery County school district and has an average ACT score of 12. According to a message from the principal on the school's website, the school theme is “Reclaiming the Castle”. "This theme represents the positive energy from our faculty and staff as we prepare to invigorate our perception in this community by reclaiming Lanier from the stereotypes and the realities that do not reflect what it means to be a Poet. In order to accomplish this theme, we need support, cooperation, and dedication from all of our faculty and staff members, parents, students, and stakeholders."

Calhoun High School is within the Lowndes County district and had an average ACT score of 12 in 2016. The school's mission statement, according to its website, is "to foster nourishing growth and the sound development of each individual academically and emotionally who will thereby be prepared to intensely compete in a global society. We will create a safe and extraordinary place to learn and excel. This will be accomplished by a well-trained staff, utilizing a technologically sound, student centered curriculum."

Bullock County High School, in the Bullock County district, had an average ACT score of 12 last year. The above photo, taken in 2013, shows the schools computers. The district has Apple computers in all of its schools.

Barbour County High School, located in the town of Clayton, is in the county school district. Its average ACT score was 12. The school district has 849 students enrolled and 130 employees. According to a school brochure, the 2016-2017 operating budget is $10 million.

Amelia L. Johnson High School is in the Marengo County School District. Its average ACT score last year was 12. According to its website, the school's purpose is "to provide educational opportunities which enable our students to acquire knowledge, skills, and personal experiences for responsible citizenship and lifelong learning."

Woodlawn High School-Magnet is located in the Birmingham City school district. The school's average ACT score last year was 13. A movie, called "Woodlawn," came to theaters nationwide in 2015. The movie put Alabama's civil rights history in the spotlight with the story of a Birmingham high school football team coming together in the 1970s.

Wilcox Central High School, located in the Wilcox County school district, had an average score of 13 in 2016. According to U.S. News, the school’s enrollment was 540 students, and its graduation rate was 87%.

Tarrant High School, located in the Tarrant City school district, had an average test score of 13. According to the school's website, its Advance Placement program participation rate is 56 percent. The school is in talks with Lawson State Community College in the hopes of being able to offer more career technical education options than it currently has. "Our goal is to graduate College and/or Career Ready students," the website states.

Sumter Central High School is in the school district of Sumter County, and had an average ACT score of 13. The school website shows its vision statement: "Sumter Central High School, in striving for excellence, seeks to provide a comprehensive education that engages all students to their fullest potential. Our goal is to ensure students academic and social success."

Robert C. Hatch High School had an average test score of 13 last year. It is part of the Perry County school district. According to greatschools.org, the school has an enrollment of 370 and serves grades 7-12.

In the Birmingham City school district, Parker High School had an average ACT score of 13. The website states, "A. H. Parker High School is a public, urban high school located in the northern section of Birmingham, Alabama (Jefferson County). The school was conceptualized as the first public high school for Negro students in Birmingham. In 1900, its initial enrollment consisted of 18 students, compared to the 1,235 in 2006. Upon Dr. Parker's retirement in 1939, the school's name was officially changed to A. H. Parker High School. In 2011, the new A.H. Parker High School opened its doors."

Notasulga High School, located in the Macon County district, had an average ACT score of 13. The school offers programs including student government association, student ambassadors, future nurses of America, and a campus ministry.

In the Washington County school district, McIntosh High School had an average ACT score of 13 last year. The school is located in the town of McIntosh, which has a population of about 300. The town was incorporated in 1970- just the third incorporated town in Washington County. Read more about the town and its history here.

Loachapoka High School is in the Lee County school district. In 2016, the high school had an average ACT score of 13. Loachapoka High School enrolls grades 7–12, with 296 students. It is one of four high schools in the Lee County school district. The school, according to its website, is widely known for their marching band. "With their dynamic drum majors and dance team they are who they say they are: 'The Baddest Band in the Land'. The Mighty Marching Indians band formed in the late 1970s," the website shows.

Lillie B. Williamson High School
Lillie B. Williamson High School, located in the Mobile County school district, had an average score of 13. According to Williamson High, students have the opportunity to take Advanced Placement courses- participation in the AP program is 17 percent, according to U.S. News. About 596 students are enrolled at the school, and the student-teacher ratio is 16:1.

Lee High School, located within the Montgomery County school district, had an average score of 13 in 2016. According to the district website, Montgomery County public schools' core values are a commitment to achievement, passion for learning, integrity and accountability, respect for self and others, educational equity, and community partnerships.

Keith Middle-High School is located in the Dallas County school district. Its average ACT score in 2016 was 13. A message from the principal in 2016 on the school website read, "As principal I challenge each of you to become the best that you can be. As a caring and committed staff we offer the following suggestions on achieving academic success (1) be respectful to all faculty/staff as well as fellow students, (2) attend school regularly with all materials needed for classes, (3) pay extra attention to areas of focus,(4) seek help early if needed, (5) take pride in yourself, your school, and your community."

https://www.al.com/news/index.ssf/2017/06/alabamas_lowest_act_scores.html

19 Alabama high schools where at least 80 percent of graduates go to college

Leada Gore | Al.com *March 19, 2018*

About 63 percent of Alabama high school graduates enroll in college the year after completing from high school, according to data from the Public Affairs Research Council of Alabama. Thirty-one percent of those students enroll in a four-year college; 32 percent in a two-year college; and 37 percent do not continue into higher education in the year after graduating from high school. Here's a look at the schools sending the highest percentages of students to college the year after they graduate, according to PARCA data. The percentage shown is the total attending four-year colleges and community colleges as of 2016, the most recent data available.

Sweet Water High School
Marengo County Schools
80 percent of students attend college
46 percent attend 2-year-colleges
34 percent attend 4-year colleges

James Clemens High School
Madison City Schools
80 percent of students attend college
25 percent attend 2-year colleges
55 percent attend 4-year colleges

George W. Long High School
Dale County Schools
80 percent of students attend college
69 percent attend 2-year colleges
11 percent attend 4-year colleges

Pleasant Home High School
Covington County Schools
81 percent of students attend college
76 percent attend 2-year colleges
5 percent attend 4-year colleges

Spain Park High School
Hoover City Schools
81 percent of students attend college
16 percent attend 2-year colleges
65 percent attend 4-year colleges

Auburn High School
Auburn City Schools
81 percent of students attend college
27 percent attend 2-year colleges
54 percent attend 4-year colleges

Bob Jones High School
Madison City Schools
81 percent of students attend college
21 percent attend 2-year colleges
60 percent attend 4-year colleges

Muscle Shoals High School
Muscle Shoals City Schools
82 percent of students attend college
38 percent attend 2-year colleges
44 percent attend 4-year colleges

Hoover High School
Hoover City Schools
83 percent of students attend college
23 percent attend 2-year colleges
60 percent attend 4-year colleges

T. R. Miller High School
Brewton City Schools
85 percent of students attend college
48 percent attend 2-year colleges
37 percent attend 4-year colleges

Wadley High School
Randolph County Schools
87 percent of students attend college
74 percent attend 2-year colleges
13 percent attend 4-year colleges

Excel High School
Monroe County Schools
87 percent of students attend college
65 percent attend 2-year colleges
22 percent attend 4-year colleges

Vestavia Hills High School
Vestavia Hills Schools
87 percent of students attend college
10 percent attend 2-year colleges
77 percent attend 4-year colleges

Booker T. Washington Magnet School
Montgomery County Schools
88 percent of students attend college
2 percent attend 2-year colleges
86 percent attend 4-year colleges

Mountain Brook High School
Mountain Brook City Schools
91 percent of students attend college
5 percent attend 2-year colleges
86 percent attend 4-year colleges

Marengo High School
Marengo County Schools
92 percent of students attend college
83 percent attend 2-year colleges
9 percent attend 4-year colleges

Ramsay High School
Birmingham City Schools
93 percent of students attend college
15 percent attend 2-year colleges
78 percent attend 4-year colleges

Loveless Academic Magnet Program High School
Montgomery County Schools
93 percent of students attend college
4 percent attend 2-year colleges
89 percent attend 4-year colleges

Brewbaker Technology Magnet High School
Montgomery County Schools
94 percent of students attend college
7 percent attend 2-year colleges
87 percent attend 4-year colleges

https://www.al.com/expo/erry-2018/03/ffc068387d/19_alabama_high_schools_where.html

Session VII - Monroeville

Below are the biographies of the panelists for Session VII, discussing literary tourism in Monroeville.

Annie Marie Bryan

Annie Marie Bryan is Director of Monroeville Main Street.

Alisha Linam

Alisha Linam is the Director of Library Services and the Director of the Alabama Center for Literary Arts at Coastal Alabama Community College. The Alabama Center for Literary Arts sponsors the annual Alabama Writers Symposium, celebrating 22 years on April 25-26, 2019. Alisha currently serves on the Monroeville Main Street and Monroeville/Monroe County Chamber of Commerce Boards of Directors, and she is the Vice President of the Kiwanis Club of Monroeville. She enjoys reading, iPhone photography, traveling, Hamilton: An American Musical, and owns an impressive collection of houndstooth.

Linam is an alumna of The University of Alabama (B.A. in history, 2009 and MLIS, 2010) and Middle Tennessee State University (M.A. in History, 2013).

Mayor Sally Smith

Sandy Smith was recently appointed as Mayor of Monroeville. She spent 28 years serving as Executive Director of the Monroeville/Monroe County Chamber of Commerce. She is a graduate of the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. Sandy is married to Rayford Smith and they have two married children.

Harper Lee's lawyer to transform author's hometown into major tourism destination

Connor Sheets | al.com *December 1, 2016*

A bold new plan to transform Harper Lee's hometown of Monroeville into a major tourist destination for fans of the late author and her writings is slated to roll out beginning as early as March. A tight-knit coalition, including Lee's attorney Tonja Carter and wealthy paper mill magnate George Landegger, plans to create the "Harper Lee Trail," a multifaceted collection of new Lee-related attractions aimed at drawing hundreds of thousands of additional tourists to the small Monroe County town each year.

With plans to refurbish a 1909 building to serve as a museum dedicated to Harper Lee, build replicas of three homes that served as settings in her seminal novel "To Kill a Mockingbird," and provide other new offerings, the proposed trail would be a costly endeavor that would take years to complete. Pete Black, a member of the board of Mockingbird Company - a nonprofit founded in May 2015 by Lee, Carter and Montgomery accountant Paul Fields - spoke to AL.com Wednesday about the little-known plan.

Carter did not respond to requests for comment via email and phone and instead instructed Black to answer questions about the project. Black said the Wednesday phone interview marked the first time the plan's details have been discussed with a media outlet. "There's a bigger vision that we're working on in Monroeville," he said. "With Ms. Lee's passing in February we've been working with leaders in Monroeville on how do we honor Ms. Lee, and our vision is, with some time, how do we create a Harper Lee Trail?"

Alabama's Stratford-upon-Avon Inspired in part by visits in July by Carter, Black and Monroe County Probate Judge Greg Norris to William Shakespeare's birthplace at Stratford-upon-Avon in England to learn about how it has been turned into a popular destination for fans of the playwright, the Harper Lee Trail would fundamentally change Monroeville's tourism industry. Landegger, chairman of the Parsons & Whittemore pulp and paper company, funded Black and Norris' transatlantic trips, according to Black, who also serves as Parsons & Whittemore's Alabama business director.

"We had a great trip," Norris told the Monroe Journal newspaper after he returned from England in July. "While there, we had the opportunity to meet with Juliet Short, the Stratford mayor, and she provided us with lots of ideas on how to grow tourism in our county." The only major cultural attraction in Monroeville currently dedicated largely to Lee's legacy is the old Monroe County Courthouse. Lee based the courtroom that serves as the setting for the trial in "To Kill a Mockingbird" on the one in the county courthouse, which also houses a museum of artifacts that includes many related to the novelist, who died Feb. 19 at the age of 89.

But Carter's coalition hopes that the Harper Lee Trail would greatly expand the offerings that Lee pilgrims could patronize when visiting her hometown, which was the inspiration for the fictional town of Maycomb immortalized in "Mockingbird." Landegger responded to an email seeking comment with a short statement. "It's somewhat too early to go public with our planning which [is] still embryonic," he wrote Tuesday. "I will be happy to speak with you end January (sic) with good news."

In September, Landegger purchased the Old Monroe County Bank Building on the town's historic Courthouse Square, a historic structure that once housed the offices of Lee's father's law practice. Black said the trail coalition hopes to register a foundation later this month that would raise funds to renovate the bank building and turn it into a Harper Lee museum. He described the foundation as "the first step" toward realizing the dream of a Harper Lee Trail.

The entity, which Black described as "a public charity to raise funds" for the trail's development and construction, will likely be called the Harper Lee Literary Foundation. The mission of the foundation "would be to honor the literary legacy of Ms. Lee and at the same time get more people to visit Ms. Lee's Maycomb," Black explained. The coalition plans to develop a number of properties to be featured as part of the trail, and to fund the efforts largely via the foundation, assuming it can generate enough funds via donations, grants and other sources to do so.

"Our longer-term vision would be doing that in Monroeville: making sure the courthouse is maintained and refurbished as necessary; restoring that bank building to the 1909 vintage and making it into a museum; refurbishing the house where the Lee sisters lived during their senior years; and a plan to replicate the three houses from the To Kill a Mockingbird neighborhood. We've got big plans, working on a big vision."

The house he referred to is the last private residence where Harper and Alice Lee lived together before they fell into poor health. And the three houses he referenced are ones from Lee's youth in Monroeville that have long been torn down but that served as the inspiration for the homes of Boo Radley, Scout and other "Mockingbird" characters.

The details of the proposal have yet to be formally announced, but sources in Monroeville said that it has been discussed in general terms with a number of local leaders in recent months. In February, Landegger told attendees of the Monroeville/Monroe County Chamber of Commerce's annual dinner that "[i]t is good that over 30,000 people visit the old courthouse each year, but let's set our goal to attract 100,000 or 200,000 or 250,000 visitors annually," according to The Monroe Journal.

Lee Sentell, director of the Alabama Department of Tourism and Travel, has also been told about the plans for the trail, according to Black. Sentell was traveling this week and was not available to provide comment about the proposal. "Lee Sentell was here the week before last and we met with him and he's very, very excited," Black said. "He sees the impact it will have."

In March, Birmingham attorney Scott Adams registered a Montgomery company called Harper Lee LLC with the state. Little is known about the private company, but Fields confirmed Wednesday that he is its chief financial officer, and that Carter is the point person for any inquiries about the property. "I'm not authorized to give you any information other than to let you know that what you just asked me is correct," he said when asked if he was in fact the CFO of Harper Lee, LLC, as he indicates in his resume on the LinkedIn social network. "[Carter] would be one person you could contact," he said, when asked where one could obtain more information about the company.

http://www.al.com/news/birmingham/index.ssf/2016/12/harper_lees_lawyer_to_lead_tra.html

Monroeville Main Street is writing the next chapter on the city's historic downtown

Michael Tomberlin | Alabama NewsCenter *April 11, 2018*

Monroeville just might be one of the most recognized downtowns in Alabama and now it is turning the page to a renaissance. Home of the late Harper Lee and other literary and journalism legends, Monroeville has more to offer in its downtown square than the courthouse-turned museum made famous in "To Kill a Mockingbird." The new chapter is being authored by Monroeville Main Street, the local entity formed with the help of Main Street Alabama that marries revitalization with historic preservation for economic development.

"Main Street has been a fantastic program," Monroeville Mayor Joseph Oglesby said. "They brought new life back to downtown." Monroeville Main Street is writing the book on its downtown revitalization from Alabama News Center on Vimeo. That new life was sorely needed. The Great Recession of 2007-2008 hit the seat of Monroe County especially hard. Monroe County had an unemployment rate of 22.3 percent in November 2009. In February 2018, the preliminary unemployment rate was 6.8 percent after having dipped to as low as 5 percent in September 2017.

"We're like any small town – the heart of the town is our main street area, our downtown square," Oglesby said. "We've got such a fantastic jewel in the center of town in our old courthouse. We've always been so proud to have it. Now people are taking a little bit of that pride and they're putting it into the buildings they own. You can drive around the square in Monroeville and you can see millions of dollars of work that people have put into their buildings over the last few years because there is that sense of pride back in the downtown."

Oglesby and others believe that pride got newfound life in 2014 when Main Street Alabama designated Monroeville a Main Street Community. "Monroeville has fully embraced the Main Street 'Four Point Approach' of organization, design, promotion and economic vitality in their downtown district," said Mary Helmer, president and state coordinator of Main Street Alabama. "It has been wonderful to see the engagement of volunteers, property and business owners and the city in their revitalization journey. Monroeville Main Street understands the importance of working in all four points and connecting with partners in the community and region."

Anne Marie Bryan is director of Monroeville Main Street. She said those who backed Main Street saw value in the program and wanted to follow the blueprint. "We took to heart the market assessment," Bryan said. "We have valued the tools they've given us and worked with them because they truly are the professionals." Bryan said the Main Street program had the backing of the city government, the Monroeville-Monroe County Chamber of Commerce, the Monroeville-Monroe County Economic Development Authority and others.

"I'm grateful for all of the support," she said. "We could not do this if it wasn't a team effort – if we didn't team up with the library, the museum, the chamber, the city, the county, the economic development office – because together we're far more efficient than we are if we're all trying to work against each other on our own." The city did streetscaping and other improvements very early in the process, making downtown more pedestrian-friendly. The local garden club spruced up potted plants and revitalized the square's rose garden.

But it was the small businesses that began to invest in new storefronts and buy buildings downtown that really started showing the fruits of Monroeville Main Street's efforts. "Monroeville is a great example of how effective a Designated Main Street program can be for a community," Helmer said. "Since 2014, this district alone has cultivated 13 net new businesses and 37 net new jobs. Successes like these truly change the narrative for communities and create vibrant districts."

Bryan and Monroeville Main Street work with small businesses to walk them through things like permitting, historical commission approvals, applying for grants and accessing capital, among other assistance. "One of my favorite things is to see businesses that test the waters – they come in and try a little bit at a time, then move from location to location as they expand," Bryan said. "We've had a number of those that have purchased their own buildings." One of those businesses is Denise Goldman's Becoming Wellness Spa. Goldman's own skin issues got her interested in makeup and eventually led her back to school to learn how to do facials and other treatments.

She began doing facials in a local salon but eventually decided to open her own place, which she did next to the Monroeville Post Office on the downtown square. Her business quickly tripled and she had to move into a larger space next door and within a few months she was outgrowing that space, too.

Goldman always liked the building she's in now and bought it when it became available. The much larger space allowed her to offer a full range of spa treatments including facials, pedicures, manicures, cosmetology, massage therapy, body wraps and a sauna. It gave her an area to sell makeup and spa products and have four private treatment rooms. "We've been here about a year and a half and we love it," she said. Sales last month were 250 percent higher than a year ago.

"It's just growing," she said. "We've got a lot of really good ladies working here and a lot of really good customers that keep coming back. It's just been fantastic." Goldman credits Monroeville Main Street with walking her through her moves and her growth. So, too, does Ashley House, owner of Monroe Signs. Her business started outside the downtown area and she decided to make the move to downtown Monroeville. "We like being a part of the community here," House said.

"I can't say enough about being on the square. I wouldn't be anywhere else, that's for sure." Her business personalizes items for businesses, organizations or individuals. She said repeat business and new walk-ins are better downtown. Businesses like clothing retailer Studio 3:19 and restaurant Prop & Gavel joined long-standing downtown businesses as part of the modern renaissance. "When we opened downtown there was not as much activity as we're seeing now," said Tawny Carter, co-owner and executive chef at Prop & Gavel. "We're seeing more foot traffic and activity now. It's certainly starting to take off and we're seeing a spike in activity."

Other business like Bonehead Boots chose to open a second location on the square after noticing so many of its customers at its Brewton store were coming from Monroeville. The mayor said it's been eye-opening for a number of businesses. "Initially, people were a little skeptical: 'Do we need another program, something else?' But since Main Street focuses just on our downtown main street it's given that little extra push," Oglesby said. "Our occupancy rates are up. At one point in time we had a lot of vacant buildings on the square but now we have few buildings available."

Bryan said buildings are still being sold with big plans. "We've had a few buildings sell recently," she said. "We have a venue space coming in, I'm pretty sure about. We have a project between stage one and stage two of the federal tax credit for renovations on historic buildings." The top floor of that building will be converted into four one-bedroom apartments, the first upstairs living for downtown Monroeville.

But it won't be the first residence downtown. A handful of homes are in the Main Street district, including that of Al Brewton, the Monroeville City councilman who represents the district that includes downtown. Brewton owns a business in the district. He supported Main Street from the beginning. "It was a very comprehensive, organized way of getting involved and keeping things up to date and then it had such excellent follow-through that we thought it would be an excellent way of improving our downtown," Brewton said. "We're starting to see some visible evidence of it now. We're very glad for that."

Brewton believes the best is yet to come. "I would like to see more visible evidence. We would love to see more businesses locate here – restaurants, entertainment district – big, huge plans and looking down the road," he said. Monroeville Main Street has launched its first downtown mural project, a tribute to Truman Capote and "A Christmas Memory," his short story with strong ties to Monroeville. It's an example of a community using its assets and connections to enhance its downtown, a tenet of the Main Street program.

"Across Alabama, we are seeing the impact of communities working this approach to effectively create districts that are well-managed and maintained as well as entrepreneur-friendly, becoming the place citizens choose to do business," Helmer said. In that regard, you might say Monroeville is doing it by the book.

https://www.alabamanewscenter.com/2018/04/11/monroeville-main-street-writing-next-chapter-citys-historic-downtown/

Session VIII - Monroeville

Below is the biography of the speakers for Session VIII, discussing the history and legacy of the Clausell community in Monroeville.

Rev. Ywell Cunningham

Ywell Cunningham is the Pastor of Bethel #2 Baptist Church in the Clausell Community.

Rev. John Malone

John Malone is Pastor of Bethany Baptist Church in Burt Corn, AL and has 57 years of ministry experience. He is a retired social studies teacher with the Monroe County Board of Education. John is a graduate of Bethlehem Industrial Academy and taught at Union High School both in Clausell. He served two years in the United States Army and is a Korean War Veteran.

Malone is an alumnus of Alabama A&M University, Tuskegee University and Birmingham-Easonian Baptist Bible College.

What's Changed, and What Hasn't, in the Town That Inspired "To Kill a Mockingbird"

Paul Theroux | Smithsonian Magazine *July 2015*

Traveling back in time to visit Harper Lee's hometown, the setting of her 1960 masterpiece and the controversial sequel hitting bookstores soon

The twiggy branches of the redbuds were in bloom, the shell-like magnolia petals had begun to twist open, the numerous flowering Bradford pear trees—more blossomy than cherries—were a froth of white, and yet this Sunday morning in March was unseasonably chilly in Monroeville, Alabama. A week before, I had arrived there on a country road. In the Deep South, and Alabama especially, all the back roads seem to lead into the bittersweet of the distant past.

Over on Golf Drive, once a white part of town, Nannie Ruth Williams had risen at 6 in the dim light of a late winter dawn to prepare lunch—to simmer the turnip greens, cook the yams and sweet potatoes, mix the mac and cheese, bake a dozen biscuits, braise the chicken parts and set them with vegetables in the slow cooker. Lunch was seven hours off, but Nannie Ruth's rule was "No cooking after church." The food had to be ready when she got home from the Sunday service with her husband, Homer Beecher Williams—"H.B." to his friends—and anyone else they invited. I hadn't met her, nor did she yet know that one of the diners that day would be me.

The sixth of 16 children, born on the W. J. Anderson plantation long ago, the daughter of sharecropper Charlie Madison (cotton, peanuts, sugar cane, hogs), Nannie Ruth had a big-family work ethic. She had heard that I was meeting H.B. that morning, but had no idea who I was, or why I was in Monroeville, yet in the Southern way, she was prepared to be welcoming to a stranger, with plenty of food, hosting a meal that was a form of peacemaking and fellowship.

Monroeville styles itself "the Literary Capital of Alabama." Though the town had once been segregated, with the usual suspicions and misunderstandings that arise from such forced separation, I found it to be a place of sunny streets and friendly people, and also—helpful to a visiting writer—a repository of long memories. The town boasts that it has produced two celebrated writers, who grew up as neighbors and friends, Truman Capote and Harper Lee. Their homes no longer stand, but other landmarks persist, those of Maycomb, the fictional setting of To Kill A Mockingbird. Still one of the novels most frequently taught in American high schools, Lee's creation has sold more than 40 million copies and been translated into 40 languages.

Among the pamphlets and souvenirs sold at the grandly domed Old Courthouse Museum is Monroeville, The Search for Harper Lee's Maycomb, an illustrated booklet that includes local history as well as images of the topography and architecture of the town that correspond to certain details in the novel. Harper Lee's work, published when she was 34, is a mélange of personal reminiscence, fictional flourishes and verifiable events. The book contains two contrasting plots, one a children's story, the tomboy Scout, her older brother Jem and their friend Dill, disturbed in their larks and pranks by an obscure house-bound neighbor, Boo Radley; and in the more portentous story line, Scout's father's combative involvement in the defense of Tom Robinson, the decent black man, who has been accused of rape.

What I remembered of my long-ago reading of the novel was the gusto of the children and their outdoor world, and the indoor narrative, the courtroom drama of a trumped-up charge of rape, a hideous miscarriage of justice and a racial murder. Rereading the novel recently, I realized I had forgotten how odd the book is, the wobbly construction, the arch language and shifting point of view, how atonal and forced it is at times, a youthful directness and clarity in some of the writing mingled with adult perceptions and arcane language. For example, Scout is in a classroom with a new teacher from North Alabama. "The class murmured apprehensively," Scout tells us, "should she prove to harbor her share of the peculiarities indigenous to that region." This is a tangled way for a 6-year-old to perceive a stranger, and this verbosity pervades the book.

I am now inclined to Flannery O'Connor's view of it as "a child's book," but she meant it dismissively, while I tend to think that its appeal to youngsters (like that of Treasure Island and Tom Sawyer) may be its strength. A young reader easily identifies with the boisterous Scout and sees Atticus as the embodiment of paternal virtue.

In spite of the lapses in narration, the book's basic simplicity and moral certainties are perhaps the reason it has endured for more than 50 years as the tale of an injustice in a small Southern town. That it appeared, like a revelation, at the very moment the civil rights movement was becoming news for a nation wishing to understand, was also part of its success.

Monroeville had known a similar event, the 1934 trial of a black man, Walter Lett, accused of raping a white woman. The case was shaky, the woman unreliable, no hard evidence; yet Walter Lett was convicted and sentenced to death. Before he was electrocuted, calls for clemency proved successful; but by then Lett had been languishing on Death Row too long, within earshot of the screams of doomed men down the hall, and he was driven mad. He died in an Alabama hospital in 1937, when Harper Lee was old enough to be aware of it. Atticus Finch, an idealized version of A.C. Lee, Harper's attorney father, defends the wrongly accused Tom Robinson, who is a tidier version of Walter Lett.

Never mind the contradictions and inconsistencies: Novels can hallow a place, cast a glow upon it and inspire bookish pilgrims—and there are always visitors, who'd read the book or seen the movie. Following the free guidebook Walk Monroeville, they stroll in the downtown historic district, admiring the Old Courthouse, the Old Jail, searching for Maycomb, the locations associated with the novel's mythology, though they search in vain for locations of the movie, which was made in Hollywood. It is a testament to the spell cast by the novel, and perhaps to the popular film, that the monument at the center of town is not to a Monroeville citizen of great heart and noble achievement, nor a local hero or an iconic Confederate soldier, but to a fictional character, Atticus Finch.

These days the talk in town is of Harper Lee, known locally by her first name, Nelle (her grandmother's name Ellen spelled backward). Avoiding publicity from the earliest years of her success, she is back in the news because of the discovery and disinterment of a novel she'd put aside almost six decades ago, an early version of the Atticus Finch-Tom Robinson story, told by Scout grown older and looking down the years. Suggesting the crisis of a vulnerable and convicted man in the Old Jail on North Mount Pleasant Avenue, the novel is titled Go Set a Watchman.

"It's an old book!" Harper Lee told a mutual friend of ours who'd seen her while I was in Monroeville. "But if someone wants to read it, fine!"

Speculation is that the resurrected novel will be sought after as the basis of a new film. The 1962 adaptation of To Kill A Mockingbird, with Gregory Peck's Oscar-winning performance as Atticus Finch, sent many readers to the novel. The American Film Institute has ranked Atticus as the greatest movie hero of all time (Indiana Jones is number two). Robert Duvall, who at age 30 played the mysterious neighbor, Boo Radley, in the film, recently said: "I am looking forward to reading the [new] book. The film was a pivotal point in my career and we all have been waiting for the second book."

According to biographer Charles Shields, author of Mockingbird: A Portrait of Harper Lee, Nelle started several books after her success in 1960: a new novel, and a nonfiction account of a serial murderer. But she'd abandoned them, and apart from a sprinkling of scribbles, seemingly abandoned writing anything else—no stories, no substantial articles, no memoir of her years of serious collaboration with Truman Capote on In Cold Blood. Out of the limelight, she had lived well, mainly in New York City, with regular visits home, liberated by the financial windfall but burdened—maddened, some people said—by the pressure to produce another book. (Lee, who never married, returned to Alabama permanently in 2007 after suffering a stroke. Her sister Alice, an attorney in Monroeville who long handled Lee's legal affairs, died this past November at age 103.)

It seems—especially to a graphomaniac like myself—that Harper Lee was perhaps an accidental novelist—one book and done. Instead of a career of creation, a refinement of this profession of letters, an author's satisfying dialogue with the world, she shut up shop in a retreat from the writing life, like a lottery winner in seclusion. Now 89, living in a care home at the edge of town, she is in delicate health, with macular degeneration and such a degree of deafness that she can communicate only by reading questions written in large print on note cards.

"What have you been doing?" my friend wrote on a card and held it up.

“What sort of fool question is that?” Nelle shouted from her chair. “I just sit here. I don’t do anything!”

She may be reclusive but she is anything but a shrinking violet, and she has plenty of friends. Using a magnifier device, she is a reader, mainly of history, but also of crime novels. Like many people who vanish, wishing for privacy—J.D. Salinger is the best example—she has been stalked, intruded upon, pestered and sought after. I vowed not to disturb her.

Nannie Ruth Williams knew the famous book, and she was well aware of Monroeville’s other celebrated author. Her grandfather had sharecropped on the Faulk family land, and it so happened that Lillie Mae Faulk had married Archulus Julius Persons in 1923 and given birth to Truman Streckfus Persons a little over a year later. After Lillie Mae married a man named Capote, her son changed his name to Truman Capote. Capote had been known in town for his big-city airs. “A smart ass,” a man who’d grown up with him told me. “No one liked him.” Truman was bullied for being small and peevish, and his defender was Nelle Lee, his next-door neighbor. “Nelle protected him,” that man said. “When kids would hop on Capote, Nelle would get ’em off. She popped out a lot of boys’ teeth.”

Capote, as a child, lives on as the character Dill in the novel. His portrayal is a sort of homage to his oddness and intelligence, as well as their youthful friendship. “Dill was a curiosity. He wore blue linen shorts that buttoned to his shirt, his hair was snow-white and stuck to his head like duck-fluff; he was a year my senior but I towered over him.” And it is Dill who animates the subplot, which is the mystery of Boo Radley.

Every year, a highly praised and lively dramatization of the novel is put on by the town’s Mockingbird Players, with dramatic courtroom action in the Old Courthouse. But Nannie Ruth smiled when she was asked whether she’d ever seen it. “You won’t find more than four or five black people in the audience,” a local man told me later. “They’ve lived it. They’ve been there. They don’t want to be taken there again. They want to deal with the real thing that’s going on now.”

H.B. Williams sighed when any mention of the book came up. He was born in a tenant farming family on the Blanchard Slaughter plantation where “Blanchie,” a wealthy but childless white landowner, would baby-sit for the infant H.B. while his parents worked in the fields, picking and chopping cotton. This would have been at about the time of the Walter Lett trial, and the fictional crime of Mockingbird—mid-’30s, when the Great Depression gripped “the tired old town” of the novel, and the Ku Klux Klan was active, and the red clay of the main streets had yet to be paved over.

