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BURT JONES  
**RURAL COMMUNITY  
EXPERIENCE**

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THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**ALABAMA** | *Division of*  
Student Life  
Blackburn Institute

# Fall 2017 Travel Experience

Preparatory Materials



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# BURT JONES RURAL COMMUNITY EXPERIENCE

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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA | Division of Student Life  
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## Contents

|   |            |
|---|------------|
| <b>Trip Itinerary</b>   | <b>5</b>   |
| <b>Bios/Readings By Session</b>   | <b>8</b>   |
| Session I - Engine Assembly Plant at Honda Manufacturing of Alabama, Lincoln                    | 9          |
| Session II - Talladega Superspeedway and International Motorsports Hall of Fame, Lincoln        | 15         |
| Session III - Dinner with Talladega National Forest at the Montana Saloon and Grill, Lincoln    | 17         |
| Session IV - E. H. Gentry Technical Center, Alabama Institute for the Deaf and Blind, Talladega | 23         |
| Session V - Sylacauga Marble Festival/Omya at B. B. Comer Memorial Library, Sylacauga           | 29         |
| Session VI - Avondale Mills Lunch Discussion at B. B. Comer Memorial Library, Sylacauga         | 35         |
| Session VII - Blue Bell Creameries, Sylacauga   | 37         |
| Session VIII - Sylacauga Alliance for Family Enhancement (S.A.F.E.)                             | 41         |
| Session IX - Freedom Riders National Monument Dinner Panel at Classic on Noble, Anniston        | 45         |
| Session X - History and Legacy at Town Hall, Hobson City  | 53         |
| Session XI - Panel on Intercommunity Relations at FEMA Building, Hobson City                    | 59         |
| Session XII - EPA Superfund Site Lunch Panel at JSU/GSCC McClellan Center, Anniston             | 63         |
| Session XIV - Alabama Army National Guard at Fort McClellan Armory, Anniston                    | 75         |
| Session XIII - McClellan Development Authority, Anniston  | 79         |
| Session XV - Committee on Unified Leadership Dinner Panel at Top O' the River, Anniston         | 83         |
| Session XVI - Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act at UA - Gadsden Center                               | 87         |
| Session XVII - Special Programming Achievement Network (S.P.A.N.) of Etowah County, Gadsden     | 91         |
| Session XVIII - Lunch Panel with United Steel Workers Local 12 at Union Hall, Gadsden           | 93         |
| Session XIX - Gadsden City High School Consolidation Panel at UA - Gadsden Center               | 97         |
| Session XX - Downtown Revitalization Panel at Mary G. Hardin Center for Cultural Arts, Gadsden  | 10         |
| <b>Student Expectations</b>   | <b>113</b> |
| <b>Dress Classifications</b>  | <b>115</b> |
| <b>Suggested Packing List</b>   | <b>117</b> |
| <b>Post-Trip Self-Assessment</b>  | <b>119</b> |





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## 2017 Travel and Meeting Itinerary

### Wednesday, October 25

- 12:00pm Meet at Blackburn Institute Office
- 12:30pm Depart Tuscaloosa for Lincoln
- 2:45pm Session I - Walk through of Engine Assembly Plant at Honda Manufacturing of Alabama and discussion panel moderated by Marion McIntosh (Process Engineer) with Mike Oatridge (Vice President, Manufacturing), Noboru Takahashi (Senior Vice President), and Jeff Tomko (President)
- 4:30pm Session II - Track Tour at Talladega Superspeedway and meeting with Russell Branham (Director of Public Relations and Consumer Marketing) and Kylie Easterling (Digital and Social Media Manager)
- 6:15pm Session III - Dinner at the Montana Saloon and Grill with Gloria Nielsen, (District Ranger, Talladega National Forest) and Blackburn Fellows and Advisory Board Members
- 9:00pm Check in at Hotel (Holiday Inn Express and Suites - Talladega)
- 9:30pm Reflection and Overview of Thursday

### Thursday, October 26

- 7:30am Breakfast at Hotel
- 8:30am Depart Hotel
- 8:45am Session IV - Meeting at Alabama Institute for the Deaf and Blind with Vera Hendrix (Vice President, Instructional Programs), Donte' Little (Director, Talladega Regional Center), Jerry Martin (Executive Manager, Alabama Industries for the Blind), Dr. John Mascia (President) and Patrick Robinson (Executive Director, E. H. Gentry Technical Center)
- 9:45am Depart Talladega for Sylacauga
- 10:30am Session V - Greetings by Jim Heigl (Mayor) and discussion of marble industry at the B. B. Comer Memorial Library with Bob Karell (Plant Manager, Omya Sylacauga) and Dr. Ted Spears (Chairman, Sylacauga Marble Festival) including tour of marble sculptures by Tracey Thomas (Library Director)
- 11:45pm Session VI - Tour of Douglas Crockwell's Avondale Mills Work Art Exhibit at B. B. Comer Memorial Library by Shirley K. Spears (Library Foundation Director) and lunch discussion on the economic impact of the closing of Avondale Mills with Lee Perryman (President, Sylacauga City Council), and Blackburn Fellows and Advisory Board Members
- 1:45pm Session VII - Observe end of production at Blue Bell Creameries and meeting over ice cream with Mindy Grier (Administrative Manager)
- 3:15pm Session VIII - Meeting at the Sylacauga Alliance for Family Enhancement (S.A.F.E.) with Margaret Morton (Executive Director)
- 4:30pm Depart Sylacauga for Anniston
- 5:45pm Check in at Hotel (Courtyard by Marriott - Anniston/Oxford)
- 6:30pm Depart Hotel

- 7:00pm Session IX - Dinner panel on the Freedom Riders National Monument at Classic on Noble with Dr. Barbara Boyd (State Representative and Park Advisor), Pete Conroy (Co-Chair, Park Committee), Dr. Reginald Tiller, (Acting Superintendent) and Blackburn Fellows and Advisory Board Members
- 9:30pm Reflection and Overview of Friday

**Friday, October 27**

- 7:30am Breakfast at Hotel
- 8:30am Depart Hotel
- 9:00am Session X - Tour of Hobson City Town Hall and meeting with Alberta McCrory (Mayor), Katie Powell (Chair, Calhoun County Training School Reunion Committee), and Tamar Towns (Program Manager, Dannon Project)
- 10:15am Session XI - Panel on Intercommunity Relations with Alton Craft (Mayor, City of Oxford), Jack Draper (Mayor, City of Anniston), Alberta McCrory (Mayor, Town of Hobson City), and Barry Robertson (License Commissioner, Calhoun County & Chair, Calhoun County Chamber of Commerce) at the Hobson City FEMA Building
- 12:00pm Session XII - Lunch panel at TBD with discussion on cleanup of the Anniston PCB EPA Superfund Site with Cindy Calix (Administrator, Community Advisory Group), Gayle Macolly Harris (Manager Remedial Projects, Eastman Chemical), David Reddick (Anniston City Councilman and Chair, Community Advisory Group), and Pam Scully (Remedial Project Manager, EPA), and Blackburn Fellows and Advisory Board Members
- 2:30pm Session XIII - Meeting at the Alabama Army National Guard's Fort McClellan Armory with Major General Allen Harrell (Commanding General, 167th Theater Sustainment Command) and Colonel Everette Price (Chief of Staff, 167th Theater Sustainment Command)
- 4:30pm Session XIV - Meeting at McClellan Development Authority with Robin Scott (Executive Director)
- 6:00pm Session XV - Dinner panel on the Committee on Unified Leadership (C.O.U.L.) and diverse populations working together for progress at Top O' the River with Mauldine Halloway (Director, Community Enabler), The Rev. Chris K. Hartley (Rector, Saint Michaels and All Angels Episcopal Church), Rev. Ben Little (Anniston City Councilman), and Tom Potts (President, Potts Marketing)
- 8:00pm Depart Anniston for Gadsden
- 9:00pm Check in at Hotel (Holiday Inn Express and Suites - Gadsden/Attala)
- 9:30pm Reflection and Overview of Saturday

**Saturday, October 28**

- 7:30am Breakfast at Hotel
- 8:30am Depart Hotel
- 9:00am Session XVI - Meeting with Lilly Ledbetter (Former Area Manager, Goodyear Tire and Rubber Co.) at the UA - Gadsden Center
- 10:30am Session XVII - Tour of the Special Programing Achievement Network (S.P.A.N.) of Etowah County with Keith Blackwell (Program Coordinator)
- 12:00pm Session XVIII - Lunch Panel at United Steel Workers Local 12 Union Hall, David Hayes (President) Eric Hubbard (Division B Chairman), Bren Riley (President, Alabama AFL CIO) and Tony Townsend (Division E Chairman)
- 2:30pm Session XIX - Panel discussion on Consolidation of High Schools in the Gadsden City School System with Catina Bett (Former Student), Keith Blackwell (Director of Operations), Dr. Ed Miller (Superintendent) and Tony Perkins (Director of Student Services) at the UA - Gadsden Center
- 4:00pm Session XX - Downtown Revitalization Panel at the Mary G. Hardin Center for Cultural Arts with Shane Ellison (Administrative Assistant to the Mayor, City of Gadsden & Board Member, Downtown Gadsden, Inc.), Mary Helmer (President, Main Street Alabama), Tena King (Owner,

- King's Oil Company & President, Gadsden/Etowah County Chamber of Commerce) and Kay Moore (Executive Director, Downtown Gadsden, Inc.)
- 5:30pm Session XXI - Dinner at Gadsden Museum of Art with Gadsden State Community College students and Blackburn Fellows and Advisory Board Members
- 8:30pm Depart Gadsden for Tuscaloosa
- 11:00pm Arrive at Blackburn Institute Office

## Optional Hiking Itinerary

### **Saturday, October 28**

- 8:30pm Depart Gadsden for Oxford
- 9:30pm Check-In at Hotel (TBD)

### **Sunday, October 29**

- 7:30am Breakfast at Hotel
- 8:30am Depart Hotel
- 9:00am Hiking at Cheaha State Park
- 12:00pm Short Distance Hikers Depart for Tuscaloosa (quick stop for lunch)
- 2:30pm Short Distance Hikers Arrive at Blackburn Institute Office
- 3:00pm Long Distance Hikers Depart for Tuscaloosa (quick stop for lunch)
- 4:30pm Long Distance Hikers Arrive at Blackburn Institute Office

# Lincoln, Alabama



Lincoln is a city in Talladega County in the east central region of the state. Incorporated in 1911, the city is named for Major General Benjamin Lincoln, who served in the American Army during the Revolutionary War.

Logan Martin Lake borders Lincoln's western edge providing over 30 miles of recreational shoreline within the city limits. The city is known for the Honda Manufacturing Plant, where the Acura MDX, Honda Odyssey, Honda Pilot, and Honda Ridgeline are built and the neighboring Talladega Superspeedway, NASCAR's longest oval track. During annual racing weeks, Lincoln's population surges to over 150,000.



## Quick Facts

**Population:** 6,491

**Racial Composition:** 73.3% White, 23.4% Black or African American, 0.5% Native American, 0.4% Asian, 1.0% from other races, and 1.4% from two or more races. 1.9% of the population were Hispanic or Latino of any race.

**Median Age:** 39

**County:** Talladega

**Random Trivia:** Despite its modest size, Lincoln is a commuter town, where the population at night is 6,300 and 15,000 once everyone heads to work.

## Alabama



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## Session I - Lincoln

Below are biographies of the panelists for Session I, discussing economic impact of the automotive industry in Alabama and the implications for workforce development at Honda Manufacturing of Alabama (HMA).

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### Marion McIntosh (Moderator)

Marion S. McIntosh is originally from Monroeville, AL, and currently works as a Process Engineer at HMA. He is a graduate of the University of Alabama with Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Industrial Engineering, May 2003 and August 2006, respectively. In his spare time, he volunteers as a motivational speaker and addresses youth groups, minority engineering students, and professional organizations on topics ranging from collegiate success to community activism. He aspires to get more actively involved in public service and volunteers on various political campaigns. Marion currently serves on the Board of Directors for the Alabama Mathematics, Science, Technology, and Engineering Coalition (AMSTEC) and is a Life Member of the Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc.



McIntosh is a 2005 Fellow and Advisory Board Member of the Blackburn Institute.

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### Mike Oatridge

Mike Oatridge is from Ontario, Canada and currently serves as the Vice President of Manufacturing for HMA. He began his career in 1989 at the Honda of Canada Manufacturing in Alliston, Ontario, where he was influential in the start-up of the company's second manufacturing plant. Now, he leads HMA's overall operations, which includes vehicle and engine production and parts procurement from more than 300 suppliers. Outside of Honda and the manufacturing world, he was recently elected as chairman of the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute Board of Directors.



Oatridge is a 1988 alumnus of Ryerson University with a degree in mechanical engineering.

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## Noboru Takahashi

Noboru Takahashi is Senior Vice President at HMA, where he previously served as plant manager and Vice President of Operations. Noboru started my career at Honda in 1981 as a mig welder at Honda's Sayama plant in Japan. He accept my first U.S. assignment over 20 years ago in the Weld Department at the East Liberty Auto Plant. While at ELP, Noboru was given the opportunity to act as new model project leader for the 2001 Civic and 2006 Civic, which built the foundation of my working style at Honda of America Manufacturing. He also served as the 2007 CRV plant project leader (PPL) while at ELP. Noboru has been married for 25 years and has a son, Ryuhoshin (Lou), 20, and a daughter, Koharu, 10.



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## Jeff Tomko

Jeff Tomko joined Honda originally in 1987 and is now the president of Honda HMA, which operates an automobile and engine plant in Lincoln, AL, where various cars are produced as well. Tomko previously served as senior vice president of HMA, in which he was one of five Operation Leaders responsible for daily operations of the entire Lincoln facility. Prior to joining HMA in 2013, Tomko served as chief advisor at Honda of America and plant manager of the Marysville Auto Plant in Ohio.

Tomko received his bachelor's degree in Business Administration from Bowling Green State University, where he majored in purchasing, materials, production, and operations management.





Alabama is reportedly one of 11 states in the running for a new \$1.6 billion Toyota Mazda plant. The plant, expected to create more than 4,000 jobs, is projected to be operational by 2021, but a location has not been announced. Toyota says it will build the Corolla, while Mazda will focus on crossovers. The plant could produce about 300,000 cars a year.

If Alabama were to be the location of the new plant, it would be the fourth vehicle manufacturing facility to call the Yellowhammer State home. Mercedes-Benz, Honda and Hyundai already manufacture more than 1 million vehicles a year in Alabama. With any large manufacturing project, incentives will play a role. So what were the incentives for each of Alabama's auto manufacturing facilities?

Mercedes-Benz announced in September 1993 it would build its first U.S. manufacturing plant in Vance. Alabama paved the way for their entrance with a \$253 million incentive package, double the amount that South Carolina paid to attract a BMW plant a year earlier. Those incentives included \$77.5 million in road and infrastructure improvements; \$17.4 million in site acquisition and development; \$42.6 million in tax credits; \$30 million to build and equip a training center, and another \$60 million to train employees and suppliers. In August 2000, Siegelman and Mercedes-Benz officials announced a \$600 million expansion to double the size of its M-Class operation. Total incentives were \$119 million - \$64.9 million for site work and other costs and about \$54.4 million in tax credits.

In 1999, Honda Motor Corp. announced it would build a manufacturing plant in Lincoln, in Talladega County. Alabama's incentive package this time totaled \$158.3 million. That package included \$55.6 million in state and local tax breaks; \$30 million in job training programs; \$21.5 million for site development; \$17.5 million for access roads; \$16 million for site purchase; \$10 million for a training facility and equipment; \$4 million for water and sewer service; \$2 million for a railroad spur and \$1 million for fire protection. The package also included \$500,000 for a foreign trade zone and \$225,000 in environmental permitting. In all, the state ponied up \$64.7 million in incentives, with \$17.5 million coming from local governments, \$11.5 million coming from the federal government, and another \$9 million from private sources.

In 2001, Toyota Motor Corp. announced it would build its first V-8 engine factory outside Japan in Huntsville. The \$220 million factory set a target date of 2003 to open. Because it was smaller than the Mercedes and Honda projects, the incentive package was smaller. The state settled on a \$29 million package, with \$13.6 million paying for training programs and \$15 million in tax breaks.

Hyundai Motor Co. chose a site in Montgomery for its \$1 billion manufacturing plant in 2002. The incentive package this time was \$234 million. Included in that package was \$82 million in corporate income tax abatements over 20 years; \$75 million for worker training; \$118.5 million for a job training center and training programs.

Did the state get its money's worth? Add up all these packages and you get a figure of more than \$764 million. Back in 1993, a study by Troy University and a site consultant estimated that Mercedes' 20-year cumulative impact on Alabama's economy would be \$7 billion. Since 1993, Alabama has gotten more than \$9 billion in investment just for the four plants. And since Mercedes began production, Alabama's three plants have produced more than 9 million vehicles.

Over 20 years time, Alabama has become the fifth largest automobile producing state in the U.S. Employment in the automotive sector tops 57,000, with 25,000 jobs in the automotive supplier chains among more than 160 companies. And last year, exports of automobiles manufactured in Alabama rose 13 percent to \$7.9 billion. Auto exports were the largest segment in the state's \$20 billion of total exports. And the three vehicle plants are still expanding. Over the last year, there were more than 69 auto-related projects, for an estimated total of more than 4,000 jobs and over \$1 billion in new capital investment in Alabama, according to the Alabama Department of Commerce.

## Honda Alabama expansion project launches with \$85M first phase

*Dawn Azok | madeinalabama.com*

*March 28, 2017*

LINCOLN, Alabama — Honda continues to build on its massive investment in Alabama and today announced a plan to spend an additional \$85 million at its Talladega County auto manufacturing plant. The money will be used for the first of a multi-phase project to improve vehicle manufacturing flexibility, strengthen the logistic efficiency for future models and prepare for future technologies, the company said. It includes a building expansion at the south end of Line 1 for vehicle assembly operations. Construction for this initial phase of the project is expected to be complete in 2018.

“This significant financial investment in our Lincoln facility will enhance Honda’s manufacturing efficiency and flexibility to help us meet strong customer demand for our products and prepare us for future opportunities in our industry,” said Jeff Tomko, president of Honda Manufacturing of Alabama. “Honda has found a home in Alabama, expanding repeatedly to boost output and add capabilities.” The \$2.2 billion, 3.7 million-square-foot plant in Lincoln has sole responsibility for production of Honda’s Odyssey minivan, Pilot SUV, Ridgeline pickup, as well production of the Acura MDX luxury SUV. Workers at the plant also build the V-6 engines that power each vehicle, and the facility has the capacity

to produce 340,000 vehicles and engines each year. Honda’s Alabama assembly center employs more than 4,500 workers and has attracted a network of almost 30 Tier One suppliers that employ another 7,600 people. The plant has an estimated annual economic impact on the state of \$6.8 billion, according to a University of Alabama analysis.

“Honda has been a powerful economic engine in Alabama, creating thousands of well-paying jobs and new levels of opportunity for residents in Talladega County and across the state,” said Greg Canfield, secretary of the Alabama Department of Commerce. “Honda has found a home in Alabama, expanding repeatedly to boost output and add capabilities,” he added. “We’ll work hard to keep this fruitful partnership going strong.”

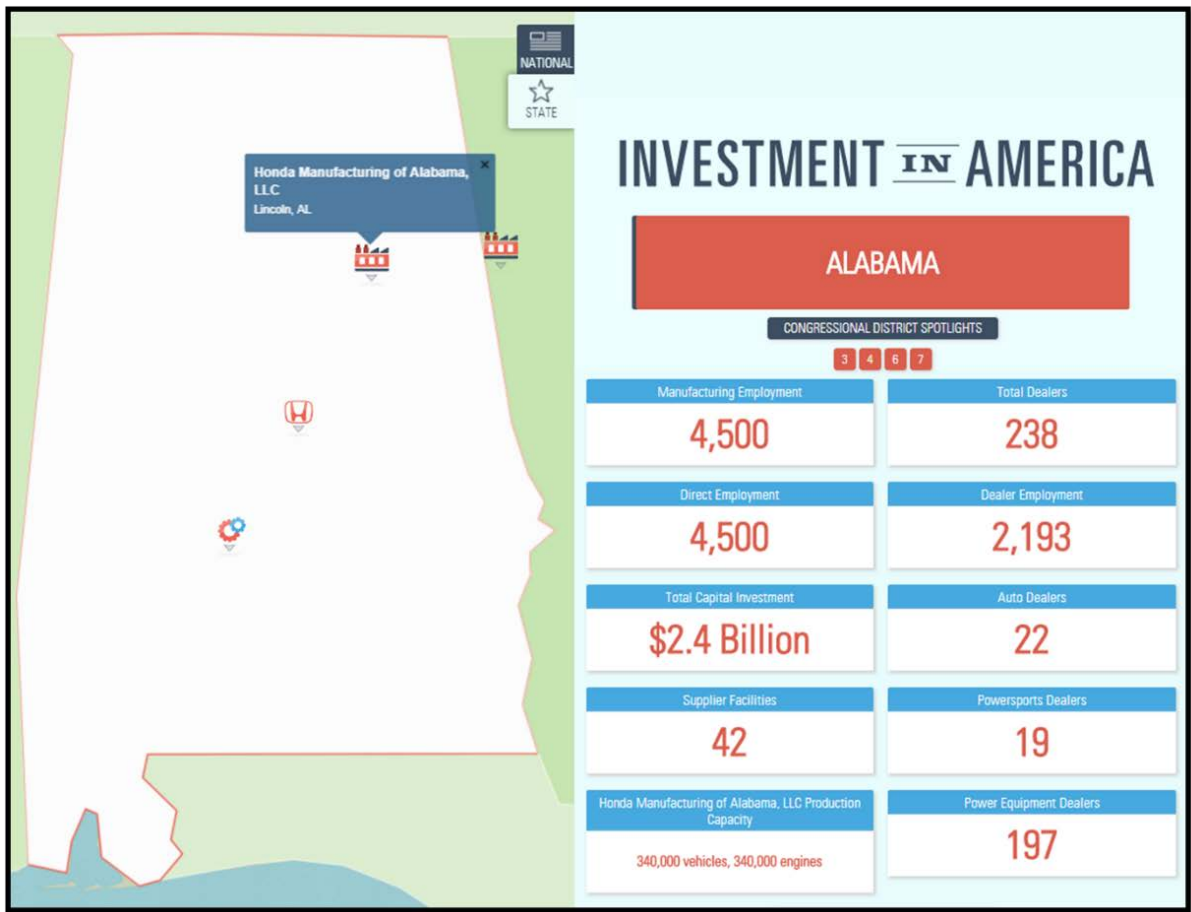
### **RISING INVESTMENT**

Earlier this year, Honda’s Alabama operations were in the spotlight at the North American International Auto Show in Detroit, where the redesigned 2018 Odyssey was unveiled. The updated Odyssey raises the stakes for family-friendly packaging, performance and technology in the minivan segment. Also in Detroit, the Alabama-made Ridgeline was named the 2017 North American Truck of the Year. The latest \$85 million investment brings HMA’s total capital investment since 2011 to more than \$750 million. The company has also added more than 450 employees during that time.

<http://www.madeinalabama.com/2017/03/honda-alabama-expansion/>



# Honda Manufacturing of Alabama



<https://hondainamerica.com/investment-map/#!state%7CAL%7Call%7CEmployment>



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## Session II- Lincoln

Below is the biography of the speakers for Session II, discussing the regional economic impact of the racing industry and event tourism at the Talladega Superspeedway.

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### **Russell Branham**

Russell Branham has been with Talladega Superspeedway since February 2013 and currently serves as the Director of Consumer Marketing and Public Relations. A South Carolina native, he is well-respected for nearly 30 years in the NASCAR industry. Russell joined the track after spending 13 ½ years as former NASCAR driver and current NBC Sports analyst Jeff Burton's business manager as well as Vice President of HB&M Sports, a marketing agency in Charlotte, NC. He has brought a vast amount of experience to his role as Director of PR having headed the communications effort at Darlington Raceway (SC) from 1989-99, and having been actively involved with the track's Stock Car Museum and National Motorsports Press Association Hall of Fame. Russell has also worked in public relations for the Pearson family, headed by NASCAR Hall of Fame legend David Pearson.