After the book was published and became a best seller, H.B., then a school principal, was offered the job of assistant principal, and when he refused, pointing out that it was a demotion, he was fired. He spent years fighting for his reinstatement. His grievance was not a sequence of dramatic events like the novel, it was just the unfairness of the Southern grind. The pettifogging dragged on for ten years, but H.B. was eventually triumphant. Yet it was an injustice that no one wanted to hear about, unsensational, unrecorded, not at all cinematic.

In its way, H.B.’s exhausting search for justice resembles that of the public-interest attorney Bryan Stevenson in his quest to exonerate Walter McMillian, another citizen of Monroe-ville. This was also a local story, but a recent one. One Saturday morning in 1986, Ronda Morrison, a white 18-year-old clerk at Jackson Cleaners, was found shot to death at the back of the store. This was in the center of town, near the Old Courthouse made famous 26 years earlier in the novel about racial injustice. In this real case, a black man, Walter McMillian, who owned a local land-clearing business, was arrested, though he’d been able to prove he was nowhere near Jackson Cleaners that day. The trial, moved to mostly white Baldwin County, lasted a day and a half. McMillian was found guilty and sentenced to death.

It emerged that McMillian had been set up; the men who testified against him had been pressured by the police, and later recanted. Bryan Stevenson—the founder of the Equal Justice Initiative in Montgomery, Alabama, who today is renowned for successfully arguing before the Supreme Court in 2012 that lifetime sentences for juveniles convicted of homicide constituted cruel and unusual punishment—had taken an interest in the case. He appealed the conviction, as he relates in his prize-winning account, Just Mercy (2014). After McMillian had been on death

row for five years, his conviction was overturned; he was released in 1993. The wheels of justice grind slowly, with paper shuffling and appeals. Little drama, much persistence. In the town with a memorial to Atticus Finch, not Bryan Stevenson.

And that's the odd thing about a great deal of a certain sort of Deep South fiction—its grotesquerie and gothic, its high color and fantastication, the emphasis on freakishness. Look no further than Faulkner or Erskine Caldwell, but there's plenty in Harper Lee too, in Mockingbird, the Boo Radley factor, the Misses Tutti and Frutti, and the racist Mrs. Dubose, who is a morphine addict: "Her face was the color of a dirty pillowcase and the corners of her mouth glistened with wet which inched like a glacier down the deep grooves enclosing her chin." This sort of prose acts as a kind of indirection, dramatizing weirdness as a way of distracting the reader from day to day indignities.

Backward-looking, few Southern writers concern themselves with the new realities, the decayed downtown, the Piggly Wiggly and the pawn shops, the elephantine Walmart, reachable from the bypass road, where the fast-food joints have put most of the local eateries out of business (though AJ's Family Restaurant, and the Court House Café in Monroe-ville remain lively). Monroeville people I met were proud of having overcome hard times. Men of a certain age recalled World War II: Charles Salter, who was 90, served in the 78th Infantry, fighting in Germany, and just as his division reached the west bank of the Rhine he was hit by shrapnel in the leg and foot. Seventy years later he still needed regular operations. "The Depression was hard," he said. "It lasted here till long after the war." H.B. Williams was drafted to fight in Korea. "And when I returned to town, having fought for my country, I found I couldn't vote."

Some reminiscences were of a lost world, like those of the local columnist, George Thomas Jones, who was 92 and remembered when all the roads of the town were red clay, and how as a drugstore soda jerk he was sassed by Truman Capote, who said, "I sure would like to have something good, but you ain't got it....A Broadway Flip." Young George faced him down, saying, "Boy, I'll flip you off that stool!" Charles Johnson, a popular barber in town, worked his scissors on my head and told me, "I'm from the child abuse era—hah! If I was bad my daddy would tell me to go out and cut a switch from a bridal wreath bush and he'd whip my legs with it. Or a keen switch, more narrah. It done me good!"

Mr. Johnson told me about the settlement near the areas known as Franklin and Wainwright, called Scratch Ankle, famous for inbreeding. The poor blacks lived in Clausell and on Marengo Street, the rich whites in Canterbury, and the squatters up at Limestone were to be avoided. But I visited Limestone just the same; the place was thick with idlers and drunks and barefoot children, and a big toothless man named LaVert stuck his finger in my face and said, "You best go away, mister—this is a bad neighborhood." There is a haunted substratum of darkness in Southern life, and though it pulses through many interactions, it takes a long while to perceive it, and even longer to understand.

The other ignored aspect of life: the Deep South still goes to church, and dresses up to do so. There are good-sized churches in Monroeville, most of them full on Sundays, and they are sources of inspiration, goodwill, guidance, friendship, comfort, outreach and snacks. Nannie Ruth and H.B. were Mount Nebo Baptists, but today they'd be attending the Hopewell C.M.E. Church because the usual pianist had to be elsewhere, and Nannie Ruth would play the piano. The pastor, the Rev. Eddie Marzett, had indicated what hymns to plan for. It was "Women's Day." The theme of the service was "Women of God in these Changing Times," with appropriate Bible readings and two women preachers, the Rev. Marzett taking a back pew in his stylish white suit and tinted glasses.

Monroeville is like many towns of its size in Alabama—indeed the Deep South: a town square of decaying elegance, most of the downtown shops and businesses closed or faltering, the main industries shut down. I was to discover that To Kill A Mockingbird is a minor aspect of Monroeville, a place of hospitable and hard-working people, but a dying town, with a population of 6,300 (and declining), undercut by NAFTA, overlooked by Washington, dumped by manufacturers like Vanity Fair Mills (employing at its peak 2,500 people, many of them women) and Georgia Pacific, which shut down its plywood plant when demand for lumber declined. The usual Deep South challenges in education and housing apply here, and almost a third of Monroe County (29 percent) lives in poverty.

“I was a traveling bra and panty salesman,” Sam Williams told me. “You don’t see many of those nowadays.” He had worked for Vanity Fair for 28 years, and was now a potter, hand-firing cups and saucers of his own design. But he had lucked out in another way: Oil had been found near his land—one of Alabama’s surprises—and his family gets a regular small check, divided five ways among the siblings, from oil wells on the property. His parting shot to me was an earnest plea: “This is a wonderful town. Talk nice about Monroeville.”

Willie Hill had worked for Vanity Fair for 34 years and was now unemployed. “They shut down here, looking for cheap labor in Mexico.” He laughed at the notion that the economy would improve because of the Mockingbird pilgrims. “No money in that, no sir. We need industry, we need real jobs.”

“I’ve lived here all my life—81 years,” a man pumping gas next to me said out of the blue, “and I’ve never known it so bad. If the paper mill closes, we’ll be in real trouble.” (Georgia-Pacific still operates three mills in or near Monroeville.) Willie Hill’s nephew Derek was laid off in 2008 after eight years fabricating Georgia-Pacific plywood. He made regular visits to Monroeville’s picturesque and well-stocked library (once the LaSalle Hotel: Gregory Peck had slept there in 1962 when he visited to get a feel for the town), looking for jobs on the library’s computers and updating his résumé. He was helped by the able librarian, Bunny Hines Nobles, whose family had once owned the land where the hotel stands.

Selma is an easy two-hour drive up a country road from Monroeville. I had longed to see it because I wanted to put a face to the name of the town that had become a battle cry. It was a surprise to me—not a pleasant one, more of a shock, and a sadness. The Edmund Pettus Bridge I recognized from newspaper photos and the footage of Bloody Sunday—protesters being beaten, mounted policemen trampling marchers. That was the headline and the history. What I was not prepared for was the sorry condition of Selma, the shut-down businesses and empty once-elegant apartment houses near the bridge, the whole town visibly on the wane, and apart from its mall, in desperate shape, seemingly out of work. This decrepitude was not a headline.

Just a week before, on the 50th anniversary of the march, President Obama, the first lady, a number of celebrities, civil rights leaders, unsung heroes of Selma and crowders of the limelight had observed the anniversary. They invoked the events of Bloody Sunday, the rigors of the march to Montgomery, and the victory, the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

But all that was mostly commemorative fanfare, political theater and sentimental rage. The reality, which was also an insult, was that these days in this city which had been on the front line of the voting rights movement, voting turnout among the 18-to-25 age group was discouragingly low, with the figures even more dismal in local elections. I learned this at the Interpretive Center outside town, where the docents who told me this shook their heads at the sorry fact. After all the bloodshed and sacrifice, voter turnout was lagging, and Selma itself was enduring an economy in crisis. This went unremarked by the president and the civil rights stalwarts and the celebrities, most of whom took the next plane out of this sad and supine town.

Driving out of Selma on narrow Highway 41, which was lined by tall trees and deep woods, I got a taste of the visitable past. You don’t need to be a literary pilgrim; this illuminating experience of country roads is reason enough to drive through the Deep South, especially here, where the red clay lanes—brightened and brick-hued from the morning rain—branch from the highway into the pines; crossing Mush Creek and Cedar Creek, the tiny flyspeck settlements of wooden shotgun shacks and old house trailers and the white-planked churches; past the roadside clusters of foot-high ant hills, the gray witch-hair lichens trailing from the bony limbs of dead trees, a mostly straight-ahead road of flat fields and boggy pinewoods and flowering shrubs, and just ahead a pair of crows hopping over a lump of crimson road-kill hash.

I passed through Camden, a ruinous town of empty shops and obvious poverty, just a flicker of beauty in some of the derelict houses, an abandoned filling station, the white-washed clapboards and a tiny cupola of old Antioch Baptist Church (Martin Luther King Jr. had spoken here in April 1965, inspiring a protest march that day and the next), the imposing Camden public library, its facade of fat white columns; and then the villages of Beatrice—Bee-ah-triss—and Tunnel Springs. After all this time-warp decay, Monroeville looked smart and promising, with its many churches and picturesque courthouse and fine old houses. Its certain distinction and self-awareness and

its pride were the result of its isolation. Nearly 100 miles from any city, Monroeville had always been in the middle of nowhere—no one arrived by accident. As Southerners said, You had to be going there to get there.

Hopewell C.M.E. Church—in a festive Women's Day mood—was adjacent to the traditionally black part of town, Clausell. The church's sanctuary had served as a secret meeting place in the 1950s for the local civil rights movement, many of the meetings presided over by the pastor, R.V. McIntosh, and a firebrand named Ezra Cunningham, who had taken part in the Selma march. All this information came from H.B. Williams, who had brought me to a Hopewell pew.

After the hymns (Nannie Ruth Williams on the piano, a young man on drums), the announcements, the two offerings, the readings from Proverbs 31 ("Who can find a virtuous woman, for her price is far above rubies"), and prayers, Minister Mary Johnson gripped the lectern and shouted: "Women of God in these Changing Times, is our theme today, praise the Lord," and the congregation called out "Tell it, sister!" and "Praise his name!"

Minister Mary was funny and teasing in her sermon, and her message was simple: Be hopeful in hard times. "Don't look in the mirror and think, 'Lord Jesus, what they gonna think 'bout my wig?' Say 'I'm coming as I am!' Don't matter 'bout your dress—magnify the Lord!" She raised her arms and in her final peroration said, "Hopelessness is a bad place to be. The Lord gonna fee-all you with hope. You might not have money—never mind. You need the Holy Spirit!"

Afterward, the hospitable gesture, my invitation to lunch at the Williams house, a comfortable bungalow on Golf Drive, near the gates to Whitey Lee Park, which was off-limits to blacks until the 1980s, and the once-segregated golf course. We were joined at the table by Arthur Penn, an insurance man and vice president of the local NAACP branch, and his son Arthur Penn Jr.

I raised the subject of Mockingbird, which made Nannie Ruth shrug. Arthur Senior said, "It's a distraction. It's like saying, 'This is all we have. Forget the rest.' It's like a 400-pound comedian on stage telling fat jokes. The audience is paying more attention to the jokes than to what they see."

In Monroeville, the dramas were intense but small-scale and persistent. The year the book came out all the schools were segregated and they remained so for the next five years. And once the schools were integrated in 1965, the white private school Monroe Academy was established not long after. Race relations had been generally good, and apart from the Freedom Riders from the North (which Nelle Lee disparaged at the time as agitators), there were no major racial incidents, only the threat of them.

"Most whites thought, 'You're good in your place. Stay there and you're a good nigger,'" H.B. said. "Of course it was an inferior situation, a double standard all over."

And eating slowly he was provoked to a reminiscence, recalling how in December 1959 the Monroeville Christmas parade was canceled, because the Klan had warned that if the band from the black high school marched with whites, there would be blood. To be fair, all the whites I spoke to in Monroeville condemned this lamentable episode. Later, in 1965, the Klan congregated on Drewry Road, wearing sheets and hoods, 40 or 50 of them, and they marched down Drewry to the Old Courthouse. "Right past my house," H.B. said. "My children stood on the porch and called out to them." This painful memory was another reason he had no interest in the novel, then in its fifth year of bestsellerdom.

"This was a white area. Maids could walk the streets, but if the residents saw a black man they'd call the sheriff, and then take you to jail," Arthur Penn said.

And what a sheriff. Up to the late 1950s, it was Sheriff Charlie Sizemore, noted for his bad temper. How bad? "He'd slap you upside the head, cuss you out, beat you."

One example: A prominent black pastor, N.H. Smith, was talking to another black man, Scott Nettles, on the corner of Claiborne and Mount Pleasant, the center of Monroeville, and steps from the stately courthouse, just

chatting. “Sizemore comes up and slaps the cigarette out of Nettles’ mouth and cusses him out, and why? To please the white folks, to build a reputation.”

That happened in 1948, in this town of long memories.

H.B. and Arthur gave me other examples, all exercises in degradation, but here is a harmonious postscript to it all. In the early ’60s, Sizemore—a Creek Indian, great-grandson to William Weatherford, Chief Red Eagle—became crippled and had a conversion. As an act of atonement, Sizemore went down to Clausell, to the main house of worship, Bethel Baptist Church, and begged the black congregation for forgiveness.

Out of curiosity, and against the advice of several whites I met in town, I visited Clausell, the traditionally black section of town. When Nelle Lee was a child, the woman who bathed and fed her was Hattie Belle Clausell, the so-called mammy in the Lee household, who walked from this settlement several miles every day to the house on South Alabama Avenue in the white part of town (the Lee house is now gone, replaced by Mel’s Dairy Dream and a defunct swimming pool-supply store). Clausell was named for that black family.

I stopped at Franky D’s Barber and Style Shop on Clausell Road, because barbers know everything. There I was told that I could find Irma, Nelle’s former housekeeper, up the road, “in the projects.”

The projects was a cul-de-sac of brick bungalows, low-cost housing, but Irma was not in any of them.

“They call this the ’hood,” Brittany Bonner told me—she was on her porch, watching the rain come down. “People warn you about this place, but it’s not so bad. Sometimes we hear guns—people shooting in the woods. You see that cross down the road? That’s for the man they call ‘James T’—James Tunstall. He was shot and killed a few years ago right there, maybe drug-related.”

A white man in Monroeville told me that Clausell was so dangerous that the police never went there alone, but always in twos. Yet Brittany, 22, mother of two small girls, said that violence was not the problem. She repeated the town’s lament: “We have no work, there are no jobs.”

Brittany’s great-aunt Jacqueline Packer thought I might find Irma out at Pineview Heights, down Clausell Road, but all I found were a scattering of houses, some bungalows and many dogtrot houses, and rotting cars, and a sign on a closed roadside café, “Southern Favorites—Neckbones and Rice, Turkey Necks and Rice,” and then the pavement ended and the road was red clay, velvety in the rain, leading into the pinewoods.

Back in town I saw a billboard with a stern message: “Nothing in this country is free. If you’re getting something without paying for it, Thank a Taxpayer.” Toward the end of my stay in Monroeville, I met the Rev. Thomas Lane Butts, former pastor of the First United Methodist Church, where Nelle Lee and her sister, Alice, had been members of his congregation, and his dear friends.

“This town is no different from any other,” he told me. He was 85, and had traveled throughout the South, and knew what he was talking about. Born ten miles east in what he called “a little two-mule community” of Bermuda (Ber-moo-dah in the local pronunciation), his father had been a tenant farmer—corn, cotton, vegetables. “We had no land, we had nothing. We didn’t have electricity until I was in the 12th grade, in the fall of 1947. I studied by oil lamp.”

The work paid off. After theology studies at Emory and Northwestern, and parishes in Mobile and Fort Walton Beach, Florida, and civil rights struggles, he became pastor of this Methodist church.

“We took in racism with our mother’s milk,” he said. But he’d been a civil rights campaigner from early on, even before 1960 when in Talladega he met Martin Luther King Jr. “He was the first black person I’d met who was not a field hand,” he said. “The embodiment of erudition, authority and humility.”

Rev. Butts had a volume of Freud in his lap the day I met him, searching for a quotation in Civilization and Its Discontents.

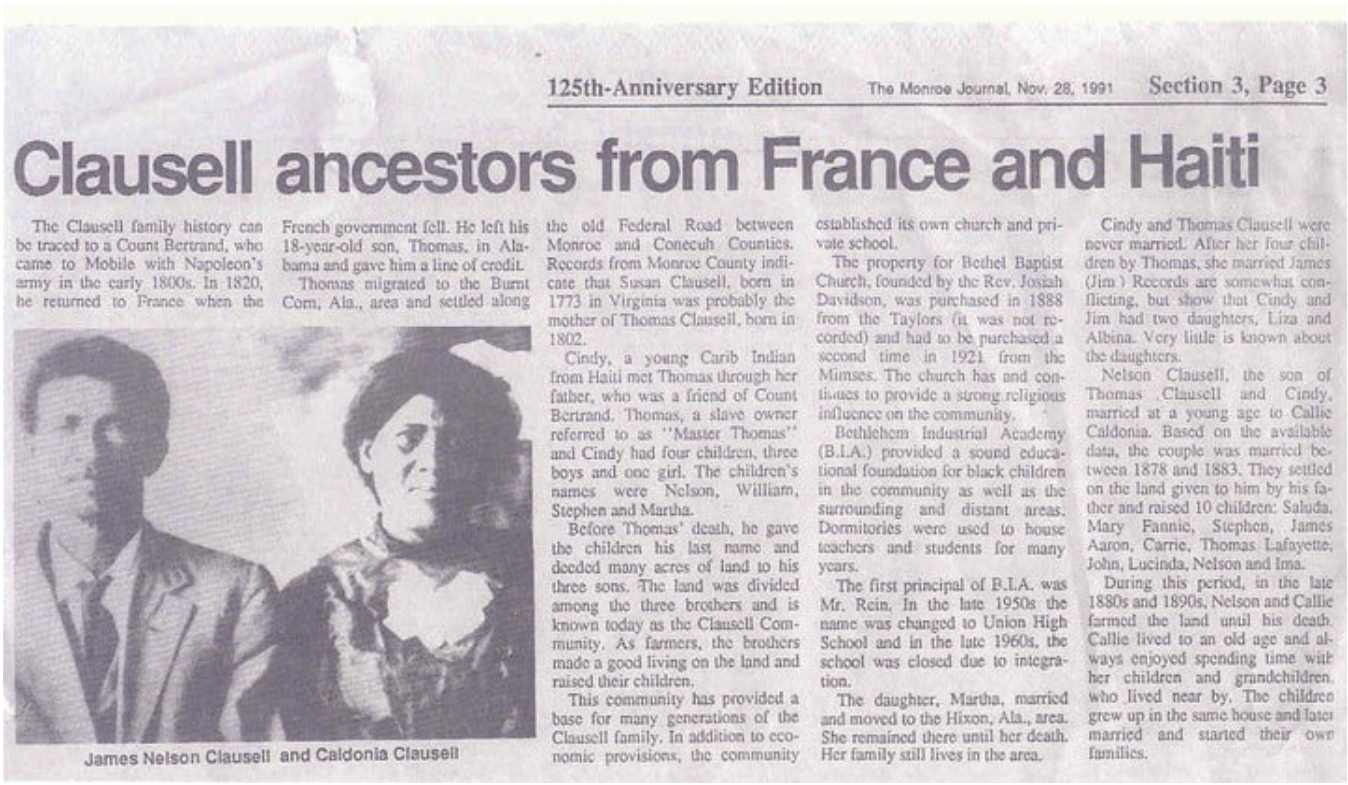
I told him the essay was one of my own favorites, for Freud's expression about human pettiness and discrimination, "the narcissism of minor differences"—the subtext of the old segregated South, and of human life in general.

His finger on the page, Rev. Butts murmured some sentences, "'The element of truth behind all this...men are not gentle creatures who want to be loved...can defend themselves...a powerful share of aggressiveness...' Ah here it is. 'Homo homini lupus...Man is a wolf to man.'"

That was the reality of history, as true in proud Monroeville as in the wider world. And that led us to talk about the town, the book, the way things are. He valued his friendship with H.B. Williams: the black teacher, the white clergyman, both in their 80s, both of them civil rights stalwarts. He had been close to the Lee family, had spent vacations in New York City with Nelle, and still saw her. An affectionately signed copy of the novel rested on the side table, not far from his volume of Freud.

"Here we are," he intoned, raising his hands, "tugged between two cultures, one gone and never to return, the other being born. Many things here have been lost. To Kill A Mockingbird keeps us from complete oblivion."

https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/whats-changed-what-hasnt-in-town-inspired-to-kill-a-mockingbird-180955741/



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Clausell ancestors from France and Haiti

The Clausell family history can be traced to a Count Bertrand, who came to Mobile with Napoleon's army in the early 1800s. In 1820, he returned to France when the French government fell. He left his 18-year-old son, Thomas, in Alabama and gave him a line of credit.

Thomas migrated to the Burnt Corn, Ala., area and settled along the old Federal Road between Monroe and Conecuh Counties. Records from Monroe County indicate that Susan Clausell, born in 1773 in Virginia was probably the mother of Thomas Clausell, born in 1802.

Cindy, a young Carib Indian from Haiti met Thomas through her father, who was a friend of Count Bertrand. Thomas, a slave owner referred to as "Master Thomas" and Cindy had four children, three boys and one girl. The children's names were Nelson, William, Stephen and Martha.

Before Thomas' death, he gave the children his last name and deeded many acres of land to his three sons. The land was divided among the three brothers and is known today as the Clausell Community. As farmers, the brothers made a good living on the land and raised their children.

This community has provided a base for many generations of the Clausell family. In addition to economic provisions, the community established its own church and private school.

The property for Bethel Baptist Church, founded by the Rev. Josiah Davidson, was purchased in 1888 from the Taylors (it was not recorded) and had to be purchased a second time in 1921 from the Mimses. The church has and continues to provide a strong religious influence on the community.

Bethlehem Industrial Academy (B.I.A.) provided a sound educational foundation for black children in the community as well as the surrounding and distant areas. Dormitories were used to house teachers and students for many years.

The first principal of B.I.A. was Mr. Rein. In the late 1950s the name was changed to Union High School and in the late 1960s, the school was closed due to integration.

The daughter, Martha, married and moved to the Hixon, Ala., area. She remained there until her death. Her family still lives in the area.

Cindy and Thomas Clausell were never married. After her four children by Thomas, she married James (Jim) Records are somewhat conflicting, but show that Cindy and Jim had two daughters, Liza and Albina. Very little is known about the daughters.

Nelson Clausell, the son of Thomas Clausell and Cindy, married at a young age to Callie Caldonia. Based on the available data, the couple was married between 1878 and 1883. They settled on the land given to him by his father and raised 10 children: Saluda, Mary Fannie, Stephen, James Aaron, Carrie, Thomas Lafayette, John, Lucinda, Nelson and Ima.

During this period, in the late 1880s and 1890s, Nelson and Callie farmed the land until his death. Callie lived to an old age and always enjoyed spending time with her children and grandchildren, who lived near by. The children grew up in the same house and later married and started their own families.

James Nelson Clausell and Caldonia Clausell

History of Bethel #2 Baptist Church

Bethel #2 Baptist Church has been an inspiration to generations that have known its service and felt its influence in their lives and in their hearts. It was in the early years and is today a source of strength for its worshippers.This church history represents known facts pertaining to the early establishment of the Bethel Baptist church as remembered and relayed by the Rev. James Aaron Clausell, Bro. Sandy Clausell, Sis. Carrie Clausell and Bro. Tommie Clausell. This is a history that was passed on to them by their parents during their lifetimes.

The Bethel Baptist Church had it beginnings in approximately 1870 when it was organized by Rev. David Small in an old log cabin behind the Old Dan Tucker Place (about ¼ miles past the present church site-off the road to the right). Under Rev. Small's leadership, another young man, Rev. Josiah Davidson was called to preach. Rev. Small led the church in raising money to send the young man to Selma University, an institution founded by the Negro Baptist Churches of Alabama, to provide higher education for black potential ministers. Rev. Josiah Davidson finished the educational program at Selma University and returned later to become the next pastor of Bethel Baptist Church.

Under Rev. Davidson's guidance, the first frame building for the church was erected at the present church site. It is believed that the land on which the church is built was once owned by a relative of Deacon Willie Nettles. It remains unanswered why the same land was purchased from the Mims according to deeds found from old records. However, more recently a deed has been found that reads the land was purchased from Celina S. Taylor on the 15th day of September 1888. This document has now been recorded. The church had to be rebuilt a couple of years later because it was destroyed by a tornado. Rev. Davidson served as pastor of the church for about forty years, and because he was very active in the local community - teaching school, preaching on Sundays, and working to help members with their spiritual needs- he has been referred to a the "First Pastor."

In about 1908, the Rev. James M. Lynum became Bethel's pastor, and he served for about four or five years. Then Rev. Robert Russell served as pastor for about four years. In 1918 or 1919, Dr. C. W. Wilson was called to serve as Bethel's pastor. Under his leadership a new church was built by
three brothers who were members of the church and whose descendants are still members – Bro. Nelson Clausell, Bro. Stephen Clausell and Rev. William Clausell.

In the early 1920's Rev. W. T. Brown became the pastor. He lived in the Clausell community, where he taught school and later also taught Bible lessons to students at the school on a weekly basis. Church services were held on every second Sunday. During Rev. Brown's pastorate, many improvements were made in the church's activities. The Junior Choir and the Usher Board were organized: the baccalaureate services for students graduating from high school were held in the church, a baptism pool was built outside the church on the hillside. Prior to the Baptism pool, baptizing was performed in he Old Isaam Tucker Branch and in the Archie Branch. Rev. Brown remained Bethel's pastor until his health began to fail. On August 13, 1950 Rev. Brown's resignation was offered and accepted by the church in a business meeting on August 16, 1950, to be effective in sixty days.

On February 24, 1951, Rev. W. M. Patton was accepted as pastor of Bethel to serve on second and fourth Sundays of each month. During his years of service, the church became aware of its need for further expansion to meet its growing membership. In 1956, the church opened its first bank account with Monroe County Bank. A banking committee composed of Deacon Arthur Clausell, Deacon Pearlie Broughton, Deacon T. L. Clausell, and Bro. John Clausell was formed to oversee the account.

When Rev. E. L. Williams became pastor in 1957, services were changed to the first and third Sundays of each month. Rev. Williams initiated the church building fund project, and in 1962, Bethel had a new church building. A loan for $15,000.00 was made from E.S. and Louise Gardner to assist with the building of the new church. After about eighteen months, another loan was made from First National Bank. The money was used to pay off the first mortgage as well as to complete the building of the church, this included finishing the basement, installing air conditioners in the Sunday School rooms, placing a sidewalk around the church, and installing stained glass windows.

The edifice was constructed by Bro. Nelson Clausell. The dedication of the new church was held on March 29, 1964, and the Rev. K.C. Bass preached the sermon. However, that building was remodeled to appear as it does today. In January 1976, Rev. Williams initiated full time services for worship on every Sunday. In May of the same year, Bethel was deeply saddened by the accidental drowning death of Rev. Williams.

On the third Sunday in August, 1976, Rev. John W. Floyd was called to pastor Bethel. Many more improvements and accomplishments were made under Rev. Floyd's administration. Some are the purchase of a church parsonage, the purchase of land, the construction of a parking lot in 1977, the landscaping of the church grounds in 1978, organization of a Boy Scout troop under the direction of Deacon Johnnie Boswell and others, the cushioning of the church pews in 1979 and initiation of a child day care center which was later taken over as a private venture by the late Mrs. Ernestine H. Odom.

Under the continuous inspiration, encouragement, and guidance of Rev. Floyd, Bethel also realized several other accomplishments; A church van was donated by Deacon and Mrs. Robert Jones in 1978 so that the membership and its choirs could travel with the pastor to various churches, as well as provide transportation for regular members to get back and forth to church. A shed was also constructed to protect the van and the bus. Another van was purchased on August 27, 1996.

The Cherubim choir, the John W. Floyd Inspiration Chorus, the Mass Choir and Nurses Guild were organized. Sister Jacquelyn Lancaster Nettles was hired as the first full time Minister of Music in 1985. Later the pulpit area was remodeled to give more space for the choir, and a banister was added as a protective support. In 1992, the church organized and became the sponsor of a Girl Scout Troop. Under the leadership of Sisters Evelyn Johnson, Pearline Lee, Carol Cunningham and Nettie Bradley.

In December 1990, Bro. Ywell Cunningham, who was at the time the Sunday School Superintendent, said to the church family that he had been called to preach. He preached his initial sermon on the 5th Sunday in December 1990 and received his license. He preached at many other churches for about two years and assisted our pastor in all phases of the church program. On June 6, 1993, Rev. Cunningham was ordained and the pastor presented him a Bible from the church family.

In 1990, the church family voted to accept a proposal by Pastor Floyd to build a new sanctuary. It was also decided at this time that the current church would remain to be used for religious educational activities. A three year preparation period was decided. We prayed and worked during this time. Many meetings, discussions, decision and fund raising project were held. We also purchased more land to accommodate the size of the building we felt needed.

Bro. Jimmy Taylor came to the church in 1992. He preached his initial sermon in November of 1992 and was given his license. Rev. Taylor assisted the pastor in teaching, preaching and organizing the witnessing and outreach program. In a board meeting in May, the board accepted a proposal from the pastor to accept Rev. Taylor as youth Minister. His position became effective June 6, 1993.

In 1992, the State of Alabama approved Bethel as a corporation, and we are now known as the Bethel #2 Baptist Church of Monroeville, Inc. A 24 member Board of Directors was selected for this new corporation. The original board consisted of several deacons and three ladies of the church: Sister Gladys Boswell, Sister Wanda Gail Lett Whiting and Sis Juanita Whiting with Deacon Robert Jones serving as Chairman of the board. Since then several other ladies of the church have been added to the board.

At the end of the three year preparation period, the membership had raised over $300,000.00.
The balance for the construction of the building was financed by the Monroe County Bank. On January 18, 1993, the Ground Breaking Ceremony was held and the contractors began working one week later. After five months of watching, waiting and anticipating, the building was completed.

In January 1997, Rev. Warrick Maye was hired as youth minister. On the 1st Sunday in February 1998, Rev. Ywell K. Cunningham was hired as Assistant Pastor of Bethel Baptist Church. To continue to enhance our music department on the 3rd Sunday in February, Bro. Thomas Maye, Jr. was hired as Minister of Music. On November 17, 1998 Rev. Floyd announced to the congregation that he was going to retire as of December 31, 1998.

On January 5, 1999, Rev. Ywell K. Cunningham was voted as Interim Pastor for three months. Rev. Floyd was named Pastor Emeritus. A celebration for twenty-three years of faithful and dedicated service was held for Rev. & Mrs. John Floyd on February 28, 1999. After three months of spiritual guidance, Rev. Ywell K. Cunnningham was voted official pastor of Bethel Baptist Church as of Monday April 12, 1999.

Under Pastor Cunningham's guidance Bethel has continued to grow. Some of his accomplishments are continuation of the Building Fund Project, organization of a food bank, praise teams, and continuation of children's church and prayer service. The organization of a tutoring program for elementary and high school students, Bro Robert Cunningham was hired as Minister of Music, increased participation in all church auxiliaries, and the organization of a clothes closet

On Sunday, March 4, 2002 Brother Kevin Roberts preached his initial sermon and was presented his license by Rev. Cunningham. On May 28, 2002, the church was deeply saddened over the death of Pastor Emeritus John Floyd. Rev. Floyd was a source of strength and inspiration to the church and community in which he lived. Rev. Floyd was a pastor, preacher, builder and teacher for twenty four years at Bethel Baptist Church.