Branham is a alumnus of Francis Marion University, Florence, SC.

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### **Kylie Easterling**

Kylie Easterling has been with Talladega Superspeedway since March 2013 and is currently the Digital and Social Media Manager. She is a Texas native, growing up in the Panhandle/West Texas. Easterling's responsibilities at Talladega Superspeedway include oversight and strategy involving all digital and social media, including content creation, graphic design and more. Since Easterling joined the Talladega Superspeedway team in 2013, the TSS social media channels have amassed the 2nd largest total following among all NASCAR tracks/facilities.



Easterling is an alumna of Texas A&M University (BA in Telecommunication and MS in Sport Management)

## Talladega Superspeedway Quick Track Facts

- Talladega Superspeedway is located 40 miles east of Birmingham, Ala. at exit 168 and 95 miles west of Atlanta, Ga. at exit 173.
  - Built in 1969 by Bill France, the land was suited for farming soybean and next to a couple of abandon airport runways, was then constructed to be the biggest, fastest and most competitive superspeedway in the world. What was first called Alabama International Motor Speedway until 1989, the TSS property now covers 3,000 acres including the track site and parking areas. The infield area is 212 acres.
  - A 2.66-mile tri-oval course with turns banked 33 degrees at the highest, and the grandstands tri-oval is banked 16.5 degrees.
  - The track is 48-foot wide with an apron that is an additional 12 ft. in width. The frontstretch is 4,300' long, while the backstretch is 4,000' long.
  - TSS presents five separate racing shows each year as host to Monster Energy NASCAR Cup Series, NASCAR XFINITY Series, NASCAR Camping World Truck Series and the Automobile Racing Club of America (ARCA) Racing Series Presented by Menards
  - The facility is used for various automotive testing purposes as well as by driving schools, including the NASCAR Racing Experience, Inc.
  - The grandstand seating area is .8 mile in length along the frontstretch, with chair back seats that are 21 and 22 inches wide. Capacity is approximately just under 80,000 in the grandstands. All tower and grandstand seating is smoke free.
  - The driver with the most wins in Talladega Superspeedway history is Dale Earnhardt with 14 across 3 different racing series (10 Cup Series, 1 XFINITY Series, 3 IROC)
  - Study by Dr. Keivan Deravi concluded that from 2004-2013, TSS drover \$380 million of economic impact per year to the state of Alabama
  - To provide a world-class facility to host 2 NASCAR race weekends per year, parent company International Speedway Corporation has invested over \$430 million over the decade in operational event costs and upgrades.
- 

## Talladega Superspeedway offers free camping for Hurricane Irma evacuees

*Teresa Welsh | Miami Herald*

*September 06, 2017*

Talladega Superspeedway is allowing Hurricane Irma evacuees to stay for free at its campground. The facility has restrooms and warm water for showers, and water hookups for campers. It will open to evacuees on Thursday morning at 9 a.m. Central time. The NASCAR track is calling the campground a safe place for people fleeing the path of Irma.

“Our track is committed to helping our friends in Florida and the surrounding states during this time of need,” said Talladega Superspeedway Chairman Grant Lynch. “We hope to provide a sense of relief by offering a place to stay for no charge for evacuees during this time of adversity. Our thoughts and prayers go out to everyone in the path of the storm.”

The Talladega, Ala. facility is located less than 10 minutes from the Talladega Municipal Airport and is off Highway 20. By car, it's about 50 minutes from Birmingham and about one hour and 40 minutes from Atlanta. Evacuees with questions can reach the speedway at 256-315-4747.

<http://www.miamiherald.com/news/nation-world/national/article171669652.html>

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## Session III - Lincoln

Below is the biography of the speaker for Session III, providing an overview of Alabama's National Forests and discussing the economic, recreational, and environmental impacts of Talladega National Forest.

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### **Gloria Nielsen**

Gloria Nielsen is a District Ranger for Talladega National Forest. Gloria grew up in Double Springs, Alabama, home of the Bankhead National Forest (NF), where her mother was one of the first women who worked as a seasonal employee planting trees and doing timber stand improvement (injecting trees with chemical) on the Bankhead. Gloria began her fulltime employment with the FS a timber marker (forestry technician) in Double Springs and later Conecuh NF. She then transitioned to the Forest Inventory and Analysis, the research branch of FS, occupying various posts in Oklahoma, Mississippi and Arkansas. After a stint as a trainee in Louisiana, Gloria became a Forester with assignments in California, Kentucky, South Carolina and Mississippi over a 20 year span. In 2009, she became the first female District Ranger on the Talladega Ranger District. She is married to her husband Aron and has two sons, two wonderful daughters-in-law and one grandson.



Nielsen is an alumna of Auburn University (BS in Forest Management).

## Talladega National Forest Quick Facts

- 117,000 Acres from Cheaha State Park south to Sylacauga
- Proclamation July 17, 1936 by Franklin D. Roosevelt
- Zone - Wilderness/Recreation/Lands/Special Uses/Minerals – Cheaha Wilderness (7,425 acres), 3 developed recreation areas, about 100 miles of trail, 5-10 special use events, monitor special use permits, rock sales
- Zone - Engineering (over 300 miles of roads (615 total) and facilities)
- Wildlife – Red cockaded woodpecker management (endangered species), Georgia aster restoration project, endangered mussel habitat
- Zone - Fire (40,000 acres of prescribed burning annually, wildfire suppression - 10-30 annually)
- Zone - Silviculture (longleaf restoration, NEPA documents, stand exams over 10,000 acres annually)
- Zone - Timber Management (28,000 CCF annually, administer timber sales)
- Law Enforcement is directly supervised from above

### Laws that Dictate Management.

- National Environmental Policy Act
- National Forest Management Act
- Clean Air Act
- Clean Water Act
- Wilderness Act

### Issues/Concerns

- Wildfires – mostly human caused
- Road Maintenance – lack of sufficient funds to maintain all roads to standard which results in many roads being closed to public use
- Mud Bogging/ damaging gates/ riding around gates – impacts already limited funding
- NNIS (non-native invasive species) - Bicolor lespedeza has the potential to completely replace native herbaceous layer needed to produce adequate food for the endangered RCW and many other species.
- Smoke/Spring Burning/Turkey Nesting – Public concerns about growing season burning impacting turkey nesting
- RCW/ Endangered Species – extirpated but reintroduced by translocation in 2008, now have 13 potential breeding group
- Trespass – claims to government property or use of government property without a special use permit
- Lost Hikers – particularly in the Cheaha Wilderness, since we have limited blazing of trails, people frequently get off the trails and become lost

### Partners

- Cheaha State Park (signs, National Public Lands Day)
- Alabama Forestry Commission (Southern pine beetle flights, implement State and Private Forestry programs with landowners (Stevens Act))
- Alabama Power (road work, Georgia Aster restoration)
- County Highway Dept. (road work)
- Office of Archaeological Resources University of Alabama (archaeological surveys)
- Cheaha Trail Riders Club of East Alabama (Kentuck ORV trail)
- City of Sylacauga (Sylaward Mountain Bike Trail)
- Citizens of Greater Sylacauga (COGS) (maintenance of Sylaward Mountain Bike Trail)
- Munford Schools/ Talladega County Board of Education (conservation education for Talladega, Clay, Jefferson and other counties)
- Friends of the Talladega National Forest (trailhead maintenance, assistance with grants)
- Clay and Talladega County Forest Planning Com. (driving tour, field days)
- The Nature Conservancy (prescribed burning, purchasing land)
- US Fish and Wildlife Service (T&E species management; RCW, bats, plants, mussels)

- National Wild Turkey Federation (wildlife openings, support for management activities, stewardship projects on some districts)
- Alabama Dog Deer Hunters Association (wildlife opening maintenance)
- Hollins Wildlife Management Area (wildlife opening and road maintenance, NNIS work)
- Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (management of hunting activities)
- Forest Fire Lookout Association (fire tower maintenance)
- Civilian Conservation Corps Legacy (signs)
- About 10 Wyden Agreements to burn private lands

### Benefits

- Clean Air
- Clean Water
- Timber for jobs, lumber, houses,
- Recreation
- Hunting
- Protection of threatened and endangered species habitat

### Crews fighting wildfire in Talladega National Forest as drought continues

*Katelyn Schneider / Anniston Star*

*October 31, 2016*

A wildfire in the Talladega National Forest had burned up to 800 acres of land Monday, and firefighters were still working to contain it on Monday afternoon as the region continued in a drought that has raised the risk of fires. The Talladega forest fire, south of Cheaha State Park in Clay County, started Sunday evening, according to Gloria Nielsen, district ranger for the Talladega District of the national forest. "We're not sure exactly how the fire started, but it was definitely man-made," Nielsen said.

Nielsen noted that Clay County is one of 46 counties in Alabama under a no-burn order issued by Gov. Robert Bentley Oct. 12 because of severe drought that has parched the state since September. Nielsen said by phone that the Talladega fire was about 50 percent contained at 1:50 p.m. and firefighters hoped to have it completely contained by Monday night.

Nielsen said Forest Service crews were setting up bulldozer lines with a perimeter of 1,000 acres to prevent the fire from spreading farther. The line was about 75 percent complete Monday afternoon, according to Nielsen. The Forest Service will not consider the fire controlled until it rains, Nielsen said.

When the fire started Sunday, it was traveling up the steep terrain, which resulted in it spreading more quickly with flame heights of about 8 to 10 feet, she said. She said the fire appeared to be moving down the steep terrain Monday, so the fire was spreading less quickly. There had been no wildfires in Calhoun County since Friday, according to reports from the Alabama Forestry Commission.

Calhoun County fire departments responded to several minor fires as a result of residents not adhering to the burn ban. Anniston firefighters extinguished six fires over the weekend, according to Capt. Joel Roberts. He said there was one Friday evening, three Saturday, and two Sunday. The blazes were extinguished quickly, and each time the Fire Department reminded the people who started them of the no-burn order.

Roberts said he doesn't think people know how dangerous it can be to set fires. "It's important to refrain from burning right now because it is so dry that it's so easy for fires to spread and get out of control," Roberts said. According to Oxford fire Chief Gary Sparks, his agency responded to two unauthorized burnings, both on Saturday. He said they were easily extinguished, but people should continue to be very careful.

Jacksonville firefighters also responded to two minor fires, one on Saturday and one on Sunday, according to Chief Wade Buckner. Drought conditions are expected to continue even though there is a slight chance of rain from Thursday afternoon to Thursday night, according to Gerald Satterwhite, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service in Calera.



“Despite the chance of rain, it would be very spotty at best,” Satterwhite said. “There will be nothing measurable.” The last measurable rainfall Anniston received was on Sept. 18, with 0.12 inches of rain, Satterwhite said.

He said the lack of rain will continue and temperatures also continue to break records. On Saturday, Anniston broke the record high temperature of 84 degrees set in 1984 with a high of 88 degrees. On Sunday a new record of 87 degrees broke the old mark of 86 degrees set in 1961, according to Satterwhite.

He said Anniston has received 26.47 inches of rain in 2016, leaving a deficit of 14.39 inches below the expected average rainfall.

[https://www.annistonstar.com/news/local/crews-fighting-wildfire-in-talladega-national-forest-as-drought-continues/article\\_f57e931c-9fa9-11e6-85db-1bab91f6d1c6.html](https://www.annistonstar.com/news/local/crews-fighting-wildfire-in-talladega-national-forest-as-drought-continues/article_f57e931c-9fa9-11e6-85db-1bab91f6d1c6.html)

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### Roads closed due to 1,000-acre wildfire in Talladega National Forest

*William Thornton | al.com*

*November 16, 2016*

Forest Service rangers say two roads in the Talladega National Forest have been closed for visitor safety as crews work to suppress a 1,000-acre wildfire.

National Forest System Road 680 on both the north and south faces of Rebecca Mountain, and NFSR 691, located on the north side of the mountain, are both temporarily closed.

Control lines are around all of the 1,000-acre "Half Way Wildfire," according to District Ranger Gloria Nielsen, and burnout within the lines has started. At the same time, a helicopter is making water drops near a residence near the site of the wildfire.

Smoke warning signs are installed along Alabama 148. Forest Service officials are urging hunters and other forest visitors to watch out for firefighters and other forest workers.

[http://www.al.com/news/anniston-gadsden/index.ssf/2016/11/roads\\_closed\\_due\\_to\\_1000-acre.html](http://www.al.com/news/anniston-gadsden/index.ssf/2016/11/roads_closed_due_to_1000-acre.html)





# Talladega, Alabama



Talladega, incorporated in 1835, is the county seat and largest city of Talladega County, located 50 miles east of Birmingham in the east-central region of the state.

The city is home to the Alabama Institute for the Deaf and Blind, one of the nation's most comprehensive educational programs for the hearing and vision impaired, and Talladega College, Alabama's oldest private historically black college. The Talladega Municipal Airport, Desoto Caverns, and the International Motorsports Hall of Fame are located nearby. The city also features a number of historic properties listed on the National Register.



## Quick Facts

**Population:** 15,676

**Racial Composition:** 48.7% Black or African American, 47.7% White, 0.3% Native American, 0.5% Asian, 0% Pacific Islander, 1.6% from other races, and 1.2% from two or more races. 3.4% of the population were Hispanic or Latino of any race.

**Median Age:** 36

**County:** Talladega (county seat)

**Random Trivia:** Davey Allison Memorial Park celebrates the life and racing career of the former NASCAR star, killed in a helicopter crash at Talladega Superspeedway.

## Alabama



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# BURT JONES RURAL COMMUNITY EXPERIENCE

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## Session IV- Talladega

Below are the biographies of the speakers for Session IV, discussing the operations of the Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind and its impact on individuals of various vision and hearing abilities throughout the state.

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### Vera Hendrix

Vera Hendrix is Vice President of Instructional Programs at the Alabama School for Deaf and Blind. Ms. Hendrix is a 37 year educator with degrees in Education Administration, Specific Learning Disabilities and Hearing Impairment. Classroom experiences at the Alabama School for the Deaf, Talladega, AL; West Blocton High School, West Blocton, AL; and Central High School-East in Tuscaloosa. After leaving the classroom, she became an administrator at the Alabama School for the Deaf. In 2008, Ms. Hendrix was named AIDB's Special Education Coordinator and has been Vice President of Instructional Programs in 2014, Ms. Hendrix is a member of the Mt. Canaan Baptist Church and charter member of the Optimist Club of Talladega. She has two children and one grandchild.



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### Donte' Little

Donte' Little has worked as the Director of the Talladega Regional Center since June of 2015. He is an AIDB alumnus, having graduated from the Alabama School for the Blind (ASB) in 2004. In 2010, he was employed as an Employment Specialist at AIDB E.H. Gentry Facility in the Project Green Program. He returned to his Alma Mater, ASB, to teach Business Education in 2011 and gained administrative experience as the Director of Outreach for the WeKare Community Development Center in Childersburg AL.

Little holds an MBA from Troy University; Master's in Business Education from Auburn University; and MA in Special Education with Visual Impairment Certification from University of Alabama at Birmingham.



## **Jerry Martin**

Jerry Martin became the Executive Manager at the Alabama Industries for the Blind. Prior to assuming his current role, Mr. Martin worked and retired from Russell Corporation in Alexander City, Alabama after 35 years of service. During his tenure at Russell Corporation he held various leadership positions in Quality, Industrial Engineering, and Sewing over three decades in the apparel manufacturing industry. Mr. Martin also serves as a Colonel in the Alabama Army National Guard. He is currently assigned to Joint Force Headquarters in Montgomery, Alabama. He has commanded at every level of command through Brigade command. His combat tours include 1996 Operation Joint Endeavor, 2003 Operation Iraqi Freedom and 2010 Afghanistan. Martin is an alumnus of Auburn University at Montgomery (BS in Business Administration), Troy University (MS in International Relations) and the U. S. Army War College (MS in Strategic Studies).



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## **Dr. John Mascia**

Dr. John Mascia is the 17<sup>th</sup> President of the Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind is, the nation's most comprehensive education and service program for children, adults, and seniors with hearing and vision loss. Dr. Mascia began his professional career in 1985 as a Consulting Audiologist with Great Neck Audiology Associates in Great Neck, New York. He served as Supervising Audiologist and Senior Audiologist with Terence Cardinal Cooke Health Care Center from 1986-1989. In 1989 he began employment with the Helene Keller National Center for Deaf-Blind Youths and Adults as and Audiologist, Supervisor of Speech and Hearing Departments, Coordinator of Professional Services and National Director of Field Services. Dr. Mascia came to AIDB in 2005 as Executive Director, Gentry Facility and Regional Centers. In 2009, he was named Vice President, Adult Services serving in that position until 2013 when he was appointed President. Dr. Mascia is an alumnus of the Hofstra University (BA in Speech Pathology/Audiology; Masters in Audiology), and Pennsylvania College of Optometry (Doctorate in Audiology).



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## **Patrick Robinson**

Patrick Robinson is the Executive Director for the E. H. Gentry Technical Center, an adult training facility at the Alabama Institute for the Deaf and Blind. Mr. Robinson is a native of Prattville, AL and a 1986 graduate of the Alabama School for the Deaf, named the top of academic student his class. After college, Mr. Robinson has worked in various roles at ASD including counselor, teacher, and coach. He later as served two years as an adjustment counselor at Janice Capilouto Center for the Deaf in Montgomery. Over the last decade, Mr. Robinson has served as Director of AIDB's Talladega and Birmingham Regional Centers before being selected to lead the E. H. Gentry Center in 2015. Mr. Robinson takes an active role in state and national agencies serving and comprised of those with sensory loss. Robinson is an alumnus of Gallaudet University, Washington, DC (BA in Psychology) and Western Maryland College, Westminster, Maryland (MS in Deaf Education).





Architect's rendering of new AIDB Health Care facility. (AIDB)

The 5,000-square-foot facility is designed to enhance healthcare services for students across AIDB's campuses. It is planned to include three hospital bedrooms, a nursing station, waiting area and administrative space. School officials said the center will serve as a "mini-hospital" while other services will still be provided at the Dowling Center healthcare building. The nursing center is scheduled for completion early next year.

School officials said funding is coming from the school's AIDB Foundation, which has raised about \$1.15 million toward the project. However, the school is still working to raise its target amount of \$1.3 million. AIDB serves 24,500 individuals statewide and provides full-time nursing and health care to approximately 2,000 children and adults on the Talladega campuses. They include the Alabama School for the Blind, the Alabama School for the Deaf, the Helen Keller School, the E. H. Gentry Center and Alabama Industries for the Blind.

AIDB President John Mascia said the center is needed due to some accessibility issues on the Dowling Center's third floor. "We are thrilled that our new facility will be a great front door into the comprehensive healthcare services we provide for our students," Mascia said.

[http://www.al.com/business/index.ssf/2017/06/aidb\\_planning\\_13\\_million\\_nursi.html](http://www.al.com/business/index.ssf/2017/06/aidb_planning_13_million_nursi.html)



## ALABAMA INSTITUTE FOR DEAF AND BLIND (AIDB) OVERVIEW

### AIDB – We are Limitless

The Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind (AIDB) is the world's most comprehensive education, rehabilitation, employment and service program serving individuals of all ages who are deaf, blind, DeafBlind and multidisabled. Founded in 1858 by a young medical doctor who wanted to educate his deaf brother, AIDB now serves more than 24,450 infants, toddlers, children, youth, adults and seniors with hearing and vision loss throughout Alabama each year.

At AIDB, the education continuum begins at birth and literally spans a lifetime through programs and services at our five campuses in Talladega, eight regional centers located in Birmingham, Dothan, Huntsville, Mobile, Montgomery, Talladega, Tuscaloosa and Tuscumbia. Programs range from early and senior intervention, traditional and nontraditional education services and a manufacturing facility that is the state's largest employer of adults who are blind and deaf.

The Alabama School for the Blind, Alabama School for the Deaf, and Helen Keller School of Alabama, all of which are residential campuses, provide traditional and non-traditional academic instruction and life preparation for children ages 3 to 21 in residential and day environments — featuring strong academics, assistive technology and championship athletics. All three schools have earned AdvancEd Accreditation.

Our curriculum focuses on advanced, academic and occupational diploma tracks plus career exploration, work experience; extracurricular activities such as music, art and drama; leadership development and independent living training. We believe in immersing our students at all levels in assistive technology that builds self confidence and levels the playing field in classroom and work environments.

A fourth residential facility is Gentry - a rehabilitation program training deaf and blind adults for work and independent living. During a recent re-accreditation review Gentry's assistive technology program was praised as one of the best in the country. A statewide team of job coaching services is having powerful results in connecting potential employers and employees. A recent report cited



*"What can I be when I grow up?" asks  
Georgia Aplin, student at Alabama School for  
the Blind...*

*AIDB says, "Anything...  
You are Limitless!"*

nine out of ten Gentry clients seeking employment after completing the program found successful job placements.

AIDB's Instructional Resource Center for the Blind, located on the School for the Blind campus, provides Braille and large-print books, materials and other services to all blind and visually impaired students in Alabama — at AIDB and in public schools. They also operate an adult lending library and a Braille and large print production service for textbooks, manuals or other printed resources requested by colleges, businesses and individuals.

The Alabama Industries for the Blind employs more than 200 blind and deaf adults in a diverse manufacturing facility that produces a variety of items including paper goods, flight bags and all military neckties for the U.S. Armed Forces. AIB also operates supply stores at military bases in Alabama and Georgia.

AIDB's Regional Centers offer a lifelong continuum of services for people with hearing and vision loss — from infants and toddlers to senior citizens. In homes and communities across the state AIDB provides services such as early intervention, counseling, interpreting, transportation and other daily living and adjustment programs.

Accessibility is the key ingredient to success on our campuses where master level trained teachers use sign language and speech therapy to develop communication skills or Braille and large print to eliminate barriers. Each deaf, blind or multidisabled student's educational needs deserve and receive the personal touch — including public school students statewide served through our Instructional Resource Center for the Blind.

There is no tuition, room or board charged to deaf, blind or multidisabled students whose families are Alabama residents. Approximately ninety percent (90%) of AIDB's schools and services budget is dependent upon an appropriation from the Alabama Legislature. By law — AIDB does not receive revenue from tuition or local taxes.

Established in 1858, AIDB's mission remains strong — to prepare deaf and blind individuals for the business and personal challenges of life. To that end we as an organization continue to strive for equal opportunities in funding for Alabama's deaf and blind citizens. It's not just business — it's personal. It is an investment in the future.

In 1980, AIDB established the AIDB Foundation, a 501(c)3 organization, to receive and manage gifts to support AIDB's programs and mission. We have been very fortunate with the generosity of individuals, corporations, and foundations such as ALFA that move AIDB beyond the ordinary and provide LIMITLESS opportunities for Alabamians with hearing and vision loss.

# Sylacauga, Alabama



Sylacauga's history goes far back, starting with Hernando De Soto's records in 1540, inhabited by Native Americans, until it became a French territory in 1759. The city was first incorporated in 1838 as Syllacoga, then in 1887 as Sylacauga.

The marble industry transformed Sylacauga's economy, per its nickname, because the city is constructed on a solid deposit of what is claimed to be the finest marble in the world. Sylacauga has also provided marble for construction of many famous buildings, including the United States Supreme Court. Today, Sylacauga has a diverse workforce with large employers like Blue Bell Creameries, Imerys, Omya, and Pursell Technologies, and Home Depot.



## Quick Facts

**Population:** 12,749

**Racial Composition:** 69.17% White, 28.91% Black or African American, 0.29% Asian, 0.26% Native American, 0.06% Pacific Islander; 0.40% from other races, and 0.91% from two or more races. 0.97% of the population were Hispanic or Latino of any race.