In April 2003, Rev. Michael Horn was baptized at Bethel Baptist Church and on May 18, 2003, Bro. Frisher Walker did his initial Sermon and license to preach On September the church and Music Ministry was deeply saddened by the death of our friend and minister of Music, Bro. Thomas Maye, Jr. Thomas was an inspiration to the church, community and county. Also under Pastor Cunningham's guidance, Minister Terry Johnson preached his trial sermon on February 28, 2010 and was licensed to preach.

Under Pastor Cunningham's guidance, Bethel has continued to grow. Some of his accomplishments are continuation of the building project, organization of a food bank, praise teams, and continuation of children's church, prayer service and the organization of a tutoring program for elementary and high school students. Bro. Robert Cunningham was hired as Minister of Music.

Other men that have served as ministers of music are: Minister Michael Rice, Minister Michael Lett, Minister Christopher Johnson and now, Interim minister of music, Minister Gary Griggs. In 2010 and 2011 Bethel did a major renovation project which included: new cushioning of pews, new carpeting and ceramic in the sanctuary building, changing the fellowship hall to classrooms, a complete renovation of the old church to a fellowship hall and commercial kitchen, new restrooms and exercise room. Deacon John Dean was the overseer.

The present officers are: Dr. Ywell Cunningham, Pastor, Deacon Darenell Payne, Chairman of Deacon Board, Deacon Alex Roberts, Treasurer, Sister Gladys Boswell, Secretary and Brother Kenneth Smith, Chairman of the Trustee Board. We are grateful to God for bringing us thus far, and we realize that God's grace will sustain us in years to come. We must keep the faith. It is our prayer that God will continue to bless our church family, our Pastor Dr. Ywell Cunningham and all those who helped us accomplish this goal.

We are grateful to God for bringing us thus far, and we realize that God's grace will sustain us in years to come. We must keep the faith. It is our prayer that God will continue to bless our church family, our Pastor, Rev. Ywell Cunningham and all those who have helped us accomplish this goal. It is our desire that Bethel Baptist Church will remain a source of strength and guidance in our community now and through generations to come. From and Old Log Cabin in 1870, "We are Blessed".

Session IX - Monroeville

Below are the biographies of the panelists for Session IX, discussing a regional approach economic development.

Pete Black

Pete Black is a native of Monroeville and graduate UA where he played on the baseball team from 1971 to 1975. After thirty-three years of pulp and paper manufacturing experience with Buckeye Cellulose, Union Camp, Scott Paper and Alabama River Pulp, Pete retired as Executive Vice President and General Manager of the Alabama River Pulp Company in 2010. In 2011, joined Parsons & Whittemore of Rye Brook, New York, as the Alabama Business & Community Development Manager which worked with the Monroeville-Monroe County Economic Development Authority and the Coastal Gateway Economic Development Alliance to promote local and regional economic development efforts and improve the quality of life in Monroe County. He retired for P&W in 2017 and focused his attention of writing.

Currently Pete is a writer in Residence at Pete's Perspective.com and has written weekly column Heart Matters for the Monroe Journal since 2012. He has self-published his first book, Heart Matters – Never Lose Heart in December 2011; A collection of 75 short inspirational stories, poems and quotes to encourage readers to pursue their dreams and never lose heart. His community activities include: Serving on the board of directors for Monroe County United Way board, Monroeville Main Street, the YMCA, Chamber of Commerce, the Kiwanis Club, and the Monroe County Education Foundation; Is founder and past president of the Education Foundation. He is married to local school board member Patsy Black and has 4 adult children and one granddaughter.

Black is an alumnus of The University of Alabama (B.S. in Physical Education, 1975 and Civil Engineering, 1978).

Rev. Ywell Cunningham

Ywell Cunningham is the Pastor of Bethel #2 Baptist Church.

Jess Nicholas

Jess Nicholas is Associate Director of Coastal Gateway Regional Economic Development Alliance, a regional economic development organization representing five counties in southwest Alabama. He spent 11 years in the fields of both traditional journalism and business-to-business journalism through employment with Gannett, Randall Publishing Co., Boone Newspapers and Southern Newspapers Inc. Jess continues to serve as Editor-In-Chief for BamaNation Partners LLC's TideFans.com, a site he helped build that covers Southeastern Conference sports and athletics for The University of Alabama athletics in particular. It is one of the oldest of all sports websites, in continual operation since late 1996. Jess also spent four years with Edward Jones and Co. as a financial advisor, holding Series 7 and Series 66 licenses as a financial advisor. He is also an author and songwriter in his spare time. Jess resides in Monroeville, along with his wife Melena and son Creighton.

Nicholas is an alumnus of The University of Alabama (1997).

Will Ruzic

Will Ruzic is Executive Director at Coastal Gateway Economic Development Alliance. At Coastal Gateway, Will previously served as Assistant Director for Existing Industry and Project Management, where he worked closely with regional workforce development initiatives. He continues to serve on the regional board for ACT Work Ready Communities, a program designed to identify and pre-qualify potential employees for area businesses and industry. Prior to Coastal Gateway, Will spent twenty years in the finance and investment banking industry with a concentration in municipal finance. He worked with local governments to streamline and restructure existing debt as well as underwrite and issue municipal bonds for capital needs. Will specialized in establishing public-private partnerships through special-purpose tax districts and cooperative districts permitted through the state constitution. He is a FINRA-licensed Municipal Securities Representative holding Series 52 and Series 63 Securities Licenses. Will currently resides in Brewton, Alabama with his family and is involved in many civic and volunteer organizations.

Will holds a Bachelor of Business Administration from Auburn University with a concentration in Finance.

How Global Economics Changed Small-Town Alabama

Jeff Poor | Lagniappe Weekly *February 14, 2018*

A hundred miles up the Alabama River from Mobile Bay, where the Black Belt meets the Coastal Plains, is uniquely situated Monroe County, a place most Alabamians overlook. Aside from its literary exploits and being geographically situated far from the major thoroughfares, Monroeville, the county seat of Monroe County, clings to a historically forgotten status. Indeed, unless you have a reason to go to Monroeville, it is unlikely you would ever, by happenstance, pop by.

Late last month, I had a reason to go to Monroeville. Like most small towns after 6 p.m. on a weekday, the town square surrounding the Monroe County Courthouse is quiet. It's late January, and Mardi Gras decorations are mixed in with the town's signature "To Kill a Mockingbird" décor.

The lone show of a pulse is the Prop and Gavel, a restaurant that arrived on the courthouse square in 2013. Inside, I am automatically recognized as an outsider. A rare visitor. Why am I there? To get the real scoop on the rise and fall of this small town. In Monroeville, this is synonymous with the rise and fall of the old Vanity Fair "silk mill," which was once Monroeville's crown jewel. All three patrons at the bar and the bartender know someone who was once employed by Vanity Fair. "My granddaddy worked there for years," said one. Monroe County Probate Judge Greg Norris echoed that sentiment.

"When I grew up, Vanity Fair was the biggest company in the county," he said later in an interview. "I think they hired somewhere between 3,000 and 3,500 people. Everybody that you knew had a family member that worked there. Growing up, there's no telling how many baseball jerseys, football jerseys I put on that Vanity Fair made." Vanity Fair was a textile manufacturer that got its start at the very end of the 19th century in Pennsylvania and for decades was Monroe County's largest employer. In 2018, the last remnant of Vanity Fair is a distribution facility, now owned by Fruit of the Loom.

But there is still a recognizable footprint left on the town by Vanity Fair. At the corner of Alabama Avenue and Claiborne Street, a historical marker recognizes Vanity Fair as how "Monroeville's industry got its start" and acknowledges its contributions to the community. While in town, I caught up with local historian and newspaper columnist George Thomas Jones. He set the scene of a pre-Vanity Fair Monroeville. Jones, a resident since 1926, described Monroeville back then as a town of fewer than a thousand people.

"It was a real backwards country town," he said in an interview while seated in his recliner in a local nursing home. "There wasn't a paved street in town, no sewage system. It hadn't had electricity but for about three years. But it was a real friendly town. I learned later in life the lifeblood of what makes a town worthwhile are the people." In 1929, the Great Depression came and lasted through the 1930s. The economy of that time relied on the almost 500 small cotton farmers for the county's cash crop. Aside from a sawmill or two, there were no industries in the county.

"In 1929, they had what I remember they called the 'September gale,'" Jones said. "Well, actually that was a hurricane. It blew all the cotton out of the fields before they could pick it. That hurt. Then the Depression hits about '30." Jones, whose father owned the local Ford dealership, was forced to let all of his salesmen go. Aside from that, Jones described living through the Depression in blissful ignorance, which is how many of his contemporaries in the South who survived the downturn have described it.

"As kids growing up, we didn't know there was a Depression," he said. "We had enough to eat. We had enough to wear. We didn't have a big wardrobe. But heck, we just thought that's the way things were supposed to be." Monroeville still was not the idyllic version of a small town you would see in films. Although the city had paved sidewalks, it wasn't until 1934 that they started paving the town square, a project that did not wrap up until the next year. The downtown stores had tin sheds over the sidewalks. There were no fireplugs. A sewer system did not arrive until 1930.

Several one-room schoolhouses scattered throughout the county served as the local school system. It was not until the mid-1930s that they consolidated the schools — the town did not do this earlier because there were no school buses. And school, back then, did not start until the third week of September because school-aged children had to pick cotton. Monroeville's fortunes would soon change for the better thanks to one of the most colorful figures in Mobile's political history: Alabama Congressman Frank Boykin.

Perhaps it was by chance, but Boykin had an early morning encounter with Vanity Fair executive Howard "Pop" Snader in the halls of Congress in Washington, D.C., in 1936. Snader was there to meet with a member of Pennsylvania's congressional delegation, but as Jeffrey Rodengen chronicled in his book "The Legend of VF Corporation," that member arrived late. Word had gotten out that Vanity Fair was looking to locate in the South to evade a wave of unionization in the mid-Atlantic. The member's late arrival gave Boykin an opportunity to lobby Snader to build a facility in South Alabama, where unions were discouraged and labor was cheap and plentiful.

On the list of possible sites was Monroeville and in the end, its location in the middle of nowhere was an advantage in luring a company seeking to disappear from the labor unions' radar. Vice president J.E. Barbey had been traveling throughout the South looking for such a place. "He wanted a place somewhere in the Deep South that was completely off the beaten track, and boy, Monroeville fit that description," the historian Jones explained. "You think about it — we're a hundred miles from any city in any direction. There were no good roads coming into Monroeville. You didn't come through Monroeville going from one city to another. You come to Monroeville. So, as far as being off the beaten track, Monroeville fit that bill.

"And it also fit the bill that there was no industry involving women. They had a wide-open market. They were country folks, and they had learned that country folks made great employees." Late winter that next year, it was official. The March 4, 1937, issue of The Monroe Journal featured the headline "Vanity Fair Silk Mill assured." Vanity Fair's arrival in Monroeville required some concessions. Under the terms of a deal made between the company and county residents and businesses, $40,000 (nearly $700,000 in 2018 dollars) would be raised to build a structure to house the mill. In return, all 200 of the mill's first workers would be Monroe County residents. That led to the organization of the Monroe Industries Board, which sold bonds for between $25 and $500 to finance the building. Given that this was near the end of the Great Depression, the town was only able to raise $35,000. Vanity Fair made up the difference in addition to its commitments, and on June 23, 1937, the mill held its grand opening.

The arrival of Vanity Fair was particularly important for local women. Other than work as sales clerks, school teachers and secretaries, employment for women in Monroe County was scarce. Vanity Fair offered farm housewives the opportunity to earn a reliable income to supplement cash made from the cotton crop, which was only harvested once a year. "It changed the face of Monroe County," Jones said of Vanity Fair's arrival. "All of the areas outside of the towns — they had nice, modest houses but, for instance, all of the yards were dirt. But when Vanity Fair came, and the women had a little money, they planted grass and bought a power mower and kept neat yards."

Washing machines, once an unheard-of luxury locally, became commonplace on front porches. Spirits were picking up, and Monroe County was shaking off the impact of the Great Depression. It also brought new residents to town. "High-class people," as Jones called them. "Their executives were just a notch above." The newcomers got involved in civic clubs and other things such as the Chamber of Commerce. The newcomers fit in, according to Jones.

"Monroeville is different from towns like Evergreen and Brewton that are kind of aristocratic," he explained. "Monroeville is more like Jackson. You had to be an awful unfriendly guy not to be accepted." World War II and beyond Vanity Fair thrived in its new Southern location. Expansions began almost immediately, starting in 1938. When World War II came, the plant put its silk panties operation on hold and started manufacturing silk parachutes. It produced three basic types of parachutes — personal chutes for paratroopers, cargo chutes for equipment and supplies (including chutes large enough for tanks and artillery) and flare chutes that served to illuminate night targets and make nighttime bombings possible.

The war ended in 1945, and after the economy readjusted, Vanity Fair closed its Reading, Pennsylvania, plant in 1948 because of labor unions. That spurred even more expansion in Alabama, and over the next 20 years Vanity Fair would have facilities throughout Southwest Alabama and into the Florida Panhandle. The company built a plant in Jackson in 1939, in Demopolis and Atmore in 1950, in Butler in 1961 and in Robertsdale in 1963. Vanity Fair added a 100,000-square-foot warehouse in Monroeville.

With the advent of the Civil Rights movement, the company had a come-to-Jesus moment with the town's locals over racial integration of the plant's workforce. Being Alabama in the 1950s, townspeople were not particularly happy about this possibility. Company executive M.O. "Whitey" Lee threatened to move Vanity Fair's manufacturing effort to Mobile's Brookley Field if this proved too much of a problem for the locals. They got the message.

During those years, Vanity Fair was also contributing to the community, working with local organizations and government to build new ballparks and improve other recreational facilities. To this day a lake, park and golf and tennis club are still in use. "It was a great relationship between Monroeville and Monroe County, and between the Vanity Fair leadership and our leadership the project grew and grew and grew," former pulp and paper executive Pete Black, a long-time Monroeville resident and son of a local service station owner, said in an interview. "They eventually moved their headquarters from Reading, Pennsylvania, to Monroeville."

"Vanity Fair was a … tremendous blessing to this community," he added. The locals nurtured the relationship. Whenever Vanity Fair had a bond sale for expansion, people snatched them up. The bank would loan money for the bonds at 6 percent interest. The bonds had a return of 4 percent, yet they always sold enough. There was also a community effort to keep the unions away. "Civic leaders knew we needed to keep the union out," Jones said. "When union representatives would come to town — boy, they'd get spotted, and word would get around, 'That guy's with the union.' The local newspaper wouldn't take their ads. Usually, we didn't have trouble with them."

Jones recalled that sometime after the Korean War, they got a whiff of intimidation tactics by union organizers and it was immediately snuffed out. More expansions came. In the 1970s, Vanity Fair built cutting and dyeing facilities. As the company's presence grew, so did Monroeville, leading to the construction of new churches and medical facilities, the expansion of existing businesses and the creation of new ones. A half a century after Vanity Fair's arrival, Monroeville was better off. In 1986, Vanity Fair employed 1,641 employees and had a payroll of $26.5 million.

The late 1980s saw the beginning of the proliferation of outsourcing in manufacturing. In 1989, the United States entered into the U.S.-Canada Free Trade Agreement. In 1991 talks began to include Mexico, and the U.S. entered into what is known as the North American Free Trade Agreement in 1994. The treaty eliminated tariffs and certain quantitative restrictions, making it possible for U.S. manufacturers to seek lower-wage labor in Mexico. Keith Baggett, the son of a 40-year Vanity Fair employee, had a front-row seat to witness how this would eventually unfold and what it meant for Vanity Fair's presence in the region.

Baggett, with a college degree from Troy State University, started with Vanity Fair in 1991. He estimated 85 percent of the company's manufacturing was done in South Alabama and northwest Florida at that time, with a total workforce of at least 3,000. Baggett had the roles of sewing superintendent, manufacturing manager and supervisor of production at various facilities under the Vanity Fair Corp. umbrella in the early 1990s. While he was there, Vanity Fair began moving some manufacturing to Mexico.

"I saw the handwriting on the wall that we were gradually going to be shutting those facilities down and moving it to Mexico," Baggett, now an administrator for a health care facility in Monroeville, told Lagniappe. "And again, this was somewhere in the mid-'90s. That's exactly what we did. We started opening up factories in Mexico and our headquarters for Mexico was in McAllen, Texas. "We gradually moved stuff to Mexico and shut factories down here in the states. And so, I had to travel to McAllen and in Mexico. We'd usually go about once a month to McAllen in order to work with that group — managers, scheduling and leveling their factories out."

Eventually, Baggett began aiding in this transition — training the workforce, procuring the materials and troubleshooting the new operation. As this process was underway, the operation in Monroeville was shrinking. The corporate headquarters left for Alpharetta, a suburb of Atlanta, in 1998. “It was like chopping the dog’s tail off an inch at a time over a five-to-10-year period, and then rumors in between,” Black said of the time. The jobs Alabama lost did not last long in Mexico. Before long they moved on to the Far East, first to China and then to Southeastern Asia. But the damage was done.

Vanity Fair Corp. got out of the underwear business in 2005 when it sold its remaining assets in Monroeville to Fruit of the Loom. Baggett’s career path took him into the health care industry and back to Monroeville. However, he insists that with or without NAFTA’s passage in the 1990s, Vanity Fair in Monroeville would have likely had a similar fate. “I was always told with or without NAFTA, we would have already went,” Baggett said. “As a matter of fact, we were probably one of the last textile companies to start moving offshore like that. Other companies had already done it, and the reason we had to do it was to compete. NAFTA accelerated it.”

Baggett said he believed transportation costs will inevitably make the U.S. a more competitive place for manufacturing. “In my lifetime, I will see it where it is cheaper for us to produce in the United States than it is over there because of the inventory you have to carry. The biggest thing was our transportation costs. When we first started doing China, we could get a container, and it cost us $3,000. When we had these issues with fuel, it jumped to $10,000 a container to ship. When you weigh all that in and wages increasing, you get to that point where it makes more sense just to manufacture it back here.”

For now, all that remains are 300 jobs at the Fruit of the Loom distribution facility. It was a good run. At the time the first sewing machines started running in June 1937, Monroeville was a town of 1,500. Today the population is estimated to be around 6,000, give or take a few hundred. Bordering Monroe County to the north is Wilcox County, plagued by high unemployment and a poverty rate of 38 percent, one of the poorest counties in the nation. Immediately to the south is Baldwin County, with low unemployment, and economic and population growth projected for the next decade.

Monroe County’s current situation is somewhere in between those two extremes. In the 2016 presidential election, Donald Trump beat Hillary Clinton by 14 points in Monroe County. That was not so unusual because only twice since 1964 has the county not gone Republican in a presidential election. In this election, however, Trump’s message on trade in a global economy resonated with Monroe County voters, who have had firsthand experience with the economic consequences of globalization.

When you talk to some of the old-timers in town, they acknowledge the post-VF state of affairs was a result of going all-in with a single employer. They also say it was necessary because Vanity Fair didn’t want other industries in town that would compete for labor. In other words, the single-employer model was part of the deal. Since Vanity Fair’s departure, Monroe County has grappled with bouts of unemployment. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, unemployment in the county peaked in February 1992 at 23.5 percent, then remained in the high teens for most of the decade, far above the state average. The county regained its footing and, in the first eight years of the new millennia, Vanity Fair kept the rate under double-digits.

The so-called Great Recession that began in mid-2008 exposed how vulnerable Monroe County was to economic downturns. The countywide unemployment rate hit 22.3 percent, rivaling the worst unemployment following Vanity Fair’s departure. Since then, the unemployment rate gradually decreased to a manageable 5 percent. Vanity Fair left behind a skill set, and if there is an opportunity for textiles to return, there would be a qualified workforce, according to Baggett. “It could,” he said. “The workforce is there. The biggest thing is that all the people that were experts in it went on to do something else because they had to, or they retired.”

In late January, Rep. Bradley Byrne was wrapping up his whirlwind tour of town hall meetings in the first congressional district. His last stop was in Frisco City, eight miles from Monroeville. Byrne addressed trade and praised Trump's early actions on the issue, which, he said, are specifically targeted. "I think President Trump is doing the right thing by pushing back," Byrne said of a recent Trump move to impose tariffs on imported solar panels and washing machines. "I think that's exactly the way to go because when you rifle in on the precise things that are the issue, you're going to have more of an impact than doing sort of blanket stuff."

During the town hall, Byrne took a question about local infrastructure, specifically four-laning U.S. Highway 84, the main east-west highway that runs from Mississippi to Georgia through Alabama, just south of Monroeville. U.S. 84 is four lanes through half the state, but from Andalusia to Mississippi it remains a two-lane road and serves as one of the primary routes in and out of town. Black, the former Vanity Fair paper executive, blames past politicians for not making Monroeville more accessible to the rest of the state.

"If you want to look back to when George Wallace built the interstate highway system and say, 'Where was a major faux pas created?' — I-65 was supposed to come right dead through Monroe County and Monroeville," he said. "We had a probate judge at the time that was against that project because it was going to disrupt farmland — cotton and cows." Instead, I-65 passes through nearby Conecuh County. According to Black, not having a four-lane highway and a Class 1 railroad into Monroeville was an obstacle.

For decades, local leaders have lobbied Washington, D.C., and Montgomery to four-lane U.S. Highway 84 to where it connects to I-65 near Evergreen. Black insisted that is the wrong project. Instead, he said, Alabama Highway 21, the main north-south route through the county, should be widened from Monroeville south to I-65. Why? Better access to Mobile. "That's where you want to connect," Black said. "Mobile is the place. If you go east to Evergreen, you haven't accomplished anything. You still have got to go north or south."

Black pointed to the economic development of Mobile and its transportation assets as why a focus on improved access to the Port City would be more beneficial to Monroeville. Much of the state's recent economic development success has been in Huntsville and Mobile. Probate Judge Greg Norris insists that despite this, Montgomery is doing what it can for rural areas such as Monroe County. "They're doing everything they can for rural Alabama," Norris said. "I'm from rural Alabama, and it's more difficult to do anything for rural Alabama. We don't have the resources. We don't have the roads. We don't have the infrastructure. So I think the Office of Commerce is doing a great job, but it's just so much easier to bring those jobs to a Huntsville, to a Mobile.

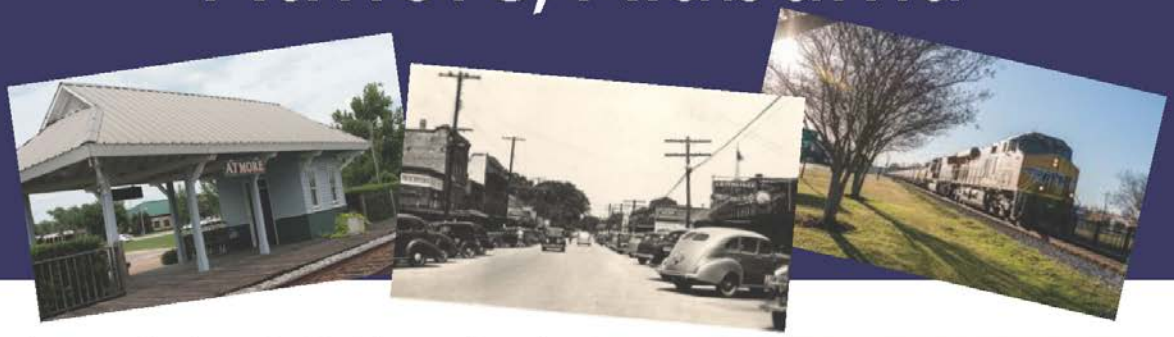
"Maybe they're not targeting us. You know, you're rural, you're left out. It's just so much easier to bring it to another place. We have to get out and hustle. But they help us," Norris added. Black explained how the focus of the county's efforts was finding a company for which a place like Monroe County would be a good fit. "We had to do it on our own," Black said. "What we did was hire a site consultant ourselves who is touching base with projects all across this country and paid him a retainer so that when he runs across a project, he thinks that might fit in rural America."

Black said they recruited 200 jobs in 2017, and that the key to success is getting the company executives to Monroeville. "They love this little community," he said. "I mean, it's a hundred miles from nowhere, but it's a warm, friendly community. It's got a lot of great things going for it. It's got a great hospital, great community college. We got a great mayor, a great probate judge. The longer answer is you got to do it yourself." In his closing sales pitch, Norris told Lagniappe that much as they were 80 years ago when Vanity Fair came to town, locals are willing to cooperate.

"The quality of life is unreal," he said. "Fresh air, beautiful outdoors, low taxes," he replied. "We're a work ethic by the people — people that want to work that want to earn a living wage, and a government that will work with you."

https://lagniappemobile.com/global-economics-changed-small-town-alabama/

Atmore, Alabama



Only two miles from the Florida state line, the city of Atmore is the largest in Escambia County. In the 1860s, the city served as a supply facility for logging right along the Great Northern Railroad. Called Williams Station, settlement slowly grew, until a sawmill was built that sparked growth tremendously in 1886.

Atmore is known for its abundance of crops most recently soy beans and wheat. Natural gas and chemical processing along with carpet manufacturing have been major industries for the area. In 1985, the Poarch Band of Creek Indians opened the first of what would be several casinos in Atmore.

Quick Facts

Population: 10,194

Racial Composition: 55.4% Black or African American, 39.3% White, 1.8% Native American, 0.3% Asian, 0.1% Pacific Islander, 0.1% from other races, and 1.3% from two or more races. 1.8% of the population were Hispanic or Latino of nay race.

Median Age: 36

County: Escambia

Random Trivia: The city is home to four-time World Heavyweight Champion, Evander Holyfield.

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Session X - Atmore

Below are the biographies of the speakers for Session X, providing an overview of the correctional facilities and exploring their impact on local communities.

Mary Cooks

Mary Cooks serves as Warden at Fountain Correctional Facility.

Cynthia Stewart

Cynthia Stewart serves as Warden at Holman Correctional Facility.

'This is slavery': U.S. inmates strike in what activists call one of the biggest prison protests in modern history

Jaweed Kaleem | Alabama Public Radio *October 28, 2016*

What's been billed as the biggest prison strike in the American history has continued on and off for nearly a month, crippling prison labor in states including Ohio, North Carolina and Alabama. In his 29 years in prison, David Bonner has mopped floors, cooked hot dogs in the cafeteria and, most recently, cut sheets of aluminum into Alabama license plates. The last job paid $2 a day — enough to buy a bar of soap at the commissary or make a short phone call.

"This is slavery," said Bonner, who is 51 and serving a life sentence for murder. "We're forced to work these jobs and we get barely anything." He was speaking on a mobile phone smuggled into his 8-by-12 foot cell in Alabama's Holman Correctional Facility, where he and dozens of other inmates were on strike. They're among a growing national movement of prisoners who have staged work stoppages or hunger strikes this fall to protest dismal wages, abusive guards, overcrowding and poor healthcare, among other grievances.

Prisoners' rights activists say the coordinated effort is one of the largest prison protests in modern history, drawing in at least 20,000 inmates in at least 24 prisons in 23 states. State officials have confirmed inmate protests in Michigan, South Carolina and Florida since early September. In California, at least 300 inmates have been involved in hunger strikes at jails in Santa Clara and Merced counties. In several states, including Virginia, Ohio and Texas, officials have denied claims by activists that strikes have occurred.

Alabama officials acknowledged the protest at the Holman prison, 52 miles northeast of Mobile, though they said it was limited to a one-day strike by 60 inmates who worked in the kitchen and license plate plant — far less extensive than the 10-plus days in September and October that activists described. "I know there are inmates who are saying there is this big, wide work stoppage but that is just not the case," said Alabama Dept. of Corrections spokesman Bob Horton.

Horton denied inmate reports that the prison had been on lockdown in response to strikes, which he described as "peaceful." But he also said he understood some of prisoners' complaints about living conditions. Holman is "overcrowded and understaffed," Horton said, adding that state officials were working to fix the problem. Alabama Gov. Robert Bentley, who visited Holman earlier this year, has described the state corrections system as being "in crisis" and has pushed for funding to build additional prisons.

Known by inmates as "the slaughterhouse" for its death row, the maximum-security Holman prison is considered one of the most violent facilities in the South. Nearly 1,000 inmates occupy a space built for half that many. Tensions have been escalating throughout this year. In March, riots broke out. In September, a prisoner stabbed a corrections officer to death. In October, after an inmate committed suicide, prisoners said guards had ignored their screams to come and help the man.

Amid the protests, the U.S. Department of Justice announced this month that it was launching a civil rights investigation into prisons across Alabama to determine "whether prisoners are adequately protected from physical harm and sexual abuse at the hands of other prisoners" and "from use of excessive force and staff sexual abuse by correctional officers." Activists celebrated. "I've been doing this work for four years, and we've never gotten this kind of attention to prisoners' rights," said Azzurra Crispino, an activist based in Austin, Texas. "There's a momentum."

Crispino is a spokesperson for the Incarcerated Workers Organizing Committee, a group that is part of the Industrial Workers of the World union and has played a key role in coordinating the protests. It has connected prisoners to one another and outside activists, and rallied activists to flood prisons with letters and phone calls on behalf of inmates. Most states have a prisoner-rights organization headquartered at one of its major prisons. The Free Alabama Movement, for example, is based at the Holman facility.

Leaders in each prison have used contraband smartphones to coordinate work stoppages and broadcast their complaints and demands through Twitter, Facebook, YouTube and blogs. Some inmates have reported being

transferred to other prisons or confined in cells as retaliation for organizing. All of us realize this is a long and protracted struggle. From our perspective, the fact that a strike occurred at all is a win.

Organizers said that although the labor strikes have included only a sliver of the nation's 2.2 million prisoners, they stand the best chance of spurring change. Putting prisoners to work is standard practice, but many states don't pay them, pointing out that although the 13th Amendment of the Constitution outlaws "involuntary servitude," it makes an exception for work done "as a punishment for crime."

Correction officials say prison labor gives inmates job skills and a sense of independence, a view supported by some studies. Many prisoners say they wouldn't mind working but want more pay and protections on par with jobs outside prisons. The work goes far beyond maintaining the prisons or producing goods for the government. Prison labor often benefits private enterprises.

According to prisoners, the strikes this fall included inmates at the Perry Correctional Institution in South Carolina who work without pay for a furniture company that operates a factory there. In an interview, Bryan Stirling, who heads the state department of corrections, denied there was a strike. Until it bowed to pressure from prisoner-rights activists last year, the grocery store chain Whole Foods bought tilapia and goat cheese from a supplier that raised its animals using inmate labor in Colorado.

The Florida Department of Corrections website says that inmates working in jobs serving various state agencies saved residents $45 million in taxes in 2014. "Inmates performed almost 5.4 million hours of work in our communities, valued at more than $76 million," the site reads. By some estimates, prison workers save individual states and U.S. companies billions a year in wages.

"The prison system right now is just a big old business," said Carlos Sanders, a 53-year-old death row inmate who goes by the name Siddique Abdullah Hasan and helps lead the Free Ohio Movement from the Ohio State Penitentiary in Youngstown. "We've tried hunger strikes and filing grievances with courts," said Sanders, who entered prison for robbery and was subsequently convicted of helping plan the murder of a corrections officer during a 1993 uprising. "But since super-economic exploitation is what keeps these prisons alive, we decided a labor strike is the way to go."

The strikes began on Sept. 9, timed to the 45th anniversary of the deadliest prison uprising in modern American history — a five-day standoff over living conditions at the Attica Correctional Facility in upstate New York that left 33 prisoners and 10 guards dead. The issue of prisoner rights has periodically garnered public attention over the years, fueled most recently by debates over race and justice that have gripped the country.

A 2010 work stoppage involving thousands of prisoners in Georgia was quickly followed by similar strikes in North Carolina, Washington, Illinois and Virginia. Three years later, 30,000 California inmates refused food — some of them for close to two months — protest the state's use of long-term solitary confinement. But the strikes this fall have a breadth that has seldom been seen. That can only translate to increased awareness for a cause that has rarely enjoyed much sympathy from the public.