**Median Age:** 39

**County:** Talladega

**Random Trivia:** The first documented case of an object from outer space hitting a person happened in Sylacauga.

## Alabama





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# BURT JONES RURAL COMMUNITY EXPERIENCE

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## Session V- Sylacauga

Below are the biographies of the speakers for Session V, discussing Sylacauga's marble industry and the economic impact on the region and opportunities for generating art and tourism.

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### **Bob Karell**

Bob Karell is Plant Manager of Omya Sylacauga, AL. His work assignments in Europe, North and South America

Karell holds degrees from Montana State University (BS) and Texas A&M University (MS).



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### **Dr. Ted Spears**

Ted Spears is Chairman of the Sylacauga Marble Festival and has extensive experience public education and leadership development.

Dr. Spears is an alumnus of Jacksonville State University (BS) and The University of Alabama (MA and EdD)



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### **Tracey Thomas**

Tracey Thomas is Director of the B. B. Comer Library.

Thomas is an alumna of Faulkner University (BS) and The University of Alabama (Master of Library and Information Science)



## Omya announces expansion of Sylacauga plant

*William Thornton / al.com*

*June 30, 2017*

Sylacauga's Omya plant is planning an expansion, with construction to begin this summer. The Daily Home is reporting that the company announced the expansion yesterday, which will "serve the growing polymers and packaging markets," according to a news release.

There were no details released on the size or cost, which should be fully completed by 2019. The plant is located on Sylacauga Fayetteville Highway and has been in existence since 1992.

It produces fine calcium carbonate filler and coatings grades for paper and packaging manufacturers, and treated products for the paint and plastics industries. Omya was founded in Switzerland and has 180 locations in 50 countries. Its North American operations are based in Cincinnati.

## SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

- March 6  
 "Children's Poster Contest" area Schools
- March 24  
 Posters turned into Schools
- April 4  
 Sculptors Arrive (Registration Mayor's Office  
 Pick Up Marble—Select Carving Spot)
- April 4-15  
 Marble Product Displays  
 (9:00am-5:00pm Daily—B.B. Comer Library)
- April 4-15  
 Marble Sculptures for Sale  
 (9:00am-5:00pm Daily—B.B. Comer Library)
- April 5-6  
 Imerys Quarry Visits  
 Observation Site—10:00am to 11:30 am Each Day  
 (Registration—Mayor's Office 256 401-2424)
- April 6  
 Italian Party for Visiting Sculptors  
 (6:00pm—8:00pm Hosted by Pie & Prints)
- April 6-7  
 Sylacauga Marble Quarry Visits  
 1:00pm-3:00pm Each Day  
 (Registration—Mayor's Office 256 401-2424)
- April 8  
 Nemak 5K Run and 1 Mile Fun/Run  
 (9:00am—Blue Bell Park Registration Forms Available  
 J. Craig Smith Community Center)
- April 8  
 Fish Fry For Sculptors and Their  
 Wives/ Husbands, American Legion Hall 6:00 pm
- April 12  
 Mayor's Reception for Sculptors and  
 Sponsors (6:00pm—Sylacauga City Hall)
- April 12-13  
 OMYA Quarry Visits  
 10:30am-11:30 Each Day  
 (Registration—Mayor's Office 256 401-2424)

### APRIL 15—FESTIVAL ENDS



The Marble Festival is located in Sylacauga, AL on North Norton Avenue across from Blue Bell Creameries GPS 33.174352, -86.252007

## Marble Festival Sponsors

- Alabama Power Foundation, Inc.  
 Alabama State Council on the Arts  
 Alabama Tourism Department  
 American Legion Post 45 Sylacauga  
 Architectural Stone Imports  
 Automatic Gas & Appliance  
 B.B. Comer Memorial Library  
 Blue Bell Creameries  
 Blue Horizon Travel  
 City of Sylacauga  
 Conn Equipment  
 Coosa Valley Medical Center  
 Curtis & Son Funeral Home  
 Imerys  
 Isabel Anderson Comer Museum and Arts Center  
 J. Craig Smith Community Center  
 Miller Lumber Company  
 Morris Custom Marble & Granite  
 Nemak  
 Omya, Inc.  
 Representative Ron Johnson  
 SouthFirst Bank  
 Sylacauga Arts Council  
 Sylacauga Chamber of Commerce  
 Sylacauga Housing Authority  
 Sylacauga Marble Quarry  
 Towne Inn  
 21st Century Signs  
 Utilities Board of Sylacauga

### CONTACT INFORMATION:

email: [magicofmarble@gmail.com](mailto:magicofmarble@gmail.com)  
 City of Sylacauga —(256) 401-2424  
 B.B. Comer Memorial Library —(256) 249-0961  
*The mission of the Sylacauga Marble Festival is to recreate the magic of marble through its artistic, commercial and industrial applications.*

# Ninth MAGIC OF MARBLE FESTIVAL



Photo Credit: David Green

**THE WARMTH OF ENLIGHTENMENT**  
 Craigger Browne, Sculptor

## Sylacauga, Alabama

**April 4—April 15, 2017**

Ted Spears, Marble Festival Chairman  
 Email: [tedspears4316@yahoo.com](mailto:tedspears4316@yahoo.com)  
 Phone: 256 249--0961  
[www.bbcomerlibrary.net/marblefestival](http://www.bbcomerlibrary.net/marblefestival)



# “See The Magic At Work”

## Marble Festival Events



Linda Walden



Pamela Paine



Frank Murphy



Larry Bottomly



Nemak 5K Marble Run



Dale Chambliss



Meet the Sculptors



Fayetteville School Contest Winners 2016



John Chen



Marble Displays—Marble for Sale  
B.B. Comer Library



Marble Tours

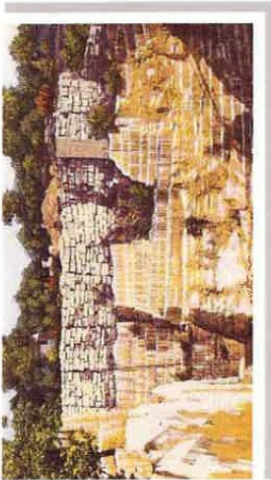




Established to honor the marble industry and Gantt's Quarry Village, where the company store, company schools and housing, a post office, several churches and recreation spots created a good place in time and memory for hundreds of workers and their families.



The larger pieces of marble weigh upwards of 20,000 pounds. This high quality marble, found only in the Sylacauga area, is located in a seam 32 miles long, 1.5 miles wide and 400 feet deep.



\*Sylacauga Marble was discovered by Dr. Edward Gantt, a surgeon in Andrew Jackson's army, during the Creek War of 1813-1814. His efforts to open a quarry began in earnest in 1847.

Edward Gantt purchased his first quarry land in 1832 (after the Treaty of Cuseetta made Creek lands available to settlers) and established Sims & Gantt in agreement with three others in 1834. Even though he did not move to Sylacauga until 1840s, he was very much involved in marble quarrying from 1834 on.

\*By the early 20th century, the area that had become known as Gantt's Quarry was operated by Alabama Marble Company producing blocks of marble for ornamental and structural orders.

\*In 1944, Moretti-Harrah expanded its quarry operations to include calcium products, as well as structural stone. At that time, a company named Thompson-Weinman served as sales arm and distributor for Moretti-Harrah calcium products.

\*In 1963, Alabama Marble Company became part of Georgia Marble Company.

\*By mid-1970's, three major marble companies were in operation in Sylacauga-Georgia Marble Company, Moretti-Harrah, and Thompson-Weiman.

\*In 1986, English China Clay (ECC) purchased Moretti Harrah and then purchased Thompson-Weinman in 1988.

\*In 1992, Georgia Marble Company entered a joint venture with a company called OMYA to form Alabama Carbonates, L.P.

\*In 1995, Imetal Group of Paris acquired Georgia Marble Company and in June, 1999 acquired ECC International. They became part of the new Imery's Company—a company with an international presence in minerals processing.

# Imerys Gantt's Quarry Observation Site



Experience Sylacauga's new scenic overlook while learning about the unique history of the stone that Giuseppe Moretti called, "the finest white marble in the world."

The Imerys-Gantt's Quarry Observation Site is open to the public from 9:00am until 4:00pm daily. The site is located 3/10ths of a mile off U.S. Highway 280 on the Fayetteville Highway.





Gantt's Quarry Baptist Church



On one of his first visits to the area, Giuseppe Moretti obtained a piece of "strada" from the quarry. From this block he carved his masterpiece, "The Head of Christ", which is now displayed in the Alabama Department of Archives & History in Montgomery, Alabama.

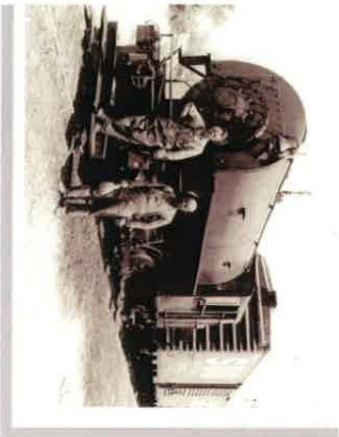
The famous sculptor, Giuseppe Moretti, and a New York business partner, Charles Jefferson Harrah, opened a marble quarry operation in the early part of the twentieth century's second decade. It was named Moretti-Harrah. Moretti-Harrah was Moretti's second quarry attempt, but the first at Gantt's Quarry. He had opened Moretti-Gibson at Monte Pino near Talladega about 1905. It closed because of railroad and financial issues.

*The mission of the Sylacauga Marble Festival is to recreate the magic of marble through its artistic, commercial and industrial applications.*

*Sponsored by Sylacauga Arts Council \*\* Alabama Tourism Department \*\*Inerys Carbonates*



Gantt's Quarry School



The "Dinky" train was used to haul the marble to the main train line.



Gantt's Quarry Post Office Restored



Railroad Street in Gantt's Quarry depicts village houses and large blocks of marble.



Moretti-Harrah Quarry Houses



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# BURT JONES RURAL COMMUNITY EXPERIENCE

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## Session VI- Sylacauga

Below are the biographies of the panelists for Session VI, discussing the history of the closing of the Avondale Mills and its impact on the local economy.

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### Lee Perryman

Lee Perryman is President of the Sylacauga City Council and owns RadioAlabama operates six East Central Alabama radio stations based in Sylacauga. He spent 35 years with the Associated Press in Washington, most recently as Director of Broadcast Technology, and returned home in 2016. His family has had roots in the area since 1836. Lee started his broadcast career during high school in local radio station management, sales, programming, and engineering. He was named Alabama's Broadcaster of the Year in 2014 and inducted into the Alabama Broadcasters Association's Hall of Fame. He also serves on Sylacauga's Planning Commission, is on the board of directors of the Sylacauga City Schools Foundation, and is on the Board of Visitors of the University of Alabama's College of Communications and Information Sciences.



Perryman is an alumnus of The University of Alabama.

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### Dr. Shirley Spears

Dr. Shirley Spears is Director of the B. B. Comer Library Foundation. She previously served as the library's director for 33 years until her retirement in May, 2017.

Dr. Spears is an alumna of Auburn University (BS, MA, and EdD)



Avondale has been part of Sylacauga for almost 100 years

*Denise Sinclair / The Daily Home*

*Jun 22, 2011*

For 109 years, Avondale Mills left its mark on towns like Sylacauga throughout Alabama and several other Southern states. Founded in 1897, the textile manufacturing company closed its doors in July 2006, unable to compete with foreign textile manufacturers and unable to recover from a January 2005 train accident in Graniteville, S.C.

According to the Encyclopedia of Alabama, Avondale Mills spanned the rise and fall of Alabama's industrial history, and its most notable owners, the Comer family, became some of the most powerful people in the state. In 1897, Braxton Bragg Comer built the first mill in the Birmingham neighborhood of Avondale, hence the name Avondale Mills. He went on to become governor in 1906.

When Donald Comer assumed management of Avondale Mills in 1907, he continued his father's business success. He expanded the company into Sylacauga, building the Eva Jane plant in 1913. In 1919, he constructed Salle B. No. 1 and Catherine mills and completed Sallie B. No. 2 in 1926, although some sources said it was in 1922.

Avondale plants were overseen by other male Comers and often bore the names of female Comers; for example, the Eva Jane plant was named for B.B. Comer's wife. These and other Avondale plants typically turned out rope, hosiery yarns, sheeting, indigo denims and heavy twills. When Avondale Mills arrived in Sylacauga, it was described by a local historian as the most important event in the town's history.

Avondale's impact on Sylacauga was heightened by the presence of five plants in Talladega County. The Catherine Central Plant and the Eva Jane Plant employed almost 3,000 people.

In its 109-year history, Avondale Mills expanded to include plants throughout Alabama. By 1947 and 1948, Avondale Mills had reached its apex in Alabama, with 7,000 employees. The company later branched out into Georgia and South Carolina.

In 1986, Walton Monroe Mills Inc. purchased Avondale Mills. The two merged in 1993 to become Avondale Incorporated. Three years later, Avondale acquired the textile assets of the Graniteville Company. Then in January 2005, the train accident occurred near the Graniteville plant. Sixteen freight cars from one train and one car and a locomotive from another train derailed. Sixty tons of chlorine gas was released in the wreck.

The Graniteville plant was closed following the accident. From then on, repercussions of the wreck ripped through the company until July 2006, when Avondale Incorporated ceased operations and sold three of its plants. Avondale closed three mills in Sylacauga and one each in Alexander City, Pell City and Rockford, laying off more than 1,300 workers. In Sylacauga, Avondale generated an annual payroll of \$35 million the year it closed.

At the time of its closing, the Eva Jane Plant used approximately 1 million pounds of cotton each week, while producing 900,000 to 1 million yards of cloth. When Avondale Mills closed in late July 2006, Sylacauga Mayor Sam Wright said, "Losing Avondale is like losing a friend. It's so sad."

Now, the town and county are losing a part of history with Avondale's destruction by fire Wednesday. On Feb. 14, 2008, the Pell City plant faced a similar fate as Sylacauga's plant. It caught fire and was destroyed.

[https://www.annistonstar.com/the\\_daily\\_home/dh\\_news/avondale-has-been-part-of-sylacauga-for-almost-years/article\\_f4903ca2-5deb-54e8-8125-db85060559c2.html](https://www.annistonstar.com/the_daily_home/dh_news/avondale-has-been-part-of-sylacauga-for-almost-years/article_f4903ca2-5deb-54e8-8125-db85060559c2.html)



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## Session VII- Sylacauga

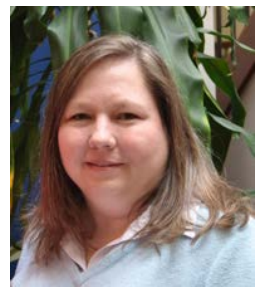
Below is the biography of the speaker for Session VII, discussing the economic impact of Blue Bell Creameries.

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### **Mindy Grier**

Mindy Grier has been the Administrative Manager for Blue Bell Creameries for the past 20 years.

Grier is an alumna of Auburn University (Bachelor's in Agricultural Economics).



## Blue Bell gets OK to resume ice cream production in Sylacauga

*William Thornton / al.com*

*August 5, 2015*

The Alabama Department of Public Health has placed "no restrictions" on the sale of Blue Bell ice cream made at the company's Sylacauga plant. Ron Dawsey, deputy director of the department's Bureau of Environmental Services, said inspectors had made several visits to the plant, and all product test results had come back negative.

"All products meet our standards for dessert product production," Dawsey said. The Sylacauga plant resumed ice cream production on July 20 and has been using a "test and hold" policy according to an agreement with the department. Blue Bell referred media inquiries to state health officials. There has been no date announced for when Blue Bell products will be available for purchase.

Under the terms of the agreement, Blue Bell must inform the state of any future test results. Blue Bell began a product recall in April that has kept the ice cream off store shelves after 10 people were infected with several strains of listeria by consuming ice cream in Arizona, Kansas, Oklahoma and Texas, according to the Centers for Disease Control.

This does not include a South Florida man who reportedly experienced brain swelling in April, whose family found a tub of Blue Bell in their freezer which tested positive for listeria. That ice cream was manufacturing at Blue Bell's Sylacauga plant, according to an attorney.

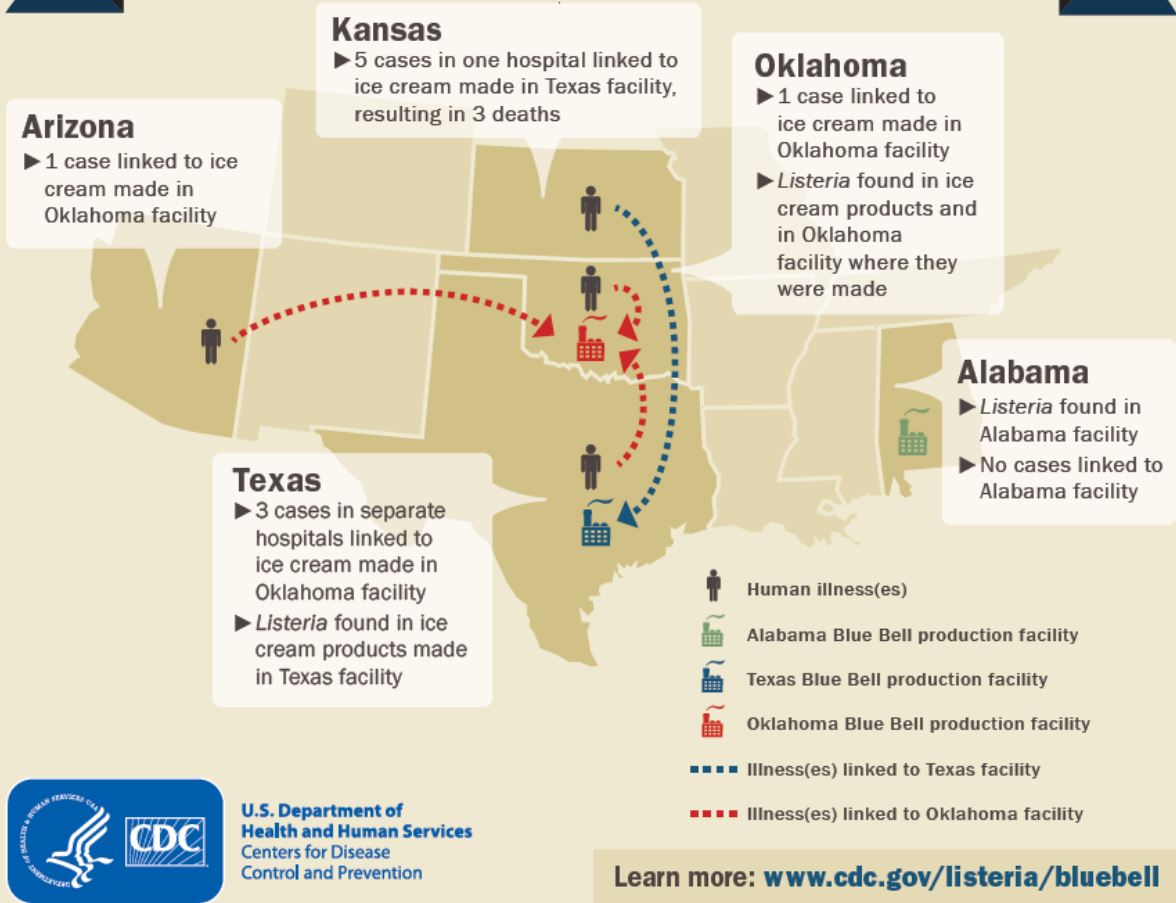
The reported illnesses stretch back to January 2010. None of the documented cases involved ice cream manufactured in Sylacauga.

[http://www.al.com/news/anniston-gadsden/index.ssf/2015/08/blue\\_bell\\_gets\\_ok\\_to\\_resume\\_ic.html](http://www.al.com/news/anniston-gadsden/index.ssf/2015/08/blue_bell_gets_ok_to_resume_ic.html)

# LISTERIA AND BLUE BELL ICE CREAM

Contaminated production facilities and illnesses linked to Blue Bell Creameries

CDC recommends that people not eat, serve, or sell any recalled Blue Bell brand products. This complicated investigation of a listeriosis outbreak involved serious illnesses from 2010 through 2015 linked to two Blue Bell production facilities.



CS257655B

Two years after enduring the harsh glare of negative publicity, Texas-based Blue Bell creameries is inviting consumer scrutiny. In 2015, the iconic Brenham-based ice cream maker was at the center of a product recall that garnered international attention. This summer, the 100-plus year old company is re-opening an observation deck that allows consumers to watch part of the ice cream-making process at a plant that received a major overhaul. The observation deck had been the last stop on a ticketed tour of the company's main plant. Now, consumers can stop by the observation area for free and just watch.

"It has been a popular attraction," said spokeswoman Jenny Van Dorf. At this time, there is no cost to our visitors. It is a self-guided tour that overlooks one of our production areas. Visitors can see how our products are made like half gallons, pints, three gallons, and three-ounce cups. With the summer crowds, we've seen several hundred each day," she said. After the recall, the company "had not resumed any type of tour until just a few weeks ago." The observation area is open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. "until our production ends for the day, which is usually between 3 p.m. and 4 p.m. "

No photos are allowed.

After the pathogen *Listeria* was found in Blue Bell plants and linked to its ice cream, the company shut down production at all four of its plants, including the two in Texas, and stripped all products from store shelves. The bacteria sickened 10 people and was linked to three deaths. The company said opening the viewing area is "not a matter of transparency; it's about accommodating our guests who would like to see how our ice cream is made."

"Our tour program, at one time, hosted over 225,000 guests per year," Van Dorf said. "We are happy to once again offer the opportunity to our fans." The company also has "Country Store and Ice Cream Parlor" locations in Brenham and Sylacauga, Ala. Blue Bell, which has gradually increased its offerings and sales territory post recall, is still using the "test and hold" procedure it agreed on with three state health departments.

The products are tested for pathogens before a batch is allowed to be sold. The company's newest flavors are Sweet 'n Salty Crunch, Cookie Two Step and Southern Blackberry Cobbler.

Blue Bell plans to announce another new flavor this week. Attorney Bill Marler, who represents victims in cases of foodborne illness, said he sees the company's gradual roll out of products as part of a larger effort to slowly regain trust.

"It strikes me that they're being very methodical," said Marler, who followed the recall case closely. "I think that Blue Bell is handling the rollout of their product correctly, slowly ... making sure they don't have any glitches. They're doing it the right way and building up their customer base again."

<https://www.dallasnews.com/business/retail/2017/07/18/blue-bell-reopens-observation-deck-invites-consumers-come-look-shoulder>

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# BURT JONES RURAL COMMUNITY EXPERIENCE

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## Session VIII- Sylacauga

Below is the biography of the speaker for Session VIII, discussing the role of non-profit community based organizations in providing social services to families outside of major metropolitan areas.

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### Margaret Morton

Margaret Morton has been the executive director of the Sylacauga Alliance for Family Enhancement, Inc. (SAFE) since 1997, and she is the president of the Alabama Network of Family Resource Centers. Under her leadership, SAFE has grown to offer more than 25 programs in the areas of case management, job searching, parenting education, marriage and family relationship skills, family literacy, youth empowerment and more.



When the city of Sylacauga had to shut down public transportation because of the recent economic downturn, Morton reached an agreement with city officials that allowed SAFE to take over management of the transportation system so that families and others who depended on the system would be able to get to work. The transportation system is now in the black financially. She is known nationwide as having the model family service center, and has presented at national conferences in Denver and San Francisco.

Morton serves on the boards of the Sylacauga Literacy Council, the Talladega County Community Improvement Foundation, the Alabama Partnership for Children and others. She is also involved in state government to support family services. Morton has received Sylacauga's Woman of Achievement Award; the Award for Outstanding Commitment to the Children and Families of Alabama; the Talladega County Women Committee to Excellence Award-Professional Category; and was the inaugural recipient of the Jean O'Connor-Snyder Award from The David Mathews Center for Civic Life.

## Sylacauga wins grant to support after-school and summer meals program

Lee Perryman | *SylacaugaNews.com*

April 1, 2017

SYLACAUGA, Ala. – The National League of Cities has announced grants to 20 cities, including Sylacauga, to provide children with after-school and summer meals.

The program, to be administered locally by the Sylacauga Alliance for Family Enhancement which applied for the grant on behalf of the City of Sylacauga, receives support from the Walmart Foundation as part of NLC's Cities Combating Hunger through After-school and Summer Meal Programs ("CHAMPS") initiative. According to the NLC, many children in the state do not receive adequate nutrition even though free or reduced-cost lunch programs have been increased.

Mayor Jim Heigl expects "a significant effect on our children in the city and surrounding areas."

"This is the first time we have applied for these funds, and we were told that our submission was extremely impressive," added SAFE's Executive Director Margaret Morton, who confirmed a local CHAMPS grant of \$25,000. "This will go a long way in not only promoting Sylacauga but helping us get resources directly to areas of the community in need, particularly children who are hungry."

In Alabama, Anniston, Brewton, Clanton, Florence, Hobson City, Prattville, and Russellville also received grants.

The Sylacauga Alliance for Family Enhancement, celebrating its 20th anniversary this October, is a non-profit community-based organization providing a variety of programs and services including transportation, adult education, after school, healthy marriage and relationships, family literacy, fatherhood, health and wellness, home instruction for pre-schoolers, work counseling and job mentoring, industry training, medication assistance, case management, substance abuse, community gardening, and parenting education and support.

Based in Washington, D.C., the National League of Cities represents more than 218 million Americans as a resource and advocate for the nation's cities and their leaders.

<http://www.sylacauganews.com/local/sylacauga-wins-grant-support-school-summer-meals-program>

In continuing its sustainable development initiatives, Imerys Carbonates North America employees participated in the Money Habitudes program presented by Sylacauga Alliance for Family Enhancement in Sylacauga, Alabama. Imerys and SAFE worked together to identify what program would be most beneficial for the majority of the Sylacauga-based employees. They found that no matter what their professional or personal situation, money was the number one area of concern.

Money Habitudes is a financial literacy training program that teaches basic life skills for reading and money management. The program consisted of four sessions, each of which included employees from all departments within the company. These cross-functional sessions allowed the employees to interact and participate in teambuilding exercises. Through these sessions, co-workers were observed assisting each other if they were having difficulty completing the session. This program provided meaningful opportunities for families and individuals to serve others while promoting the community working together.

In the final session of the program, Imerys employees were asked to complete a feedback survey. Over 90% of the participants indicated they now understand what their Money Habitude is and how this affects their financial decisions. More than 70% responded that they would like to participate in other personal developmental programs such as this. This training allowed Imerys to provide a very valuable tool to employees as well as provide them with a community source that provides ongoing learning opportunities.

[http://imerys-carbonates.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Moneyhabitudes\\_pressreleaseNA\\_dec141.pdf](http://imerys-carbonates.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Moneyhabitudes_pressreleaseNA_dec141.pdf)

# Anniston, Alabama



Nicknamed "The Model City," Anniston is the county seat for Calhoun County and is located in the east-central region of the state. Like Oxford, the city is situated on the slope of Blue Mountain and on the edge of the Appalachian Mountain range.

Anniston's economy was originally based on iron, steel, and pipe clay production until several investors transformed the economy into a hub for hotels, schools, and other industries. Anniston was the fifth largest city in the state from the 1890s to the 1950s. The city's population has been on the decline by a third since the 1960s, fueled by the rise of neighboring Oxford and the closing of Fort McClellan in the 1999.



## Quick Facts

**Population:** 23,106

**Racial Composition:** 43.6% Non-Hispanic White, 51.5% Black or African-American, 0.3% Native American, 0.8% Asian, 0.1% Pacific Islander, and 1.7% from two or more races. 2.7% of the population was Hispanic or Latino of any race.

**Median Age:** 39

**County:** Calhoun (county seat)

**Random Trivia:** Anniston is home to the country's largest and the one-time world's largest chair.

## Alabama





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# BURT JONES RURAL COMMUNITY EXPERIENCE

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## Session IX- Anniston

Below are the biographies of the panelists for Session IX, discussing the process of securing the designation for the Freedom Riders National Monument as well as the economic and social impacts of civil-rights tourism.

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### Dr. Barbara Boyd

Dr. Barbara Boyd was elected to the Alabama House of Representatives in 1994. In the House, she serves on the County and Municipal Government, Rules, State Government Committees and is Ranking Minority Member of the Children and Senior Advocacy Committee. Dr. Boyd is a retired educator with over 45 years of service in public and private education, secondary, two-year, and four-year colleges including Jacksonville State University, Gadsden State Community College, and Miles College in Fairfield. She currently serves on the Trustee Board of Murray Temple Christian Methodist Episcopal Church, is a life member of the NAACP, the Alabama New South Coalition, and the Dorcas Art and Social Club in Anniston. Dr. Boyd is a member of the Freedom Riders Park Advisors. She is also a member of the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., Phi Delta Kappa, and Kappa Delta Pi. Dr. Boyd is the mother of two sons.



Dr. Boyd holds a BA in French and English from Miles College in Birmingham, MA in Supervision and Curriculum Development and EdD in Instructional Leadership and Reading from The University of Alabama.

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### Pete Conroy

W. Pete Conroy has served as the Director of Jacksonville State University's Environmental Policy and Information Center since 1997. Trained as a biologist, Mr. Conroy moved to Alabama in 1985 to work as the curator of the Anniston Museum of Natural History. Since then, he has received appointments from Alabama Governors Bob Riley (R), Don Siegelman (D), Fob James (R), Jim Folsom (D) and Guy Hunt (R). Retained by President George Bush, Pete received White House appointments by President Bill Clinton in 1999 to serve as Alternate U.S. Federal Commissioner of the Tri-State (ACT/ACF) Water Compacts. He was also selected by the Office of the Secretary of the Army to serve on an Operational Assessment Team to review safety measures relating to the destruction of chemical materials in Alabama. Conroy may be the best known for his interest in public lands, leading to the following designations: Little River Canyon National Preserve (Bush, 1992); Dugger Mountain Wilderness (Clinton, 2000); Mountain Longleaf National Wildlife Refuge (Bush, 2005); and the Freedom Riders National Monument (Obama, 2017).



Pete leads a number of projects including the establishment and operation of the Little River Canyon Center, the Talladega Mountain Center, Longleaf Studios and entertainment complex, the re-use of the former Fort McClellan, the Chief Ladiga Rail-Trail, and several Alabama-based initiatives promoting smart growth, environmental education, arts, conservation, tourism, water policy and sustainable hospitality. Born in Pennsylvania, Pete moved to Asheville, North Carolina with his family in 1970. He resides in Jacksonville, Alabama with his wife Roxana, daughter Haley and son Mitch.

Conroy is an alumnus of Furman University (BS in Biology) and the University of Georgia (MS in Zoology).

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### **Dr. Reginald Tiller (Reggie)**

Dr. Reginald “Reggie” Tiller is the acting superintendent for the Freedom Rider’s National Monument. Previously he served as deputy superintendent for the Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historic Site in Atlanta, GA. He was responsible for facilitating operations, cultural resources, planning, visitor protection, and interpretation/education programs among other tasks. Dr. Tiller has also served as the superintendent for William Howard Taft National Historic Site, where he was specifically able to focus on programming and community outreach to urban schools. He has served at other monuments across the nation, including Charles Young Buffalo Soldier National Monument and the George Washington Carver National Monument. In addition to serving as deputy superintendent, Dr. Tiller teaches courses in organizational management and criminal justice, as well as MBA courses.



Originally from Tennessee, Dr. Tiller earned Bachelor’s and Master’s degrees from Trevecca Nazarene University and a Doctorate in Strategic Leadership from Regent University in Virginia.

## Freedom Riders, visitors from around the world celebrate Anniston monument

*Eddie Burkhalter / Anniston Star*

*May 13, 2017*

Tom Medema thinks that Anniston's Freedom Riders National Monument has an important story to tell. Speaking at a celebration of the monument outside the former greyhound bus station on Gurnee Avenue on Saturday, Medema, acting associate director of interpretation, education and volunteers for the National Park Service, said the city's monument is a step forward in "telling our nation's whole story."

"This is not an African-American story. This is an American story. This is a story for all of our people to understand, and to understand how we share it," Medema said.

At the corner of Gurnee Avenue and 11th Street a gathering of local leaders and visitors from as far away as Denmark celebrated the creation of the Freedom Riders National Monument, which includes the former bus station and the site on Alabama 202 west of town, where the bus of black and white civil rights activists were attacked and firebombed by a white mob on Mother's Day 1961. Shortly before the end of his second term, President Barack Obama proclaimed as a national monument both sites.

Freedom Rider Hank Thomas was just 19 when he boarded the bus that ended its journey in flames on the side of the road. Thomas, the last living Freedom Rider who rode the bus that was firebombed, told the crowd Saturday that he boarded the bus because he wanted a piece of the American Dream.

Rev. J. Phillips Noble, 95, author of "Beyond the Burning Bus," told the crowd Saturday that the day was a remarkable one. "I do not believe that any person here who was involved in the revolution and in the dangers of the 1960s could ever dream that there would be a day like this," Noble said.

Pete Conroy, co-chairman of the Freedom Riders Park Committee, said he felt a bit numb Saturday as everyone who's worked on the project for more than a decade saw it come together. "We are now in the big league," Conroy said.

State Senate President Del Marsh, R-Anniston, said Saturday that "this is going to be good for this downtown area. I think there will be thousands of visitors each year." "This is such a different community now than it was in 1961," Marsh said, adding that it's important to tell the story of what happened in Anniston those many years ago. "You've got to remember that."

Rep. Barbara Boyd, a member of the Freedom Riders advisory board, thanked the work of the many people who helped see the project through. "We knew that the story had not been told," Boyd said, but now it is.

Gens Horstmann brought his political science class from Denmark to Anniston, part of the professor's "understanding America" class. He's taking his students across the country to teach them first hand about the American way of life. Horstmann previously lived in the U.S. and had met Freedom Rider Charles Person, who suggested that the students attend Saturday's event. They'd traveled to Birmingham earlier on Saturday to see the city's Civil Rights National Monument sites.

Horstmann said he makes the civil rights movement a big part of his lessons, and that he works to show students the "commitment to local community" that he sees in the U.S. "And this is proof of governmental forces and local forces getting together and creating something," Horstmann. One of Horstmann's students, 19-year-old Oscar Harttung said the Freedom Riders' story is "a story of courage. To know driving into such dangers, such peril, but doing it anyway for human rights. It's really inspiring."

Harttung's classmate Frederik Maesby, 20, said "I think it's important for the time we're in now" and added that racial unrest in the U.S. isn't over. He noted the Black Lives Matter movement and the fatal shooting of Michael Brown by police in Ferguson, Mo. that sparked protests, riots and debates on policing and race.

Maesby said America's continuing struggles with race are "in the news all over the world, so this is important for everybody," speaking of Anniston's national monument and the story it tells. Marie Jorgensen, another of the students, said that while the work the Freedom Riders did made a difference, she agrees with Maesby, that America still has civil rights work to do. "And that's sad, so making this a national monument, I think that's incredible," Jorgensen said. "We just see it from the outside, but there's a lot to see from the outside, unfortunately."

Reggie Tiller, the acting superintendent for both the Freedom Riders National Monument and the Birmingham Civil Rights National Monument, said having visitors from Denmark at the celebration "shows that people really want to know American history and the civil rights struggle that occurred in the United States."

"We have people from Denmark. We have African-Americans. Latinos. You have people from a lot of different backgrounds, and that's what America is," Tiller said. Medema, speaking after the ceremony, said Anniston's national monument has something many others do not, and that's the opportunity for dialogue.

"We want to have a place where people can communicate with each other about what it means and where we are today. We're still not there yet," Medema said. "I see this as a gathering place for ideas and connectivity, so we want to build that into the exhibits as they're developed." California resident Nancy Bandle brought herself and 15 other members of the National Park Travelers Club to Anniston's celebration Saturday. Others in the group came from states across the country.

Bandle said she remembers the Freedom Riders when the bus burned, and was moved by hearing the story told by those who lived through it. "And yes, I got tears," Bandle said, adding that she and many of the others will be coming back to Anniston as the monument progresses. Bill Harbour, a Freedom Rider originally from Piedmont and co-chair of the Freedom Rider Park Committee, said seeing the monument come together makes him happy.

"It's been great. I feel good. Years ago I'd have never thought it would be this way," Harbour said. In the coming months the National Park Service will conduct studies to be used to restore the former bus station into its 1961-era state. To donate toward the project visit [freedomriderspark.org](http://freedomriderspark.org).

[https://www.annistonstar.com/free/freedom-riders-visitors-from-around-the-world-celebrate-anniston-monument/article\\_3edb9ff8-3845-11e7-9890-57b6a70ee1da.html](https://www.annistonstar.com/free/freedom-riders-visitors-from-around-the-world-celebrate-anniston-monument/article_3edb9ff8-3845-11e7-9890-57b6a70ee1da.html)

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## Park service officials gather ideas for Freedom Riders monument

*Kirsten Fiscus and Eddie Burkhalter | al.com*

*June 29, 2017*

National Park officials spent most of Thursday sharing their vision for the Freedom Riders National Monument but also took suggestions from Anniston city officials and the public during two meetings. Ben West, the chief of planning with the National Park Service southeast region, started the morning meeting with city officials and community leaders by talking about how far-reaching the monument can be.

"The events that happened here and the monument are one piece of the Freedom Rides," West said. "We're going to be telling a much bigger story." West said the first step in the monument's development will be refurbishing the site of the bus depot on Gurnee Avenue back to its 1961 appearance.

"We're putting out an all-points bulletin to find pictures, stories of people that worked there or remember the depot as it was," he said. Progress on the monument, however, could be slow depending on funding, West said.

Since President Barack Obama signed the monument's proclamation months into the 2017 fiscal year there was no line item in the parks service's budget for the Anniston location, West said. State Rep. Barbara Boyd, who attended the meeting, said she'd prefer to know sooner rather than later what the budget will be.

"We need to know how much the Freedom Riders advisory board needs to fundraise or match," she said. "For this fiscal year, we're just pulling money from different places to do as much as we can with the resources we have," West said. "That's going to stay in place until Sept. 30. We will have a line item on our budget for next year."

Anthony Dixon, treasurer of the Freedom Riders Park Committee, said the monument could significantly affect the city and county's tourism market and the sooner the project is completed, the better. "I want to see Anniston revitalized," Dixon said. "We've identified and encouraged a number of people to donate funding for this project. The concern I've got is waiting to understand how we do that."

While West did not estimate what the budget would be, he said "fundamentally it's not a big number." He continued to explain that many parks and monuments have nonprofits that partner with the national park service to help raise money. "Birmingham has a lot of existing partners," West said. "We're going to work hard to help you get to that point and we'll continue to work to find grants and other sources of money."

During the meeting, officials in attendance broke up into small groups to discuss their visions for the monument. Sarah Bodo, a community planner with the National Park Service, recalled what input she received during the exercise. "Someone said the site needs to tell the local narrative but also the national narrative of the Freedom Riders," she said. "The involvement of the KKK, the role of the photographer that took the photos and the role of the media needs to be discussed."

Acting park Superintendent Reginald Tiller closed the meeting highlighting what role the monument will play in American history. "We're telling the whole American story," he said. "Some of it is not glamorous, some is, but if we tell it all, future generations may not make the same mistakes." At the evening meeting National Park officials met again to hear from residents about their thoughts on the national park, and to seek photos, memories and stories about the former bus station to help in its restoration.

Rain Thursday evening may have kept some at home, but a small number showed to hear a presentation by officials. Among them was Earl Glass. The Munford resident brought with him photos of the inside of the former bus station, taken decades ago, when his grandfather, Herman Glass, ran the station.

Glass said he can't recall when his grandfather worked there, but that he hopes the photo that shows a young Glass sitting near the ticket counter of his grandfather's station helps the National Park Service accurately reconstruct that part of the building. "They can rebuild all of that from it," Glass said. West told attendees at the later meeting that the Freedom Rider story is broader than just the bus burning.

"There are a lot of connections in a lot of different places and a lot of communities," West said. Officials already had one of the photographs Glass brought along Thursday, which shows his grandfather standing inside the station. West said the National Park Service isn't certain what will be placed on the 202 site, but said "we certainly have some ideas." Bodo asked that the community continue to send in old photos, stories and memories as the agency works to restore the station. "We just don't know enough about that right now to do it accurately," Bodo said.

[https://www.annistonstar.com/news/anniston/park-service-officials-gather-ideas-for-freedom-riders-monument/article\\_955fbe92-5d50-11e7-96c4-0b417d989ead.html](https://www.annistonstar.com/news/anniston/park-service-officials-gather-ideas-for-freedom-riders-monument/article_955fbe92-5d50-11e7-96c4-0b417d989ead.html)

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U.S. Interior Secretary tours Anniston Freedom Riders sites

*William Thornton | al.com*

*October 27, 2016*

U.S. Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell toured sites in Anniston today associated with the Freedom Riders, the 1961 protest against segregation that gained attention worldwide for the Civil Rights movement. Jewell was in town with Jonathan Jarvis, director of the National Park Service, to tour the old Greyhound bus station on Gurnee Avenue and the area where a bus was burned by the side of Alabama 202 on Mother's Day, 1961.

The two officials were there to determine whether to ask President Barack Obama to designate the sites as a national monument. Standing on the side of the highway near a historical marker, Jewell said the two sites were very favorable, given the "remarkable site integrity."  
"The station is so close to its original condition that the story can be told in a way people can see," Jewell said. "And here, there are several houses that were here at the time." "It's a story that can't be sanitized and should be told," she said.

Jewell had just heard the story of Hank Thomas, who was one of the original Freedom Riders beaten on May 14, 1961 by the roadside by a gang of whites. The Freedom Riders were a group of civil rights activists who rode integrated buses through the segregated South to spur Federal enforcement of desegregation court orders.

When the buses arrived in Anniston, one encountered a mob which beat the people on board, while the other bus was firebombed as it stopped by the roadside after its tires were slashed. As Thomas recounted the moment, the mob, some still wearing Sunday church clothes, held the bus door closed in hopes of the people inside burning to death. As the Freedom Riders emerged, they were beaten.

Joining Thomas was Janie Forsythe McKinney. On that day in 1961, she was a 12-year-old whose family owned a grocery store by the road. Thomas credited her with saving his life that day, as she brought out water to the riders, still gasping for breath. He called her "the angel of Anniston." McKinney described herself as an shy, awkward kid who knew what was happening when the bus burned.

"That day I realized I needed to do something because people were suffering. That's what sprang me into action," she said. Thomas urged federal authorities to "consecrate this ground."  
"This was not just a historical incident," Thomas said. "These people were trying to murder us for simply exercising our rights. This is a symbol of how this country has changed."

[http://www.al.com/news/anniston-gadsden/index.ssf/2016/10/us\\_interior\\_secretary\\_tours\\_an.html](http://www.al.com/news/anniston-gadsden/index.ssf/2016/10/us_interior_secretary_tours_an.html)



# Hobson City, Alabama



Hobson City, AL is the oldest incorporated African-American municipality in the state of Alabama. During the late 19th century, what is now Hobson city was known as the "Mooree Quarter" of the city of Oxford.

At that time, African-Americans were permitted to vote in both city and county elections and their vote usually swayed election results. In 1899 after an African-American man was elected justice of the peace, Mayor Whitehead petitioned to have the corporate boundaries of Oxford redrawn to exclude Mooree Quarter. As a result, the people of Hobson City filed a petition with the Calhoun County Probate Judge to incorporate into a separate entity.



## Quick Facts

**Population:** 771

**Racial Composition:** 92.71% Black or African American, 6.15% White, 0.23% from other races, and 0.91% from two or more races. 0.57% of the population were Hispanic or Latino of any race.

**Median Age:** 35

**County:** Calhoun

**Random Trivia:** The town is named for Richmond Pearson Hobson, a naval hero in the Spanish-American War and former Alabama Congressman.

## Alabama







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## Session X- Hobson City

Below are the biographies of the speakers for Session X, discussing the school to the history and legacy of the Town of Hobson City, the oldest historically all-African American municipality in the state.

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### Mayor Alberta McCrory

Mayor Alberta McCrory has served the Town of Hobson City since 2008 and was re-elected in 2012 and 2016.



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### Katie Pyles

Katie Pyles is a longtime resident of Hobson City and is Treasurer of the Calhoun County Training School Reunion Committee. Her husband, Robert Pyles is a former Mayor of Hobson City.

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### Tamar Towns

Tamar Towns is Program Manager, Dannon Project in Calhoun County, an organization that helps restore lives through providing supportive assistance including short term training and certifications, job prep and employment placement to youth, unemployed, underemployed and previously incarcerated persons.



2013 marks the 50th anniversary of many pivotal moments in the civil rights era in Alabama. The movement would lead to desegregation of schools and businesses in the Deep South. But, along with these victories, there were casualties along the way. Desegregation almost killed one small Alabama town. "This used to be the main drag. The school would always have a homecoming parade, Christmas parade. So it was always kind of a celebration strip. And all these homes left and right, I knew everybody in these homes."

Hobson City is about two miles long and sits between Oxford and Anniston in East Alabama. Bernard Snow drives through the narrow, main strip of Hobson City. He's familiar with the businesses and families that once thrived in this small Alabama town. That's because he grew up here. Snow's family was one of many that were part of a thriving all African American community. Today, things are different.

"Through here used to be our retail stores here. It's all gone now and my grandparents own the café right there on this corner. Used to be a church right here on this corner. Used to be a sundry store on the corner to your right there where this building is. Followed by a beauty shop, another gasoline station, the barber shop."

Hobson City could be easy to miss if you're just passing through. About two miles long, the town sits between Anniston and Oxford. The city was once a part of Oxford, until an African American justice of the peace was elected from the area. Oxford's mayor redrew the boundaries and kicked out Hobson City. The town was incorporated in 1899 as Alabama's first all-black city.

Nobody thought it would work because blacks were not used to governing themselves," says Hobson City Mayor Alberta McCrory. "In fact, some of the newspapers said it was a...refer to it as maybe a project, a test of some kind. And they would wait to see what happen. So here we are still existing in Hobson City in 2013." Like Bernard Snow, Mayor McCrory also grew up in Hobson City. She isn't too far from where she went to class nowadays. That's because City Hall was once the local school.

Today, much of the building is in disarray with peeling paint and leaky ceilings that are starting to fall in. But at one time, the school was a source of pride for Hobson City and was the town's core. McCrory says a historic piece of legislation changed Hobson City forever. "After the passing of the civil rights bill, we saw changes in Hobson City because it opened doors for us to go other places," says McCrory. "So the small businesses we had in Hobson City, like businesses in other small towns with the large companies coming in shutting them out. That's what happened with Hobson City."

McCrory says Hobson City had freedom of choice during the 1965-1966 school year. That meant students who used to attend segregated classrooms could choose to go to black or white schools. So, students in Hobson City could choose to stay in the local school or attend nearby Oxford, which was predominately white. McCrory says most chose to stay where they were.

"It took the court order to really desegregate the schools because people really wanted to stay where they were," says McCrory. "You know they had their own friends, their own school, they were involved in sports and music and all other activities and so they were comfortable staying where they were." McCrory says desegregation knocked down barriers, and ultimately that hurt Hobson City. After graduation, many students left and didn't come back. Shops that were once "white only" in nearby Oxford and Anniston were now open to blacks as well.

Hobson City stores and businesses that once relied on its residents as a solid customer base were forced to close. McCrory says she was active in the civil rights movement, and says she was thrilled to gain equal rights, but it came at a cost. "Had I known then what I know now, that maybe I wouldn't have gone to all the

protest marches and then perhaps still would have marched because there needed to be changes in other areas," says McCrory. "But if we had been able to maintain some of what we had instead of losing everything, because we did lose. And so you know that's the price we have to pay."