"All of us realize this is a long and protracted struggle," said Crispino. "From our perspective, the fact that a strike occurred at all is a win." One recent question for activists inside and outside prisons is where prison guards stand on the push for reforms. They spend more time with the inmates than anyone else and have a close-up view of prison conditions. They also naturally have a strong interest in maintaining peace at their workplaces.

Last month at the Holman prison when nine guards didn't show up for a work shift, inmates took it as support for their strike. "They tired of the Administration playing games with their lives," tweeted Robert Earl Council, a 42-year-old death row inmate and Free Alabama Movement co-founder who goes by the name Kinetik Justice. But the guards have yet to make their stance public, and corrections officials said their lack of attendance didn't mean they were joining striking prisoners.

This week, according to prison officials, an inmate used an unidentified homemade weapon to attack a guard, who was slashed across the head. He is expected to recover. "They support us," Council said. "But they also are afraid of being hurt themselves."

http://www.latimes.com/nation/la-na-prison-strike-snap-story.html

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Warden Testifies in Trial Over Prisons' Mental Health Care

Mallory Moench | Associated Press *April 23, 2018*

MONTGOMERY, Ala. (AP) — In late February, Alabama prison inmate Billy Lee Thornton stepped onto his cell bed, put a shoe string around his neck and hung himself from the light fixture, according to an incident report written by a correctional officer who witnessed the incident. The correctional officer, who had been at the door of Thornton's segregated cell talking with him about medication, immediately called for help.

As two officers rushed into the cell at Holman Correctional Facility and reached for Thornton, the string broke and Thornton fell, hitting his head. Thornton was rushed to the hospital. Four days later he was taken off life support. U.S. District Judge Myron Thompson, who last year ruled that Alabama provides "horrendously inadequate" mental health care to state inmates, ordered a Monday hearing on the circumstances of Thornton's death and the death of another inmate.

Holman Warden Cynthia Stewart testified Monday in federal court that Thornton was placed on mental health observation but not a suicide watch after a previous attempt to kill himself. Thornton was on the prison's mental health caseload and had already attempted to hang himself on Dec. 27, 2017. A mental health evaluation presented to the court described him as hearing voices that told him to kill himself. He was placed under mental health observation, not a suicide watch, and stayed in a crisis cell under more intense supervision until Jan. 4.

The plaintiff's attorney Maria Morris said there is no documentation to show that Thornton received a mental health check 30 days after his release from the crisis cell. The 30-day check is required under a January 2017 court order that outlines a plan to protect possibly suicidal prisoners. After receiving another mental health evaluation where he was again described as having suicidal thoughts, Thornton was placed in a crisis cell on Feb. 22. He was released one day later. Morris said no documents show he received another mental health check before his death.

Stewart said she didn't know at the time about Thornton's first suicide attempt. Bob Horton, a spokesman for the Alabama Department of Corrections, wrote in an email that the department is continuing to "investigate and evaluate the circumstances surrounding the death of the inmate at the William C. Holman Correctional Facility."

"This evaluation will include a review of actions of our contracted mental health staff and our correctional staff and whether those actions complied with departmental policy as well as any outstanding directives from the federal court," Horton wrote. The department said the incident was currently classified as an attempted suicide.

"I think today showed the Department of Corrections continues to leave prisoners who have severe mental health needs and have shown signs of dramatic decompensation in segregation at risk of harms to themselves without proper monitoring or treatment," Morris said.

Thornton was 31 when he died. His sister Taneisha Head, 29, was present at Monday's hearing. "We're just here for the truth," she said. She said he never had a history of mental illness. "I knew my brother. He was coming home," she told The Associated Press. "I told him we can't wait till he comes home, and we can ride around in my new car and listen to blues."

https://www.usnews.com/news/best-states/alabama/articles/2018-04-23/hearing-on-inmate-suicide-in-prison-mental-health-trial

Prisons face officer shortage, court order to boost numbers

Kim Chandler | Associated Press *September 8, 2018*

MONTGOMERY, Ala. - Last year John Chandler, 33, made the decision to step away from his job as a correctional officer at Limestone Correctional Facility after eight years with the state prison system. Too few officers trying to control too many inmates, he said, were creating dangerous conditions for both, and he saw no hope that the situation was going to get better anytime soon. "Officers are getting stabbed. Inmates are getting extorted," Chandler said. "There's no control. It's not that the officers don't want to do the job. It's that there are no officers to do the job," Chandler said.

Faced with a court order to improve conditions inside state prisons, Alabama is trying to address a shortage of correctional officers. As of June 2018, the Alabama Department of Corrections said it has 2,070 correctional officers, but said that includes supervisors, part-time correctional officers and trainees.Alabama Corrections Commissioner Jeff Dunn said estimates filed with the court show the state needs to add between 1,800 and 2,000 officers - almost doubling current staffing levels.

The court directive to boost officer staffing came out of a lawsuit filed over prison health care.Thirty-seven correctional officers graduated from the training academy on Wednesday but Commissioner Jeff Dunn has said the prisons have only about half the number they need. U.S. District Judge Myron Thompson last year ruled mental health care was "horrendously inadequate" in state prisons and said that low staffing and overcrowding are the "overarching issues."

The officer shortage is intertwined with overcrowding and violence. As prison populations ballooned in the 1990s and early 2000s so did incidents of violence inside prison walls. "I think you can associate the rise in our prison population and the slow decline in our staff inside the prisons initially with our violence rates," Dunn said. Corrections Officer Kenneth Bettis died in 2016 after being stabbed by an inmate at William C. Holman Correctional Facility in Atmore.

In fiscal year 2017, nine inmates were killed in homicides inside state prisons, according to department statistics. Ten officers and more than 200 inmates were seriously injured in assaults. Inmates "are getting beat up and extorted. Family members are getting calls: 'You got send this $200 or we'll kill your son,'" Chandler said. Safety is the top reason correctional officers quit, according to Randall McGilberry, president of the Alabama Corrections Officer Association.

"They are always outnumbered," he said. Southern Poverty Law Center attorney Maria Morris, who is representing state inmates in the lawsuit, said she frequently hears from inmates that mental health workers cannot do rounds because there are not correctional officers to escort them. It also provides fewer people to check on inmates, which she said has been a contributing factor in inmate suicides.

The Department of Corrections is supposed to submit a plan on how it will increase officer ranks. As an initial measure, the department authorized a five and 10 percent pay increase for officers at minimum and maximum security prisons. The raise will boost the starting salary for entry-level correctional officers from $28,516 to $31,368 at maximum security prisons and $29,942 at medium security facilities.

Dunn said it is a pay incentive to take jobs at those prisons, but acknowledges that "is no way the long-term solution." He said the state will have to address the overall compensation, recruiting efforts, and other initiatives to entice veterans to stay. Thompson has indicated he wants the staffing levels raised significantly by 2022. Dunn said it will take a "concerted effort" by the department and Alabama Legislature to meet that expectation. "I hope we in the state of Alabama don't pass on this opportunity to really fix a longstanding 30 year problem," Dunn said.

https://www.al.com/news/index.ssf/2018/09/prisons_face_officer_shortage.html

Poarch Band of Creek Indians

The Poarch Band of Creek Indians is the only federally recognized Native American tribe in Alabama. Their ancestors lived in the Upper Creek towns on the Coosa and Tallapoosa rivers near Wetumpka, Elmore County, before relocating in the 1790s to settlements northwest of Atmore, Escambia County.

When the Creek War erupted in 1813, most Poarch Band members allied with the United States. By 1826, most Creek Indians other than the Poarch Band had been removed from the ceded lands by the federal government to lands west of the Mississippi River.

Quick Facts

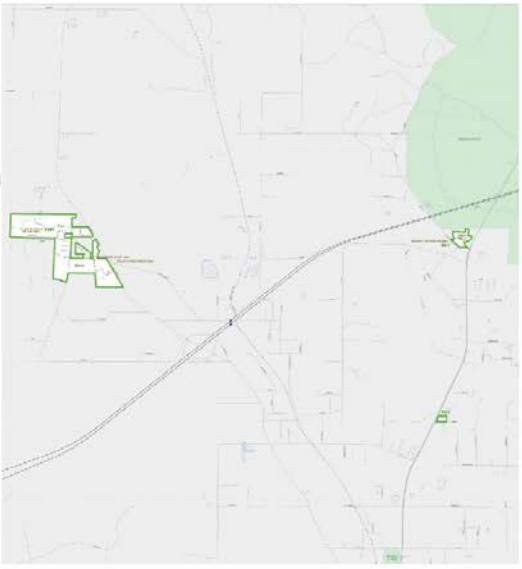
Population: 334

Racial Composition: 75% American Indian or Alaska Native, 14% White, 1.2% Hispanic or Latino, 0.5% Black, 8.7% are two or more races and 1.5% are some other race.

Median Age: 26

Counties: Escambia and Elmore

Random Trivia: Every year the Poarch Creek Indians host an Annual Pow Wow in late November to celebrate the cultural tradition of Thanksgiving.



Session XI - Poarch Band of Creek Indians

Below are the biographies of the panelists for Session XI, discussing the tribal government of the Poarch Band of Creek Indians and relations between the tribe and federal, state and local governments.

Robert McGhee

As an enrolled member of the Poarch Band of Creek Indians, Robert McGhee has been involved in and an advocate for Native American issues at all levels of government. Robert is currently serving his fourth term on the Poarch Band of Creek Indians Tribal Council, in which he holds the position of Vice Chairman. Prior to moving back to Atmore, Robert McGhee worked in Washington, D.C. for approximately five years at the Department of Interior-Bureau of Indian Affairs, the United States Senate Committee on Indian Affairs, and Troutman Sanders LLP-Indian Law Practice Group.

Before accepting the position of Governmental Relations Advisor for the Poarch Band of Creek Indians, Mr. McGhee served in several capacities for the Tribe. He was employed by the Tribe as the Tribal Administrator, Governmental entity of the Tribe, and President of Creek Indian Enterprises (CIE), the Economic Development entity of the Poarch Band of Creek Indians. Currently he serves on the Board of the National Indian Child Welfare Association, Children First Alabama, Chairman of the Native American Rights Fund Board of Directors, Vice President of the United South and Eastern Tribes Board of Directors and the Board of Advisors for the Center for Native American Youth.

McGhee holds a MSW from Washington University in St. Louis and an Executive MBA from the University of Tennessee Knoxville.

Mayor Jim Staff

Jim Staff is a graduate of Escambia County High School and in 2012 he was elected Mayor of Atmore after serving 12 years as a City Councilman. He has served on the West Escambia Utilities Board, the Atmore and South Alabama Regional Planning Commission, the Jefferson Davis Community College Board of Advisors, and the Atmore Area Chamber of Commerce. For the last 45 years, Jim has worked for his family's local business Staff Chevrolet. He is a member of Rotary Club, Toys for Kids, and St. Robert's Catholic Church. Jim has been married to his wife Myrtle for 23 years and together they have six children and 13 grandchildren.

Mayor Staff is an alumnus of The University of Alabama.

Poarch tribe still fighting Escambia County over casino's property taxes

Casey Toner | al.com *September 8, 2015*

Last week, a federal appeals court slapped down an attempt by Alabama Attorney General Luther Strange to close the state's three Indian casinos. Now, an Escambia County Tax Assessor Jim Hildreth is looking to that same court to reverse an earlier decision that keeps his office from collecting what he claims is a multi-million dollar property tax bill for Wind Creek Casino and Hotel.

The Poarch Band of Creek Indians sued Hildreth in federal court earlier this year over his attempts to unlawfully assess taxes on tribal land. The tribe has casinos in Escambia, Elmore, and Montgomery counties. Bryan M. Taylor, an attorney who is representing Hildreth, said the tax assessor is seeking five years worth of back taxes for about $23 million in addition to annual property taxes worth about $3.5 million. In July, U.S. District Judge Callie V. S. Granade issued a preliminary injunction against Hildreth, preventing him from assessing property taxes on the Escambia County site while the federal lawsuit plays out.

"... Hildreth has made no effort to assess taxes on the Tribe's Trust Property for three decades," Granade said in her ruling. "He cannot now contend that he will suffer some substantial harm if he is forced to delay such an assessment for the relatively short period of time that it will take this Court to address the Tribe's claim on the merits." Subsequently, Hildreth appealed the matter to the 11th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals.

The appeals court ordered last month that the two parties will have to meet for a one-hour teleconference on Sept. 29 to determine if mediation is appropriate. If mediation fails, the court will issue an opinion on the appeal. Taylor said that the initial meeting is to determine what the two parties will be able to negotiate. He said that they will know in a few months whether the mediation will succeed. Tribal chair Stephanie A. Bryan said in a press release that the teleconference has "absolutely no impact on her assessment or on the ultimate resolution of this case."

Former Alabama Congressman Spencer Bachus, another attorney for Hildreth, estimated that the tribe's casinos generate a profit of more than $1 million per day. If the Poarch tribe loses the federal lawsuit, it could be exposed to millions of dollar annually in income taxes, sales taxes, and tobacco taxes statewide which it does not currently pay, Bachus said. "This case is about making sure the tribe is paying its fair share," Bachus said in a press release. "And Jim Hildreth wants to be sure he is fulfilling his responsibilities under the law to all the taxpayers of Escambia County, equally." Hildreth is set to retire on Oct. 1.

At the heart of Hildreth's legal argument is the case law stemming from a 2009 U.S. Supreme Court ruling. The high court's decision gave Rhode Island the right to stop the Narragansett Indian Tribe from building on its land because it was not federally recognized in 1934 when the Indian Reorganization Act was enacted. The federal law allowed for the transfer of the lands. Alabama Attorney General Luther Strange attempted to cite the ruling in his bid to stop the gambling at the Poarch tribe's casinos.

That's because the Poarch Band of Creek Indians was also not federally recognized at the time of the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934. However, Strange lost the claim because he did not raise it through the right administrative channel and the statute of limitations to do so had expired. What is different about Hildreth's case, according to Taylor, was that the tribe sued to stop the assessor and not the other way around.

"We are not challenging at this point sovereign immunity," Taylor said. "We have been sued by the tribe. They are claiming a tax exemption under federal law and we are saying it does not apply." Bryan, the tribal chair, said in a press release that Hildreth's case will lose for the same reason as the state's did. "Like Mr. Hildreth, the State sought to use the Supreme Court's 2009 ruling in the Carcieri case to challenge the legal status of lands that the United States holds in trust for the benefit of the Tribe," Bryan said.

"The Eleventh Circuit resoundingly rejected the State's argument, reaffirming that the United States holds the lands where the Tribe's gaming facilities are located in trust for the benefit of the Tribe and that those lands are properly considered 'Indian lands.' "Because a federal statute explicitly exempts Indian lands held in trust by the United States from state and local taxation, the Eleventh Circuit's opinion in PCI Gaming forecloses Mr. Hildreth's principal argument in this case." She added that "the taxpayers have spent an inordinate amount of money litigating against the Tribe."

"The Tribe was pleased to read that the Attorney General had accepted the decision of the Eleventh Circuit so the parties can move forward," Bryan said. "Mr. Hildreth needs to do so as well." Bryan also said that the tribe has given more than $5.5 million dollars to Escambia County since 2012 including donations to schools, hospitals, and charities.

https://www.al.com/news/index.ssf/2015/09/poarch_tribe_still_fighting_es.html

Poarch Creek have major legislative victory in Congress

Brandon Moseley | Alabama Political Reporter *January 22, 2018*

The U.S. House of Representatives unanimously passed the Poarch Band of Creek Indians Land Reaffirmation Act by a voice vote. The bill was sponsored by U.S. Representative Bradley Byrne. This legislation would address a legal technicality that, in theory, could potentially have legally jeopardized the tribe's reservation status.

This issue first came up in April 2013 when then state Senator Bryan Taylor, R-Prattville, while representing the Escambia County Commission as an attorney, launched a legal campaign to disenfranchise the PCI of their Tribal standing before the Federal government. Taylor, argued that the 2009 Supreme Court ruling in 'Carcieri v. Salazar' rendered the PCI's Land Trust null and void.

Then Alabama Attorney General Luther Strange also brought up this issue in a letter to the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs. The Bureau, during the Obama Administration, rejected these arguments; but some think that if this were taken to federal court that the Tribe could lose their federally protected trust status. The purpose of the lawsuit was to make the Tribe pay taxes to Escambia County; but at least in theory it could have closed the county's leading employer.

H.R. 1532, if passed by the Senate, and then signed by the President, would prevent that from happening. H.R. 1532 describes the lands, in Elmore, Escambia, and Montgomery Counties that were taken into trust by the United States for the benefit of the Poarch Band of Creek Indians prior to the date of enactment of this Act are reaffirmed, subject to valid existing rights, as trust land and shall remain as Indian country under section 1151 of title 18, United States Code."

The U.S. Supreme Court ruling 'Carcieri v. Salazar' stated that lands acquired by Tribes after 1932 could not be held in trust. Some of PCI's property was not put acquired into trust until 1995.Prior to becoming a state Senator, Bryan Taylor advised former Gov. Bob Riley in his efforts against the State's then out of control electronic bingo industry. Taylor continued his effort against battle the Poarch Band of Creek Indians both as an attorney for Escambia County and while he was in the State Senate. Taylor is now Gov. Kay Ivey's General Counsel.

Congressman Byrne said in his speech on the floor of the House of Representatives, "This legislation is necessary due to the legal uncertainty caused by the Supreme Court decision in Carcieri v. Salazar. This decision has unnecessarily created legal ambiguity about whether the Poarch Creek land is actually in trust or not."

"The Poarch Creek Indians are a valued and trusted part of our community in Southwest Alabama," Byrne said. "Their economic impact in Escambia County, Alabama, speaks for itself. From their help with funding for community projects to their business enterprises that employ thousands of Alabamians, the Poarch help make life better for so many people in our area."

Some analysts have suggested that passage of this legislation would give the Poarch Band of Creek Indians a much strengthened negotiating position with the state of Alabama, if and when the state approaches the Indians about a possible compact. With their legal status secured, the Tribe would not necessarily need to enter into any sort of a compact with the state.

H.R. 1532 now moves on to the U.S. Senate for their consideration.

(Original reporting by the 'Yellowhammer News and earlier reporting in APR by Bill Britt contributed to this report.)

http://www.alreporter.com/2018/01/22/poarch-creek-major-legislative-victory-congress/

PREPARING A
Future.

We make a difference in the lives of our Tribal Members by fostering in them a spirit of independence and pride, connecting them to each other and their strong, unique heritage.

The Poarch Creek Indian community honors its proud heritage and spirit, values its people, encourages open communication and participation in all of its activities, promotes progressive partnerships with its neighbors and other organizations, and is a supportive, welcoming community that features exceptional economic and community development opportunities for all.

TRIBAL GOVERNMENT

Dear Neighbors,

"Home is where the heart is." I love that saying because like so many others in our Poarch community, I have lived on our Tribal lands my entire life, and the love I have for our place and our people has been my guiding force as a leader.

As you have a chance to read and learn about our Tribe, I hope you will get to know more about the important role our ancestors played in helping Alabama's earliest settlers. Our history also includes our struggles as an economically challenged community, many generations that worked hard to survive tough times, and families who have lived close and cared deeply for each other for many years. The past has shaped us into what we are today, many people with one purpose—all focused on doing what we can to help make life better for our people and our neighbors.

As Alabama's only federally recognized Tribe, we are ever mindful that those who came before us sacrificed much to ensure we could endure as an Indian nation. At Poarch, home is where the heart is – where generations of families still live, where we care about each other and our neighbors, and where dreams for a better future can be realized.

Thank you for taking the time to learn more of our Tribe's personal story, and as Alabama Natives, Alabama Neighbors, we hope that you always know there is an open invitation to come visit us at our home.

Mvto (Thank you),

Stephanie A. Bryan

Stephanie A. Bryan, Tribal Chair/CEO

Poarch Band of Creek Indians

We act with **fairness** in all our decisions and policy applications inspiring others to **trust** our intentions and our actions.

This affirms our commitment to something bigger than any one of ourselves and encourages all to persevere when we confront challenges along the journey. The respect we show for the contributions of all to our common purpose creates the platform for open and honest interactions. This leads to collaborative relationships and openness to new ideas and growing levels of accomplishment.

LEGISLATIVE BRANCH

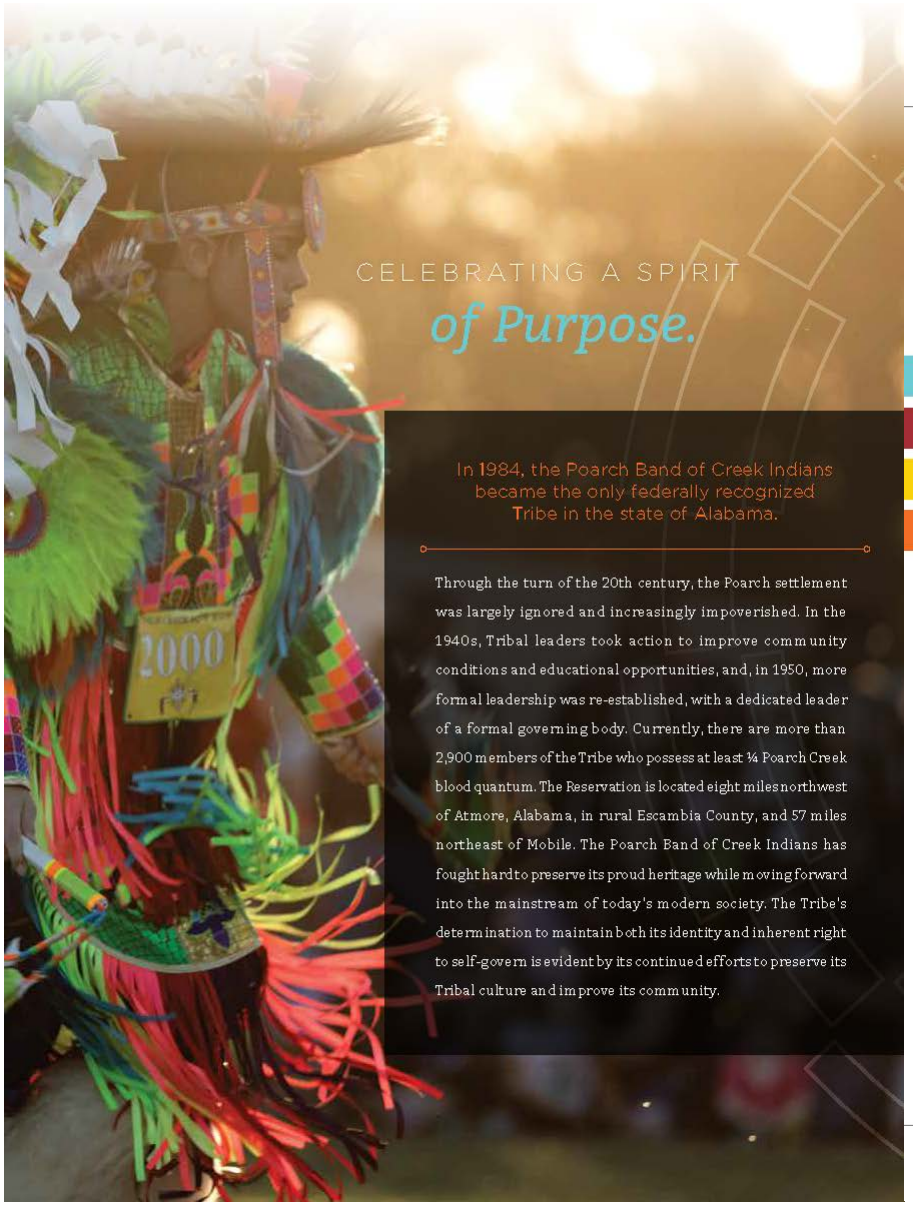
A nine-member Tribal Council, one-third of whom are elected each year, meets regularly to manage Tribal affairs.

EXECUTIVE BRANCH

The Tribal Chair is the CEO of the Tribe and is responsible for the overall management of the Tribal Government's daily activities. Several departments perform administrative functions, including: accounting, human resources, education, family services, health services, safety, public works, utilities, economic development, legal, and resource development.

JUDICIAL BRANCH

The Tribal Supreme Court, Tribal Court, and Drug Court make up the Judicial Branch of the Tribe. The judicial system is an important exercise of Tribal sovereignty, as the state of Alabama has neither criminal nor civil jurisdiction over Indians located on the Reservation. The Federal Court System only has judicial authority over major criminal offenses that occur on the Reservation.



CELEBRATING A SPIRIT

of Purpose.

In 1984, the Poarch Band of Creek Indians became the only federally recognized Tribe in the state of Alabama.

Through the turn of the 20th century, the Poarch settlement was largely ignored and increasingly impoverished. In the 1940s, Tribal leaders took action to improve community conditions and educational opportunities, and, in 1950, more formal leadership was re-established, with a dedicated leader of a formal governing body. Currently, there are more than 2,900 members of the Tribe who possess at least ¼ Poarch Creek blood quantum. The Reservation is located eight miles northwest of Atmore, Alabama, in rural Escambia County, and 57 miles northeast of Mobile. The Poarch Band of Creek Indians has fought hard to preserve its proud heritage while moving forward into the mainstream of today's modern society. The Tribe's determination to maintain both its identity and inherent right to self-govern is evident by its continued efforts to preserve its Tribal culture and improve its community.

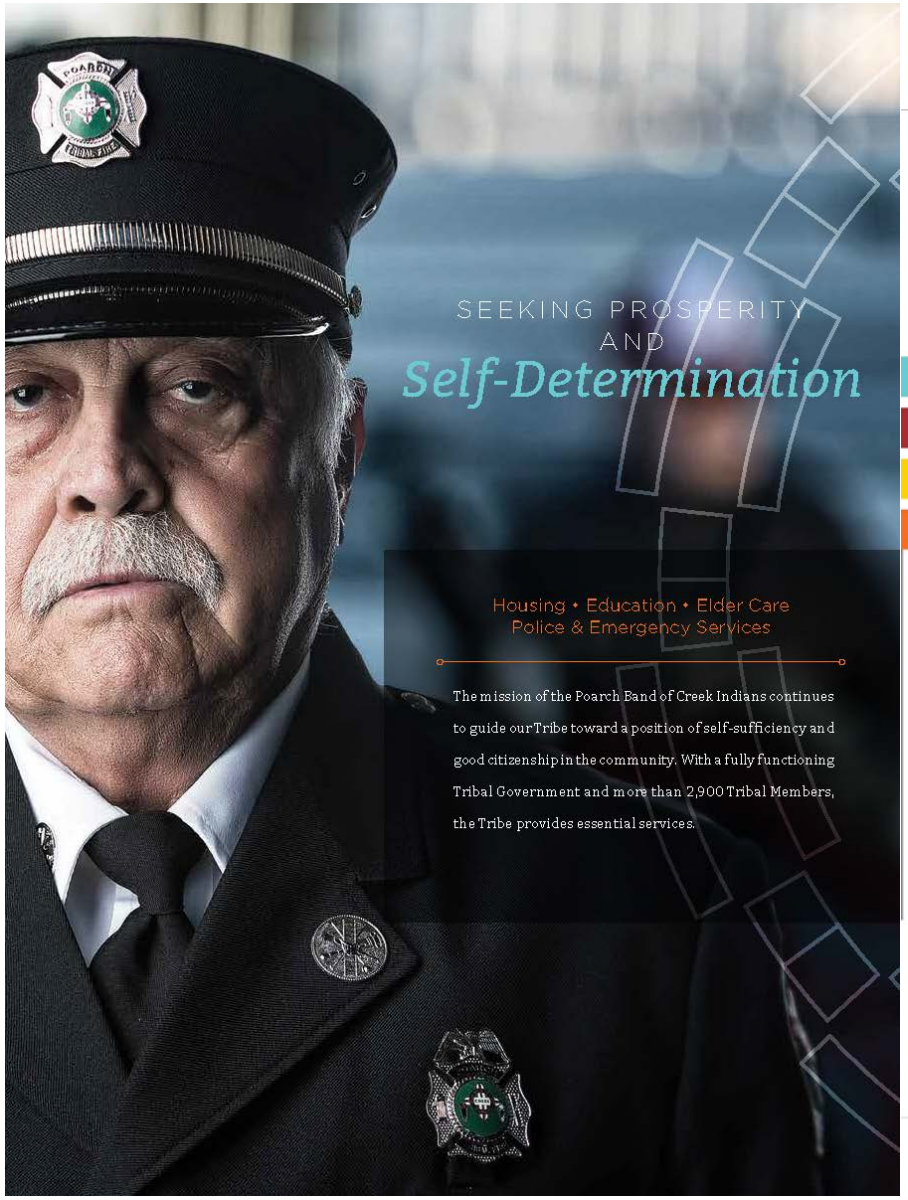
OUR HISTORY

OUR HERITAGE

As descendants of a segment of the original Creek Nation, the Poarch Band of Creek Indians have a rich heritage. This nation once covered most of Alabama and Georgia, and can trace its roots to the Paleo-Indian period. Our ancestors lived along the Alabama, Coosa and Tallapoosa Rivers, including areas from Wetumpka south to the Tensaw settlement. The Treaty of Fort Jackson, in 1814, forever changed the face of the great Creek Nation, as more than 21 million acres of Creek Indian land were ceded to the United States. In 1830, the historic Indian Removal Act imposed the resettlement of the Creek Nation from the remaining lands to present-day Oklahoma; this journey is known as The Trail of Tears. However, several Creek leaders and their families, because of their service in protecting Creek and White settlers, received land grants, in 1814 and again in 1836, which became the home of today's Poarch Band of Creek Indians in southern Alabama.

Pictured clockwise from top left: Mrs. Eloise Bradshaw, Chief Calvin McGhee Leola Manac, Rebecca McGhee, Sara Margaret Manac

Chief Calvin McGhee stands with an Episcopal preacher



SEEKING PROSPERITY
AND
Self-Determination

Housing • Education • Elder Care
Police & Emergency Services

The mission of the Poarch Band of Creek Indians continues to guide our Tribe toward a position of self-sufficiency and good citizenship in the community. With a fully functioning Tribal Government and more than 2,900 Tribal Members, the Tribe provides essential services.

COMMUNITY

MANY PEOPLE. ONE PURPOSE.

Our community is far bigger than just our Tribe. We work, play, go to school and raise our families with our fellow Alabamians. In fact, Tribal Government has donated and provided scholarships of more than $75,000,000 (since 2013).

EDUCATION

The Education Department oversees three federal programs: the Johnson-O'Malley (JOM) Program, the Adult Education Program and a library program made available by a grant from The Institute of Museum and Library Services. The department provides services that include after-school tutoring, GED classes, college assistance, computer classes, leadership classes and on-the-job training. This department is also responsible for administering the Fred L. McGhee Tuition Assistance educational scholarship program.

FAMILY SERVICES

The Family Services Department promotes self-sufficiency and well being through a variety of services that range from investigation of child abuse/neglect to crisis intervention for families and children. Services are available to enrolled members of the Poarch Band of Creek Indians, members of a federally recognized tribe and members of an enrolled household.

HEALTH

Established in 1984, the Poarch Creek Indian Health Program operates a full-service, outpatient clinic that provides health, medical, dental and pharmacy services to Poarch Creek Indians and First-Generation descendants up to age 19. In addition, the PCI Health Program oversees the Women, Infant and Children program (WIC) that is contracted through the state of Alabama.

HOUSING

The Poarch Creek Indian Housing Department helps to provide adequate housing opportunities to eligible Tribal Members. The Housing Department manages five rental subdivisions with a total of 95 family units and 44 senior citizen rental units. The Tribally Assisted Home Ownership (TAHO), Rehabilitation, Renovation Loans, and Section 184 Indian Loan programs are a few of the many services offered by the Housing Department. Currently 300 Tribal Members have utilized the TAHO program to finance and build homes of their own.