Mayor McCrory says she's working to turn Hobson City's fortunes around and bring it back as a thriving community. Some have expressed concerns that if Hobson City can't make it, it'll be swallowed up into Oxford or Anniston. Mayor McCrory says she's determined not to let that happen. "No. Never. We'll never go back. Why? That's like throwing our hands up to our ancestors and saying 'we couldn't make it. We couldn't do it.'"

Others, like Bernard Snow, aren't so optimistic. "If you look straight ahead through there, you'll see the play equipment. Our organization's responsible for that," says Snow. "We found other people in the community in the industry that were willing to donate concrete, labor, machinery. So it was really a grassroots effort." Snow is part of an economic development group that's rebuilding Hobson City one project at a time, like the \$50,000 playground at the local park he's pointing to. Snow says if something isn't done soon, Hobson City will have to be incorporated back into Oxford, or merge into Anniston. But he says he's going to fight with Mayor McCrory to try and preserve a piece of Alabama's history.

<http://apr.org/post/hobson-city-how-desegregation-almost-killed-alas-first-all-black-city#stream/0>

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## Translating Hobson City

*Margaret Holloway | The Oral History Review*

*November 11, 2016*

Crossing the train track from the predominantly white Anniston into the historically black Hobson City, Alabama, I immediately noticed the significant changes in environment and people. It was not until I exited my car and physically inserted myself into the Hobson City community that I learned that there was much more to this small town than what initially met my eyes.

Hobson City, Alabama is the oldest incorporated African American town in the state. The town is a part of a larger nationally recognized organization called the Historic Black Towns and Settlements Alliance, which includes Tuskegee, AL, Mound Bayou, MS, Grambling, LA, and Eatonville, FL. Hobson City is located right in predominantly white Anniston; the only thing that separates the two towns is a train track. The train track serves as a national marker that symbolizes segregation along with differences in socio-economic statuses within communities. Over the past two years, I have learned about the town's rich African American origins, significant political events, and entrepreneurial pioneers of Hobson City that make this place a historical black town.

In May of 2016, I conducted an oral history interview with one of the town's most significant citizens, Mr. Montessor Sudduth. A native of Hobson City, he is the middle child of three children, with an older brother and a younger sister. He was raised in a single-parent home by his mother. His story is rooted in the early beginnings of Hobson City, Alabama and his contributions to the town live on to this day.

An important theme in this interview was the park as a site for community fellowship and engagement. Mr. Sudduth spoke about how there used to be a swimming pool, a bowling alley and baseball field all at the park. The present park in Hobson City includes a playground, a field that could serve as a football field, and an old basketball court. The park that Mr. Sudduth spoke of in the interview was called the Booker T. Washington Park. I am not sure why this park dissolved but it was the nucleus of all community gatherings in the 50s and 60s.

Mr. Sudduth attended Miles College in Birmingham before working in a foundry in Anniston. While at the foundry he persuaded two of his friends to start a disc jockey group, which they called Stop Slicking the Wicked. The group developed their DJ skills before the disco wave so once disco became popular they were

“prepared...ready for the game.” In between his time at Miles and his time as a foundry worker he landed an opportunity as a broadcaster. He stated that he “fulfilled the need for minority broadcasters...at that time FCC was opening doors for minorities to go into broadcasting.” That is how he landed a midnight DJ job at one of the top rock stations. Mr. Sudduth worked as a DJ for a number of years until he and his friends decided to open a record store. The store was located downtown on Noble Street and was the 2nd or 3rd black owned business in Anniston. To this day, Mr. Sudduth works as a DJ for the local radio station that serves the Hobson City area, WGHOM-am 1120 am. His group, Stop Slicking the Wicked, was one of the first to perform on WEN radio station, 107.7 which covered the entire state, from Mobile to Huntsville.

Mr. Sudduth continues to contribute to the historical richness of Hobson City, Alabama. He continues to leave a lasting mark by working at the only radio station that serves the Hobson City area. His presence and service helps preserve the history of this historical black town. Mr. Sudduth takes pride in being a professional, the son of a wonderful mother, a black business owner, a DJ, and a product of Hobson City. At the conclusion of our interview I asked Mr. Sudduth if he had any last thoughts that he wanted to share. He said “if you don’t see life giving you what you want, go out there and get it yourself. Design your life the way you want to design your life. Don’t let no one else design it for ya.” Those words exemplified how Mr. Sudduth lived and continues to live his life. He journeyed through life while making his own personal and professional choices and to this day he continues to contribute to the rich history of Hobson City.

The town established six goals in hopes of gaining access to human and capital resources, so that the town can return to a state of rich economic livelihood. Two of those goals are 1) recovering community histories and 2) achieving National Registry recognition. Collecting oral histories has accomplished the first goal and will hopefully help achieve the National Registry goal.

My oral history is the result of a class project from a course offered in the English Dept. at the University of Alabama taught by Dr. Michelle Bachelor Robinson. The class conducted a total of 14 oral histories with citizens of the town who were selected based on their contributions and significance to the town’s history. For my dissertation, I will conduct 2-3 more oral histories to add to that collection. Oral history plays a major role in gaining National Registry recognition because it recovers, rescues, and (re)inscribes (Royster and Kirsch) the stories that are not written in history books. Oral history allows others to hear and read about underrepresented stories that come out of towns such as Hobson City. It can be used to foster conversations across disciplines, across geographical locations, and across cultures on the importance of rescuing Historical Black Towns that have been marginalized, silenced, and dismissed in American history.

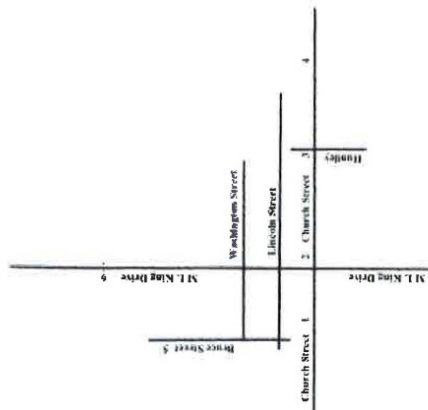
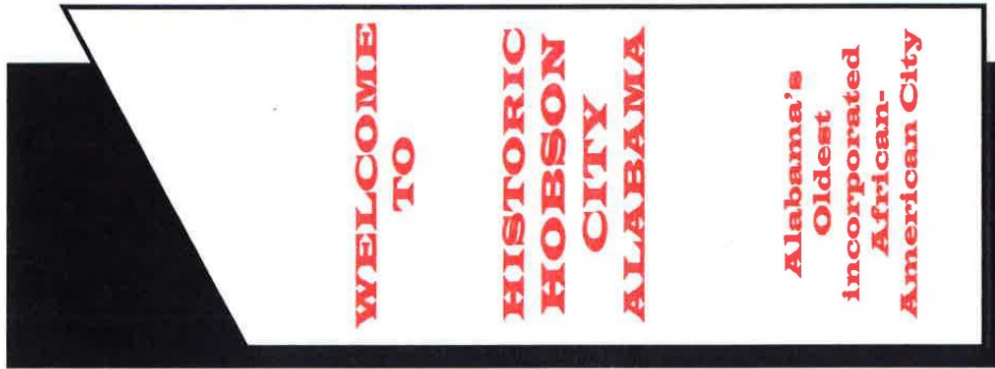
<https://blog.oup.com/2016/11/oral-history-alabama/>

## Historic Hobson City Alabama

Hobson City, formerly known as Mooree Quarters, was part of Oxford, Alabama until the late 1890s. In 1832, the area was included in the Creek Indian Native American Territory.

According to the 1899 Alabama constitution, to be able to vote, a resident must be a male at least twenty-one years old, a United States citizen, a resident of the county they live in for 12 months, able to read and understand the constitution, have been working a steady job for 12 months, own at least 40 acres of land and pay taxes, plus other requirements. The twenty men responsible for Hobson City qualified to vote under those terms.

A Black man was elected Justice of the Peace in Oxford, causing some confusion. During one man's mayoral campaign, he promised that if he were elected he would stop Blacks from participating in city elections. After winning the election, he went to the State Capitol and had the corporate boundaries of



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Hobson City, Alabama 36201  
(256) 831-4940  
[www.hobsoncityhall.com](http://www.hobsoncityhall.com)

Photographs courtesy of Jocelyn Bates



Oxford redrawn, leaving the Black settlement in the county. It remained under the county system of government for approximately three years.

Taking matters into their own hands, a committee of citizens from Mooree Quarters took their concerns to Attorney Ross Black in Anniston, Alabama. The attorney advised them to incorporate the territory into their own municipality. On July 20, 1899, approximately 125 Blacks dwelling in the Mooree Quarters area filed a petition with Calhoun County Probate Judge E. F. Cook to become a separate and district municipality. After proper legal proceedings, the town became incorporated August 16, 1899. It was the second municipality in the South composed exclusively of colored people. Hobson City was named for Richard P. Hobson, a white naval hero in the Spanish American War and a representative of the Alabama Legislature.

In 2009, the Black Heritage Council of the Alabama Historical Commission nominated the town to the state's annual list of *10 Places in Peril* in Alabama. The BHC nomination resulted in the town gaining national and international recognition for its significance as the oldest incorporated African-American municipality in Alabama.



5) In 2008, Hobson City Memorial Gardens became the first cemetery in Calhoun County to be included in the Alabama Historic Cemetery Register.



2) The Pride of Hobson City Masonic Lodge 695 and Acquila and Priscilla Order of Eastern Star 455 was organized in the early 1900s.



6) In 1905, C. E. Hanna organized a school in Hobson City. The school was later named Calhoun County Training School and became the only high school for blacks in the Calhoun County School System. In the 1970s, the school was paired with the Oxford school system under a federal desegregation order. It was converted into an elementary school and renamed C. E. Hanna School.

1) New Hope Baptist Church



was organized in 1871. In 1878, land was purchased in the Town of Hobson City to build a church.



3) Welcome Chapel Colored Methodist Episcopal Church was established in 1888, at its current location at the corner of Church and Huntley. The word Colored was later changed to Christian.



4) In 1889, Rising Star Methodist Church moved to Mooree Quarters at Huntley Street, in

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# BURT JONES RURAL COMMUNITY EXPERIENCE

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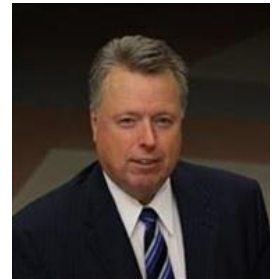
## Session XI- Hobson City

Below are the biographies of the panelists for Session XI, discussing intercommunity relations among municipal leaders in southern Calhoun County.

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### Mayor Alton Craft

Mayor Alton Craft is serving the City of Oxford since 2016. He is a former finance director for the city.



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### Mayor Jack Draper

Mayor Jack Draper serves the City of Anniston and was elected in 2016. Mayor Draper is an attorney. He is a native son of Anniston who has been civically active for many years. A graduate of Leadership Calhoun County, Mayor Draper also served as Chairman of the Downtown Development Authority.





## Mayor Alberta McCrory

Mayor Alberta McCrory has served the town of Hobson City since 2008 and was re-elected in 2012 and 2016.



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## Barry Robertson

Barry E. Robertson was sworn in as Calhoun County's Commissioner of Licenses on January 2, 1995 and was re-elected to the same office in 1998, 2004, 2010, and 2016. Prior to being License Commissioner, he served as a member of Governor Jim Folsom's Cabinet as the Governor's Legislative Liaison to the Alabama State Senate. From 1992 to 1993; Barry served as Chief of Staff/Administrative Assistant to the Lieutenant Governor of Alabama. Prior to his service in Montgomery, Barry was employed with the East Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission. Barry is a lifelong resident of Calhoun County. Barry is married to the former Arminda Cavender, has a daughter, Anna-Kate, a son Parker, and a step-son, Jackson. They attend Anniston First United Methodist Church and Church of the Highlands.



Robertson holds Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Political Science from Jacksonville State University.

Like parents and preschool teachers, small-town mayors occasionally have to dirty their hands with the unpleasantness of life. Toilets, for example. “Nobody wants to talk about waste-water plants — except when they go to flush the commode and it’s all going in the wrong direction. When that happens, they begin to talk about it.”

That was Jacksonville Mayor Johnny Smith last week at the Calhoun County Chamber of Commerce’s Council of Mayors event. It was part one-liner, part reality. People laughed. But if President Donald Trump thinks governing is arduous in the political minefields of Washington, he should try his hand at civic leadership that’s more about potholes and wastewater than international relations and criticism of so-called fake news.

“This is a project that a lot of people don’t even want to talk about, and I don’t either,” Smith said. But he laid out the facts: Jacksonville’s wastewater treatment plant received a 20-year upgrade in 1993. “Do the math and realize that’s 24 years ago,” he said. So Jacksonville has embarked on an \$11 million project to prevent the city’s toilets from ruining people’s day.

“I sit up at night thinking about what I can do with \$11 million,” Smith said. “Think about upgrading the parks and doing all the stuff you like to do.”

That’s governing. Small stuff matters. That’s also the spirit that seems to exist throughout Calhoun County, where fiefdoms and ward politics and community rifts have historically made camaraderie and teamwork a fantasy. Unnecessary, too. Kumbaya was impossible as long as Leon Smith was mayor of Oxford and wasn’t needed before Anniston’s place atop the county’s throne was challenged. Parity and common struggles have changed the paradigm.

Today’s narrative is that this Gang of Seven — Anniston’s Jack Draper, Hobson City’s Alberta McCrory, Ohatchee’s Steve Baswell, Weaver’s Wayne Willis, Piedmont’s Bill Baker, Oxford’s Alton Craft and Smith — is arm-in-arm over the notion that everyone wins when anyone in the county wins. Industrial expansion at McClellan, the example goes, doesn’t equate to a loss for Oxford since job growth and sales-tax revenue, like crime, don’t stop at city boundaries. “This is a great working group,” Barry Robertson, the chamber’s chair, said. That narrative quickly arose after last year’s elections and hasn’t subsided — and shouldn’t. Calhoun County is due a few breaths of fresh air.

On a side note, don’t think our friendly mayors and the cities they represent aren’t competitors. Sales-tax revenue — the lifeblood of Alabama cities — is 14-carat gold, and the only way to get it is to pray that cash registers work overtime. So, if a hotel or restaurant or retailer calls the chamber and asks for Calhoun County options, don’t kid yourself. These men and women would bar-knuckles spar over who gets a Buffalo Wild Wings or the next Publix.

This narrative of peace, though cute and quaint, doesn’t pay the bills.

In Jacksonville, there’s the muted fear of flooded bathrooms and an expansive upgrade to traffic lights on Alabama 21. In Hobson City, there’s the eternal nemesis — a lack of money and the need for new business. In Anniston, there’s everything: school improvements, budgetary constraints, McClellan redevelopment and a new hotel for Noble Street. In Oxford, it’s about smart growth — how do you lead from a position of fiscal strength? In Ohatchee and Weaver and Piedmont, it’s small steps forward instead of two steps back — removing blight, enforcing city codes, enticing business owners to give those small places a chance.

Governing is hard. Especially for cities with limited budgets and slim Statehouse pull.

Robertson, also the Calhoun County license commissioner, put it this way: “The common theme tonight is every municipality is unique. They all deal with similar things but in a different way. As citizens, we all have to be mindful of that.” I’ve always wondered why a sane person would want to be mayor, an often-

thankless job laden with heartburn and the occasional backed-up commode. It must take a special type of servant.

[https://www.annistonstar.com/columnists/phillip\\_tutor/phillip-tutor-malfunctioning-commodes-and-our-mayors/article\\_111272c8-629c-11e7-9d85-6f2043b0d419.html](https://www.annistonstar.com/columnists/phillip_tutor/phillip-tutor-malfunctioning-commodes-and-our-mayors/article_111272c8-629c-11e7-9d85-6f2043b0d419.html)

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BURT JONES  
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## Session XII- Anniston

Below are the biographies of the panelists for Session XI, discussing the process of remediation for the Anniston Polychlorinated Biphenyl (PCB) Superfund Site by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

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### **Cindy Calix**

Cindy Calix is the administrator for the Community Advisory Group-Consent Decree.



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### **Gayle Macolly Harris**

Gayle Macolly Harris has been the Manager of Remedial Projects for Eastman Chemical Company since 2008. Previously, she was the Senior Project Manager for the Loper Group as well as the Senior Environmental Scientist for Golder Associates Inc. She is an active member of the Anniston Rotary Club.

Harris is an alumna of Louisiana State University (BS in Environmental Science).



## David Reddick

David E. Reddick has served as Anniston City Councilman for Ward 2 since November 2012. He served 6 years in the U. S. Navy where he specialized in aviation ordinance, weapons systems checks and repair, and intermediate systems maintenance of the F/A-18 hornet aircraft. While on active duty David received many awards including “The Stand-Out Warrior Award” for quick action that helped save the lives of his co-workers. David is the former host of two cable television shows created to enable, give direction and information to the youth and the community. He is the past president of Anniston-Calhoun County NAACP and serves as the Chair of the Community Advisory Group-Consent Decree. David is also a member of a Masonic Order, the American Legion and other philanthropic and civic organizations.



Reddick attended Jacksonville State University.

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## Pam Scully

Pam Scully is a Remedial Project Manager with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. She has 24 years of experience and is a licensed professional engineer in the state of Georgia. Pam began her career with Exxon Corporation in Baytown, Texas. After working in the consulting field for several years, Pam began her career at the Region 4 Office of the EPA in Atlanta, Georgia. She was assigned the Anniston PCB Site in October 2002. Pam works with all federal, state, and local stakeholders interested in the Site, and she follows the EPA’s Superfund process to ensure the Site will be protective for human health and the environment when work is complete.

Scully is an alumna of Clemson University (BS in Civil Engineering) and the Georgia Institute of Technology (MS in Civil Engineering).



## Background

The City of Anniston is located in northeastern Alabama. It is about 50 miles east of Birmingham. The Anniston PCB site is located in and around Anniston, and surrounding Calhoun County. The Anniston site includes commercial, industrial and residential properties and downstream waterways and floodplains. Solutia's Anniston plant (a subsidiary of Eastman Chemical Company (2012) is the main focus of this site. The plant has about 70 acres of land and is located about one mile west of downtown Anniston. The Norfolk Southern and Erie railroads border the plant to the north. Clydesdale Avenue borders the plant to the east, and First Avenue to the west. U.S. Highway 202 is located south of the plant.

Site investigations show that the former Monsanto Corporation's PCB manufacturing plant released the vast majority of polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) in the area. The plant produced PCBs from 1929 until 1971. Today, the former PCB plant produces polyphenol compounds and phosphate ester-based hydraulic fluids. The facility is fenced, secured and access is restricted. While operational, the plant disposed of hazardous and non-hazardous waste in several areas, including the West End and South Landfills. The Monsanto Corporation discharged a wastewater stream containing PCBs into a ditch, and which flowed into Snow Creek.

EPA has not listed this site on its NPL (National Priorities List), but EPA does consider it to be an NPL site. Therefore, it is being addressed through the Superfund Alternative Approach (Approach). The Superfund Alternative Approach uses the same research process and cleanup standards that the Approach uses for sites listed on the NPL.

## What Is Being Done to Clean Up the Site?

The EPA required removal actions (short-term cleanups) on residential properties, churches, schools, and other properties with playgrounds. The EPA required the PRPs to complete investigations and studies that will be used to determine what additional actions are needed to protect human health and the environment. The studies for OU3 have been completed, and actions are complete or underway to control releases and protect workers at the Anniston Plant. The studies for OU1/OU2 have been completed, and the proposed plan describing the actions needed to control releases and protect residents and workers have been made available to the public. The studies for OU4 are still underway.

A "no consumption" fish advisory has been issued by the Alabama Department of Public Health for Choccolocco Creek. Similarly, if fish are found in Snow Creek, they should not be consumed. Eating contaminated food products, especially fish, is the most important pathway of PCB exposure in people who have not been exposed to PCBs at work. Exposures by way of inhalation and contact with the skin generally contribute less to exposure than eating contaminated food.

## What Is the Current Site Status?

Environmental cleanup work at the Site has been divided into four parts, or operable units (OU). Early removal actions were taken in OU1, which targeted residential properties. The purpose of the early removal actions was to prevent continued residential exposure to PCBs above the protective health based action level. OU2 includes the non-residential properties along Snow Creek and its floodplain. OU3 includes the Solutia Anniston plant and the two adjacent landfills, where an interim record of decision was signed on September 2011, and remedial actions will be complete in 2017. OU4 includes Choccolocco Creek and its floodplain, where an ecological risk assessment is scheduled for completion in 2017, followed by a remedial investigation report in 2018 and a feasibility study report in 2019.

Proposed Plan for Operable Unit 1 (OU1-residential) and Operable Unit 2 (OU2-nonresidential)

The Proposed Plan for the Anniston PCB Site is available for review and public comment from March 13, 2017 through May 12, 2017.

The proposed plan presents the EPA's preferred cleanup alternatives, which reduce risk to human health and the environment to acceptable levels by: (1) completing the residential property cleanup and managing subsurface contamination as needed; (2) completing the cleanup of low activity areas on church, school, and park properties and managing subsurface contamination as needed; (3) excavating soils that were not included in previous interim measures; (4) removing dredged soil piles along the bank of Snow Creek; (5) capping two auto fluff disposal areas; (6) excavating soils that create risk in other non-residential, commercial/industrial areas; (7) excavating soils that are impacting groundwater near the 11th street ditch and Snow Creek, then capping the areas and extracting the contaminated groundwater; and (8) excavation of contaminated sediments in Snow Creek and stabilization of the creek banks. The preferred alternative includes off-site disposal of soils and sediments, as well as discharge of treated groundwater into Snow Creek. These Alternatives will cost approximately \$ 36.6 million and take several years to complete.

The Proposed Plan describes other alternatives considered and the criteria the EPA used to compare the alternatives including the cost estimates and construction timelines

### **EPA's Involvement at the Site**

Site investigations have identified PCB contamination in soil, sediment, surface water, groundwater, and air in and around Anniston, Oxford, Hobson City, and parts of Calhoun and Talladega Counties, Alabama. Contamination resulted primarily from manufacturing and waste handling practices at the former PCB production facility. Contaminants of concern include PCBs and a number of other organic and inorganic substances, depending on the media.

A number of interim actions have been taken to prevent citizens from coming into contact with contaminated soil, while the full extent of contamination is under investigation. The potentially responsible parties (PRPs) worked with the Alabama Department of Environmental Management, the EPA, and the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry to educate the public and reduce exposures

EPA and the site's PRPs have sampled soils on properties in and around Anniston for PCBs since 1999 as part of a Superfund investigation. Sampling has indicated that sediments in drainage ditches leading away from the plant, Snow Creek and Choccolocco Creek, as well as sedimentary material in the floodplains of these waterways, contain varying levels of PCBs and other contaminants. A "no consumption" fish advisory has been issued by the Alabama Department of Public Health for Choccolocco Creek. Similarly, if fish are found in Snow Creek, they should not be eaten.

### **Enforcement Information**

In 2000, Solutia entered into an Administrative Order on Consent (AOC) (a legal agreement) with EPA to sample residential properties in west Anniston for PCB contamination. Under the order, Solutia was required to clean up any property with PCB levels that could cause short-term health concerns. In 2001, EPA and Solutia entered into a revised AOC that expanded the cleanup to soils being moved at Quintard Mall and Oxford Lake Park.

In 2002, EPA and Solutia completed negotiations for performing an RI/FS. The negotiations were finalized in a Partial Consent Decree (CD) rather than an AOC, to provide judicial oversight of the process and address community trust issues. A CD is a legal document signed by a judge formalizing an agreement. The Partial CD was lodged in federal court in 2002 and was made available for public comment. The Partial CD was revised based on public comment and was entered by the federal court in 2003. A follow-up "Stipulation and Agreement" was also entered into federal court to resolve certain issues between the parties under the Partial CD in 2006.

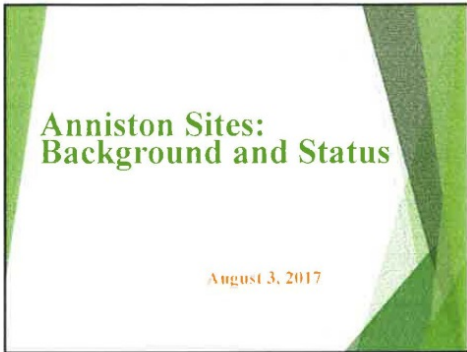
In 2012, the EPA and the PRPs entered into a Remedial Design/Remedial Action (RD/RA) CD to implement the Interim Record of Decision (IROD) for OU3 (the Anniston plant). The agreement was entered by the Court on April 17, 2013. The IROD required installation of a new, RCRA Subtitle C-compliant cap over the Cells 1E, 2E, and 3E of the South Landfill, additional caps at the facility to prevent infiltration and direct contact with PCBs in soils, expansion of the existing groundwater treatment system, and institutional controls. Construction is expected to be complete in 2017.

When the record of decision is complete for OU1/OU2, the EPA will negotiate another CD to perform the work.

### **Operable Units**

During cleanup, a site can be divided into a number of distinct areas depending on its complexity. These areas, called operable units (OUs), may address geographic areas, specific problems, or areas where a specific action is required. Examples of typical operable units include construction of a groundwater pump and treatment system or construction of a cap over a landfill.

<https://cumulis.epa.gov/supercpad/SiteProfiles/index.cfm?fuseaction=second.Cleanup&id=0400123#bkground>



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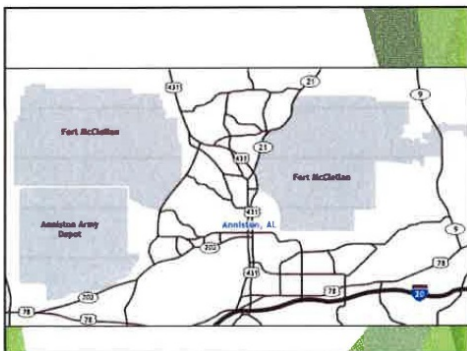
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### Anniston PCB Site

- ▶ The Anniston PCB Site is not listed on the National Priorities List (NPL), but is considered to be a NPL-caliber site, and is being cleaned up under the Superfund Alternative Approach (SAA).
- ▶ Solutia Inc.'s Anniston plant encompasses approximately 70 acres of land and is located about one mile west of downtown Anniston, Alabama. The facility was recently acquired by Eastman Chemical Company.
- ▶ PCBs were produced at the plant from 1929 until 1971.
- ▶ The Plant is an operating facility that currently produces polyphenol compounds.
- ▶ PCB contamination has impacted residential, industrial, agricultural, forested and floodplain areas for ~ 40 miles.

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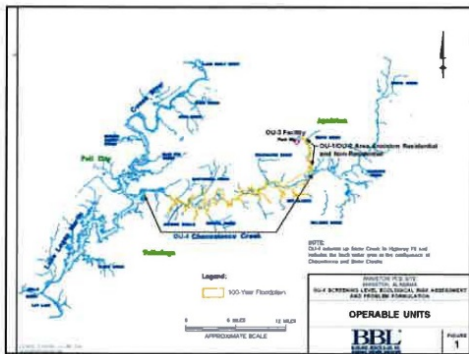
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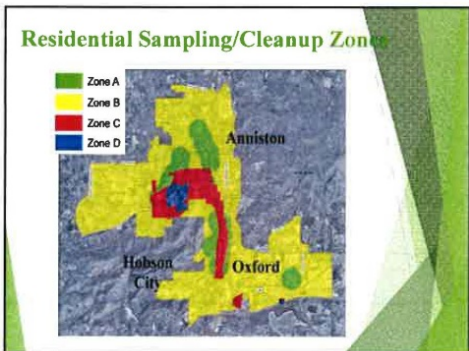
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### Residential Property Removals

- ▶ Collectively, over 7,900 properties were sampled for lead and PCBs at both sites.
- ▶ Approximately 1,400 residential properties were cleaned up for lead or PCBs or both.
- ▶ Roughly 60 properties still need to be cleaned up.
  - ▶ a remedial decision is needed for wooded properties
  - ▶ access to residential properties is needed for the rest

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### Lake Logan Martin and Lay Lake

- Fish are impacted by PCBs in LLM and LL.
- The Natural Resource Trustees have included lakes in their Natural Resource Damage Assessment.
- EPA may extend the investigation to LLM at a future date.



The map shows the Coosa River and Tallapoosa River systems in Alabama. Key locations marked include Wetzel Lake, Lake Logan Martin, Lay Lake, and various other lakes and rivers. The map is titled 'Lakes on the Coosa River and Tallapoosa River Systems'.

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### Enforcement

- ▶ There have been four removal orders and two consent decrees negotiated between the Anniston Lead and PCB Sites.
- ▶ The Northern District Court of Alabama has jurisdiction over the Removal orders, RI/FS Consent Decree and the OJ3 RD/RA Consent Decree between the parties at the Anniston PCB Site.
- ▶ The Court has appointed both a Legal and a Technical Special Master to oversee the work under the PCB agreements. Both Special Masters regularly attend the CAG meetings or send representatives.

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### Enforcement (continued)

- ▶ The Special Masters were concerned about the negative tone and the effectiveness of the CAG meetings.
- ▶ The District Court Judge held a meeting with the parties to the Partial Consent Decree and the CAG in December 2014.
- ▶ The Judge suggested that the CAG fill out its membership roster and then hold training (Superfund process; roles of parties; history of Site; issues of concern; etc.) to bring members up to speed and allow the CAG to move forward.
- ▶ The CAG, the EPA, the Special Masters, and the potentially responsible parties participated training in 2015.

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### STATUS OF THE WORK

- ▶ OU3 (Facility)
  - ▶ RI/FS complete
  - ▶ ROD signed in 2011
  - ▶ RD complete
  - ▶ RA should be complete this year.
- ▶ OU1/OU2 (Residential and Nonresidential along Snow Creek)
  - ▶ RI/FS complete
  - ▶ ROD being prepared for signature this fall
- ▶ OU4 (Choccolocco Creek)
  - ▶ Ecological Risk Assessment being revised.
  - ▶ Hope to complete RI in 2018 and FS in 2019.

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### Community Advisory Group Concerns

- ▶ Nature and Extent of Contamination
- ▶ Residuals Management (Institutional Controls)
- ▶ Air Monitoring
- ▶ Jobs
- ▶ Other Issues

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### Nature and Extent of Contamination

- ▶ The CAG questioned why every property in the zones was not sampled.
- ▶ The CAG believes that samples should be collected and tested for lead and PCBs when any digging takes place because only the surface soils were sampled on most properties.
- ▶ It is the EPA's position that residential sampling for lead and PCB contamination in soils was very thorough and is complete; no additional sampling is needed.
- ▶ In other words, the nature and extent of lead and PCB contamination in residential soils at both sites have been defined.

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### Management of Residual Contamination (including Institutional Controls)

- The CAG is concerned about the PCB contamination in soils under homes, structures, and below the top foot of soils.
- The CAG understands that Institutional Controls (ICs) are needed to help prevent future exposure from residual contamination.
- The community wants an active role in deciding what ICs are required and in making sure the controls are maintained and effective.
- EPA has identified the residual contamination and will ensure that it is maintained through PRP O&M or local government controls if available, to prevent recontamination.
- Community groups cannot have independent enforcement authority over ICs. Local policies, zoning or ordinances are considered reliable IC devices.

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### Air Monitoring

- In the past:
  - The CAG has requested that ambient air monitoring be conducted for a wide range of contaminants, not just PCBs.
  - The CAG has asked that air monitoring for PCBs be conducted in all area schools.
  - The CAG has suggested that AINOR air monitoring recommendations were not followed.
  - The CAG believes that widespread PCB air monitoring should continue until the cleanup is complete and the results should be made available to the community.
- The EPA's risk assessment based on the yearlong air partition study conducted in 2003 and 2004 determined that the carcinogenic risk to residents adjacent to the facility from inhalation of PCBs in air was 2 in 1,000,000. This is at the very low end of the EPA's acceptable cancer risk range and is not considered a significant risk level.
- Future monitoring will be conducted if the methods selected are expected to ensure a reduction in PCBs in air.
- A total of 318 individual air samples have been collected and analyzed for PCBs at Anneton since 2009. These results have all been provided to the community and AINOR.

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### Jobs

- Job Training to allow Anniston residents to perform environmental cleanup work has been done through Environmental Justice Grants and Brownfields Grants.
- The CAG recognizes that residential cleanup contractors have hired local workers.
- The CAG has noted that Anniston sent hundreds of trained workers to the Gulf Coast to assist with the BP oil spill cleanup; those individuals were turned back and told that local workers would be hired first.
- The CAG wants more local workers to be hired in Anniston to perform the cleanup.
- The PRPs have encouraged their contractors to hire local workers in the past, and they are willing to hire local workers in future contracts.

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### Other Issues

- ▶ The CAG believes that the Anniston Lead Site cleanup was inadequate and that a comprehensive Site IC program needs to be developed (see Bunker Hill Site).
- ▶ The CAG believes that the Anniston cleanups should eliminate all risk at both sites.
- ▶ The CAG is not a party to the CD and believes it has been left out of the decision making process.
- ▶ There have been discussions in the past about a range of illnesses in the community that derail CAG meeting agendas.
- ▶ Adverse economic impacts in West Anniston are discussed as being caused by the site and that the EPA and the PRPs need to do more to address them.

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### CAG, TA, and Education Fund

- ▶ Solutia is required in the CD to pay for administration of the CAG.
  - ▶ The CAG asked Solutia when it organized to give it funding to run the CAG itself.
  - ▶ This is the only CAG that operates this independently.
- ▶ The CD anticipated funding a Technical Advisor for 3 years. Solutia has funded one for 13 years so far. Solutia will likely fund this position through the ROD for OUA.
- ▶ Solutia paid a total of \$3.2M to an education foundation over a period of 10 years and paid for the administration of the funds. The funding and support ended in 2014, but a large amount of funds are still available for distribution.

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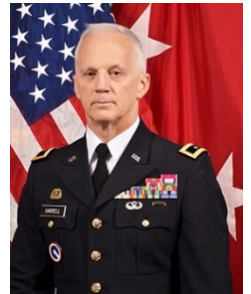
## Session XIII- Anniston

Below are the biographies of the speakers for Session XI, discussing the Alabama National Guard's mission to support the State of Alabama through disaster relief, law enforcement training and antiterrorism operations.

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### **MG Allen Harrell**

Major General Allen M. Harrell serves Commander of the 167<sup>th</sup> Theater Sustainment Command at Fort McClellan, a theater level logistics headquarters assigned to United States Army North. In this position, General Harrell is responsible for strategic planning and coordination of support to active duty and federalized reserve component forces in the Northern Command area of operations. Previously he served as Director, Joint Staff, Alabama Joint Force Headquarters in Montgomery, where he coordinated actions of the Alabama Army and Air National Guard staffs for the Adjutant General. General Harrell served as a Field Artillery officer on active duty in various battery and battalion level assignments from 1980 to 1986. He subsequently served in the Army Reserve for three years before joining the Alabama Army National Guard in 1989. General Harrell has completed assignments outside the Continental United States (OCONUS) in Germany, Honduras and Iraq; as well as stops at Fort Ord, CA, Peterson AFB, CO and various locations throughout the state of Alabama.



General Harrell is an alumnus of The University of Alabama and commissioned through Army ROTC.

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### **COL Everette Price**

Colonel Everette Price is the Chief of Staff for the 167<sup>th</sup> Theater Sustainment Command at Fort McClellan.

## Alabama National Guard Soldiers and Airmen prepare for Hurricane Session

*Press Release*

*June 5, 2015*

The Joint Operations Center at the Alabama National Guard Joint Force Headquarters here is alive with activity. Soldiers and Airmen fill every inch of the space. They huddle in groups around computer screens pouring over data and emails from the field. The Alabama National Guard's Domestic Operations Group (DOG) is digging into day four of its annual hurricane exercise (HURREX) 2015.

HURREX 2015 is a week-long hurricane response exercise from June 1 to June 7.

The HURREX simulates a hurricane from landfall until six days after to validate the effectiveness of our systems to provide mission command during hurricane response, said Col. Jim Hawkins, senior domestic operations officer.

"We want to make sure the tools we have in place at the DOG and at the local level are in sync, that's why we take the time every year to focus on hurricane exercises," said Lt. Col. Mike Tomberlin with the DOG. "We have outside contractors come in every year to throw all kinds of situations at us, even things that we probably would never see, just to make sure we can respond to anything."

DOG organizes the exercise to remain prepared for any natural disaster that could occur in Alabama.

"HURREX is a DOG driven exercise," said Tomberlin. "The DOG was formed in April 2011 two weeks before the April 27 tornadoes, the worst natural disaster to ever hit the state. The governor and the adjutant general made the decision to have a standing group of people who are always focused on domestic operations whenever an event happens. The April 27 tornado response was recognized as being so good because we already had a group in place working towards things. Domestic response is the single most important mission in the state because we are helping our fellow citizens."

The Alabama Emergency Management Agency (AEMA) is in charge of the state's disaster response, but the Guard plays a major supporting role.

"We support civil authorities through tasking from the AEMA" said Hawkins. "The Guard's job in a natural disaster is to fill any gaps that are outside the capabilities of other state agencies. We provide any support state agencies need. We are likely to assist the Alabama Law Enforcement agency with our Military Police as well as support communities with distribution points passing out food, ice and water. We can do search and rescue and power generation using Army generators. There's a whole host of missions we can do."

The Guard plains and trains rigorously in order to remain in a state of readiness.

"We have a very deliberate process to prepare for hurricanes, which are one of the greatest threats our state can face," said Hawkins. "The National Guard is an intricate part of the states response plain and we go through a deliberate process to make sure we are ready all the way from the headquarters down to the individual soldier."

When the rubber meets the road this type of training benefits the citizens of Alabama in tangible and intangible ways.

"In a disaster situation, when you see the National Guard you start to feel that things are going to get better," said Tomberlin. "We are here to make things better. We serve the citizens. We are citizens ourselves. We care about this state and we see domestic response as one of the most important things we do."



FORT MCCLELLAN, Ala. - Alabama Army National Guard's 167th Theater Sustainment Command is participating in this year's Vibrant Response 17 from April 22 to May 12, 2017, at Fort McClellan Readiness Center in Anniston, Alabama. Vibrant Response 17 is an annual U.S. Northern Command (NORTHCOM) Chemical Biological Radiological Nuclear (CBRN) Response Command Post Exercise. The exercise allows various agencies to practice working together in order to properly respond to a disaster scenario. The exercise scenario this year was a large-scale terrorist attack on a major U.S. city.

The 167th TSC has been a regular player in the Vibrant Response exercises for the past few years. Each year the unit plays a role that is essential to the success of the exercise; they provide theater sustainment. Theater sustainment means providing troops and agencies the supplies they need to get their missions completed in order to save lives and prevent human suffering. Soldiers of the TSC coordinate the movement of troops, equipment, supplies, and other essentials into the area of operations.

"We are making sure things like food, water, showers, and medical equipment get to the lowest levels of troops that need them in order to accomplish their mission," said Lt. Col. Lisa Pierce, future operations officer, 167th TSC. Pierce works in the future operations center helping to interpret operations orders and coordinating proper dissemination of information.

The 167th TSC is comprised of not only Alabama National Guardsmen, but also active duty Army Soldiers. This relationship allows for fluid communication among all players in the exercise.

Maj. Gen. Allen Harrell, commanding general, 167th TSC, said that this relationship is beneficial because the active duty Soldiers bring a lot of the latest and greatest knowledge with them, and the traditional Guardsmen always bring helpful skills from their civilian job experiences.

This year, the Soldiers of the 167th TSC also trained on being completely self-sufficient while coordinating for others. This allows them to ensure that the supplies that are needed in emergency times are utilized in the most efficient way possible, and that the sustainers can sustain themselves without hindering the operation. The TSC has a full kitchen staff and, at times, the culinary specialists worked out of a new Containerized Kitchen (CK) in order to practice their ability to self-sustain.

This year's exercise combined several exercises into one, which allowed more interaction among every level of command, from strategic down to tactical. Harrell feels that this made the exercise even more realistic than it has been in the past. "This is the best exercise we've done in my time in command here, which has been about 30 months," he said.



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## Session XIV- Anniston

Below is the biography of the speaker for Session XIV, discussing the process for returning land to local communities for reuse after the closure of military installations due to Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC).

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### **Robin Scott**

Robin Scott is the Executive Director for the McClellan Development Authority.



## City could get 1,000 McClellan acres for recreation

*Eddie Burkhalter / Anniston Star*

*August 11, 2017*

Anniston City Council members could soon debate accepting about 1,000 acres of McClellan land for possible recreational use. Robin Scott, executive director of the McClellan Development Authority, prior to a meeting Friday told Anniston Mayor Jack Draper that the MDA's attorney will soon complete an agreement for the transfer of approximately 1,000 acres west of the Eastern Bypass portion of U.S. 431.

"The next step is yours," Scott told Draper. If the council approves the deal, the matter would go back before the MDA board for a final vote. Draper said the McClellan land would be a positive for the city, and could be used for hiking, cycling and possibly equestrian trails. "There are multiple uses, but it would be a great boon for the city. Great boon for tourism," Draper said.

The geography of the rolling, green land that includes Blue Mountain and borders northeastern Anniston isn't suited for use as commercial or retail property, but could connect by trails the city's municipal golf course, the Hill, and the Anniston museum complex, city officials have said. The MDA has classified the 1,000 or so acres as residential.

City Councilwoman Millie Harris said "there are a lot of possibilities for recreational groups to use this, but there has to be a plan." She said that plan remains to be developed, but that the possibilities for the land are myriad.

Other possible McClellan land deals remain to be negotiated, however. MDA board members met in the executive session Friday to discuss transfer of four McClellan tracts planned for commercial sites. Three plots are near Lowe's on Alabama 21 and a fourth is along what will be an extension of Iron Mountain Road.

Aaron Acker, MDA board member, after Friday's closed-door meeting, declined to discuss the details of the possible land deal, citing the need for continued negotiations, but sounded optimistic. "I don't see anything standing in the way" of the recreational land transfer, he said.

[https://www.annistonstar.com/news/anniston/city-could-get-mcclellan-acres-for-recreation/article\\_5764ba94-7edd-11e7-83fd-c3ec452e19a6.html](https://www.annistonstar.com/news/anniston/city-could-get-mcclellan-acres-for-recreation/article_5764ba94-7edd-11e7-83fd-c3ec452e19a6.html)

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The U.S. Army played taps to Fort McClellan years ago, but the property may be on the verge of a new type of reveille. Located in the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains, Fort McClellan is known mostly for its long run as an Army training camp, producing soldiers and officers of the Chemical Corps, Military Police and other ranks. For more than 81 years, thousands of American troops spent time at the Anniston base. These days the soldiers are gone, families have relocated and the once booming community is searching to regain its glory. After the 1980s, with shrinking defense budgets and ever-increasing costs, the U.S. military was forced to look for opportunities to decrease expenses. Officials on the Base Realignment and Closure Commission (BRAC) concluded the fort should be closed in the early 90s.

After unsuccessful votes in 1991 and 1993, this year marks the 20th anniversary of the BRAC decision to permanently close the fort in 1995. The official closing ceremony was held on Fort McClellan on May 20, 1999. In response to decaying former military bases in the state, then-Gov. Bob Riley signed a new law in 2009 authorizing development authorities to oversee development of property on military installations that were closed as the result of BRAC actions.

The McClellan Development Authority was created and charged with overseeing the economic development and growth of McClellan. In spring 2010, the MDA became a non-profit public corporation charged with the future economic development of the former fort. Since the MDA began overseeing the redevelopment of McClellan, more than 3,100 acres of property are back in use, 3,000 are currently available for sale, and a little more than 3,000 acres are set to go up for sale in the next three to five years, according to Robin Scott, MDA executive director.

Phil Webb, owner of Webb Concrete and Building Materials, an Anniston based company with locations across East Alabama, serves as the chairman of the MDA. "To me it is all about job creation and the redevelopment of McClellan," Webb said. "The process takes time but there are a lot of accomplishments to be proud of."

Since the creation of the MDA:

- 125 dilapidated structures been demolished,
- 197 acres of new industrial and commercial parcels,
- more than \$6.3 million in property has been sold, and
- more than 400 new jobs have been created.

Additionally, last year marked the end of a successful 11-year ordnance cleanup project, which opened nearly 2,800 additional acres of land for development; all completed with zero safety incidents. With the MDA leading the charge on the restoration and growth of McClellan, officials say the potential is immeasurable. There is confidence that soon McClellan can soon write a new chapter and the bugle can blow on a renewed lively, booming community.

<http://yellowhammernews.com/business-2/20-years-after-vote-to-close-fort-mcclellan-officials-are-making-progress-toward-a-revival/>





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## Session XV - Anniston

Below are the biographies of the panelists for Session XV, discussing how diverse segments of a community work together while reflecting on Anniston's Committee of Unified Leadership (C.O.U.L) during the 1960-70s.

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### Mauldine Holloway

Mauldine Holloway is director fo the Community Enabler Developer, an Anniston nonprofit that provides food, clothing and other care for those in need. Holloway started working in the 1950s with Anniston's poorest for the General Board of Global Ministries, an outreach program of the Methodist Church. Community Enabler Developer became a nonprofit in 1981. Holloway also serves as Secretary of the Community Advisory Group-Consent Decree for the Anniston PCB EPA Superfund Site and was a long time member of C.O.U.L.



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### Rev. Chris K. Hartley

Rev. Chris K. Hartley is the Rector, Saint Michaels and All Angels Episcopal Church in West Anniston. Rev. Hartley is a Birmingham native who worked frequently in the Anniston area as a medical device representative until 2011, when he began seminary. Prior to this, Rev. Hartley worked four years as a youth leader before becoming a Baptist minister in 1991 at 20 years old before joining a church in the Episcopal Diocese of Alabama



Rev. Hartley holds a Bachelor's from Samford University and a Master Divinity from The University of the South.

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## Rev. Benjamin Little

Rev. Benjamin Little is a member of the Anniston City Council representing Ward 3. Rev. Little was first elected to the City Council in 2000 and reelected in 2004 and 2008. After losing to a challenger in 2012, he was again elected to represent Ward 3 in 2016. Rev. Little is Pastor of Refuge Full Gospel Methodist Church.



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## Tom Potts

Tom Potts is the President of Potts Marketing. Tom has worked in sports marketing for both Clemson and UNC. He has extensive experience in sales management, advertising, marketing, news production, branding, and public relations as well as a broad background in internet strategies, television, cable, radio, direct marketing, trade publications, newspaper, and image development. An Anniston native, his father was a former President of C.O.U.L.



Potts is an alumnus of The University of the South with studies at University College, Oxford.



# Gadsden, Alabama



The city of Gadsden is located on the Coosa River and serves as the county seat of Etowah County. It was originally founded as a small parcel of land in 1825 but soon transformed into an important city along the east border of the state.

Gadsden's economy was comprised mostly of heavy labor, including Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company and Republic Steel, yet it was negatively transformed after most major industries shut down in the 1970s and 80s. Now, Gadsden serves, in addition to a hub for different industries, as a major stopping point between Atlanta, Birmingham, and Chattanooga.



## Quick Facts

**Population:** 36,856

**Racial Composition:** 57.3% White, 36.3% Black or African American, 0.4% Native American, 0.6% Asian, 0.4% Pacific Islander, 3.2% from other races, and 1.9% from two or more races. 5.4% of the population was Hispanic or Latino of any race.

**Median Age:** 39

**County:** Etowah (county seat)

**Random Trivia:** Above Noccochula Falls is a nine-foot-tall bronze statue of a young Cherokee woman, Noccochula, who, according to local legends, plunged to her death after being ordered by her father to marry a man she did not love.

## Alabama



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## Session XVI - Gadsden

Below is the biography of the speaker for Session XVI, discussing the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Restoration Act.