PUBLIC SAFETY

The Poarch Band of Creek Indians' Tribal Police Department is the primary law enforcement agency for the Poarch Creek Indian Reservation and operates under the Special Law Enforcement Commission of the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA). We have law enforcement agreements with the following agencies: the Escambia County Sheriff's Department, the Montgomery County Sheriff's Department, the Elmore County Sheriff's Department, and the City of Wetumpka Police Department. Tribal Police also participate in the 21st Judicial Circuit Drug Task Force and the Elmore County Drug Task Force. The department is proud to also provide law enforcement services for the surrounding community.

TRIBAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT (EMA)

The Tribal Emergency Management Department has become stronger and undergone vast growth since it opened as a volunteer fire department in 1988. Today, the department includes firefighters, paramedics and emergency medical technicians. The department has participated in and received certification in courses that range from Confined Space to Advanced EMT. The Department provides emergency services to the Tribal Community and the surrounding area with two 24-hour fully-staffed and equipped fire stations.

TRIBAL JUDICIAL SYSTEM

The Tribal Judicial System was established in 1987, when the Tribe was awarded a one-year Tribal Court contract by the Bureau of Indian Affairs. The judicial power of the Poarch Band of Creek Indians is vested exclusively in its Tribal Judicial System. The Court consists of three jurisdictional units: a Supreme Court, Tribal Court, and a Court of general jurisdiction. The overall goal of the Tribal Judicial System is to institutionalize the rule of the law to enhance the Tribe's capability to provide judicial services to its Tribal Members. The Tribal Judicial System is an important exercise of the Tribe's sovereignty.

CIEDA

CREEK INDIAN ENTERPRISES DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

The scope of CIEDA's commercial activities includes everything from direct ownership and control of certain business, while merely being a passive investor in other businesses. CIEDA believes that its businesses and investments shall, in the future, provide a non-gaming based revenue stream and foundation for continued Tribal economic prosperity. Further, many of CIEDA's investments also provide employment opportunities for Tribal members as well as the surrounding non-Tribal community.

Muskogee Technology provides advanced fabrication, composite cutting and storage to the industrial, commercial, aerospace, defense, wind energy, and the oil and gas industries.

The **Creek Convenience Stores** located in Atmore and Wetumpka, Alabama, and the **Creek Travel Plaza** located in Atmore, Alabama, serve hundreds of visitors every day and offer competitive prices on fuel, food, snacks, drinks, and tobacco products.

CIEDA investment activities have expanded into Huntsville, Alabama's prospering Redstone Gateway Development. CIEDA owns a majority interest in the company that owns the brand new **TownePlace Suites by Marriott** located right outside of Redstone Arsenal's busy Gate 9 (the most heavily traffic base entrance).

CIEDA's largest investment to date is in **OWA**, a family destination in Foley, Alabama. OWA includes an amusement park as well as a variety of options for shopping and dining and an entertainment center.

CIEDA also has ownership positions in several hospitality/hotel ventures in Florida—the **Holiday Inn Resort** and **Hilton Garden Inn** in Fort Walton Beach; the **Hyatt Place Hotel** in Pensacola, and the **Westin Hotel** in Lake Mary, Florida.

Through its varying investment strategies, CIEDA has investment interests in marinas, emerging technology markets such as **YuppTV**, which provides streaming video services, as well as additional hospitality development ventures throughout the Southeast with **Doradus Partners**.

ENTERPRISE OPERATIONS

CCS Atmore · CCS Wetumpka · Creek Travel Plaza · Magnolia Branch · Perdido River Farms

ENTERTAINMENT & LEISURE

OWA · Suntex Marinas

TECHNOLOGY

MT · YuppTV · PCI Aviation

HOSPITALITY

Doradus Partners · Hilton Garden Inn · Holiday Inn Resort · Hyatt Place Pensacola · Muskogee Inn · TownePlace Suites Marriott · Westin

Meaning "big water," OWA is the destination where you can slow down, reconnect and spend your day exactly how you wish.

Only 7 miles from the Alabama Gulf Coast, OWA is a must-see family-friendly resort destination featuring a thrilling amusement park, a picturesque 14-acre lake, and lushly landscaped pathways meandering past Southern-inspired architecture. With a variety of options for shopping and dining, guests can discover a trendy new eatery or peruse the latest fashion trends. OWA truly offers something for everyone while allowing guests to create that special memory.

OWA

EXCITING NEW THEME BASED FAMILY DESTINATION IN FOLEY

OWA has the feel of a small town evolving through time, with distinct districts punctuating the lavishly landscaped grounds. OWA represents the best of old-time southern vacationing with the amenities today's family seeks.

OWA's attractions include boutique shopping, a variety of dining options, live music, an amusement park with over twenty rides including a breathtaking roller coaster, and so much more. Thrill-seekers, fashionistas, foodies, music lovers, and sports fans will want to return time after time. OWA is your southern destination, reinvented.

This world-class resort is centered in Foley, AL, just north of Gulf Coast beaches, and is easily accessible from I-10. Discover the fun!

Go to visitOWA.com for updates and announcements.

AMENITIES

- Amusement Park
- Accommodations
- Shopping
- Dining
- Entertainment
- Resort Park

PCI GAMING/ WIND CREEK HOSPITALITY

GAMING CONSULTANTS

Over the years, PCI Gaming has gained tremendous expertise in managing and developing gaming operations in Alabama. Our success has allowed us to shift our concentration from "Indian Gaming" in Alabama to other commercial properties in the United States and abroad. Backed by our accomplishments and proven management expertise, we have the unique opportunity to partner with several tribes across the U.S. to assist them in the areas of gaming and hospitality. We are delighted that the Poarch Band of Creek Indians can help other tribes seek economic prosperity and self-determination.

WIND CREEK CASINO & HOTEL ATMORE

The possibilities are endless and the exhilaration never stops at Wind Creek Casino & Hotel Atmore. Our hotel features 236 spacious rooms and the finest resort amenities, including 24-hour room service, a luxurious spa and a wide variety of dining options. On the casino floor, over 57,000 sq ft and 1,700 games surround you with gaming entertainment. Guests may also try our bowling alley, arcade and hands-on classes at our Kitchen Culinary Studio. Catch a live show at our amphitheater or a movie at our state-of-the-art 9-theater cinema. The best in entertainment, along with high-quality cuisine, is sure to please those with the most discriminating of tastes.

WIND CREEK CASINO & HOTEL MONTGOMERY

With over 2,000 of your favorite game titles, the gaming floor at Wind Creek Casino & Hotel Montgomery is where all of the action happens. We have all of the games that you love, the way you love to play them in our 46,000 sq ft casino. Discover taste buds you didn't even know you had with the flavor-packed sensations at our restaurants. If you're ready to take your game to a whole new level, try out our new high-limit room. Stop by Essentials gift shop for souvenirs. We've got it all at Montgomery's hometown casino!

WIND CREEK CASINO & HOTEL WETUMPKA

From the excitement of our high-limits room to our shark-tank centerpiece, we've spared no luxury at Wind Creek Casino & Hotel Wetumpka. Our gaming floor offers players an 85,000 sq ft space to play over 2,500 of the most popular games. Take your tastes to the next level with everything from the upscale fare at our gourmet steakhouse to the speedy selections at our grab-and-go deli. And when the day is done and the games have been won, rest up in one of our 283 oversized rooms. Sleep like a king on an ultra-plush Dream Weaver bed, and enjoy some of the most luxurious amenities around, including 24-hour room service. Drop by Essentials gift shop to treat yourself to some of our special bath and body products. If you're looking for a good time, you've found it!

WIND CREEK CASINO & HOTEL ARUBA

Wind Creek Hospitality purchased the Renaissance Aruba Resort and Casino in early 2017. Located minutes from Queen Beatrix Airport, the resort sits in the middle of downtown Orangestad, Aruba's capital city, and overlooks the marina and cruise ship terminal. The property is well positioned to provide guests an opportunity to escape from their daily routines and experience something truly extraordinary. The resort offers two hotels with 431 rooms; numerous choices for dining; two shopping malls that include luxury retailers Dolce & Gabbana, Gucci, Louis Vuitton, Prada, Cartier, Burberry, Rolex, and Bulgari; two casinos; and the private Okeanos Spa. The adjacent 40-acre private island offers exquisite beaches and is an ideal location for tropical weddings while business conferences and trade shows are at home in 22,000 sq ft of event space.

RENAISSANCE CURACAO RESORT & CASINO

Wind Creek Hospitality's newest purchase, Renaissance Curacao Resort & Casino, is nestled in the heart of historic Willemstad, and delivers everything you need for a spectacular visit! You'll find our hotel on a beautiful private beach, moments away from popular area attractions like Christoffel National Park, the Sea Aquarium and Curacao Museum. Our guest rooms feature inviting decor and modern perks including LCD TVs and high-speed internet; plush pillow top mattresses ensure a great night's sleep after a day spent exploring Willemstad. And many of our accommodations include balconies with breathtaking views! For those planning events, our hotel boasts 8,600 sq ft of flexible venue space. Visit one of our five on-site restaurants for everything from perfectly prepared steak to delicious international dishes. Enjoy a swim in our infinity pool, a workout in the gym or a day of relaxation on our beach. And be sure to stop by our resort casino for a night of excitement! Let the Renaissance Curacao Resort & Casino make your vacation dreams come.

WA SHE SHU CASINO

Wa She Shu Casino opened in May 2016 as a partnership between the Poarch Band of Creek Indians, Wind Creek Hospitality and the Washoe Tribe of California and Nevada. Located in Gardnerville, NV, Wa She Shu Casino offers a hometown atmosphere with gorgeous views of the Sierra Mountains near Lake Tahoe. The 13,500 sq ft facility includes a 4,600 sq ft gaming floor with 130 games, a casual restaurant and a full-service bar. Wa She Shu means "The Peoples' Place" in the Washoe language.

CREEK ENTERTAINMENT—GRETNA

Located right off I-10 in Gretna, Florida, this establishment offers year-round live horse racing and simulcast betting. Our poker room is complete with a bar and grill.

MOBILE GREYHOUND TRACK

Features live Greyhound Racing, simulcast betting and clubhouse dining.

PENSACOLA GREYHOUND TRACK

Features live Greyhound Racing, simulcast betting and a 25-table poker room.

Session XII - Atmore

Below are the biographies of the panelists for Session XI, discussing public and private partnerships with the Alabama Forestry Commission and for-profit corporations.

Benjamin Elmore

Benjamin “Benji” Elmore has spent his 33-year career working from the Clarke County office, working in forest management, wildland firefighting, and law enforcement. He also served on several western fire details from Texas to the west coast. In October 2008, he became the Work Unit Manager for the Alabama Forestry Commission, and in April 2013, he was named Reginal Forester for the Southwest Region supervising employees in 12 counties in the southwest part of the state of Alabama.

Elmore is an alumnus of Auburn University (B.S. in Forest Engineering).

Jessie Harrison

Jessie Harrison grew up on his family’s farm in Uriah, Alabama and graduate from J. U. Blacksher High School. For four years, Jessie worked as an Environmental Specialist for the Poarch Band Creek Indians and has been the manager of PRT Atmore since February 2017.

Harrison is an alumnus of the University of West Alabama (B.S. in Environmental Sciences).

Ryan Holland

Ryan Holland stared work with the Alabama Forestry Commission in December 2008 as a forester in Conecuh County. He became a Work Unit Manager in January 2013, which included supervising four counties, managing Hauss Nursery, and Little River State Forest. He has been married to his wife Amanda for five years. The couple had their first child Ella Grace in May of 2017.

Holland is an alumnus of Auburn University (B.S. in Forestry).

Forest Seedling Nursery To Be Built In Atmore

NorthEscambia.com *November 28, 2016*

The largest producer of container-grown forest seedlings in North America will construct a nursery in Atmore to serve forest landowners and other customers in the southeastern U.S.

Construction of the PRT USA nursery will be completed in early 2017, and sowing of seedlings will occur in Spring 2017, for shipping to customers for the 2017-18 planting season.

The nursery will be established at the former E.A. Hauss Nursery site in Atmore. PRT has signed a long term lease with the Alabama Forestry Commission, which includes land, buildings and infrastructure suitable to forest seedling production. PRT will construct container growing facilities on the site, which it intends to expand over time in response to customer needs. PRT's forest seedling product offering will include longleaf, slash and loblolly pine, and other species.

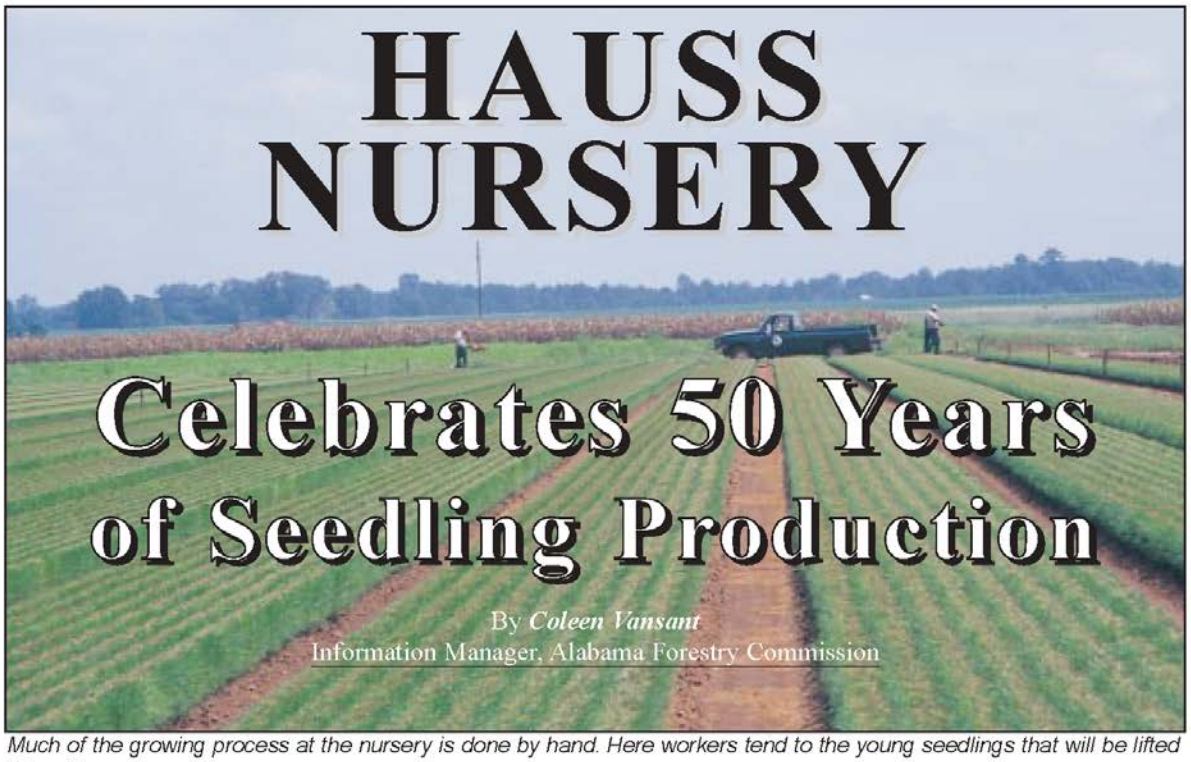
"With establishment of this facility PRT will take another step towards our goal of better serving our customers in the Southeast U.S. This region is an important forestry market in North America, which is poised to grow as the forest industry economic recovery continues and as more customers embrace the advantages of container grown seedlings. An Alabama based nursery will allow us to make PRT's containerized forest seedlings available for quick and effective turnaround deliveries during the fall and winter plant period starting in 2017," said PRT President and CEO Rob Miller.

"We have worked diligently with the State of Alabama in order to arrive at this mutually agreeable arrangement for the former E.A. Hauss Nursery. We recognize and respect the legacy of this nursery to the State and the history of forestry in the region. We look forward to continuing this legacy by working with customers throughout the Southeast U.S. and being an integral part of their successful reforestation efforts now and in the future," Miller added.

The PRT Group currently grows more than 180 million seedlings annually at a network of forest seedling nurseries in the U.S. and Canada.

http://www.northescambia.com/2016/11/forest-seedling-nursery-to-be-built-in-atmore

HAUSS NURSERY



Celebrates 50 Years of Seedling Production

By *Coleen Vansant*
Information Manager, Alabama Forestry Commission

Much of the growing process at the nursery is done by hand. Here workers tend to the young seedlings that will be lifted this winter.

This year the Alabama Forestry Commission's E. A. Hauss Nursery celebrates its 50th anniversary of producing quality genetically improved seedlings at affordable prices for landowners of Alabama.

Although the youngest of the Alabama Forestry Commission's (AFC) once three productive nurseries, Hauss Nursery is now the dominant nursery for the AFC, producing 100 percent of the bare root seedlings. In the last decade, the Commission began phasing out Stauffer Nursery in Opelika and Miller Nursery in Autaugaville and moved all bare root operations to the Hauss facility near Atmore.

Named for the late Edward A. Hauss, who was president of Alger-Sullivan Lumber Company when that company donated 50 acres of land to the Commission in 1951, the nursery has produced approximately 1,300,000,000 seedlings in its half century of existence. That milestone was reached on January 24, 1991. The first seedling crop was harvested in the winter of 1952-53 with a total of 7,402 seedlings being produced. In the last 50 years the nursery has grown to approximately 400 acres of owned and leased land and to the production capacity of 60 million seedlings. The packing shed at the Hauss complex can process 1,200,000 seedlings per day.

When construction began in 1951, the nursery was placed under the management of Carl A. Mueller and in 50 years has seen only four additional nursery managers; Marty Schupeltz, Sam Campbell, Philip Wilson, and current manager Craig Frazier. It has had only three nursery supervisors in the same period of time: Mueller, Marlin Mack, and at present, Bobby Wooten.

Over the last 50 years many changes have occurred at Hauss Nursery. In the past, longleaf seedlings were planted and harvested by hand without the help of machinery. Seed for each 100–foot bed was measured out in a paper bag and sown by hand into the beds. In 1982 a Whitfield tree planter was purchased which made planting longleaf much easier. However, it was the purchase of a 1986 Grayco harvester that made a significant difference in production at Hauss Nursery. Before the purchase of the planter, workers could pull by hand

A Forest In My Hand

A joyful sun burst over the hill
Sweeping away the morning's chill
While planting seedlings in the earth
A giant forest was taking birth!
Soon to shelter white-tailed deer
Where creatures small can disappear
Seedlings bought from a nursery land
Tiny roots still moist with sand.
Each was placed in pockets deep
Where spring rains would gently seep
I heeled them in, rooted, deep secure
Each one a tree in miniature.
Never knowing whose eyes will gaze
Or come to rest under forest's shade
Their bodies cooled by the tallest tree
But it was I who planted thee.
Their strength and beauty for all time
Will enrich the lives of yours and mine
Though storms will rage, able to withstand
I held a forest in my hand.

-- By Jacqueline Pitts

This poem, written by a customer, has been displayed in the Hauss Nursery office for several years.

Above: These old wooden lifting boxes were used at Hauss Nursery for many years.

Right: Although the sign is new, this is the door of the original seedling cooler at Hauss Nursery. With additional coolers the nursery has the capability to store seed for up to 5 years. When the nursery began it produced 3 species of pine. Now it produces 22 different species of both pine and hardwood.

This is the staff of Hauss Nursery today. Pictured from left to right are: Autry Zigler, Charles "Buddy" Salter, Albert Singleton, Craig Fraizer, Bobby Wooten, and Kelvin Ephraim.

Nancy Givens processes orders on the computer. The ordering and tracking process was automated in 1984.

Left: Workers in the packing shed can process 1,200,000 seedlings per day.

100,000 longleaf seedlings per day. With the mechanical harvester, production jumped to 200,000 per day.

At one time, nursery workers cut packing sticks by hand; now they are purchased pre-cut. Workers also had to go into the swamps to rake moss for packing the delicate seedlings; now they are packed with Viterra, a gel that keeps the roots of the baled seedlings moist. Formerly, seedling orders were taken at the county level and mailed to the nursery; in 1984 a computer was installed which made the ordering process and record keeping at Hauss Nursery much more efficient. Today you can even visit the Commission's web page at www.forestry.state.al.us for a seedling price list and order form.

(Continued on page 10)

This photo was taken of Hauss Nursery December 16, 1953, by Tim McKinney from the Luscombe plane. This was the first year after production began at Hauss in 1951-52.

Originally Hauss produced only three species: loblolly, longleaf, and slash pine. In the 1995-96 production year, the Alabama Forestry Commission began to offer varieties beneficial to wildlife and now they produce over 22 different species of pine and hardwood bare root seedlings. In the old days, once these trees were lifted and packed, county personnel traveled to the nurseries to pick up the seedlings for landowners. Now they are delivered by refrigerated truck to seven different distribution points across the state were they are picked up by landowners.

Last year, Hauss received a new seed cooler that provides space to store up to five years of seed under ideal conditions. All pine seed planted at Hauss Nursery is genetically improved seed, harvested from Commission tree nurseries. The AFC also produces its own seed for sawtooth oak, dogwood, red bud, and autumn olive.

There have been many changes at Hauss Nursery and in the Alabama Forestry Commission's nursery program in the last few years, changes that have brought the Commission's seedling program into the 21st century with continued commitment to customer satisfaction through the production and distribution of the highest quality seedlings at reasonable prices.

This 1986 photo shows nursery workers loading seedlings onto a trailer for transportation to the grading shed.

A landmark at E.A. Hauss for many years, this water tower was erected when the nursery was established and functioned until it was dismantled in 1998.

BURT JONES
RURAL COMMUNITY
EXPERIENCE

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA | Division of Student Life Blackburn Institute

Session XIII - Atmore

Below are the biographies of the speakers for Session XI, discussing the Alabama Accountability Act and the impact on Escambia County High School being designated a failing school.

Beth Drew

Beth Drew is Assistant Superintendent of the Escambia County Schools System.

Willie Grissett

Willie Grissett is Chairman of the Escambia County School Board.

ECHS placed on failing schools list ECHS placed on failing schools list

Andrew Garner | The Atmore Advance *January 31, 2018*

"I feel like that this list is based on a test that was deemed invalid by the (Alabama) state department of education and the federal government, but yet we're still using that as the single measuring stick that has landed Escambia County High School on this list," ECHS Principal Dennis Fuqua said. The Alabama State Department of Education's failing schools list is based on 2017 test results in math and reading from the ACT Aspire test. The list includes the bottom 6 percent of all schools in the state. Since the administration of last year's test, the state voted to discontinue using it as a measuring stick to assess schools.

Superintendent John Knott said the test is administered to students in grades 3-8, and to sophomores in high school. This year's results are based on last year's sophomore class. "As the superintendent of the Escambia County School System, I have no confidence in this test being an accurate depiction of our academic achievement in our schools," Knott said. "The ACT Aspire test was created as a formative measure of where your students are on their journey on reaching the goal for the ACT when they take it in high school.

"It didn't measure and take into account what we're teaching at the appropriate grade or skill level," he added. This is the second year in a row that ECHS has been placed on the failing schools list. Since 2016, the Atmore school has implemented several programs to help in the effort to get off of the list. Fuqua said the school started a math initiative that provides professional development for teachers, an instructional coach and after-school tutoring.

"We have made strides at Escambia County High School, and my biggest argument is that with this failing list that legislatures are deeming schools with, you're labeling our students," he said. "That's my biggest issue with the whole thing. It's hard for me to sit idly by and say that you can label this student in this manner." Assistant Superintendent Beth Drew said no matter how high the achievement the school achieves; it could still make the bottom 6 percent, based on the test. "There will always be a bottom 6 percent," she said.

Knott said the school system is in favor of an assessment that measures all areas of school, including students' extracurricular activities, sports involvement. "We want an assessment system in place that measures the mastery of the standards and skills that are being taught and are required to teach," he said. "It doesn't take into consideration graduation rates, it doesn't take into consideration what we're doing as far as career preparedness programs. It doesn't take attendance or other activities we're doing into account. In my opinion, it's a misrepresentation of what our students' achievements are."

https://www.atmoreadvance.com/2018/01/31/echs-placed-on-failing-schools-list/

Report: Alabama Accountability Act scholarship students' test scores similar to public schools

Trisha Powell Crain | al.com *September 7, 2018*

Alabama students using tax credit scholarships are performing about the same on standardized tests as their public school counterparts according to the latest report required under the Alabama Accountability Act. And that means proficiency levels are generally low, not only for scholarship recipients but also public school students, which isn't news to anyone who follows test score results.

The report, posted on the Alabama Department of Revenue's website Friday afternoon, uses 2016-2017 test data, and was prepared by the University of Alabama's Institute for Social Science Research at a cost of $112,800, paid for by the scholarship granting organizations who collect donations and distribute scholarships to eligible students.

The Alabama Accountability Act, originally passed by lawmakers in 2013, allows taxpayers to donate to scholarship granting organizations, known as SGOs, who then distribute scholarships to low-income students in Kindergarten through 12th grade to use in participating non-public and public schools. Donors can count the contribution as a credit against their Alabama income tax liability. Critics claim those tax credits represent tax revenue that could be used to support public schools while supporters claim the scholarships allow families an educational option beyond what is offered in their neighborhood public school.

Alabama Opportunity Scholarship Fund Executive Director Lesley Searcy said her organization has been working with students attending the schools that were dropped from the list to help their families find a new school. Students using tax credit scholarships must take standardized tests in English language arts and math. Scholarship students must take the ACT college entrance exam before they graduate. Those test results must be sent to the SGOs by each school. SGOs are then required to send results to the organization compiling the report. The Alabama Department of Revenue oversees the administration of the Alabama Accountability Act.

According to the authors, the report has three objectives: for students receiving scholarships, describe achievement levels, compare learning gains to public school students, and assess achievement changes over time. In each area, scholarship recipients performed about the same as their public school counterparts. "On average, over time," the report states, "participating in the scholarship program was not associated with significant improvement on standardized test scores." Additionally, the report states, "The overall lack of change over time follows the same pattern seen in public school students in Alabama and is likely not attributable to participation in the scholarship program."

Authors note that the most accurate way to determine the effects the AAA scholarship program may have on student achievement would be to "compare scholarship students' performance to the performance of students in the public school for which they were zoned, rather than aggregating across all schools in the state." However, they also note that information is not collected at the state level and it would be "time intensive and costly."

The Alabama Accountability Act, or AAA, in part created a tax credit scholarship program allowing low-income families to use donations made to a scholarship granting organization to pay tuition for their children to attend a private school or an out-of-district public school. According to the report, test results were obtained for 1,991 scholarship recipients attending 114 schools in 43 counties statewide. Those results represent three-quarters of the students that were required to be tested, according to the report.

While more than 4,000 students received scholarships during that school year, only students in third through eighth and 10th grade and also in 11th grade were required to be tested. The authors cautioned against generalizing the results to the larger group of scholarship students because results for the 1,991 students might not be representative of the larger group.

The report indicates the following about the students who were tested:

- 15 percent were first-time scholarship recipients,
- 11 percent were two-time recipients,

- 51 percent were three-time recipients,
- 22 percent were in their fourth year
- 90 percent were eligible for free or reduced-price lunches, a measure that is used to indicate poverty,
- 34 percent were zoned to attend a failing public school,
- 62 percent of students are black, 20 percent are white, and 11 percent are Hispanic.
- The report lists several challenges researchers faced in compiling and comparing the results.

A total of 21 different tests were used for scholarship recipients in 149 different schools. Because the number of students taking some of the tests was so small, 14 types of tests were eliminated from the report. Ultimately, researchers used results from seven tests. The breakdown, shown below, is in Table 1 from the report. Alabama's public school students took the ACT Aspire during the 2016-2017 school year, but changed tests for the 2017-2018 school year and are expected to change again for the 2019-2020 school year.

Only 331 of the scholarship recipients took the ACT Aspire, leaving a small group that authors note may not be representative of the scholarship recipients as a whole. Another challenge mentioned is that not only are the tests different in name, but they measure different things. Norm-referenced tests, like the Stanford Achievement Test, measure how students perform compared to other students. Criterion-referenced tests, like the ACT Aspire, measure the percentage of students who reach proficiency.

The authors go into detail about the performance of students on various tests but run into problems breaking down results by race, income level, and gender because of the small numbers of students within those groups. The first report, published in September 2016 using test results from the 2014-2015 school year, found similar test results between scholarship students and public school students. In that 2016 report, test results for 970 scholarship students were obtained, which represented 52 percent of the students in the grades that were required to be tested.

https://www.al.com/news/index.ssf/2018/09/report_tax_credit_scholarship.html

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Atmore's Escambia County High Named A 'Failing School' Again

NorthEscambia.com *January 26, 2018*

The Alabama Department of Education released their latest list of "failing schools" on Thursday. There are 75 schools on the list, including Escambia County High School in Atmore for the second year. Under the Alabama Accountability Act, "Failing Schools" are the bottom 6 percent of public Alabama schools for the 2016-2017 school year based on the state's standardized assessment (ACT Aspire and Alabama Alternate Assessment) in reading and math. Students are tested in reading and math in grades 3-8 and 10 with the Aspire Assessment and the Alabama Alternate Assessment. Students in an Alabama public school designated as a failing school or scheduled to enroll in a failing school will be given school choice options:

- The student may remain or enroll in the assigned school.
- The student may transfer to a comparable school that is not included on the annual list of "failing schools" within the same local school system that has available space and is willing to accept the student.
- If the local system has not made Option 2 available, the student may transfer to a comparable school that is not included on the annual list of "failing schools" within another Alabama local school system that has available space and is willing to accept the student.
- The student may transfer to a qualifying non-public Alabama school that is willing to accept the student.

Parents have until May 1 to give notice of their intent to transfer.

http://www.northescambia.com/2018/01/atmores-escambia-county-high-named-a-failing-school-again

Session XIV- Atmore

Below is the biography of the panelists for Session XIV, discussing civic engagement in terms of capital investment including downtown revitalization and business recruitment.

Dale Ash

Dale Ash began her business career at First National Bank in Brewton (at present, Trustmark), where she worked for 12 years as cashier, controller and secretary to the board of directors. Additionally, she taught at Jefferson Davis Community College (Coastal Alabama). In February 1993, Dale and her siblings, purchased a 50 percent interest in Pepsi-Cola. She became the first female elected to the board of directors of United Bank in 1993, and was later elected to the bank's holding company. Over the last 25 years, Dale has served in various capacities on the bank board as well as in various organizations throughout the state, city and county. She was the second woman in the 100 year history of the Alabama Beverage Association to be elected as its president. Dale led Coca-Cola, Pepsi and Dr. Pepper bottlers throughout the state in a grassroots effort to defeat a possible soft drink tax.

She currently leads Pepsi-Cola Bottling Co. in Atmore as vice president. Dale's honors include the 2017 Lifetime Achievement Award from the Atmore Area Chamber of Commerce and 2018 Atmore Hall of Fame. She serves as a member of the Escambia County Child Advocacy Board and Atmore's National Day or Prayer Committee and was instrumental in the formation of the Atmore affiliate of the Community Foundation of South Alabama. Dale, now a local grant writer, co-authored a Delta Regional Authority grant, which helped fund the Pride of Atmore, the city's development plan for a revitalization effort. In 1998, Dale, an her siblings purchased the remainder of Pepsi-Cola Bottling Co. from their father. Ash is married to her husband, Alan, of 37 years, and they are the parents of two sons, Matt, a doctor of physical therapy, and Alan, a teacher and coach.

Ash is an alumna of Auburn University.

Bub Gideons

Malcolm "Bub" Gideons is a realtor for PHD Realty. He is a past president of the Atmore Area Chamber of Commerce, the recipient of the 2017 Atmore Citizen of the Year Award, and the founder of Pride of Atmore, a civic group leading the charge to revitalize the city's downtown core. Bub, a well-known advocate of the city of Atmore, has been involved with several organizations, including Save the Strand effort, the Lions Club; and several other entities.

Gideons is an alumnus of The University of Alabama School of Law.