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### Lilly Ledbetter

Lilly Ledbetter was born in a house with no running water or electricity in the small town of Possum Trot, Alabama. In 1979, with two young children at home and over the initial objections of her husband Charles, Lilly began working at Goodyear tire factory as one of the first women hired at the management level. Though she faced daily gender prejudice and sexual harassment, Lilly pressed onward, believing that eventually things would change.

Nineteen years after her first day at Goodyear, Lilly received an anonymous note revealing that she was making thousands less per year than the men in her position. She filed a sex discrimination case against Goodyear, which she initially won and then heartbreakingly lost on appeal. Over the next eight years, her case made it all the way to the Supreme Court, where she lost again: the court ruled that she should have filed suit within 180 days of her first unequal paycheck--despite the fact that she had no way of knowing that she was being paid unfairly all those years. In a dramatic moment, Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg read her dissent from the bench, urging Lilly to fight back. And fight Lilly did, becoming the namesake of Barack Obama's first official piece of legislation as president. Today, she is a tireless advocate for change, traveling the country to urge women and minorities to claim their civil rights.



The first piece of real legislation Barack Obama signed as the 44th President of the United States helps ensure that workers discriminated on the basis of gender have a fair chance to sue their employers. The Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act is named after a woman who was paid less than her male co-workers at an Alabama tire factory. Ledbetter did not set out to be an activist; she did not even involve herself in politics much. But after the Supreme Court ruled against her, she decided it was time to start. (See pictures of Barack Obama's Inauguration.)

Fast Facts:

- Lives in Jacksonville, Ala. and is 70 years old, a mother and grandmother. Her husband died in December.
- Hired at the Alabama Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company in 1979 and worked as an overnight supervisor (7 p.m. to 7 a.m.) for nearly two decades.
- During her career at Goodyear, Ledbetter suffered sexual harassment and day-to-day discrimination. She testified before Congress in 2007 that a supervisor once asked for sexual favors in return for good job performance evaluations. After Ledbetter complained about the supervisor to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), he was reassigned, but Ledbetter said she felt isolated at work and experienced a long-term pattern of discrimination.
- Got periodic pay raises, but all compensation information was kept confidential at her company. She received a Top Performance Award in 1996.
- Shortly before she was due to retire in 1998, an anonymous co-worker slipped a note into her mailbox at work comparing her pay against that of three other male counterparts. Ledbetter was making \$3,727 per month, while men doing the same job were paid \$4,286 to \$5,236 per month. Ledbetter filed a complaint with the EEOC and was then assigned to lift heavy tires, which she felt was retribution.
- Sued Goodyear, which claimed it paid Ledbetter less than other male workers because she was not a good worker. A jury awarded Ledbetter about \$3.3 million, but the amount was later reduced to around \$300,000. Subsequently, the Supreme Court voted 5-4 that Ledbetter was not entitled to compensation because she filed her claim more than 180 days after receiving her first discriminatory paycheck.
- The new bill changes the Civil Rights Act so that workers can sue up to 180 days after receiving any discriminatory paycheck.
- Met Obama while he was a senator and campaigned on his behalf. Obama and the future First Lady talked about Ledbetter regularly on the stump and the Alabama native rode with Obama as he took a celebratory train trip to Washington, D.C. before the inauguration. Ledbetter attended the inauguration and danced with the President at a ball afterwards.
- Says that she lives paycheck to paycheck; has no expectation of ever getting any restitution from Goodyear Tire.

<http://content.time.com/time/nation/article/0,8599,1874954,00.html>

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The challenges and benefits of being a woman are different through the country. Things such as the gender wage gap, poverty, healthcare and education can make life harder for women. Those factors are among the ones looked at by 24/7 Wall Street in its ranking of the best – and worst - places to be a woman.

To identify the worst U.S. metro areas for women, 24/7 Wall St. looked at six various measures of income, educational attainment, health, and environmental factors. The index includes median female earnings as a percent of median male earnings, the share of women with at least a bachelor's degree, the share of 3 and 4-year olds enrolled in preschool, the uninsured rate among women aged 64 and under, female life expectancy, and the infant mortality rate.

First, the good news

The top 10 cities for women were

- |                                       |                                     |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Ithaca, NY                         | 6. Ames, IA                         |
| 2. San Francisco-Oakland-Hayward, CA  | 7. Ann Arbor, MI                    |
| 3. Iowa City, IA                      | 8. Boston-Cambridge-Newton, MA-NH   |
| 4. Boulder, CO                        | 9. Burlington-South Burlington, VT  |
| 5. San Jose-Sunnyvale-Santa Clara, CA | 10. Bridgeport-Stamford-Norwalk, CT |

Female earnings in Ithaca are about 80 percent of men's and 54 percent of the women in the city - home to Ithaca College - have at least a bachelor's degree. Seventy-one percent of 3 and 4 years olds are enrolled in Pre-K, as compared to the national average of less than 50 percent. Among the top 10, the city with the smallest gender pay gap was Iowa City, Iowa, where women earned 86.3 percent of what men earned. The national average is around 80 percent.

Now for the bad news

The bottom 9 cities for women were:

- |                                 |                     |
|---------------------------------|---------------------|
| 2. Michigan City-La Porte, IN   | 7. Lake Charles, LA |
| 3. Shreveport-Bossier City, LA  | 8. Florence, SC     |
| 4. McAllen-Edinburg-Mission, TX | 9. Macon, Georgia   |
| 5. Idaho Falls, ID              | 10. Odessa, Texas   |
| 6. Lake Havasu City-Kingman, AZ |                     |

The worst city in America to be a woman...Gadsden.

Gadsden, the county seat of Etowah County, was ranked as the worst place in America to be a woman. In Gadsden, the average woman earned 73.4 percent of what the average man earned. In Gadsden, only 16.9 percent of women have bachelor's degrees, a little more than half the corresponding national rate of 30.9 percent. Higher levels of educational attainment are linked to better jobs, higher incomes, stronger social connections, and healthier lives.

Slightly more than 48 percent of 3 and 4-year-olds in Gadsden are enrolled in pre-school. Studies show early educational programs promote learning throughout a student's school life. Life expectancy among Gadsden's female population is only 75.3 years old, well below the 80.8-year life expectancy among women nationwide. At 11.8 infant deaths for every 1,000 live births, Gadsden's infant mortality rate is also higher than in all but three other metro areas.

<http://www.al.com/news/index.ssf/2017/09/alabama-city-named-worst-place-1.html>



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BURT JONES  
**RURAL COMMUNITY  
EXPERIENCE**

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THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**ALABAMA** | Division of  
Student Life  
Blackburn Institute

## Session XVII - Gadsden

Below is the biography of the speaker for Session XVII, providing an overview of S.P.A.N., whose mission is to significantly reduce commitment of juvenile offenders to state correctional institutions.

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### **Kevin Blackwell**

Kevin Blackwell is Program Coordinator for Special Programming Achievement Network (S.P.A.N.) for at-risk students. He has led the program for two years, having served in various capacities at SPAN since 1998. Kevin is also a board member of the Etowah County Children's Policy Council a non-profit organization dedicated to identifying and helping fill the needs of local families and children.

One local agency aimed at helping at-risk students is opening its doors Wednesday for an open house. The public can visit the Special Programming for Achievement Network, at 607 S. 12th St. in the old Gadsden High School building, from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Wednesday.

Since Kevin Blackwell took over as program coordinator in July, he said he's been trying to let the community know about SPAN's work, and some of the students will be available to talk about it firsthand. "We'll have some students here volunteering, taking people on tours and talking about what we do," Blackwell said. Refreshments also will be served.

SPAN was established in Gadsden in 1981. It helps students who have been through the juvenile court system obtain a degree. "About 80 percent of our kids come from the juvenile justice system, and it can be for something as simple as truancy or for something more serious," Blackwell said. The program works with the students academically and behaviorally to teach them life skills and try to help them avoid incarceration.

"The other 20 percent of our students is because we're getting schools that call us because they have students that they think might benefit," Blackwell said. "You don't have to be on probation, but most of our students are." Despite that, Blackwell said there's a misconception about the school environment. He said people expect it to be a loud and chaotic place. "It's one of the quietest places you'll find, guaranteed," he said.

Blackwell said between 80 and 85 percent of the program's students earn a GED or return to school and avoid further legal trouble. Nine other programs have been founded around the state because of Gadsden's success. Blackwell has been with SPAN since 1998, and he's seen the number of staff members cut from nine to four because of budget cuts and retirements. As the new director, he has a number of goals for the future, including assembling a board and more rewards and activities for the students, like field trips. "We're working hard, doing what we do," Blackwell said.

<http://www.gadsdentimes.com/article/DA/20151024/news/603233171/GT/>

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# BURT JONES RURAL COMMUNITY EXPERIENCE

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THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**ALABAMA** | Division of  
Student Life  
Blackburn Institute

## Session XVIII - Gadsden

Below are the biographies of the panelists for Session XVIII, discussing unions and organized labor in Alabama.

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### David Hayes

David Hayes is President of United Steelworkers (USW) Local 12L. David has 42 years of service with Goodyear and worked as a production worker for 25 years along with serving three terms as Division A Chairman, three terms as Local 12L President and numerous terms as a member of the Local 12L Executive Board. David has participated in over 15 contract negotiations and served as a member of the Steelworker International R/PIC advisory board. David is also a member of the Northeast Alabama Labor Council. He is married to Valerie Hayes and has a son, Jordan



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### Eric Hubbard

Eric "Big E" Hubbard is Division B Chairman for USW Local 12L. Eric began his Goodyear career at the Union City, TN plant and transferred to the Gadsden plant when Union City was closed in 2010. He served in the United States Navy as a Navy Seal for 12 years prior to being employed by Goodyear and currently has 24 years service. Eric has worked as a production employee for 22 years and has served as Division Chairman for 2 years. He is currently serving on the Northeast Alabama Labor Council and also serves on the Local 12L Civil Rights Committee. Eric is married to Tammy Hubbard and has 3 daughters.



## **Bren Riley**

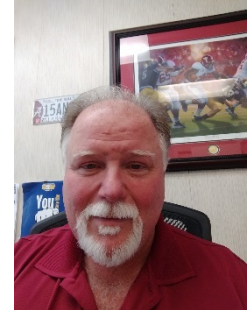
Bren Riley is the President of the 65,000 member Alabama American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO). Bren previously served as Secretary-Treasurer from 2011 to 2015, when he was appointed to the presidency becoming the first member from USW Local 12L to be elected to the two highest offices. Previously, he served Local 12 as Vice-President and Division C Chairman. Bren is a former employee of Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company.



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## **Tony Townsend**

Tony Townsend is Division E Chairman for USW Local 12L. Tony has been employed by Goodyear for 37 years, serving as a Maintenance Mechanic for 35 years and as Division E Chairman for 2 years. He is a graduate of the Gadsden Apprenticeship Program and has served on the Local 12L Executive Board and the Northeast Alabama Labor Council. Tony also serves on the Region 2 Workforce Development Board and is a board member of The United Way of Etowah County. He is married to Lisa Townsend and has 1 daughter and 3 grandchildren.





## Gadsden Goodyear workers' union authorizes strike

*William Thornton | al.com*

*April 21, 2017*

The union that represents workers at Gadsden's Goodyear plant voted this week to authorize a strike. The vote with United Steelworkers Local 12L was taken ahead of contract negotiations scheduled to take place this year. The last contract negotiations with the company were in 2013 over a four-year deal, which was reached on the day before the existing contract was set to expire.

The vote is part of the negotiation process. Voting at the local took place over two days. The vote totals this week, according to the union, were 99 percent yes. Goodyear-Gadsden manufactures radial light truck and passenger tires and employs approximately 1,550 associates. Goodyear has operated in Gadsden since 1929.

[http://www.al.com/business/index.ssf/2017/04/gadsden\\_goodyear\\_workers\\_union.html](http://www.al.com/business/index.ssf/2017/04/gadsden_goodyear_workers_union.html)

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## Steelworkers local approves new Goodyear contract

*William Thornton | al.com*

*August 24, 2017*

The United Steelworkers Local 12 in Gadsden approved a new five-year master labor contract with Goodyear this week. The local approved the master contract by 87 percent, to 13 percent against, and approved the local agreement 89 percent, to 11 percent against. Goodyear announced July 29 that it and the United Steelworkers reached a tentative agreement on a new five-year master labor contract covering nearly 7,000 workers at five plants in the U.S.

USW members at the five plants covered by the contract, including plants in Kansas, North Carolina, Virginia and Ohio, were required to ratify it. David Hayes, president of the Local 12 L, said all five locals had approved the contract. "In my 42 years, this is one of the best contracts we've negotiated," he said. "We got a general wage increase, a five-year plant guarantee, there was only a small increase in insurance."

Goodyear-Gadsden manufactures radial light truck and passenger tires and employs approximately 1,550 associates. Goodyear has operated in Gadsden since 1929.

[http://www.al.com/business/index.ssf/2017/08/steelworkers\\_local\\_approves\\_ne.html](http://www.al.com/business/index.ssf/2017/08/steelworkers_local_approves_ne.html)



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# BURT JONES RURAL COMMUNITY EXPERIENCE

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THE UNIVERSITY OF  
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Blackburn Institute

## Session XIX - Gadsden

Below are the biographies of the speakers for Session XIX, discussing the process for closing three separate high schools in the Gadsden City School System to form one consolidated Gadsden City High School.

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### **Catina Bett**

Catina Bett was a student during the first year of the consolidated Gadsden City High School and a member of it's inaguaral graduating class.

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### **Keith Blackwell**

Keith Blackwell is Director of Operations for Gadsden City Schools Central Office. During his career as an educator, he has served as a science teacher and basketball coach at Gadsden High School, an assistant principal at both Gadsden High and Gadsden City High, and most recently served as the principal at Gadsden City High School.

Blackwell is an alumnus of a Jacksonville State University with a Bachelor's Degree in Forensic Science and a Master's Degree in General Science. He also holds an Administrative Degree from the University of Alabama.



### **Dr. Ed Miller**

Dr. Ed Miller is Superintendent of the Gadsden City Schools System.



## Tony Reddick

Tony Reddick is a 29 year veteran educator and Director of Student Services for the Gadsden City School System. Tony began his career in Gadsden City Schools as an elementary art teacher and high school math and French teacher. He is a former French and Latin teacher, assistant and head basketball coach, and assistant principal at the former Gadsden high School. Tony has served as principal at Litchfield High School and J.K. Weaver Technical Center, and supervised the Secondary Alternative School. Just prior to his role as the Director of Student Services, Tony supervised the Parent Teacher Resource Center and directed the Gadsden City Schools' Mentoring, and English Language Learners programs.



Reddick is an alumnus of Talladega College (Bachelor's in Mathematics, Minor in foreign language) and Jacksonville State University (MA in Mathematics Education and certification in Education Administration) where he is currently a candidate for the Educational Specialist degree.

A new consolidated high school is reversing a trend of white flight from Gadsden schools as students come back for a wide range of advanced placement courses, fine arts offerings and athletic choices. That is the message given Lawrence County school board members by the principal of newly opened Gadsden City High School Dr. Ed Miller and Gadsden Supt. of Education Dr. Bob Russell.

Lawrence County Supt. of Education Dexter Rutherford took school board members Dr. Beth Vinson, Wendell Logan and Member-Elect Gary Bradford to look at the new 1,550-student school Monday. Board chairman Jackie Burch and Member Bobby Diggs were not able to make the trip. The Gadsden system has about the same number of students Lawrence County has. It was also operating under a long-standing desegregation order by the federal courts. Miller said problems associated with that order prompted officials to begin the process of combining the city's three high schools into one. Gadsden City High was formed from Emma Sansom High, Gadsden High and Litchfield High.

One had been predominantly black, one predominantly white and one about 50-50. Of the previous schools, one had an enrollment of about 350, one had about 450 and one had about 700. "You can obviously offer more electives in a school of 700 than you can in a school of 350, and that was causing problems," Miller said. Miller said the judge quickly agreed to remove the court order and move the system to unitary status when it finalized plans to build the single high school.

The new school's student population is 58% black. Miller said the system had been losing students to the surrounding Etowah County system, which is about 90% white. However, he said significant numbers of white students have returned to the system to take advantage of a wide range of courses and activities the system is now able to offer since the high schools consolidated.

Miller said the school has gained about 50 students from the combined enrollment last year. Twelve students have transferred from private schools since the beginning of the school year. Gadsden schools had previously offered only one foreign language. Now they offer all high school students four: Spanish, French, German and Latin. The school has a fine arts wing with a piano lab where school board members saw about 20 students taking piano lessons at the same time.

In addition to piano and band, the school offers choral classes and string instruction (violin and cello). It has a 200-member choral group. The science wing houses upto date labs for chemistry, biology and physics. One hallway is dubbed the "Freshman Academy" and all ninth-grade classes are restricted to that hall. The building has a 777-seat auditorium with full theatrical stage equipment for plays, performances and community events.

Miller said many parents questioned security of a larger combined school. "We've had two students suspended for fighting since we opened," he said. "We had a lot more than that by this time last year in the three schools we had before." Assistant principals' offices are distributed around the building. Security cameras allow observation of almost the entire building. The school has three school resource officers.

Russell said school officials went to the community to sell parents on the idea of the consolidated school. Back "It was simple," he said. "We convinced them it would provide a better education for their children. We get to offer so much more coursewise that students are better prepared." Russell said athletics was a concern for some parents.

"You can only have one quarterback on the team," he said. Miller said now athletics is a drawing card for the school because it offers wider choices. "We have a full-fledged ninthgrade football team and a JV team that plays a full schedule," he said. "They compete and develop on their level rather than throwing a ninth-grader into varsity pay before he is ready."

The varsity football team was defeated in the first round of the state playoffs. A committee of students from each of the three old high schools was formed to choose the school's name, school colors, a nickname and a mascot. "Their only rule was that it couldn't be from any of the old schools," he said. They chose the Titans.

Miller said combining the schools did not "save" any money. "It's not like you are going to be able to put money in a savings account," he said. "It is just you are putting the money you are spending to much better use. You get the benefit of volume." Lawrence County board members are considering alternatives for reorganizing county schools. Earlier this year, they had discussed consolidating schools so the county has three high schools instead of the current seven.

Rutherford is now suggesting they consider two high schools. One would be on the current East Lawrence campus. Speake's 9- 12 students would be combined there. The other five high schools in the county would be combined into a new school that would be built somewhere northwest of Moulton. That school would have about 850 students and would have a ratio of about 60/40 white to black students.

East Lawrence would have about 700 students and would be about 70/30 white to black. If such a proposal was implemented, students from Moulton Middle School would be moved to the current LCHS campus. A state bond issue that is expected next spring would provide financing for the project. The school board will consider proposals at a coming work session. They recently designated Birmingham architectural firm Goodwyn, Mills and Caewood to design future projects.

[http://www.moultonadvertiser.com/news/article\\_ff1ec53b-0279-5fa3-980a-f28a98b9e5b2.html](http://www.moultonadvertiser.com/news/article_ff1ec53b-0279-5fa3-980a-f28a98b9e5b2.html)

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Hunter: Gadsden schools have successes, challenges

*Dustin Fox / The Gadsden Times*

*June 28, 2017*

State Board of Education member Mary Scott Hunter spoke of Gadsden City Schools' successes and challenges in a speech Wednesday to the Gadsden Kiwanis Club. "We're having tough discussions in Gadsden City," said Hunter, who represents District 8, which includes Etowah County, on the board. Hunter's presentation centered on the challenges Alabama is facing, while also highlighting some of the successes the state has had with K-12 and tech schools.

She spoke of retention rates and test scores — many of which show Gadsden City Schools ranked higher or equal to the state average.

For example, she provided data comparing Gadsden City Schools' results in 2016 ACT testing to the state averages, as far as meeting or exceeding benchmarks:

- English: State 50 percent, Gadsden City 44 percent.
- Reading: State 32 percent, Gadsden City 29 percent.
- Math: State 22 percent, Gadsden City 19 percent.
- Science: State 22 percent, Gadsden City 22 percent.
- Met all benchmarks: Gadsden City 16 percent, state 15 percent.

She also noted that Gadsden City Schools' students exceed the state average for attending college after high school graduation. Hunter's speech focused on engaging in conversations that will help find solutions using correct information and data. She told The Times that same practice should be used by the members of the Gadsden City Board of Education in their search for a new superintendent to replace Dr. Ed Miller, whose contract isn't being renewed.

"The board has the right to choose who they want," Hunter said, adding that members need to handle the situation professionally to make the best decision. "It's important that everybody — all the stakeholders, all the members of the board — just take a deep breath," she said, adding that "when and if



they decide to move on, they need to work it out with Dr. Miller.” Hunter said Miller is an accomplished professional and the board should honor that.

“At the same time, if the board wishes to move on, that’s their prerogative,” she said. “It’s just really important that everybody take a deep breath, be calm and be professional.” Hunter said a lot of “loose talk” will make it “harder to go out and find a new (superintendent).” she said.

Her speech expanded beyond education, touching on how communities can work together and use accurate data to reach their goals. “Talking about hard problems using good data is the first step to solving problems,” she said. Hunter also presented data showing the significant difference between Gadsden City Schools’ students classified as non-poverty and poverty in meeting benchmark ACT scores.

<http://www.gadsdentimes.com/news/20170628/hunter-gadsden-schools-have-successes-challenges>

## 1,600+ ATTEND GADSDEN CITY HIGH SCHOOL ORIENTATIONS

If there was any question about the level of interest in the new Gadsden City High School, that question has been answered. More than 1,600 students and parents attended four orientation sessions held by the Gadsden City Board of Education in late January at the Senior Citizens Building in Downtown Gadsden.

"I have said from the beginning that we were counting on student and parent involvement to help make our school a major success," said Dr. Ed Miller, GCHS principal. "I was thrilled with the amount of interest and enthusiasm the crowd expressed and am confident that we are on our way to a fantastic first year in 2006-2007."

The orientations were organized by current grade level. Current ninth-graders attended an orientation on January 19, eighth-graders on January 23, 10<sup>th</sup>-graders on January 26, and 11<sup>th</sup>-graders on January 30.

Hand-outs included a Spring 2006 Calendar of Events, which listed dates for SGA elections, band tryouts, cheerleading tryouts, spring training camps, and more. Also distributed were proposed curriculum paths for standard, academic, and advanced academic diplomas, and a detailed course options list,



Paula Reynolds (sitting) and Mamie Bolding Miller, GCHS girls' soccer coach, (standing) answer questions and provide information on girls' athletics.



Superintendent Bob Russell shows parents and current eighth-grade students images of the new GCHS campus.

containing more than 150 courses that will be offered at Gadsden City High School.

During each of the orientations, Gadsden City Schools Superintendent Bob Russell, Miller, and other officials, gave an overview of the new school campus and its coursework. They discussed athletics, fine arts, and security, and answered questions from the crowd.

Following the presentations, those in attendance were invited to visit 16 information booths to gather materials on everything from athletics to family and consumer sciences.

Also available were brochures on computer electronics, automotive service technology, cosmetology, advanced placement courses, diploma/exit options, health science, foreign language, Team Titan, band auditions, choral auditions, business/marketing education, guidance assistance, sports schedules, and more.

For more information on Gadsden City High School, visit [www.gcs.k12.al.us/gchs.asp](http://www.gcs.k12.al.us/gchs.asp) or call GCHS offices at 549-2977.

### In This Issue of The Report

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Gadsden City High School Orientations .....                    | 1 |
| Students Tour GCHS .....                                       | 2 |
| GCHS Spring Calendar of Events .....                           | 2 |
| Emma Sansom Symphonic Band Performs for State Convention ..... | 3 |
| GCHS Extra-Curricular Activities .....                         | 3 |
| GCHS Course Listing .....                                      | 4 |



## STUDENTS TAKE FIRST TOUR OF GCHS - LEAVE THEIR PERMANENT MARK

**M**ore than 120 students from the Gadsden, Litchfield, and Emma Sansom Key Clubs, along with Team Titan members, and local Kiwanis Club members, participated recently in the first student tour of the new Gadsden City High School.