Richard Maxwell

Richard Maxwell is the owner of Maxwell Construction Company, West Side Storage Company and is a partner in Triterra Development Company. Richard is from Atmore, Alabama and has been in business there for the past 42 years. Civically active, he has volunteered his time for numerous local organizations and is past president of the Atmore Area United Fund and the Atmore Lions Club. He also served as a scout leader for Atmore Boy Scout Troop 26 for 8 years. Currently Richard is the chairman of the Atmore Industrial Development Board and is on the Board of Directors of both United Bank and United Bancorporation of Alabama. Also active in his church, Richard has been an elder and deacon in the First Presbyterian Church in Atmore. Richard has been married to his wife Bess for 44 years. They have two children and five grandchildren.

Maxwell is an alumnus of The University of Alabama.

New vision for downtown Public invited to join community planner Thursday

Don Fletcher | Atmore News *December 6 , 2017*

Bub Gideons and other members of Pride of Atmore Committee are excited about the possibility that downtown Atmore might soon undergo a metamorphosis that will bring shoppers and others back to the city's once-thriving geographic center. Having secured one of Delta Regional Authority's Creative Placemaking Grants, the first tangible proof that the latest downtown revitalization plan could bear fruit will come on Thursday, December 7, when Zachary Mannheimer, the man charged with formulating the plan, will be in town for a special get-acquainted lunch meeting.

"It's a community-wide meeting, and the public is invited," Gideons said of the gathering, which will take place at noon inside the historic Strand Theatre. "Zack is a principal community planner with Iowa-based McClure Engineering, and his whole department is involved in planning and helping folks plan revitalization efforts and finding the money to implement those plans." The committee chair added that after several years of second-guessing himself, he can finally look others in the eye with confidence when questioned about the chance of the plan becoming a success.

"I've been talking about this for four years and I could not have looked you in the face a year and a half ago or three years ago and told you that I thought chances were good of getting people to come downtown, when all we were selling downtown were lawnmowers and second-hand goods," he said. "It has been overwhelming at times, looking at our downtown and seeing what all has to be done, but Pride of Atmore has stuck with it."

Gideons said the DRA grant provided the impetus and the confidence to continue the effort. He praised the work of Foster Kizer, who wrote most of the grant application, and Dale Ash, who helped with the grant application and wrote letters of support. "I could go on and on," he said. "A lot of people have played key parts." The grant requires the use of culture and arts to fuel revitalization, which is largely dependent upon the reaction of young adults and those who are on the verge of adulthood.

"Where young people go is where everything happens," said Gideons. "This grant is about using culture to make downtown hip. What we older people know is that there is a lot that we don't know. What is hip right now? What would high school and college kids come downtown for? That's what we're going to be figuring out." He pointed out that several small shops, boutiques and other businesses — including the city's only upscale eating establishment — have opened recently or are preparing to open in the downtown area, especially along Main, Trammell, Church and Ridgeley streets.

"Private business-folks are getting involved, expressing an interest," he said. "The time is right; the economy has helped. Really, the interest shown by business people and community leaders has pushed it. Like I said, it has been a struggle. I've been waiting four years for the miracle to happen. When it finally caught on, it was 'thank you, Lord.' "Something has happened organically out there. It's all positive, and that's the key."

"Business people, 'Old Atmore' people (longtime residents) and folks who love Atmore but didn't know there was a path forward downtown, now believe it," he said. "That has been the spark that we needed." Gideons said Mannheimer has told him that the will of the people will shape the final plan, which he hopes won't go the way of other plans that were abandoned when the initial excitement wore off.

"We're going to depart from the old-timey ways," he said. "Zack told us to keep an open mind, that what the people want is how the plan will turn out. So he wants to see what they will support and come to daily. We don't need one more effort that folks get excited about, then it goes away." Gideons said that anyone who had not already been notified of Thursday's meeting but would like to attend is urged to call him at 251-359-6523 and let him know so that Cindy Colville, who is preparing box lunches for each person in attendance, will have a more accurate head count.

http://atmorenews.com/2017/12/06/new-vision-for-downtown-public-invited-to-join-community-planner-thursday/

STRAND THEATER

Downtowns and main streets are the economic engines of communities – big and small. However, in too many rural towns, downtown storefronts remain empty and buildings vacant or underutilized. Even more common are the historic theaters residing in the center of town that are rarely able to keep their doors open due to the lack of nearby retail and foot traffic from locals and tourists alike. Restoring a historic theater or performance space can positively influence a community's quality of life and spur further economic redevelopment in the downtown district. Widely believed to be the oldest continually operating movie theater in Alabama, the Strand Theater is especially well-positioned to breathe new life into downtown Atmore.

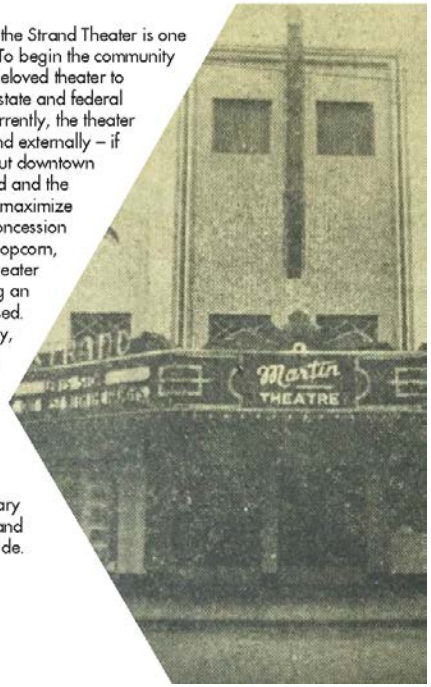
NEW PROGRAMMING

New programming can include:

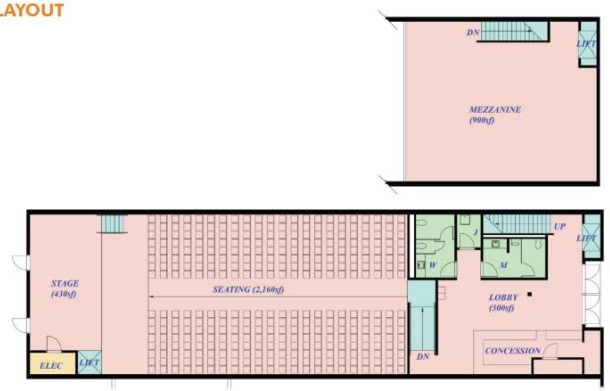
- o Independent Films
- o Second Run Films
- o Cult Classics
- o Family Films
- o Live Music Events
- o Birthday Parties

HISTORY AND NEW STRUCTURE

Opening its doors to movie-going patrons in 1929, the Strand Theater is one of the most iconic landmarks in downtown Atmore. To begin the community revitalization process, Atmore should renovate the beloved theater to look like it did when it was originally built, utilizing state and federal historic tax credits as a major source of funding. Currently, the theater sits in disrepair and needs upgrading – internally and externally – if it is to inspire and accelerate development throughout downtown Atmore. Inside the theater, the lobby will be widened and the ceiling will be raised to allow for more capacity. To maximize this additional space, the theater will upgrade the concession stand area to include more than just your average popcorn, candy, and soft drinks. Inside the cinema hall, the theater will have a seating and acoustics upgrade, including an upgrade to the overall technology currently being used. With the implementation of this enhanced technology, the cinema hall will be able to use its balcony again with the removal of the existing projection booth that is not needed in this digital age. Moreover, the restroom facilities will be upgraded to include additional lavatories and ADA-compliant enhancements. And on the outside, the theater will undergo a complete façade restoration to reflect its founder's original architectural rendering. The primary purpose of the Strand Theater will be to show films and host live music events as outlined in the program guide.



NEW LAYOUT



Strand Theater - Preliminary Space Study Plan

Pride of Atmore *Atmore, Alabama* STOA

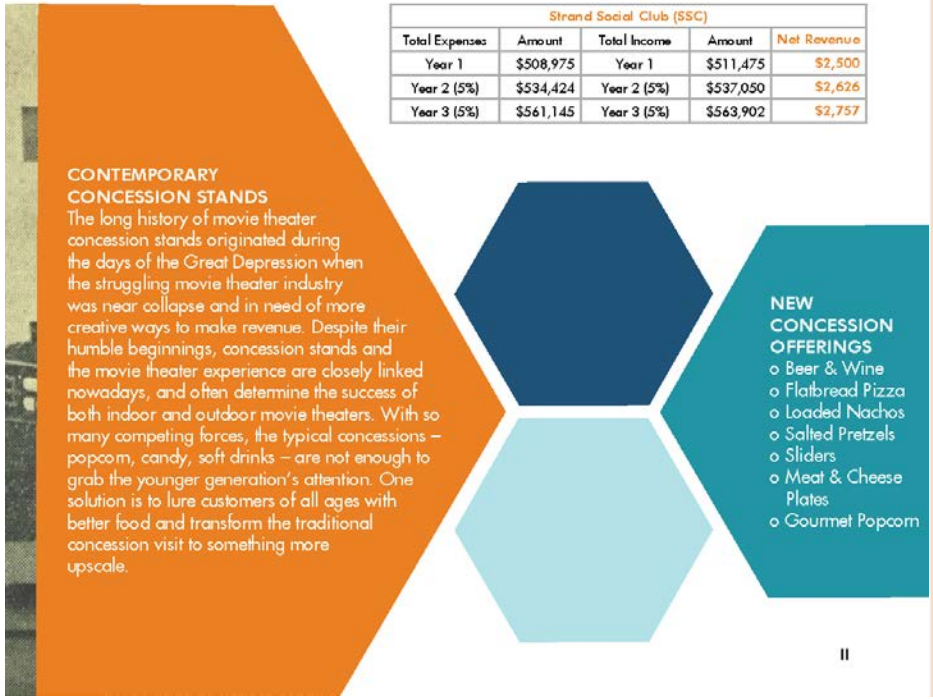
STRAND SOCIAL CLUB

Not only will the theater be restored, but it will also serve as the centerpiece of the Strand Social Club (working title). The Strand Social Club (SSC) will be a program of the already established 501c3 Pride of Atmore organization. The SSC is simply the name given to the entity that oversees the theater, and the programs in both properties immediately to the south (Hardware Store) and the north (Radio Shack). The Pride of Atmore will own both the Strand and Hardware buildings. As of this time, it is undetermined if the Radio Shack (and potentially its sister building to the north) will be owned by the non-profit or if a long term lease will be in place for the programming there. Either option will work well.

BUDGET SNAPSHOT

The full business plan for overall programming and budget can be found in Appendix A.

Strand Social Club (SSC)				
Total Expenses	Amount	Total Income	Amount	Net Revenue
Year 1	$508,975	Year 1	$511,475	$2,500
Year 2 (5%)	$534,424	Year 2 (5%)	$537,050	$2,626
Year 3 (5%)	$561,145	Year 3 (5%)	$563,902	$2,757



CONTEMPORARY CONCESSION STANDS

The long history of movie theater concession stands originated during the days of the Great Depression when the struggling movie theater industry was near collapse and in need of more creative ways to make revenue. Despite their humble beginnings, concession stands and the movie theater experience are closely linked nowadays, and often determine the success of both indoor and outdoor movie theaters. With so many competing forces, the typical concessions – popcorn, candy, soft drinks – are not enough to grab the younger generation's attention. One solution is to lure customers of all ages with better food and transform the traditional concession visit to something more upscale.

NEW CONCESSION OFFERINGS

- Beer & Wine
- Flatbread Pizza
- Loaded Nachos
- Salted Pretzels
- Sliders
- Meat & Cheese Plates
- Gourmet Popcorn

ACTION STEPS

Step 1: Create board of directors and write bylaws

WHO: Steering Committee Members
HOW: Officially incorporate the SSC as a program of the Pride of Atmore (POA) and write new bylaws reflecting the program and the powers of the board and staff. Elect a board of directors. Elect officers.
WHEN: Summer 2018

Step 2: Hire Foster Kizer as Executive Director

WHO: Board of Directors
HOW: Foster has proven himself to be a passionate supporter of the work of POA and the creation of this plan. He has strong experience in fundraising, grant writing, management and the arts. Additionally, he is willing to get to work right away regardless of pay structure being in place. In order to move this plan to action swiftly, we strongly recommend this action.
WHEN: Summer 2018

Step 3: Create Capital Campaign Committee (CCC) and select Campaign Chairs

WHO: Board of Directors
HOW: Select up to 25 people to be part of the CCC. Many board members will serve on this committee. A strong cross section of the community is needed, including members of all major Atmore populations, students and business community.
WHEN: Summer 2018

Step 4: Agree on Campaign Goal and Launch Campaign

WHO: CCC
HOW: Once all final construction estimates are received, agree on the amount needed to fund this work.* Create a roadmap of potential funders (see appendix for inspiration).
WHEN: Summer 2018

Step 5: Launch Capital Campaign

WHO: CCC
HOW: Begin silent phase of campaign and raise pledges of at least 30-40% of overall goal. Then announce Campaign to the public by launching a major event (that should be a fundraiser). At the same time, announce plans for 2-3 other events that will take place throughout the Campaign to keep folks aware and not let campaign go stale. These events are also designed to allow for small contributions (less than $100) from community members who wish to be a part of the campaign but cannot give at a major level.
WHEN: January 2019

FORMER HANDWARE STORE

On the other side of the Strand Theater is the former Hardware Store which will see a complete transformation. The first floor of the building should become a flexible performance space and rental venue, including a moveable stage, fixed bar area and box office. This versatile space should be available for both standing and seated events such as live music concerts, open mic nights, and trivia contests. At the rear of the first floor should be a separate entrance to be available for children and teenagers to have access to the second floor. The second floor of the former hardware store building should feature 2-3 flexible classroom spaces (one for dance/ movement and the other space(s) to accommodate everything else in the program guide) and a small recording studio available for rent and music lessons. Finally, the second floor should include an artist studio apartment (500-600 square feet) to be home to a resident artist who will commit to teaching classes for working with the SSC's education program. As part of the artist residency program, the artist will receive a monthly stipend, free room and board, and rotate out with another artist every 6-12 months.

LIVE MUSIC VENUE/EVENT SPACE

The first floor of the former Hardware Store building will offer Atmore residents with a place to listen to live music from local and regional artists, host various weeknight/weekend events such as open mic nights and trivia contents, but also to open up the space for community members to rent for various events such as wedding receptions, theatrical plays, birthday parties, and dance events, etc. To make best use of the space, seating and other furniture or equipment will be held in a storage area. This storage area could be a shipping container kept behind the building for convenience, and the SSC can select local artist(s) to paint a new mural on the container once a year.

NEW PROGRAMMING

New Programming can include:

- o Music Lessons
- o Painting
- o Photography
- o Ceramics
- o Dance Events
- o Language Classes
- o Academic Tutoring
- o Dance Classes
- o Theater, Music, and Art Camps
- o Yoga, Pilates, and Zumba Classes
- o Trivia Nights
- o Open Mic Nights

CLASSROOMS/SOUND RECORDING STUDIO

The second floor of the former Hardware Store building should be renovated into 2-3 classrooms, a sound recording studio, and a studio apartment for the artist residency program. The classrooms should be adaptable spaces allowing for a broader range of audiences to make use of these spaces. The classrooms should accommodate people of all ages by providing educational and artistic programming, including a variety of disciplines to meet the needs of the community. One classroom should be dedicated to dance and indoor workout classes, such as ballet and yoga. The other classrooms should be interchangeable to accommodate academic tutoring for children, painting with wine classes for adults or music lessons, among other things. The second floor will also include a sound recording studio which should be available for private rentals or group recording for community members wanting to record and produce instrumental music, songs, podcasts, etc. The various uses for the space will be determined by demand and the evolving needs of the community at-large.

PARTNERSHIP WITH YMCA

Dance classes have been offered at the YMCA over the years to varying degrees of success. There remains a strong need for dance classes in Atmore, and in order to maximize the program we recommend forming a partnership with the YMCA as outlined in the business model. Dance classes are only the beginning, and we see many avenues for future partnerships with the YMCA for other classes and programs to bring success to both organizations and decrease competition.

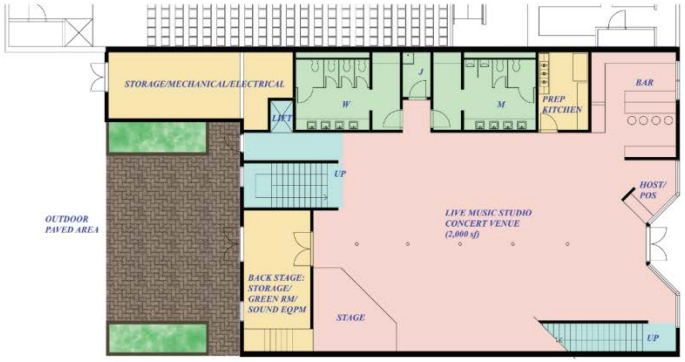
ARTIST RESIDENCY PROGRAM

This program is designed to keep programming fresh by introducing an outside artist every 6-12 months who will live in the space. The artist can be from any discipline. The artist will receive free living quarters and a monthly stipend of $500. In exchange, the artist will teach several classes in the space and create a public piece of art (whatever their discipline) working with community members. This piece of art will be displayed or performed at the conclusion of their residency. There are several national organizations to work with that will promote this opportunity to get the word out and accept applications from artists all around the world.

STUDENT LEADERSHIP

Poarch Creek Indian Tribe Youth Leadership and Escambia High School students were challenged to create an event for the SSC. They envision a comedy and open-mic music event that will be produced and hosted by the students and feature their fellow classmates. A $4 cover cost was suggested.

NEW LAYOUT



Hardware Store Building - Preliminary Space Study 1st Floor Plan

Pride of Atmore *Atmore, Alabama* STOA

Hardware Store Building - Preliminary Space Study 2nd Floor Plan

Pride of Atmore *Atmore, Alabama* STOA

ACTION STEPS

Step 1: Adopt overall budget

WHO: Executive Director (ED) and Board of Directors (BOD)
HOW: ED and BOD will vote on final budget for programming, making sure that the revenues included are achievable.
WHEN: Winter 2019 (or after construction has been completed)

Step 2: Hire staff for SSC

WHO: ED
HOW: Hire administrative, marketing and programming staff for SSC
WHEN: Winter 2019

Step 3: Hire instructors and program leads

WHO: ED and staff
HOW: Hire all programming staff to lead classes and host events. Make sure you have a marketing plan for each event. These hires will likely be contract employees only.
WHEN: Winter 2019

Step 4: Release schedule of events to community

WHO: ED and staff
HOW: Once all programs are created, host a public event to announce the schedule
WHEN: January 2020

ANDERSON FAMILY PROPERTIES

Adjacent to the Strand Theater is the former Radio Shack building owned by the Anderson family. Recognizing the significant redevelopment opportunities in downtown Atmore, the Anderson family has agreed to join forces with the Strand Social Club on several new concepts for the existing building and interior space. Residents in Atmore are eager for a new restaurant to eat at, but also want a family-friendly environment so they can bring their children with them. To meet the needs of current and future residents, the first floor of the former Radio Shack building is slated to become a counter service pizza parlor and/or bakery complete with an interactive zone for young children. The second floor of the building will feature the interactive zone for children.

The building to the north of the former Radio Shack building is also owned by the Anderson family. This space is approximately 2,850 square feet per floor and offers a perfect opportunity to use both floors as a tailor-made makerspace. The makerspace will be home to several woodworking machines and computer programming stations designed for entrepreneurs, tinkerers, and anyone else wanting to learn more skills or needing help starting a business. Ultimately, the goal of these spaces is to bring new audiences to the SCC, but also to provide new sources of revenue for the Strand Social Club.

NEW PROGRAMMING

New programming can include:

- Computer Coding
- Woodworking
- Sewing
- Arts & Crafts
- Welding
- Graphic Design
- 3D Printing
- Ceramics
- Games and Puzzles
- Co-working Space

PIZZA PARLOR / BAKERY

In 2016, pizza consumption climbed to its highest level compared to the four previous years with 41% of polled consumers claiming they now eat pizza once a week. Widely known as one of America's favorite comfort foods, pizza is a $45 billion industry in North America with independent operators and small chains earning more than 40% of this revenue. In Atmore, there are currently only two franchised pizza restaurants – Pizza Hut and Little Caesar's Pizza – serving its residents making the downtown corridor a prime location for an independently-operated pizza restaurant.

The pizza parlor/bakery should provide patrons with a casual, counter-service restaurant to enjoy during lunch and dinner hours, serving the community-at-large including families, high school students, and senior citizens alike. Meeting the needs of parents and young children residing in the community, the restaurant should also maintain a family-friendly atmosphere, especially considering the addition of the Kid's Interactive Zone located on the second floor of the building.

WHAT'S ON THE MENU?

A restaurant's menu is the primary factor determining its overall success. If the menu is too big, food ingredients become too costly to be profitable. If the menu is too small, customer volume will likely suffer and hurt profits equally as much if not more. Today's restaurant diners want consistency, but they also crave new options. The pizza parlor should provide a simple menu with weekly specials to attract new customers, but also retain "the regulars." Additionally, a limited menu will be made available to the concessions stand in the theater next door.

MENU OFFERINGS:

- Pizza by the Slice
- Create-Your-Own-Pizza
- Salad
- Appetizers
- Weekly Specials
- Beer & Wine

MAKERSPACE*

To compete in the global marketplace, urban and rural communities alike must foster innovation through the adaptation of advanced technologies and the advancement of the STEAM fields – science, technology, engineering, arts, and math – in their local schools, nonprofit organizations and workforce training programs, among others.

To encourage this creative thinking by applying the STEAM approach, Atmore should create a makerspace on the two floors of the Anderson building to provide students and adults with a space to develop their skills and collaborate with others. One floor will be home to computer science and new technology (i.e. 3D printers) the other will offer space for industrial arts such as woodworking, welding and possibly ceramics. This community-oriented workspace will provide a place for people to make, learn, explore and share using everything from high tech to no tech tools. The makerspace should also provide a platform and resources for aspiring entrepreneurs through incubators and accelerator programming for business startups.

*Should the second floor of the Hardware building not offer enough space for the artist residency, that space can be carved out here on the second floor.

KID'S INTERACTIVE ZONE

Lacking family-friendly amenity options, Atmore is in need of a new space for children and their families to spend time. Slightly separated from the pizza parlor and bakery, the kid's interactive zone should feature educational spaces for children under the age of 8 to play and learn with their family – or even without their parents/guardians to provide the adults with the opportunity to enjoy a meal next door while their kids enjoy the interactive zone.

The Kid's Interactive Zone will serve as a community space for after school programming, birthday parties, daily drop-in and educational programming, allowing families to pay based on attendance or to purchase a semi-annual/annual pass. The goal of the space is to bring new audiences to the Strand, but also to provide new sources of revenue for the non-profit.

BUDGET SNAPSHOT

The full business plan for overall programming and budget can be found in Appendix D.

2nd Floor – Kid's Interactive Zone| 1st Floor – Pizza Parlor / Bakery				
Total Expenses	Amount	Total Income	Amount	Net Revenue
Year 1	$322,092	Year 1	$336,415	$14,323
Year 2 (5%)	$338,198	Year 2 (5%)	$353,237	$15,039
Year 3 (5%)	$355,107	Year 3 (5%)	$370,898	$15,791

Makerspace				
Total Expenses	Amount	Total Income	Amount	Net Revenue
Year 1	$86,048	Year 1	$87,792	$1,744
Year 2 (5%)	$90,350	Year 2 (5%)	$92,182	$1,832
Year 3 (5%)	$94,868	Year 3 (5%)	$96,791	$1,923

ACTION STEPS

Step 1: Agree on partnership between SSC and Anderson Family

WHO: BOD and Anderson Family
HOW: In exchange for help raising funds to fix up the Anderson Family's buildings, the Anderson Family agrees to a low annual lease that goes out at least 10 years. In addition, an agreement should be formed for SSC to sub-lease out space to a restaurant tenant.
WHEN: Q4 2018

Step 2: Secure tenant for Restaurant concept

WHO: BOD and Anderson Family
HOW: Work with local entrepreneurs to secure an owner and/or operator for new restaurant concept. Approve business model and determine who the concept works with the SSC. This tenant will become a sub-lessee of the SSC. Ideal relationship is low rent is offered in exchange for % of net profits to the SSC. Another option is the SSC owns and operates the restaurant and hires the operator to run the business.
WHEN: Q1 2019

Step 3: Create Makerspace

WHO: ED and BOD
HOW: Create partnership with all local schools (grades K-12 and colleges) to help program space. Offer community-wide survey on what types of equipment and educational opportunities are of interest
WHEN: Q2 2019

Step 4: Create Interactive Zone for Children

WHO: ED and staff
HOW: Using examples such as City Treehouse in NYC, RECESS in Dumbo, Ball Factory in Naperville, IL and Edinborough Park in Edina, MN – design the space for families and children to utilize daily.
WHEN: Q2 2019

THE CASE FOR FUNDRAISING

This campaign must feel inevitable. You have to will it to happen. This is the feeling that each campaign member must project, and that which every resident of Atmore should come to understand. "Of course this is going to happen," everyone should think, and therefore, in their own time, and in their own way, they will get involved. Whether that means monetarily with a donation, volunteering hours, attending fundraising events, reading about it the media or online, or simply sharing their excitement about the Strand with others, **everyone in Atmore needs to be transfixed with the excitement of this project.**

The pitch for the project is slightly different depending on who you are talking to. You need to craft the pitch in a way that shows how The Strand Social Club opening in Atmore will affect them in a positive way. Think selfishly, for them. When giving the pitch to a potential corporate donor, your conversation can go something like this: **"Downtown Atmore has been challenged for years to welcome outside visitors and business due to its consistent lack of storefront amenities. We've done a good job of presenting it with décor, but we need a thriving downtown to take the next step as a community, and to grow our economy."** Put your own spin on this, of course. Then ask them if their company is challenged to attract and retain a quality workforce. Inevitably they will say yes in some manner. "This project will help you attract and retain the workforce you want. We've spoken with residents and businesses all over the community, those who have lived here or have thought about coming. We hear the same thing everyone – Atmore does not have the quality of life amenities they are looking for. It's why they choose Pensacola, or Mobile or even Spanish Fort over Atmore. Or if they do work here, they don't live here, and have long commutes and are spending their dollars in other communities. The Strand will help change that. We spent the last year speaking to the community about what they want to see in their downtown, and this project is a manifestation of those ideas. Your support is not simply a donation, it is an investment in the future of your company and the future of Atmore."

This same pitch can be tailored to the community member who is giving individually, and how this will affect them personally and why their involvement has such importance. Be it for their children, for their family or them individually, **Atmore has needed an injection of local entertainment and culture that helps define what it means to be "from Atmore."** In addition, the students of Atmore need a place to recreate and to socialize in a safe environment where kids from each community of Atmore can mix and befriend one another. Building the Strand is like re-building what it means to be from Atmore. Just as Gather Restaurant has galvanized the community in a positive way, and given Atmore a new, unique quality, The Strand will do this on a much deeper, more visceral level.

THE CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

Phase 1: Strand and Hardware

Total: $3,500,000*

Sources:**

State Historic Tax Credits (25%):	$875,000 * $0.85 =	$743,750
Federal Historic Tax Credits (20%):	$700,000 * $0.85 =	$595,000
Strand Naming:		$500,000
Hardware Floor 1 Naming:		$250,000
Hardware Floor 2 Naming:		$250,000
10 Pledges for naming rooms, areas and equipment @ $50,000:		$500,000
10 Pledges of $10,000 - $25,000:		$150,000
10 Pledges of $1,000 - $10,000:		$50,000
100 Pledges of $100:		$10,000
National Grants:		$200,000
Total:		$3,248,750
Gap:		$251,250

Recommendation: Lower costs on construction. This is a high estimate and the should come down, ideally to the level you need to. If not, you need to get it down to $125,000. Taking on $125,000 in loans over 5 years at 5% interest would amount to $2,359/month, which the pro-forma budget shows the entity can support.

Phase 2:
Anderson Properties

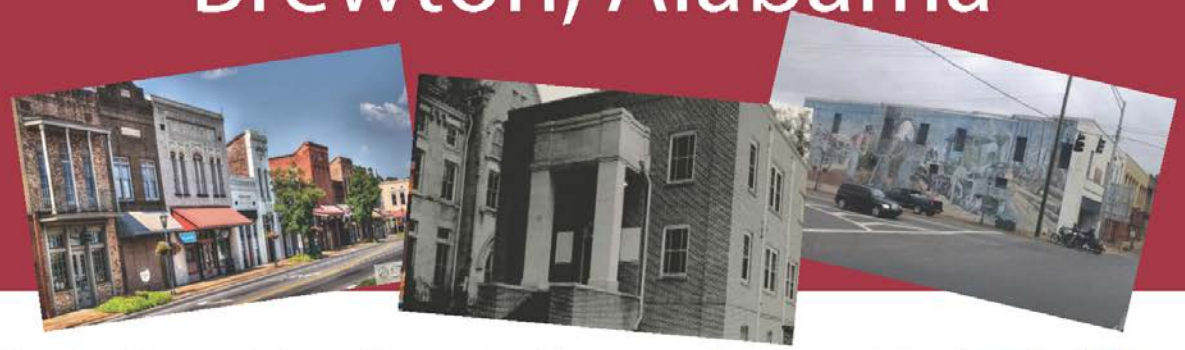
Total: Unknown

Recommendation: Once a budget is created for these properties, an understanding needs to be created between the Anderson family and the Non-profit about raising the funds together that will be necessary to turn the buildings into these concepts.

*This amount, bearing finding something significantly wrong with the structures, is the ceiling for the project based on preliminary drawings. We believe this amount can and will be reduced once the design becomes fleshed out.

**Note: All gifts are made as pledges and can be distributed over 5 years. A bridge loan can be accessed from a local financial institution and the interest rate will be factored into the capital campaign in order to make pledging easier.

Brewton, Alabama



The city of Brewton is located just north of the Florida Panhandle and serves as the county seat of Escambia County. It originally began as a train station, but during the Civil War, its rail lines were severed and many lumber mills were destroyed. After the war ended, soldiers returned home to rebuild.

The city was once known as the "richest little town in the South" and has been named one of the top 100 small towns in America. Brewton's economy is largely composed of the timber industry and for years has been thought of as one of Alabama's pimary lumber centers due to its abundance of long leaf pines within its forest.

Quick Facts

Population: 5,408

Racial Composition: 54.1% White, 42.6% Black or African American, 0.7% Native American, 0.4% Asian, 1.1% from other races, 1.0% from two or more races, and 2.2% of the population was Hispanic or Latino of any race.

Median Age: 47

County: Escambia (county seat)

Random Trivia: Each summer the city holds the Annual Alabama Blueberry Festival.

Session XV - Brewton

Below are the biographies of the speakers for Session XV, providing an overview of municipal drug courts.

Officer Tyler Aaron

Tyler Aaron began working for the City of Brewton Police Department Animal Control in 2015. In 2016, he attended the Alabama Police Academy after completing 520 hours of training from A.L.E.A. (Alabama Law Enforcement Agency) becoming a certified police officer. Tyler was accepted into the Brewton PD Special Response Team (S.R.T.) in 2017 after attending Basic S.W.A.T. School in Anniston. In 2018, he became the Brewton Police Departments K-9 officer, state certified in narcotics detection, as well as becoming a member of the Multi-jurisdictional Counter-drug Task Force.

Aaron holds a Bachelor's Degree in Criminal Justice from Faulkner University.

Judge Bradley E. Byrne

Bradey E. Byrne served as Circuit Court Judge from January of 1987 until his retirement in July of 2014 and continues to serve as the Drug Court Judge. He was instrumental in starting an adult drug court in Escambia County, Alabama in 2002 and served as the Adult Drug Court Judge beginning at that time. Bradley served as President of the Circuit Judges' Association, President of the Alabama Association of Drug Court Professionals and a member of the National Association of Drug Court Professionals. He led the Escambia County Alabama Drug Court team when training 17 other counties on implementing a drug court in those counties. He has been involved in many civic organizations and served on many committees. Bradley is married and has three children and five grandchildren.

Byrne is an alumnus of The University of Alabama School of Law.

Denise Carlee

Denise Carlee serves as an official court reporter for the State of Alabama in Escambia County and is the official court reporter for Circuit Judge David Jordan. Prior to reporting for Judge Jordan, She was the official court reporter to Judge Bradley Byrne from 1995 until June 30, 2014. Denise also serves as Director of the Escambia County Adult Drug Court, a position she started in 2002 with Judge Byrne. She began court reporting in October of 1984 where she was co-owner of a freelance court reporting firm in Pensacola, Florida until December of 1994 before coming to work for the State of Alabama. Denise also served as the District Representative for the Alabama Court Reporters Association. She is a member of the Alabama Association of Drug Court Professionals and the National Association of Drug Court Professionals and was involved in the training of 17 other drug courts in this State. Denise is married to the City of Brewton's Director of Public Safety Glenn Carlee.

Wade Hartley

Wade L. Hartley operated a solo general practice in Atmore from 1994-2006. He served as the Tribal Prosecutor for the Poarch Band of Creek Indians from 1996-2002. In 1998, he assisted in the founding of the Poarch Creek Indian Drug Court and continued to serve with that court until 2002. During this time frame, he also served as contract counsel for various tribal departments. In 2002, Wade was selected to serve as the Escambia County Assistant Public Defender and became a founding member of that Drug Court Team in the role of defense counsel. From 2004-2006, he was appointed as the Special Municipal Judge for the City of Atmore.

In 2006, Wade was appointed as the Public Defender for Escambia County where he continues to serve. He is currently the Escambia County Bar President. He is an active alumnus of Sigma Chi Fraternity and has been actively involved in the Boy Scouts of America for over forty years and currently serves in multiple leadership roles on the local, district, council, area, region and national levels. Wade is a resident of Brewton. He is married with three children.

Hartley holds an A.A. from Jefferson Davis State Junior College (Coastal Alabama), B.A. in History and Political Science from Birmingham-Southern College, and a J.D. from The University of Alabama School of Law.

Todd Stearns

J. Todd Stearns began his civil law practice with the firm of Otts. Moore, Coals, Godwin, Stearns and Darby in 2007 which continues today. In 1997, Todd began serving as the Public Defender for Escambia County, Alabama, a position he held until 2007. He served as an Adjunct Instructor for Faulkner University (now Alabama Coastal Community College) from 2007 until 2014 and since then has served as the prosecutor for the City of Atmore Municipal Court. Todd became the Municipal Court Judge for the City of Atmore in 2016, a position he continues to hold, and he began serving as an Assistant District Attorney and Drug Court Prosecutor, a position he began in 2007 until the present. Todd is married and has two children.

Stearns holds a B.S. in Psychology from The University of Alabama and a J.D. from Cumberland School of Law.

ESCAMBIA COUNTY, ALABAMA
DRUG COURT

PARTICIPANT
POLICY AND PROCEDURES
HANDBOOK

TREATMENT SCHEDULE

Southwest Alabama Mental Health
1321 McMillan Ave.
Brewton, Al 36426
251-867-3242
Robert Brewer
Director of Substance Abuse

DAY TREATMENT
Southwest Alabama Mental Health

Calley Ronso's class - Monday 10:00 a.m – 1:00 p.m.
Wednesday 10:00 a.m – 1:00 p.m
Thursday 10:00 a.m 1:00 p.m.

NIGHT TREATMENT
Southwest Alabama Mental Health

Bobby Gibson's class - Monday 2:00 p.m – 5:00 p.m
Wednesday 2:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m
Thursday 2:00 p.m. 5:00 p.m

Times, days and locations are subject to change. Participants will be notified in advance of any changes.

Requirements for Completion of the Program:

- All treatment work must be completed
- All court ordered fees, fines and restitution must be paid
- You must have a high school diploma or tested for the GED.
- You must obtain a driver's license and voter's registration if applicable.
- You must remain drug and alcohol free for a period of six months.
- You are required to be employed or attending school. If taking on-line courses you are still required to be employed.

If a relapse occurs within thirty days of a Phase Advancement, the participant will return to the previous Phase for that phase's required cleon time.

A participant who at any time attends group/court and who, in the opinion of staff, is under the influence of any substance or is disruptive shall be removed from group/court. Such removal will be considered a missed group/court and subject to sanction.

You may be terminated from the program due to violations including, but not limited to:

- **Breach of confidentiality**
- **Threatening behavior**
- **Contraband in the jail**
- **New charge or conviction,**
- **Distributing and/or manufacturing drugs**
- **Chronic failure to comply with the requirements of the Drug Court program.**
- **Chronic dishonesty**

PHASE III

* You will appear in court on a monthly basis.
* You will submit urine samples as required for color code.
* You will have a 12:00 p.m. curfew.
* You are required to be employed or attending school if you are not disabled. If taking online courses you are still required to be employed.
* You must be clean the minimum of six months.
* You will attend one group session per month. This will be the 3rd Monday of each month and is mandatory. Failure to attend will result in sanctions. Increased group attendance will be at the therapist's discretion and based on the needs of the client. **Participants must attend this group session each week.**
* You will attend an individual session at least once per week. Participants will not be required to attend an individual session on the week that they attend the mandatory group session unless noted by their therapist. **If you miss the individual session for any reason you will be required to attend a group session in the same week to make this up. Even if this is a rescheduled individual session. No call or No show for individual sessions will be treated as a missed group and a sanction will be applied.**
* You will attend one outside support meeting each week. Participants are responsible for getting a signature from a chairperson, group leader, sponsor, etc. when attending these sessions. A form that will be used for verification will be provided to you by your therapist. These signature logs will be presented to the therapist on the Monday that the participants attends group. Failure to submit these logs will result in sanction and possible additional group and/or individual sessions. **Acceptable outside support groups include AA, NA, GA, CA, Most Excellent Way, Celebrate Recovery. You cannot count church attendance as an outside support group.**
* Group attendance will be based on the needs of the client and the discretion of the therapist and treatment team. Individuals may be required to attend increased sessions based on the circumstances and progress toward established treatment goals. **Individuals that have recently had a positive test, relapsed, submitted an invalid sample, missed an individual or group sessions, and/or are not making acceptable progress towards treatment goals will be required to attend increased sessions.**
* When a Phase III participant is required to attend increased sessions, the frequency will be determined by the therapist. **Time spent in jail as a result of a sanction will not count toward the time that a participant is required to attend increased sessions.**
* **These policies are subject to change and notification of changes will be made available to all participants.**

Location: The Escambia County Drug Court is located in the courthouse, in Brewton, Alabama.

Court Sessions: The Escambia County Drug Court is scheduled for review each Friday morning at 9:30 a.m. A participant in the drug court will appear for court as scheduled under the policy or as may be instructed by the Court. The Court will reserve the right to schedule any additional hearings or court appearances that may be necessary for the fulfillment of the judicial process.

Drug Court Requirements:
* You must be on time for court.
* You must dress appropriately for court. No head coverings, shorts, tank tops, halters, baggy pants or sunglasses (unless prescribed) are to be worn.
* No cell phones or beepers are allowed in the courtroom.
* You will address the Court properly.
* A curfew will be imposed on all participants according to which phase you are in.
* You are not to violate any Federal, State or local laws.
* You may not possess or have under your control a firearm or ammunition, or any other deadly weapon.
* You are to avoid persons and places of questionable or harmful character.
* You must be gainfully employed, make progress towards obtaining a GED and obtain a driver's license and register to vote if otherwise eligible.
* You must obtain permission from the Court before traveling outside your local county. This permission is not needed if the reason for travel is employment.
* You may not change your home address or employment without the consent of the Court.
* Your person, home, vehicles or any other property under your control will be subject to search without warrant by anyone appointed to do so by the Court.

Clean Time: You must remain drug and alcohol free for a minimum of six months immediately prior to graduation in order to complete the program. If a positive UA (urinalysis) is submitted at any time during Phase III, you will begin a new six month period of negative UA's.

Program Fees: This is not a free program. You are obligated to pay $50.00 per week for each week you are in the program. You will not be charged for time spent in jail or rehab.

Restitution: If you have been ordered by the Court to pay restitution on your case(s), it must be paid in full in order for you to complete the program.

Employment: It is a requirement of this Drug Court that you work unless you are disabled.

Self-Employment:

The client shall produce the following documentation to verify self-employment.

1) A description of his/her business
2) Business License
3) Sales/service receipts or invoices
4) Tax returns

Family Employment/Employment by fellow drug court participants:

When a client works for a family member or a fellow drug court participant, this work will only qualify as "employment" if;

1) He/she has a work schedule that can be verified
2) He/she receives compensation that is subject to all State and Federal withholding requirements and that can be verified through documentation.

If you fail to adhere to the above policies and procedures you may be subject to graduated sanctions imposed by the Court, including but not limited to the following:

* A verbal warning.
* Home confinement.
* Community Service.
* Jail confinement.
* Additional treatment sessions.
* Additional assignments.
* Curfews.
* Phase reduction.
* Termination from the program.

Absences: You will attend and be on time for court on each scheduled Friday. You will also attend and be on time for all scheduled treatment sessions. If you fail to attend an individual treatment session, a sanction will be imposed. **THERE ARE NO EXCUSES!** If you fail to appear for a scheduled appearance, a court order may be issued to have you picked up and held in the detention center.

Community Service: You must complete 200 hours of community service before your scheduled completion date.

Supervision: Drug Court will maintain continuous supervision of you through the Case Manager and Field Monitor. The Field Monitor will conduct periodic visits to your home and place of employment. You cannot deny him/her access into your home. The Field Monitor can request a urinalysis test at his/her discretion.

Drug and Alcohol Testing: A random drug/alcohol test will be conducted before the beginning of each judicial review. This Drug Court utilizes a call-in color code testing procedure. You must call the pre-recorded message each day after 5:00 p.m. to verify which color is to be tested and submit a sample as instructed by the message on the machine. If you refuse to submit a sample for testing, it will be considered a positive and you will be sanctioned. If you provide a diluted/adulterated sample it will also be considered a positive, these types of samples are untestable.

Medication: You will be given a "Do Not Take" medication list. You are responsible for what you take. Always ask before taking any medication you are not sure about.

TREATMENT REQUIREMENTS:

Phase I

* You will attend group sessions for a minimum of three days per week.
* You will appear in court on a weekly basis.
* You will submit urine samples as required for color code.
* You will have a 10:00 p.m. curfew.
* You will remain in Phase I for a minimum of twelve weeks.
* You are required to be employed or attending school if you are not disabled. If taking on-line courses you are still required to be employed.
* You must be clean for a minimum of four weeks.

Phase II

* You will attend group sessions a minimum of two days per week.
* You will attend weekly sessions of Life Skills Series for six weeks.
* You will appear in court on a bi-weekly basis.
* You will submit urine samples as required for color code.
* You will have an 11:00 p.m. curfew.
* You will remain in Phase II for a minimum of fourteen weeks.
* You are required to be employed or attending school if you are not disabled. If taking on-line courses you are still required to be employed.
* You must have tested for the GED, you must have a valid driver's license and be registered to vote, where applicable.
* You must be clean for a minimum of six weeks.

IN THE ESCAMBIA COUNTY DRUG COURT, BREWTON, ALABAMA

STATE OF ALABAMA,

VS._____ **CASE NO:** _____

DEFENDANTS AGREEMENT TO PARTICIPATE IN DRUG COURT PROGRAM

I am the defendant in the above case(s). I admit that I need treatment for my drug/alcohol addiction and hereby agree to comply with all conditions of the Drug Court program of the Twenty-First Judicial Circuit and other conditions which the Court may impose.

1. I have been advised by my attorney in this case of the Court and the drug treatment program. I understand and agree that:

a) I must enter a plea of guilty in the above case.

b) The Judge of the Drug Court may accept my plea of guilt and upon recommendation of my defense attorney and the concurrence of the District Attorney of Escambia County, may postpone sentencing in my case(s) subject to my full participation and compliance with the requirements of the Drug Court Program which includes intensive substance abuse treatment.

c) My signing of this agreement does not assure or guarantee that I will be accepted into the Drug Court Program by the Judge or that concurrence by the District Attorney of Escambia County will be granted.

d) The Judge of the Drug Court may at any time for any reason enter an order removing my case(s) from the Drug Court docket and place such case(s) on the regular criminal docket of the Twenty-First Circuit for sentencing.

e.) I understand that I may be terminated from the program due to violations, including but not limited to: breach of confidentiality, threatening behavior, contraband in the jail, new charge or conviction, distributing drugs and/or chronic failure to comply with the requirements of the Drug Court program.

2. I have been advised of the requirements of the program which may last twelve (12) months or more depending on my performance and agree as follows: *(In-patient will not count toward Drug Court time.)*

a) To attend, to participate and to willfully comply in all requirements and conditions of acceptance of the Drug Court and the treatment program as a condition of acceptance into the program by the court.

b) To obey all laws of the State of Alabama and all ordinances of municipalities within Escambia County, Alabama.

c) To comply with all directives of the Judge of the Drug Court and the staff of the court and the provider in the Drug Court program.

d) To participate in random drug and alcohol use screening by urinalysis or other test selected by the Court until I have participated in the scheduled graduation ceremony.

e) To remain free of drug and alcohol substances.

f) To voluntarily and promptly provide all information required by the Court and the treatment provider.

g) To attend and be on time for all counseling sessions scheduled for me, including individual, family, group and all Drug Court Life Skills Series sessions until I have participated in the scheduled graduation ceremony.

h) To attend and to be on time for all court hearings or Drug Court Program meetings set for my case until I have participated in the scheduled graduation ceremony.

i) To pay $50.00 per week for the drug treatment program of each week I am enrolled therein, in addition to any and all court cost, fines and any other fees the Court may assess in my case(s). *(Program fees are subject to change)*

j) To complete a mandatory 200 hours of community service before my completion date.

k) That I may request the Court to set a schedule for payment of costs assessed in my case(s).

l) That I will make all payments to the Drug Court Program on the schedule set by the Court.

m) To remain in Escambia County, Alabama and not change my residence without obtaining permission from the Court.

n) To notify the Drug Court and the treatment provider immediately upon any change of my address or telephone number.

o) To notify the Drug Court and the treatment provider of any medical condition that requires attendance by a physician (except for minor conditions) and to have the physician provide a statement in writing to the Court of the medical condition, the prescribed treatment and anticipated length of time of the medical service.

p) To allow the case manager, other drug court staff or any law enforcement officer directed by the drug court to search my person, home, vehicle or any other property under my control.

q) To comply with the requirements of curfew that may be imposed by the Court.

3. I have been advised by my attorney and understand and agree that if I fail to comply with orders of the Court or the rules of the Drug Court Program that:

a) I may be ordered to be confined in jail without release.

b) I may be ordered to be confined in another detention facility for any duration.

c) Further restrictions, requirements and/or conditions may be entered in my case(s).

d) In the event that during the course of my participation in the program I am arrested and convicted for any offense, felony or misdemeanor occurring subsequent to the execution of this agreement, that the Judge of the Drug Court may immediately sentence me in the pending case(s), and that upon such adjudication I forfeit my right to participate in the program, and if at any time I fail to follow the instructions of the Court or the treatment provider then I may be terminated from this program and sentenced.

4. In the event I have successfully completed this program, have not been arrested on other charges and have obeyed all instructions of the Drug Court and treatment provider that the District Attorney–s office will request the Court to follow the plea agreement that we have previously discussed for my completion of Drug Court.

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT I HAVE READ THE ABOVE CONDITIONS OR THEY HAVE BEEN READ TO ME AND THAT I HAVE HAD THEM FULLY EXPLAINED TO ME, AND I AGREE TO COMPLY FULLY WITH THESE CONDITIONS. I FURTHER AGREE THAT THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE CASE(S) SHALL BE CONDUCTED IN THE DRUG COURT AND WAIVE ANY OBJECTION I MIGHT HAVE THAT THIS CASE WAS NOT RANDOMLY ASSIGNED TO A NON-DRUG COURT CRIMINAL DIVISION.

Date **Defendant's Signature**

AS THE ATTORNEY FOR THE ABOVE DEFENDANT, I HEREBY CONFIRM THAT I HAVE FULLY EXPLAINED THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE DRUG COURT PROGRAM TO THE DEFENDANT AND THAT THE DEFENDANT SIGNED THE ABOVE AGREEMENT IN MY PRESENCE ON THIS DATE.

_____ _____

Date **Attorney for Defendant**

AS THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY FOR THE ESCAMBIA COUNTY DRUG COURT, I RECOMMEND THAT THE ABOVE DEFENDANT BE ACCEPTED INTO THE DRUG COURT PROGRAM CONTINGENT UPON FULL COMPLIANCE WITH ALL REQUIREMENTS OF THE DRUG COURT.

_____ _____

Date **District Attorney/Assistant for the Drug Court**

Form #2

CONSENT FORM/ DRUG COURT ESCAMBIA COUNTY

I agree to submit to random drug test when requested to do so by any representative of the Escambia County, Alabama Adult Drug Court Program.

If I refuse to provide a specimen or undergo a sobriety test, I will be treated in the same manner as if I had tested positive. Furthermore, I will not be allowed to attend the program for that day, and it will be counted as a miss. At this time my case will be subject to clinical review to determine further action.

****

Spirituality Group is provided to all clients who participate in any level of treatment programming delivered at the facility. The goal is to introduce clients to the concepts of recovery dealing with the spiritual issues as they relate to the traditional 12-step recovery philosophy specific to life choices, attitudes, ethics and values. It is not the intent of the program to foster any particular religious affiliation or to require any individual to participate in any spiritual programming, which is contrary to their personal belief system.

In the event that a client objects to participating in the spirituality groups, he/she must speak with the program director and, if appropriate, alternative programming following approval from the program director.

My signature represents my consent to participate in the spirituality programming at Southwest Alabama Mental Health.

_____ _____

SIGNATURE OF CLIENT **DATE**

_____ _____

SIGNATURE OF ATTORNEY **DATE**

_____ _____

SIGNATURE OF D.A. **DATE**

1/1/09

ESCAMBIA COUNTY ALABAMA
DRUG COURT RULES OF PARTICIPATION

You have been granted the opportunity to participate in the Drug Court of Escambia County. There are certain terms and conditions that will be required by the Drug Court. The following rules apply to all participants. However, there may be special conditions that are contained in your entry orders.

1. You are not to violate any Federal, State or Local laws.
2. You are to avoid any habits or behavior that would be injurious to your recovery.
3. You are to avoid persons and places of questionable or harmful character. You may not be an informer or operative for any law enforcement agency, unless otherwise approved by the court.
4. You are to permit the Case Manager to visit you at home or elsewhere at any given time.
5. You are to gain employment and work faithfully at a lawful occupation.
6. You must have the permission of the Case Manager to travel outside of your local county. This permission is not needed if the reason for travel is employment.
7. You are to support your dependents to the best of your ability.
8. You may not change your home address or employment without the consent of the Case Manager. You must provide a valid address that is **clearly marked**.
9. You shall not possess or have under your control a firearm or ammunition, or any other deadly weapon, as defined by Alabama law. Any possession of a firearm after a felony conviction is a violation of Federal Law.
10. You shall submit to tests, including but not limited to urinalysis, breathalyzer or blood samples as directed by the Case Manager or the Treatment provider.
11. You shall attend ALL treatment and Life Skills Series sessions at your expense as established by order.
12. Your person, home, vehicle or any other property under your control shall be subject to search without warrant by the Case Manager or anyone he deems necessary.
13. You must adhere to the curfew assigned to each Phase.
14. You must remain current in your court ordered treatment fees and you must be actively paying restitution.
15. You will dress appropriately for court. **No head coverings, shorts, tank tops or halters, baggy pants or sunglasses (unless prescribed) and shirts will be tucked in.**
16. You will address the Court properly.
17. **No cell phones or beepers are allowed in the courtroom or treatment sessions.**
18. You will complete a mandatory 200 hours of community service before your completion date.
19. You may be terminated from the program due to violations, including but not limited to: **breach of confidentiality, threatening behavior, contraband in the jail, new charge or conviction, distributing drugs and/or chronic failure to comply with requirements of the Drug Court program.**

Any violation of the above rules will constitute a technical violation and you will be subject to sanctions by the Judge at his discretion.

Copies of these rules have been provided to the Drug Court participant who has been instructed regarding the same on the _____ of _____ 20_____.

_____
Case Manager

The above instructions and conditions have been read and explained. I have received a copy and I agree to abide by them.

Drug Court Participant 11/5/09

Session XVI - Brewton

Below is the biography of the speaker for Session XVI, discussing the civic legacy of Southern Normal School.

Rev. Willie Blue

Willie James Blue is an Escambia County Alabama native and graduated from Southern Normal High School in 1967. In 1971, Willie answered the call into the ministry and was licensed under the late Pastor U.L. Johnson at the First Marietta Baptist Church where he later became pastor for eight years. In 1987, he accepted the call as pastor of Second Saint Siloam Missionary Church where he has led the congregation for 30 years. Willie worked for Georgia Pacific where he retired after 45 years as a shift supervisor. He was awarded an honorary Doctor of Divinity (D.D.) by Birmingham Baptist College on May 12, 2016 for his civic work in and around the city of Brewton. On June 29, 2017, Governor Kay Ivey issued a Proclamation commending him on his diligent services to the State of Alabama. In 1970, Willie met and married Jacquelyne Humphrey and they have three grown children and the loving grandparents of one granddaughter. Pastor Blue's other honors include Outstanding ACE Volunteer award by the Alabama Communities of Excellence and being the first African American preacher to deliver the baccalaureate message at T.R. Miller High.

Marcus Hall

Marcus Hall is currently the Vice President of Omni2Max Inc. Mr. Hall is responsible for the oversight of Omni2Max Inc. workforce operation and development as well as policy, process, guidance and governance of the company. Mr. Hall went to Omni2Max Inc. after 37 plus years of civilian federal service with the Department of Navy. Mr. Hall served as the 5.0 Engineering Competency Lead for the Space and Naval Warfare Systems Center (SSC) Atlantic New Orleans Office. For his efforts in support of the Navy, he has earned numerous outstanding performance and special act awards and letters of commendation, as well as the prestigious Navy Meritorious Civilian Service Awards. Formerly from Brewton, he is a current resident of Madisonville, LA.

Hall is an alumnus of Tuskegee University (B.S. in Mechanical Engineering, 1984) and the University of Florida (M.Eng. in Mechanical Engineering, 1989).

Valerie Monroe-Hall

Valerie Monroe-Hall is currently a licensed bachelor social worker (LBSW) in Louisiana at Ochsner Hospital. Her professional experience spans the advocate, counseling and services industries, where she worked in Medical Social Work for more than 14 years. Valerie's previous social work experience involved working with children, disabled, elderly and families. She has a total of 24 years of extensive experience providing Social Work.

Monroe-Hall is an alumna of University of Alabama at Birmingham (BSW) and Western New Mexico University (MSW).

Jimmy Watson

Jimmy Watson graduated Southern Normal High School in 1962 and after serving three years in the U. S. Army in Heidelberg, Germany, he returned to Brewton. He began working at the Container Cooperation in 1966 and was promoted to Wood Yard Operator in 1998 before retiring in 2004. Jimmy was treasurer for the union, all-black United Steelworkers (USW) Local 943, and after a merger with the all-white USW Local 888, he served as the first African-American vice president. He is a past president of the Southern Normal Alumni Association, treasurer of the Evergreen District Baptist Association and was awarded the Outstanding Service Award from Brewton Chapter of the NAACP. Jimmy is a Deacon and Sunday School Superintendent of the St. Mark Church where he started a scholarship fund and Crusaders for Christ, a boys group serving the elderly.

Southern Normal shutdown

Stephanie Snodgrass | The Brewton Standard *June 3, 2015*

Alabama State University has shutdown Brewton's Southern Normal campus. The move came as a shock to those serving on the Southern Normal Alumni Association Inc. board as gates to the campus were padlocked Tuesday. Security personnel said campus staff was notified of the decision Friday.

"(Human Resources) came down on Friday," the guard said. "A black SUV rolled up; the head people came down, and that was it. There was no warning." Attempts to reach school officials, including ASU president Gwendolyn Boyd, were unsuccessful Tuesday.

Southern Normal School, a junior and senior high boarding school, was founded in 1911 by James Dooley. The school was operated under the Board of Domestic Missions of the Reformed Church in America as one of its permanent projects in 1919.

At its peak, the school enrolled nearly 350 students from across the state, Florida, Georgia and Louisiana. Until 1969, it was the only school in Brewton that educated African-Americans. In 1997, it became known as the Southern Normal Academy of Alabama State University.

Since then, the campus has served as an off-campus degree location where students could earn an accelerated bachelor's of science degree in psychology and an assortment of degrees in the education field. "I didn't have any idea (of the closing)," said Brewton's Margaret Gibson, alumni association financial secretary. "It's so sad. I'm devastated to hear it."

http://www.northescambia.com/2016/11/forest-seedling-nursery-to-be-built-in-atmore

Using a MakerSpace and STEM to Educate the Whole Person

Marcus Hall | Infosys Foundation USA *September 26, 2017*

Having grown up in the rural South, I have watched how educating the whole person has become less of a priority versus making the next super athlete or winning a state championship. The passion and culture surrounding high school football is unique; Friday night and Saturday high school football games are considered to be almost sacred events, drawing in fans from miles away. The emphasis placed on athletics (not scholastics) is the normal route for students to become recruited by universities and colleges.

Financial support for sports camps, sports traveling teams, and sports-related events is easily obtained from rural organizations. However, asking these same organizations to go beyond athletics and consider supporting new activities and resources, such as STEM and makerspaces, to educate the whole person is much more difficult.

After several failed attempts to recruit local organizations to consider supporting non-athletic opportunities to rural youth, my wife and I decided to invest our personal time and money into helping students gain access to STEM education. Our efforts have not been in vain as we have planted many seeds. Through a series of initiatives, our students are thriving, and so is our community!

It started with one of our students in New Orleans, Louisiana, came up with an eye-tracking apparatus with custom software that allows the disabled to draw using their eyes. This prototype won not only a State Science Fair but also an Infy Maker Youth Award, which measures a student on innovative use of technology to solve a real problem or need.

As part of the Youth award, Infosys Foundation USA included a grant of $5000 for a new community MakerSpace along with free tuition for Maker Education training for two adult leaders that would run the MakerSpace. Our student nominated both my wife and I as the recipients of the free training. We traveled to San Francisco for an intensive Maker Educator Training in August 2016 held by the Maker Ed organization, and funded by the Foundation.

Once back home in New Orleans, we took our newly-gained Maker Ed knowledge to transform two underutilized spaces, with the John L. Fisher Community Center in Brewton, Al being one of the two, into a new, cool place for all to learn. Materials and equipment were purchased with the Infy Maker Grant money. We outlined STEM activities and invited the community (K-12 students and families) to monthly events.

For the past nine months, we have seen an average of fifty-five youth and parents each month enjoy coming to the Center to design, build and test remote operated vehicles (ROVs), unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) and unmanned underwater vehicles (UUVs) made from everyday material. In addition, students and parents have learned basic binary coding, block coding, and basic art design. The attendance has remained constant with support coming from other organizations.

Students attending the Center's STEM sessions have enjoyed activities around programming robots, virtual reality, drones and rover maneuvers, and a creative maker space. These kids are being exposed to ideas and concepts that may hopefully inspire them to pursue STEM careers as scientists, technologists, engineers and mathematicians.

This new STEM Center in our rural area of Brewton, Al is providing a new outlook for students on future life opportunities. After one of the Center’s events, Ms. Margaret Bradley responded to our efforts. She is a former teacher, special education coordinator, assistant principal, principal, and community superintendent of schools at New York City Department of Education and currently lives in Brewton, Al after retirement. She said: "We need to encourage our youth to like and understand the possibilities in science and math that will be open to them in these much needed disciplines. Careers in science would guarantee jobs in the future. We have to change the mindset of our young people so they will embrace science which is a way of thinking. And, we have to encourage them to never stop asking questions. No question is stupid."

One such inquisitive student, Mia Boyd shared her views with us: "I thought engineering was only for boys. I have learned so much and I will do my best in science and math." Mia is one of several students awarded a sponsorship to attend Tuskegee University's Minority Introduction to Engineering (MITE) summer program held July 9-15, 2017. Several students also received summer sponsorships to attend the National Flight Academy's Six-day Summer Deployment Program at Naval Air Station Pensacola, Fl. through the D. W. McMillian Foundation.

We are delighted that this new Center is helping to educate the whole person.

http://www.infosys.org/infosys-foundation-usa/media/blog/Pages/makerspace-stem.aspx

Session XVII - Brewton

Below is the biography of the panelists for Session XVII, discussing the history and legacy of local philanthropic efforts in the Brewton community, which was once dubbed “the richest little small town in the South.”

Chris Griffin

Chris Griffin has been the administrator for D. W. McMillan Memorial Hospital since July 3008. He joined the hospital in 2003. Prior to being named administrator Chris held the positions of Chief Financial Officer and Chief Operating Officer for the hospital. Before coming to McMillan, he served in several financial leadership positions with Weyerhaeuser a local wood products manufacturer, Bellsouth Business Systems and the accounting firm of Price Waterhouse. He received his undergraduate degree from the University of Alabama School of Business. Chris is a current board member of the Alabama Hospital Association and has also served on numerous Assocaiton committees inculuding as the president of the Southwest Alabama Hospital Association Council. He is also active within his community as a member of the Brewton Rotary Club, the Brewton chamber of Commerce, and the chairman of the Sothern Alabama Area Health Education Center.

Dan McMillan

Dan McMillan has been with the D. W. McMillan Trush and the D. W. McMillan Foundation of Brewton for over 25 years. As a managing trustee, Dan oversees all operations and manages the investment assests of these two private and charitable entites. He has served on several boards of organizations such as the Brewton Area YMCA, Lakeview Center Foundation, Community Foudation of Northwest Florida, Sacred Heart Foundatin and the Unviersity of West Florida Foundation. Dan and his wife Kathy have three children and six grandchildren.

McMillan is an alumnus of the University of West Florida (B.S. in Business Aministration Management).

Tom McMillan

Tom McMillan is the current president of the Escambia Blueberry Growers, Inc. and Longleaf Energy Group Inc., an independent oil and gas exploration and productin company. He is also very active within his local community including Deacon at First Presbyterian Church of Brewton, Executive Committee of the Republican Party of Escambia County, President of the Board of Florida Independent Petroleum Producers Association, Board of the Coastal Gateway Regional Economic Development Alliance, Escambia County Historical Society and Alger Sullivan Historical Society. He attended Culver Military Academy and spent two years in the U.S. Army. Tom serves as a member of the President’s Cabinet at The Unviersity of Alabama, the board of visitors for the School of Commerce and Business Administration, and The Unversity of Alabama Musuem Board of Regents. He is married to his wife Jane, and they have five children.

McMillan is an alumnus of The University of Alabama (B.S. in General Business Administration).

Stephanie Walker

Stephanie Walker is the current Director of St. Stephen's Episcopal Preschool, Chairman of the Greater Brewton Foundation, and Vice Chairman of the YMCA Charitable Foundation. As a community volunteer, she serves as coordinator for the Youth Art Show and Wee Folks show for the Brewton Council of the Arts and is the Summer Fun planner and treasurer for the John L. Fisher Community Center. For the last 28 years, she has assisted the Chamber's annual Christmas project which helps less fortunate children and elderly in Brewton. As a leader in the community, she has served on multiple boards including the Brewton City Schools, the Department of Human Resources, the Andalusia Ballet Association, and the Jefferson Davis Community College Advisory Board to name a few. In 1995, she was named Brewton's Citizen of the Year and in 2013 was recognized as the Alabama School Board Association's Outstanding Member. Stephanie attends St. Maurice Catholic Church where she teaches Sunday School and leads music. She keeps herself active by working as a fitness instructor at the local YMCA and enjoys her book club and event planning in her spare time.

Cabaniss Johnston

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ANNA FUNDERBURK BUCKNER
PHILLIP B. WALKER

DIANE H. CRAWLEY
ANNETTE LANNING KINDERMAN
REBECCA DONELSON PARKS
DIANE BABB MAUGHAN
AMY BELL NELSON
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September 5, 2007

Via E-Mail to Monica.Clayton@alacourt.gov

Hon. Bert W. Rice
Circuit Judge
Circuit Court of Escambia County, Alabama
P.O. Box 795
Brewton, Alabama 36427

Re: D.W. McMillan Trust (the "Trust") and D.W. McMillan Foundation (the "Foundation")

Dear Judge Rice:

I look forward to presenting the 2006 accountings for the Trust and the Foundation to you on Tuesday, September 25. As requested, this letter will provide you with a brief history of the Trust and the Foundation.

The Trust was established on March 28, 1929, by Dr. D.W. McMillan, a Pensacola physician and native of Brewton. Ed. Leigh McMillan, Dr. McMillan's cousin and lawyer, was appointed trustee, and Dr. McMillan transferred virtually all of his assets into the Trust. During his life, Dr. McMillan was the sole income beneficiary of the Trust. The Trust was to continue for Dr. McMillan's life and thereafter during the lives of eight named individuals and for twenty years and ten months after the death of the last of them to die. Two of the named individuals, Mike and Felix Hoke, are still alive. Dr. McMillan was married at the time he created the Trust; however, he divorced prior to his death. After Dr. McMillan's death on August 4, 1936, Ed. Leigh McMillan continued to serve as managing trustee of the Trust; however, three additional co-trustees were named to serve. The current trustees of the Trust are managing trustee Ed. Leigh McMillan, II, and co-trustees John David Finlay, Jr., Allison Roberts Sinrod and Michael N. Hoke, Jr. For your convenient reference, I have attached a copy of the 1929 Trust indenture as Exhibit A.

After Dr. McMillan's death, the Trust was to pay $1,000 a month to his widow, which payment was never activated due to his divorce, and $200 a month to his sister and then to her descendants. The monthly payments are reported as "Annuities" on page 4 of the Trust's 2006 Financial Statements, a copy of which is attached as Exhibit B. The Trust further authorized the

trustee "during the continuance of the Trust hereby created to furnish to any of my relatives, and/or members of their immediate families, wherever they may reside, proper medical and hospital attention." These medical payments are reported as "Medical Assistance" on page 4 of the Trust's 2006 Financial Statements with the details of such payments provided on pages 7 and 8 thereof.

Finally, the Trust provided that

> (f) During the continuance of the trust hereby created my Trustee of [sic] Trustees shall from time to time use so much of the net income and profit as is not needed for any of the persons or purposes hereinabove mentioned, for the relief of the poor and/or needy people in Escambia County, Alabama, and Escambia County, Florida, without regard to color, race or creed, and whether they are worthy or unworthy; but no part of said income and/or profit shall be used for the furtherance, exploitation or advancement of any religion, religious sect or creed, nor for missionary purposes, medical missionaries excepted.

The Trust's 2006 charitable payments are reported as "Charity" and "D.W. McMillan Foundation" on page 4 of the Financial Statements, with the details of such payment provided on pages 8 through 12 thereof.

Upon the termination of the Trust, the Trust corpus is to "be equally divided between the two (2) Lodges of Free and Accepted Masons now at Pensacola, Florida [Escambia Lodge No. 15 and Pensacola Lodge No. 42], and Norris Lodge No. 301 of Ancient Free and Accepted Masons of Brewton, Alabama, for their absolute use and benefit, to do with as they may respectively see fit or proper, free from any trust or obligation whatsoever."

Foundation Created:

After Dr. McMillan's divorce but before his death, his ex-wife initiated litigation challenging the validity of the Trust. This litigation continued for almost twenty years, finally ending in the Spring of 1954 after several trips to the Alabama Supreme Court. Because of this litigation, following Dr. McMillan's death the trustees retained the Trust's income, rather than distributing the income to the named beneficiaries. Thus, by December 31, 1955, the trustees had accumulated over $600,000 of Trust income which was irrevocably set aside for charitable purposes. To facilitate the distribution of this accumulated income and the future income to be earned by the Trust, by decree dated September 4, 1956, the Circuit Court of Escambia County found that "it is desirable and is to the best interest of the [charitable beneficiaries of the Trust], and to the best interest of the trust estate, to create such a charitable trust or foundation to act as a distributee of the income of said inter vivos trust not otherwise dispersed or distributed during the year of its receipt and of the undistributed income received in prior years which had been accumulated for periods." Thus, the Foundation was established pursuant to the terms of the

Charitable Trust dated September 18, 1956, a copy of which is attached as Exhibit C. Like the Trust, the Foundation was created

> to aid or promote, or to tend to aid or promote, directly or indirectly, the general welfare of the poor and needy inhabitants of Escambia County, Alabama, and Escambia County, Florida (including those who reside in the various communities situated therein), or any one or more of them, without regard to race, creed, religion or color, provided, however, that no distribution shall be made for the furtherance, exploitation or advancement of any religion, religious sect or creed or for missionary purposes, medical missionaries excepted.

However, unlike the Trust, the Foundation was to have "perpetual existence unless and until terminated either by final order by a court of competent jurisdiction or by full and final distribution by the Trustees of the entire trust estate."

Following the establishment of the Foundation, the Trust utilizes its net income to fund the Annuities, the Medical Assistance and distributions to aid the poor and needy in Escambia Counties, Alabama and Florida (which distributions are made both to individuals in need and to charitable organizations providing for the needy), with any remaining income transferred to the Foundation and permanently set aside for the prescribed charitable purposes. In 1986, the Court provided further guidance by ordering the Trust to "distribute not less than seventy-five percent (75%) of the net income of the Trust for charitable purposes, either in the year of its receipt or in the next succeeding year", with any undistributed income (not more than 25%) to be transferred to the Foundation. A copy of the Foundation's 2006 Financial Statements is attached as Exhibit D.

Commencing with the first accounting presented to the Court in 1958, covering the period from 1936 through 1955, the Trust and the Foundation have annually presented their Statements of Account for the previous calendar year to the Court for review and approval. The accountings are filed by the trustees of the Trust and Foundation, naming as respondents the Attorneys General of the States of Alabama and Florida, the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of Alabama (representing the interest of Norris Lodge No. 301), Escambia Lodge No. 15, Pensacola Lodge No. 42, and the Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of Florida. In addition, the trustees request the appointment of a guardian ad litem to represent the interests of the "contingent, unknown and minor non-charitable" beneficiaries of the Trust.

At the September 25 hearing on the accountings, the Trust and the Foundation will present the testimony of John C. Boohaker, the accountant for the Trust and the Foundation, and Ed. Leigh McMillan, II, managing trustee of the Trust and the Foundation. Unfortunately,

representatives of the Attorneys General rarely attend the hearing; however, counsel and/or representatives of the Alabama and Florida Masons regularly attend the hearing. For the last number of years, Thad Moore has been appointed and served as the guardian ad litem.

I trust this provides you with adequate historical information concerning the Trust and the Foundation; however, if you have questions do not hesitate to call or to address them at the hearing.

With kindest personal regards.

Very truly yours,

Roy J. Crawford

RJC/mla
Enclosures

cc: Ed. Leigh McMillan (w/o encs.)

D. W. MCMILLAN FOUNDATION: ANNUAL CONTRIBUTIONS

ESCAMBIA COUNTY FLORIDA NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

ALPHA CENTER, INC.
BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS OF ESCAMBIA COUNTY FLORIDA
ESCAMBIA COUNTY FLORIDA HEALTH DEPARTMENT
BAPTIST HOSPITAL
SACRED HEART HOSPITAL
SALVATION ARMY
WATERFRONT RESCUE MISSION
STUDER FAMILY CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL @ SACRED HEART
CHILDREN'S HOME SOCIETY
GULF COAST COUNCIL BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA
BIG BROTHERS/BIG SISTERS OF NORTHWEST FLORIDA
UNITED WAY OF ESCAMBIA COUNTY FLORIDA
ARC GATEWAY
LAKEVIEW CENTER
COVENANT ALZHEIMER'S SERVICES
PENSACOLA HABITAT FOR HUMANITY
COMMUNITY FOUNDATION OF NORTHWEST FLORIDA
LUPUS SUPPORT NETWORK
CATHOLIC CHARITIES OF NORTHWEST FLORIDA
CAPSTONE ADAPTIVE LEARNING & THERAPY CENTER
PENSACOLA YMCA
GULF COAST KIDS HOUSE
COVENANT HOSPICE, PENSACOLA
APPETITE FOR LIFE
RONALD MCDONALD HOUSE
WSRE PUBLIC TELEVISION/HEALTH AWARNESS
UNIVERSITY OF WEST FLORIDA/MSN PROGRAM
ABUNDENT LIFE OUTREACH
CENTER FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING
NEMOURS CHILDREN'S CLINIC
BETHANY SERVICES/SAFE FAMILIES FOR CHILDREN
MANNA FOOD BANK
90 WORKS
NAVAL AVIATION
1ST TEE FOR JUNIOR GOLF ESCAMBIA COUNTY FLORIDA

D. W. MCMILLAN FOUNDATION: ANNUAL CONTRIBUTIONS

ESCAMBIA COUNTY ALABAMA NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

BREWTON PUBLIC LIBRARY
WHEELS OF WELLNESS
BREWTON CIVIC LEAGUE
GOODWILL/EASTER SEALS (DISABLED ADULTS & CHILDREN)
ESCAMBIA CO. ALABAMA HEALTH DEPARTMENT
ESCAMBIA CO. ALABAMA HEALTHCARE AUTHORITY
ESCAMBIA COUNTY ALABAMA FIRE & RESCUE SQUAD
COASTAL ALABAMA COMMUNITY COLLEGE
GREATER BREWTON AREA LIONS CLUB
UNITED FUND OF BREWTON & EAST BREWTON
UNITED FUND OF ATMORE
BREWTON HABITAT FOR HUMANITY
GREATER BREWTON FOUNDATION
ALABAMA DHR-CHRISTMAS PROJECT
BREWTON KIWANIS CLUB (CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS GIFTS)
BREWTON HEAD START
CREPE MYRTLE VILLAGE (VOLUNTEERS OF AMERICA)
ESCAMBIA COUNTY ALABAMA REGIONAL CHILD ADVOCACY CENTER
SAV-A-LIFE
FRANKLIN PRIMARY HEALTH CENTER/BREWTON DENTAL CLINIC
DEPT. OF HUMAN RESOURSES
APPLETON VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT
CARLISA, INC
FLOMATON VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPT.
CHRISTIAN BENEVOLENT FUND
HOPE PLACE
BREWTON YMCA
COVENANT HOSPICE, BREWTON
ESCAMBIA COUNTY ALABAMA ENABLED
ESCAMBIA COUNTY ALABAMA RED CROSS (ATMORE)
ESCAMBIA COUNTY ALABAMA MENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION
ESCAMBIA COUNTY ALABAMA COMMISSION/VICTIM ADVOCATE
ESCAMBIA COUNTY ALABAMA COMMISSION/SERVICE WORK PROGRAM
ESCAMBIA COUNTY ALABAMA COMMISSION/SOCIAL WORKER
ESCAMBIA COUNTY ALABAMA DRUG COURT
FREDERICK OZANAM CHARITABLE PHARMACY
VOLUNTEERS OF AMERICA
APPLETON VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT
FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH/WHEELCHAIR RAMPS
S. W. ALABAMA BEHAVIORAL HEALTHCARE SYSTEM
T. R. MILLER HIGH SCHOOL
DISTINGUISHED YOUNG WOMEN OF ESC. CO. ALABAMA
ESCAMBIA COUNTY ALABAMA VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT
ROTTSCHAEFFER DAY CARE
ESCAMBIA COUNTY ALABAMA READINESS CENTER
ALABAMA NATIONAL ALUMNI FUND
JOHN L. FISHER COMMUNITY CENTER
COMPASSION FOR BREWTON
W3RTECH

D. W. McMILLAN TRUST

ANNUAL DISTRIBUTION BY TRUST TO CHARITY

1979		$ 176,298.88
1980		178,760.14
1981		56,849.50
1982		72,709.97
1983		93,851.50
1984	(includes $167,000 distributed in 1985)	264,684.55
1985	(includes $55,300 distributed in 1986)	272,161.08
1986	(includes $237,890 distributed in 1987)	654,919.05
1987		837,785.00
1988		620,009.88
1989		515,514.87
1990		652,806.28
1991		422,932.20
1992		525,028.65
1993		865,919.47
1994		1,398,782.22
1995		1,236,274.00
1996		1,265,183.00
1997		1,461,142.89
1998		1,584,223.21
1999		1,487,936.00
2000		1,368,724.24
2001		1,209,857.51
2002		1,183,722.99
2003		1,191,999.69
2004		950,706.15
2005		1,930,263.81
2006		2,087,659.32
2007		2,118,553.21
2008		1,268,118.42
2009		367,111.27
2010		536,889.32
2011		277,558.76
2012		76,499.44
2013		15,313.74
2014		113,034.37
2015		90,691.28
2016		14,051.64
2017		309,759.74
TOTAL:		**$ 29,754,287.24**

D. W. McMILLAN FOUNDATION

AMOUNTS DISTRIBUTED TO CHARITY

1977		$ 126,845
1978		121,350
1979		170,470
1980		201,320
1981		221,490
1982		272,500
1983		312,000
1984		368,000
1985		396,000
1986		434,582
1987		364,723
1988		392,000
1989		384,300
1990		591,000
1991		695,500
1992		769,100
1993		763,350
1994		742,700
1995		738,560
1996		742,500
1997		784,800
1998		821,000
1999		915,500
2000		929,000
2001		960,000
2002		972,000
2003		908,500
2004		1,031,500
2005		1,250,000
2006		1,337,000
2007	($331,631 from Principal)	1,347,000
2008	($334,377 from Principal)	1,376,500
2009	($537,063 from Principal)	1,319,850
2010	($191,979 from Principal)	1,105,500
2011	($544,759 from Principal)	1,168,400
2012	($555,343 from Principal)	1,224,500
2013	($600,519 from Principal)	1,220,850
2014	($585,949 from Principal)	1,292,850
2015	($623,692 from Principal)	1,375,900
2016	($602,543 from Principal)	1,388,870
2017	(As of 12/5/2017)	621,175
	Total Distributions:	**$ 32,158,985**

Humane Society shelters to close?

Marcus Hall | The Brewton Standard *May 11, 2011*

The Humane Society of Escambia County announced on its Facebook page Wednesday that it plans to close its shelters in Brewton and Atmore because of lack of funding. “We are so sad to tell all of our friends that we have made the decision to terminate our municipal contracts, which means that both of the shelters that we operate will close at the end of this month,” the message states. “Our primary funding (60 percent of our income) has dissolved, and the amount from the contracts is simply not enough to operate.”

A large portion of the Humane Society’s funding came from the Neal Trust, which expired last year. Also last year, the Town of Flomaton decided to terminate its contract with the organization. Atmore and Brewton maintained contracts with HSEC to pick up and house stray animals.

According to statistics from the Humane Society, last year was the first year the organization adopted out more animals than it euthanized. The shelters’ intake rates steadily increased from 2005-2007, as more municipalities came under contract with the HSEC, but the intake numbers had been declining since then as efforts to control the animal population through spaying and neutering began to see success. HSEC Director Renee Jones could not be reached for comment Wednesday evening.

http://www.infosys.org/infosys-foundation-usa/media/blog/Pages/makerspace-stem.aspx

Neal Trust helped community

W. Earl Cooper | The Brewton Standard (Letter to the Editor) *August 17, 2011*

I am writing in response to at least two different subjects that the Brewton Standard has covered with front page articles recently. These articles are both embarrassing and shameful for our community. The Neal family and the Neal Trust did not ask me to defend them nor do they need me to do that. Over the past years, probably over a half century, the W T Neal Trust has generously provided millions of dollars to our community allowing our citizens to have opportunities that most communities could only dream of having.

A few months ago the Brewton Standard blamed the closing of the animal shelter on the Neal Trust. If the citizens of Brewton did not care to fund the animal shelter, we could only credit the Neal Trust for us ever having one. It surely is not the Neal's fault that the other citizens are not as generous as they have been. We should thank the Neals that we ever were able to have an animal shelter.

Last week's issue blamed the Neal family for our students not getting college credit courses without charge. What would our education systems look like without the prior generosity of the Neal Trust? I do not even like to consider that. I would venture to guess that the educations of most of the writers of this paper were greatly assisted by that very generosity. Kudos to Becky Edge for getting it right in last week's article. She clearly understood that this was not owed to the students and that they were fortunate to have had those funds provided because most students have to pay these costs themselves.

It is time we start addressing this "entitlement mindset". We are not owed anything. If someone does something good for you, say "thank you" not "is that all you can do." The article last Saturday told our students that they were entitled to free education. There is no free education. If you are not paying for it, someone else is. If they stop paying, do not get mad at them. Thank them for what they did.

According to the article, those six hours of college credit will cost the students $760 dollars. Trust me, it cost the taypayers a great deal more than $760 for the student to get those six hours. If the course is not worth $760, I would encourage them not to enroll. When you put your money in the game, the game is much more important to you. You will study harder, retain more, and become a better student.

Considering the financial condition of our country and many of our individual citizens, we are all going to be required to pay for things that someone else used to pay for. Students, today is the day to start being responsible. If it is worth having, it is worth paying for. If you cannot afford something, save until you can. You will appreciate life so much more. With your bought and paid for education, maybe one day you will be able to set up a trust like the Neal Trust and be able to provide for someone else.

This is a great time to be alive. Enjoy it, do not take it for granted, and be grateful if someone helps you along the way.

https://www.brewtonstandard.com/2011/08/17/neal-trust-helped-community/

Session XVIII - Brewton

Below are the biographies of the speakers for Session XVIII, discussing economic development in Brewton's downtown from existing and emerging industries.

Ethan Bennett

Ethan Bennett has served as General Manager with Frontier Technologies since 2014, overseeing engineering, manufacturing, and warehousing related to the wind turbine industry.

He is an alumnus of California State University, Fresno (B.S. in mechanical engineering)

Carol Gordy

Carol Gordy is CEO and Owner of Natural Decorations, Inc.(NDI). She is a floral designer with a love for the high quality of the NDI product as well as the excellent customer service that her company provides. Carol joined NDI in 1985 as Sales and Marketing Director and saw the potential to offer the finest faux floral designs available and market the company to high-end designers and retailers. Following the company's success under her leadership, she purchased the company in 1989.

Daryl Konsler

Daryl Konsler is an Experienced General Manager with a successful record of bottom line achievement. He has experience with TPS implementation; skilled in Lean tools such as Kaizen, TPM, SMED, VSM, and 5S. Daryl's background includes the Automotive and Medical Device sectors, primarily in assembly, machining and casting. He is certified Lean Six Sigma Black Belt.

Scott Sullivan

Scott Sullivan is the Senior Vice President of Provalus, as successful leader with over 20 years small and large business management experience and fifteen plus years of BPO experience working in Operations, Account and Business Management roles. Scott has a proven track record of achieving improved business results for organizations globally, internally and externally including AT&T, Time Warner and a Healthcare provider.

Julie VanDeWater

Julie VanDeWater has served as Manager of Public Communications and Affairs for Georgia Pacific since 2011. Previously she served as Senior Corporate Communicator for Associate Electric Cooperative Inc. and as Director of Community Relations and Market Development for Saint Joseph Regional Medical Center.

VanDeWater is an alumna of Ball State University.

About Brewton

Alabama Communities of Excellence

Brewton provides residents many conveniences of big city living within the comfort and safety of a small town lifestyle. The City offers residents quality education, recreational facilities, seasonal family events and a variety of shopping venues – all at a small town pace. We invite you to browse our downtown area and its fine antique shops, where the blended atmosphere of “old” and “new” lends Brewton its charm and attraction. We believe that Brewton is the ideal place to call home. But don’t just take our word for it, come experience our City. Before you buy a home or commit to a business or industrial site, we encourage you to visit the City of Brewton.

In May 1861, the city of Brewton began as a train station under Edmund Troupe Bruton. The city was originally known as Newport when barges made runs to and from Pensacola, Florida, on the Murder and Burnt Corn Creeks before the installation of rail. During the Civil War rail lines were severed, and small lumber mills were damaged or destroyed. However, after the war those who returned or arrived rebuilt the Brewton economy, began a school, and established small businesses. Into the 1870s a new European demand for lumber opened the way for creation of numerous timber and lumber operations. The Conecuh-Escambia river system became a timber artery to the Gulf.

Brewton became a town on 13 February 1885 and later became the seat of Escambia County, Alabama. Brewton was known in past times as “the richest little town in the South”. Brewton’s high per capita income was created by a small number of “lumber barons,” as they are remembered, who arrived at the end of the last century to cut pine and stayed to build extraordinary homes along Belleville and Evergreen avenues.

These families include the McMillans and the Millers, many of whom still reside in the town. Over time the county erected a series of courthouses. Brewton developed an education system that included public and private institutions, including Jefferson Davis Junior College and T. R. Miller High School, named after Thomas Richard Miller, a local timber baron and town father who contributed to the building and opening of the school.

Don’t miss these things to do:
1. Dogwood Hills Golf course
2. The Groove
3. Alabama Blueberry Festival
4. Country Club of Brewton
5. Brewton Council of the Arts
6. Jalisco
7. Burnt Corn Creek
8. Pig Daddy’s BBQ

https://www.alabamacommunitiesofexcellence.org/ace-town/brewton/

GP to invest another $50M

Stephanie Snodgrass | The Brewton Standard *March 29, 2017*

Georgia Pacific is investing another $50 million in its Brewton location, officials confirmed Monday. Julie VanDeWater, GP's communication and public affairs manager, said the investment will provide for upgrades to one the site's paper machines. "This new technology will provide a higher quality sheet to better meet the needs of our customers and improve our competitive position within the market," VanDeWater said.

Construction is expected to begin this fall and completed in November, she said. To help offset some of the expenses, the company requested a 10-year tax abatement of state-related sales tax on construction-related transactions and some county ad valorem taxes. It would not affect educational taxes in Escambia County. Monday, the Brewton City Council approved its part in the tax abatement process.

Broox Garrett, Brewton Development Authority chairman, said the project is a "good thing" for the community. "It's especially great for those who work out there because it's job security, and any time a company invests in itself, it's great for the community," Garrett said. The city's support of the abatement is the first step in its overall approval. The request must now be approved by the Escambia County Commission.

This is the second large investment by GP in recent years. In 2016, the corporation began work on estimated $400 million energy investment that included a new boiler installation and centralized control room as well as other energy saving measures. The Brewton GP plant produces two products – white top consumer board that is seen on items such as pizza boxes, and SBS, which is found as high-end cosmetic packaging. The plant employs more than 450 people.

https://www.brewtonstandard.com/2017/03/29/gp-to-invest-another-50m/

Provalus announces $6.5 millon Brewton center, to employ 300

William Thornton | al.com *August 7, 2017*

Tech-service and support company Provalus will build a $6.5 million center in Brewton and hire 300 workers. Gov. Kay Ivey announced the move this morning. Training has already begun on the first batch of 50 employees, and construction is expected to commence soon on the company's 60,000 square-foot complex.

"I've made a commitment to attracting 21st Century jobs to Alabama so that our hard-working citizens can count on a more secure future for their families and communities," Ivey said in a statement. "Provalus' technology-focused jobs will create this kind of opportunity in Brewton while reinforcing the message that Alabama is open for business."

Provalus was created by Atlanta-based Optomi as an alternative to overseas outsourcing of business services. According to the company website, Provalus is "helping under-resourced communities by providing technology, business and solutions positions to untapped talent in America."

"Our main mission is to provide value from the U.S. by bringing jobs back, especially to rural areas," Provalus President Chuck Ruggiero said. Brewton in Escambia County has a population of about 5,500. Getting the center to Alabama was codenamed "Project Sherlock," according to the Alabama Commerce Department. The Provalus facility will offer business process outsourcing, information technology outsourcing and Helpdesk services to clients, which include Fortune 1000 companies.

Commerce Secretary Greg Canfield said the company's aims fall in line with the state's strategy to go after innovation and technology companies. An Alabama Department of Commerce financial analysis projects the company's cumulative payroll over 20 years will total $210 million. "Technology is the lifeblood of business today, and our team is going to make sure Alabama is positioned for the future," Canfield said.

https://www.al.com/business/index.ssf/2017/08/provalus_announces_65_millon_b.html

Quality of life in Brewton earns city SARPC award

Staff Reports | The Brewton Standard *December 13, 2017*

The City of Brewton has been awarded the Norman J. Walton, Sr. Regional Award. The award, which was awarded at the South Alabama Regional Planning Commission's annual meeting, recognizes county and municipal governments the three-county SARPC region.

"We have made quality of life a priority with the goal of aggressive industry recruitment," said Mayor Yank Lovelace. "This past year is proof positive that our city's investment in its people and programs that make our city's heritage shine was exactly the right decision."

Brewton triumphed over 29 other municipalities in Mobile, Baldwin and Escambia Counties to secure the award in areas of problem-solving, intergovernmental coordination, innovation, benefit to regional quality of life and cost effectiveness.

"I was honored to present this prestigious award to the City of Brewton," said SARPC Director Rickey Rhodes. "Great things are happening in Brewton and SARPC appreciates the hard work of Mayor Yank Lovelace and the city council and others as we all work hard to enhance the quality of life in south Alabama."

The city cited park expansions, the addition of Provalus to its business community and a new theater among reasons to receive the award. "I am proud of all the work our city has done," Lovelace said, "and I am looking for even greater successes in the year to come. I want to cordially invite you all to Brewton. We have something to show you."

https://www.brewtonstandard.com/2017/12/13/quality-of-life-in-brewton-earns-city-sarpc-award/

BURT JONES
RURAL COMMUNITY
EXPERIENCE

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA | Division of Student Life Blackburn Institute

Student Expectations

Each and every interaction with a Blackburn Student, Fellow, Advisory Board member, or friend of the institute provides you with a unique opportunity to build your personal brand through positive networking experiences. Be mindful that poor behavior reflects poorly not only on yourself, but your family, your region, your state, the Blackburn Institute, and The University of Alabama.

Broadening Horizons:

A primary mission of the Blackburn Institute is developing ethical, broad-thinking leaders. In order to become a leader of this caliber, individuals must be willing to entertain new ideas and expose themselves to new people and experiences.

- Have the courage to not only embrace, but to seek out, new experiences.
- Show empathy and understanding for others in all that you do.
- Tolerate and learn from differing viewpoints.
- Develop a positive attitude towards interacting with people unfamiliar to you.

Professionalism:

As a leadership development organization, the Blackburn Institute places a heavy emphasis on professionalism. Ethical leaders should exemplify professional ideals and enact them in his or her daily life, but especially during Blackburn-sponsored events.

- Engage in meaningful dialogue aimed at increasing mutual understanding; never adversarial debate aimed at conquest or victory.
- Respect every individual regardless of class, rank, title, or responsibilities.
- Ask insightful questions in search of knowledge and understanding; never use questioning as a mechanism to trap or discredit someone.

General Decorum:

Ensure that you always use proper manners at Blackburn-sponsored events and please keep in mind the useful tips we learned from the Blackburn Essential Skills Workshops.

- Utilize appropriate dining etiquette.
- Maximize networking opportunities.
- Engage in civil discourse and dialogue.
- Ask thoughtful and respectful questions.
- Show respect and courtesy to members of the Blackburn Institute, speakers, invited guests, and all others.

Conduct:

As a member of the Blackburn Institute, you represent the Institute and The University of Alabama at all Blackburn events.

- Remember, you will be held accountable for all policies contained in the Code of Student Conduct when off campus representing The University and the Blackburn Institute.
- From The University of Alabama Alcohol and Other Drug Policy:
  "The University of Alabama is an institution of higher education which seeks to create a community that promotes respect, responsibility for actions, civility, upholds state and federal laws, and fosters an environment conducive to learning for members of the academic community. The misuse of AOD can hinder the University's mission and its role in preparing students for responsible citizenship through appropriately focused educational, environmental and enforcement activities related to student health, safety, and wellbeing."
- Consuming and/or being under the influence of alcohol or other drugs are strictly prohibited for all students in all Blackburn student programs. A limited exception for alcohol is made for students age 21 and over during institute-designated events with Fellows and Advisory Board members. Expectations of appropriate conduct, decorum, and professionalism remain in place at all times.

I, _____ (print), as a student member of the Blackburn Institute have read, fully understand, and agree to the Student Expectations.

_____ _____

Signature Date

BURT JONES
RURAL COMMUNITY
EXPERIENCE

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA | Division of Student Life Blackburn Institute

Suggested Packing List

Toiletry Items

- Toothbrush/Toothpaste
- Shampoo
- Deodorant
- Brush/Comb
- Eye care (contacts and contact solution)
- Required medication (in original bottle, if prescription)
- Personal hygiene items

Clothing

- General Attire Guidelines (See following page for descriptions)
    - Wednesday - Business casual for afternoon sessions and dinner
    - Thursday - Business casual for full day
    - Friday - Business casual for full day (note that we will be touring correctional facilities in the morning and will be in building with no temperature control during afternoon forestry session)
    - Saturday - Business casual for full day (note that the afternoon will include a short walk outdoors)
    - Sunday - Casual for hiking
- Sleepwear
- Socks and appropriate footwear
- Belt

Miscellaneous

- Nametag - **required**
- Portfolio - **required**
- Cell phone / tablet and charger - **optional**
- Headphones - **optional**
- Games / books / movies for travel entertainment on bus - **optional**
- Petty cash for souvenirs and any additional personal needs (all meals are provided) - **optional**

Not Recommended - Students are strongly discouraged from bringing the following items.

- Laptops
- Large amounts of study materials
- Excessive cash
- Expensive jewelry

Dress Classifications

The Blackburn Institute utilizes a standard dress classification system to help its community identify appropriate attire for a variety of events. Attire will be noted in all invitations for Blackburn Institute events. This system provides flexibility for personal style, while ensuring a consistent appearance and level of professionalism.

Business Formal

- Business-style dress
- Dress with a jacket
- Stockings (optional in summer)
- Heels, low or high
- Business suit
- Matching vest (optional)
- Dress shirt
- Conservative tie
- Dress shoes and dress socks

Business Casual

- Skirt, khakis, or pants
- Open-collar shirt, knit shirt, or sweater (no spaghetti straps or décolleté)
- Dress
- Flats or heels
- Seasonal sport coat or blazer with slacks or khakis
- Dress shirt, casual button-down shirt, open-collar or polo shirt
- Optional tie
- Loafers or loafer-style shoes with socks

Casual

- Anything in which you are comfortable!

If you want specific guidelines for this category, here are some suggestions:

- Sundress
- Long or short skirt
- Khakis or jeans (clean, no holes)
- Shorts (depending on occasion and climate)
- Plain t-shirt (no slogans), polo shirt, or turtleneck
- Casual button-down blouse or shirt and/or sweater
- Loafers, sneakers, or sandals

BURT JONES
RURAL COMMUNITY
EXPERIENCE

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA | Division of Student Life Blackburn Institute

Fall 2018 Post-Trip Self-Assessment

1. Name: _____

2. How would you rate your general level of knowledge of the Southwest region of Alabama on a scale of 1-10, with 1 being the least knowledgeable and 10 being the most knowledgeable? _____

   How would you rate your knowledge of the region with regards to the following specific topics:

Culture/Recreation	_____	Geography	_____
Industry	_____	Local Government	_____
Education	_____	Political Issues	_____

3. How would you rate your personal level of empathy and appreciation for other people's perspectives on a scale of 1-10, with 1 being the least empathetic and 10 being the most empathetic? _____

4. How would you rate your ability to engage in meaningful discussions among the following groups on a scale of 1-10, with 1 being unable to have meaningful discussions and 10 being fully able to have meaningful discussions?

Your Class	_____	Blackburn Advisory Board	_____
Your Class Small Group	_____	Blackburn Staff	_____
All Blackburn Students	_____	Those Outside of Blackburn	_____
Blackburn Fellows	_____		

5. What do you think are the biggest issues impacting this region of the state?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

6. What do you think are the biggest resources/advantages impacting this region of the state?

7. What did you learn from this travel experience?

8. What did you enjoy most about this travel experience?

9. What did you enjoy least about this travel experience?

10. What area of the state would you like to see next year's fall travel experience explore?

11. Do you have any concerns about the content or format of the travel experience?