The group gathered on campus at 10:30 a.m., Saturday, February 11 for the tour. Talmadge James, site project manager for Gary C. Wyatt, Inc., the general contractor overseeing the construction project, told those present that the day held special significance, as it was the exact same date in 2005 that the first footing of what would become

GCHS was poured.

Led by Dr. Ed Miller, GCHS principal, and officials from Gary C. Wyatt, Inc., the students then saw the school's Fine Arts wing which contains areas such as the 800-seat auditorium, two gymnasiums, the cafeteria, JROTC facilities, music practice halls, and art

studios.

After the tour, attendees participated in a drawing for new Gadsden City High School t-shirts and were each given a "Together We are the Titans" bracelet to mark the occasion.

Following the drawing, the staff of Gary C. Wyatt led the group in a floor signing ceremony, inviting each present to sign their name and leave a message on the sub-floor in the lobby of the main gymnasium. The event is a tradition Gary C. Wyatt, Inc. encourages at each of the large schools that it builds.

Although their signatures will soon be covered with tile, those who participated will always know what lies beneath. Someday, perhaps 50 years from now, when the tile is replaced, their signatures and messages will again be read, only this time, by an entirely new generation of Titans.



*Mayor Steve Means, the first president of the Gadsden High Key Club, makes his mark.*



*Students from the three high schools socialize as a Key Club member signs the GCHS sub-floor.*

## GCHS SPRING CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### February 23 - March 3

Danceline Clinic  
First United Methodist Church of Gadsden  
Russ Waits

### March 2

Drumline Tryout Parent Mtg. - 6:00 p.m.  
Gadsden State CC Band Room  
Russ Waits

### March 6

Danceline Practice Audition - 3:30 p.m.  
First United Methodist Church of Gadsden  
Russ Waits

### March 7

Danceline Tryouts - 5:00 p.m.  
First United Methodist Church of Gadsden  
Russ Waits

### March 8-10

Team Titan Interviews - 3:30 - 8:00  
Family Life Center, First Baptist Church  
Kim Back

### March 9

Drumline Clinic - 3:30  
Gadsden State CC Band Room  
Russ Waits

### March 9

Optional Cheerleader Dance Clinic - 3:30 - 5:30  
First United Methodist Church of Gadsden  
Staci Gardner

### March 13

Drum Major Tryout Parent Meeting - 5:00 p.m.  
First United Methodist Church of Gadsden  
Russ Waits

### March 13

Colorguard/Drum Parent Meeting - 6:00 p.m.  
First United Methodist Church of Gadsden  
Russ Waits

### March 13 - 15

SGA Campaigns  
Local High Schools & Middle Schools

### March 13-16

Cheerleader Clinic - 3:30 - 5:30  
First United Methodist Church of Gadsden  
Staci Gardner

### March 14

Drumline Clinic - 3:30  
Gadsden State CC Band Room  
Russ Waits

### March 16

Drumline Part Audition - 3:30 p.m.  
Gadsden State CC Band Room  
Russ Waits

### March 16

SGA Elections  
Local High Schools & Middle Schools

### March 17

Cheerleader Tryouts - 9:00  
Gadsden State CC Gym  
Staci Gardner

### March 27

SGA Results announced  
Local High Schools & Middle Schools

### March 27-April 14

Boys' Basketball Spring Camp  
Location TBA  
Reginald Huff

### March 27-March 31

Colorguard/Drum Major Clinic - 3:30 - 5:30  
First United Methodist Church of Gadsden  
Russ Waits

### April 3

Colorguard Practice Audition - 3:30 p.m.  
First United Methodist Church of Gadsden  
Russ Waits

### April 4

Colorguard/Drum Major Tryouts - 4:00 p.m.  
First United Methodist Church of Gadsden  
Russ Waits

### April 24-May 19

Football Spring Training  
Murphree Stadium  
Joe Billingsley

### May 9 - May 20

Girls' Basketball Spring Camp  
Location TBA  
Jeremy Brooks

### Contacts

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Joe Billingsley 549-2977 or 547-5446  
Emma Sansom Office 546-3316  
Gadsden High Office 547-5446  
Litchfield Office 492-3061

## GADSDEN SCHOOL BOARD ANNOUNCES GCHS APPOINTMENTS

The Gadsden City Board of Education recently announced nine key appointments for the new Gadsden City High School. Dr. Ed Miller, Terry Harris, and Danny Kimble will assume their positions immediately. The other staff members will complete the 2005-2006 school year in their current posts before joining the GCHS staff full-time.



**Dr. Ed Miller** has been named **Assistant Superintendent-Transitional Principal** for the new Gadsden City High School. Miller, who has been serving as assistant superintendent of Gadsden City Schools, has more than

25 years of experience in education. He served as principal of Gadsden High School from 1992 to 1998, prior to which he worked as a principal, teacher, and coach in the Cherokee County School System.

Miller holds a bachelor's degree from Jacksonville State University, as well as master's and doctorate-level degrees from the University of Alabama.

His professional involvement includes serving as president of the Council for Leaders in Alabama Schools and vice-president of the Alabama Association of Middle-Level Administrators. In 2001, he was chief executive officer for the national Safe Schools Forum Training program and is currently an adjunct professor at Jacksonville State University, teaching education leadership classes.



**Terry Harris** has been named **Coordinator of Secondary Schools** for the Gadsden City School System. Harris, who has more than 30 years experience in education, has served the last 12 years as principal of Emma

Sansom High School.

He is past president of the Alabama Association of Secondary School Principals and serves on the Advisory Board to the State Superintendent of Education. Harris is a member of the Board of Directors of CLAS (Council for Leaders in Alabama Schools). He was recently awarded the 2005 CLAS State Leadership Award for Secondary School Principals.

Harris is a 1961 graduate of Emma Sansom High School. He was inducted into the Emma Sansom Wall of Fame in 1998 and is a 2003 inductee into the Etowah County Sports Hall of Fame. He holds a bachelor's degree from Jacksonville State University and a master's degree from the University of Alabama.



**Danny Kimble** has been named **Athletic Director** for Gadsden City High School. Kimble was the head football coach and athletic director at Litchfield High School from 1996 to 2005. He served as assistant football, head women's basketball, and

head men's basketball coach at Gadsden High School between 1983 and 1996.

Kimble is a 1970 Emma Sansom High School graduate, where he lettered in football, basketball, and track. He played football for Florence State University (University of North Alabama) from 1970 to 1973. Kimble holds bachelor's and master's degrees from UNA.

Kimble spent one year playing for the Chicago Bears and the World Football League's Jacksonville (FL) Express.

Kimble was the 2004-2005 president of the Alabama High School Athletic Directors and Coaches Association. When GCHS opens in 2006, he will be one of a handful of Alabama athletic directors considered to be a Certified Athletic Administrator.



**Joe Billingsley** will be the **Head Football Coach** for the new Gadsden City High School Titans. Billingsley has been the head football coach and athletic director at Gadsden High School since 2002. He was the head football coach at

Gordo High School from 1997 to 2001, where his team won the 2001 2A State Championship.

Billingsley served as the offensive line coach for Jacksonville State University from 1989 to 1997. During his tenure, Jacksonville won the 1992 Division II National Championship and was the runner up in both 1989 and 1991.

Billingsley played for JSU from 1984 to 1987, and received his bachelor's degree from Jacksonville in 1988. He graduated from Millport High School in 1983 and was a member of the 1983 high school state championship team.

*continued on page 2*

### In This Issue of The Report

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| Gadsden City Board new appointments .. | 1-2 |
| Disque students recognized ..          | 3   |
| JROTC ..                               | 3   |
| GCHS update ..                         | 4   |



## NEW GADSDEN CITY HIGH SCHOOL APPOINTMENTS

*continued from page 1*



**Reginald Huff** has been named the new Gadsden City High School **Boys' Varsity Basketball Coach**. Currently in his 11th year at Litchfield High School, Huff has led the LHS boys' varsity team to many titles including six regional championships and two state runner-up awards. He was also named The Gadsden Times "Coach of the Year" in 2004.

A 1984 graduate of Gadsden High School and member of the GHS 1983 State Championship team, Huff was named the 1985 Gadsden State Community College Basketball MVP. He holds a bachelor's degree from Birmingham-Southern College (BSC). While at BSC, he was named Defensive Player of the Year and broke five school records, three of which still stand. In 2003, he was inducted into the Birmingham-Southern Hall of Fame.

Huff also has a P.E. certification from Jacksonville State University and is currently pursuing his master's at the University of Alabama.



**Jeremy Brooks** has been named **Girls' Varsity Basketball Coach** for Gadsden City High School. He will soon begin his seventh year in the same capacity at Emma Sansom High School.

Brooks' teams have won the Area Championship three out of the last four seasons. They have appeared in the Northeast Regional playoffs twice,

advancing to the Finals' elite eight in 2004 and sweet sixteen in 2002. His record includes three, 23-plus-win seasons in the last four years, with his 2005 team finishing the season with a 27-5 record.

The Alabama High School Athletic Association selected Brooks to coach in the 2005 North v. South All-Star Basketball game. In both 2002 and 2004 he was a finalist for Class 4A Girls' Basketball Coach of the Year.

A 1993 graduate of ESHS, Brooks was a member of the 1992 State Basketball Championship team. He holds a bachelor's degree from Auburn University and a master's degree from the University of Alabama.



**Staci Gardner** was named **Head Ninth-Grade, Junior Varsity, Varsity, and Competitive Cheerleading Coach** for Gadsden City High School. She currently is the varsity cheerleading coach at Gadsden High School as well as the health science teacher at Emma Sansom, Gadsden, and Litchfield high schools.

Gardner is an Emma Sansom High School graduate. While in school, Gardner cheered for 10 years, and was head cheerleader her high school junior and senior years. She also cheered for Gadsden State Community College. Under her direction, the Gadsden High School varsity squad won both the 2004 regional and national cheerleading championships.

She is a 1995 graduate of the University of Alabama at Birmingham's Respiratory Therapy program and has a Level 4

(master's) Career Technical Certification in Health Science. She also holds an American Association of Cheerleading Coaches and Advisors safety and technical judge certification, and a National Cheerleading Association coaches' certification. She is currently president-elect of the Alabama Association of Career/Technical Education – Health Science Division.



**Paul Edmondson**, the new **Performing Arts Director** for Gadsden City High School, will oversee the choral, band, and drama departments. In 1979, he began his career as the choral director at Emma Sansom High School. While holding this position, he also taught music at Mitchell, Walnut Park, and Floyd elementary schools.

In addition, he served as the choral director at General Forrest Middle for 10 years. Edmondson has been the assistant principal at Emma Sansom since 1995.

Under his direction, the ESHS choirs have consistently won superior ratings at district and state festivals. They have also had several notable performances, including the White House Christmas party and the Vienna Youth and Music Festival held in Vienna, Austria.

A 1975 graduate of Gadsden High School, Edmondson also holds a bachelor's degree, master's degree, and an educational administration certification from Jacksonville State University.



**Russ Waits** has been named **Director of Bands** for the new Gadsden City High School. Waits has served as the band director at Emma Sansom High School for the past 15 years, during which he has built one of the largest 4A high school band programs in the state of Alabama. Bands under his direction include marching, symphonic, concert, and jazz.

In recent years, the ESHS bands have earned numerous superior ratings at both marching and concert festivals across the Southeast. Bands have also marched in major parades across the United States and internationally.

Waits holds a bachelor's degree from Jacksonville State University, where he served as drum major for the "Marching Southerners." He also holds a master's degree from Auburn University, where he served as a graduate assistant with the Auburn bands. He is a 1985 graduate of Emma Sansom High School.

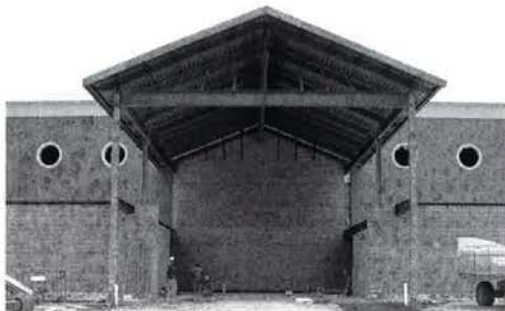
# PROGRESS CONTINUES ON CONSTRUCTION OF NEW GADSDEN CITY HIGH SCHOOL



*North end of practice gym*



*800-seat auditorium and band rehearsal room*



*East end entrance of competition gym*



*South end of 2000-seat competition gym, cafeteria and auditorium*

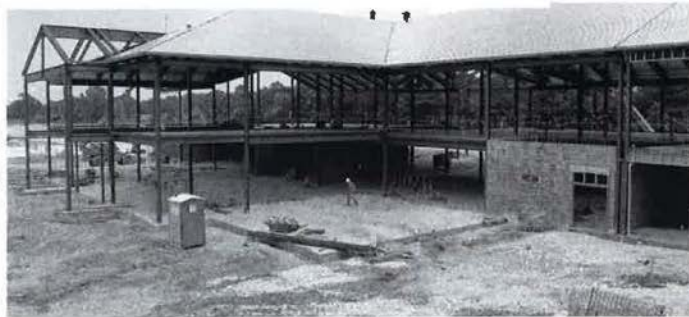


Gadsden City Schools

Gadsden City Board of Education  
1026 Chestnut Street  
P.O. Box 184  
Gadsden, Alabama 35901  
256-543-3512

Board Members  
Mike Haney, President  
Juanita Wilson, Vice President  
Dr. Norris Hilton  
Randy Holland  
Joe Ransaw  
Frankie Stone  
Pat Williamson

Superintendent  
Bob Russell



*Media center and administration building area*



*Second-floor classrooms on north wing*



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# BURT JONES RURAL COMMUNITY EXPERIENCE

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THE UNIVERSITY OF  
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Student Life  
Blackburn Institute

## Session XX - Gadsden

Below are the biographies of the panelists for Session XX, discussing the revitalization of downtown Gadsden.

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### Shane Ellison

Shane Ellison is Administrative Assistant for the City of Gadsden, a political appointee of Gadsden Mayor Sherman Guyton. Shane has worked for the City of Gadsden full and part time for nearly two decades years, most recently as assistant city planner. He has been involved with a number of projects, including the Black Creek Trail, the painting of the CSX Railroad bridge, the renovation of the Pitman and Ritz theaters and the bank fishing project on River Road. Shane has worked for the city full time since 2003. During college in the 1990s and early 2000s, he worked part time in the Parks and Recreation and Public Works departments. Shane was assistant recreation manager at Noccalula Falls and in 2004 became administrative office assistant for the planning and engineering department.



Ellison is an alumnus of Auburn University, holds an MBA and MPA from Jacksonville State University.

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### Mary Helmer

Mary Helmer has served as the President and State Coordinator of Main Street Alabama since June 2013. She is an experienced professional specializing in community and business development strategies, relationship building, training and leadership development. Mary spent 10 years as a local Main Street Director in Emporia, KS, forging a lifelong interest in downtown revitalization, economic and community development. Under her leadership, Emporia became the first Kansas community recognized with the prestigious Great American Main Street Award from the National Trust Main Street Center. In 2007, Mary became Coordinator for the Kansas Main Street Program and served in that capacity for 5 years working with Network and Designated Main Street cities throughout the state. In 2012, Mary formed Helmer Consulting LLC and has worked with several communities on understanding their market, project development and management strategies, community outreach, workplan development and implementation throughout the United States.



Helmer is an alumna of Emporia State University (BS in Psychology)

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## Tena King

Tena King is owner and operator of King's Olive Oil Company, a local business she started in 2013 as a tasting shop.



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## Kay Moore

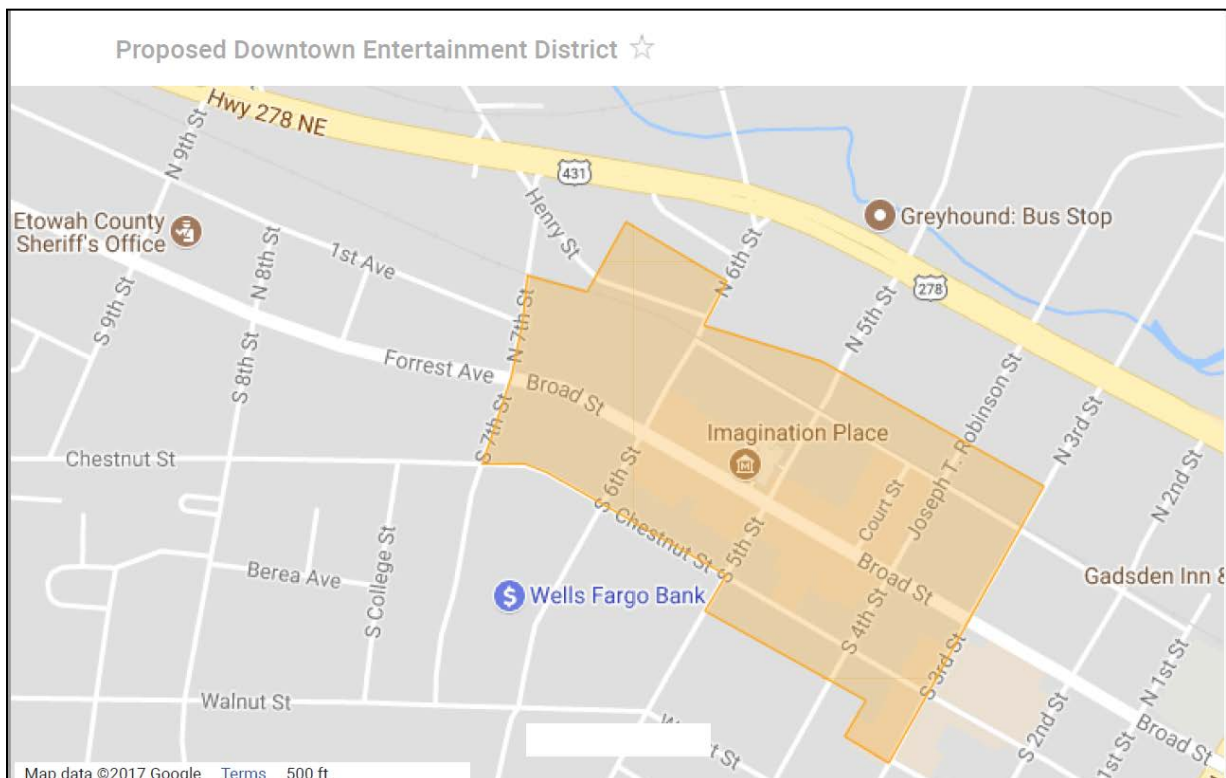
Kay Moore is Director of Downtown Gadsden, Inc (DGI). A lifelong Gadsden resident, Kay worked at Compass Bank for almost 31 years and advanced through the ranks from a teller to the Vice President and Manager of the Premiere Banking Group in Gadsden. After a short stint at First Federal Mortgage was short she began at DGI in 2007, working with downtown merchants and property owners to make a positive impact on the historic district. Kay is involved with various community organizations including Gadsden Lions Club, Cultural Arts Foundation, Gadsden/Etowah Patriots' Association and City of Gadsden Planning Commission.

Moore is an alumna of The University of Alabama.



The Gadsden City Council is considering the approval of an entertainment district downtown, which would change some of the alcoholic beverage laws within the district. The Downtown Gadsden, Inc. Board of Directors voted last month to send the request to the council. Designating an entertainment district would allow for the consumption of alcoholic beverages anywhere within the district's boundaries.

The proposed boundaries generally run from 3rd Street along Chestnut Street to 7th Street and then back east to Locust Street, which encompasses The Still, Grid Iron, Lucy's Afterlife, Chestnut Station, Old Havana Cigar Bar, Tu'Kanoos, The Downtown Tavern, Blu Chophouse, King's Olive Oil, Jefferson's, Blackstone Pub and Eatery, Tre Ragazzi, Café 5, Harp & Clover, Back Forty Beer Company and Mater's Pizza and Pasta Emporium.



Signs would be put up to inform people when they were leaving the district, and there would be maps at all bars and restaurants. However, the district isn't unique to Gadsden, and there are state restrictions that apply. The beverage must be in a recyclable paper or plastic cup that has the commercially printed name and/or logo of the establishment on it, the cup can't be more than 16 oz., patrons can't enter another establishment licensed to sell alcohol with an open container, and only one cup per person is allowed to exit onto the sidewalk.

The district's rules would also be limited to between 4 p.m. and 10 p.m. The proposal also has a provision for the ordinance to be reviewed after 90 days, allowing changes to be made. In a letter to the council, DGI director Kay Moore said she has personally had conversations with officials in Opelika, which established an entertainment district five years ago, and Guntersville, which has had one for nearly four years, and neither said they had experienced any problems.

The council held discussion about the proposal during the pre-council session on Tuesday, and owners of downtown businesses and members of the DGI Board were on hand. "I think this is a great opportunity for downtown Gadsden," said Lynn McCain. "It would promote economic as well as social opportunities for

downtown.” She said cities that have implemented such a district have helped provide more revenue for local businesses. Tina King, owner of King’s Olive Oil, provided an example.

She said that her business is less than a block away from several restaurants that usually have lines out the door on weekends, and people are just standing on the sidewalk while waiting instead of walking around downtown. “If they had the opportunity to walk a block radius and go back and enjoy a glass of wine or a beer, it would definitely help us with window shopping,” King said.

Moore emphasized that there are a number of laws that apply to the proposal. “There are a lot of rules that the state has set forth,” Moore said. “Things like it can only be alcohol purchased from a downtown bar or restaurant. You cannot bring your own.” The council also asked for the opinion of Gadsden Police Chief Lamar Jaggears, who plainly said, “I don’t like it.” Jaggears said that the district’s hours of 4 p.m. to 10 p.m. line up with his department’s busiest hours, which generally run from early afternoon until 11 p.m. on weeknights or 3 a.m. on the weekends. “I don’t have the people to send down there,” he said. “We’ll work with whatever you do, but our people won’t get there any quicker if there’s a problem because we’re already dealing with problems.”

Jaggears said manpower wasn’t his only concern. He said that he would expect an increase in public intoxication, lewdness and other alcohol-related problems. Chris Robinson of Blackstone Pub and Eatery said that since alcohol isn’t allowed outside, sometimes patrons will quickly finish a drink in order to move outside, causing them to become intoxicated more quickly than they would have otherwise.

Tripp Collins of Back Forty Beer Company said that establishing an entertainment district wouldn’t change laws for business owners. “We still have to follow the rules of responsible vending and making sure that our customers aren’t overserved, in or out of our establishment,” he said. “We still have the responsibility to serve our customers just like we do every other day of the week.”

“I think it’s an idea worth considering, but we’ve got some homework to do,” said Council President Deverick Williams. Because the proposal came up during the pre-council meeting, it will appear on the council’s regular meeting agenda next week.

<http://www.gadsdentimes.com/news/20170808/city-considers-downtown-entertainment-district>

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OUR VIEW: Entertainment district plan has benefits, risks

*Dawn Azok / al.com*

*August 10, 2017*

The City of Gadsden is considering creating a downtown entertainment district, similar to those in other Alabama cities. We think “consideration” should quickly give way to “approval.”

The board of directors of Downtown Gadsden Inc. in July voted to submit a request for the district to the City Council.

Members of that board joined owners of downtown businesses at this week’s pre-council session to push for the idea, which they say will provide more economic and social opportunities downtown. The proposed district would run from Third Street along Chestnut Street to Seventh Street, and then back east to Locust Street. That would encompass 16 restaurants, bars and nightspots in the downtown area.

The designation of “entertainment district” would permit people, between 4 p.m. and 10 p.m., to drink alcoholic beverages anywhere within that area, not just inside one of those 16 places.

OK, don’t lie — for some of you, that just conjured up visions of revelers roaming the downtown sidewalks, swigging from liquor bottles they’re gripping by the neck. That isn’t going to be the scene at all.

Entertainment districts are regulated by rather strict state law. A person must be drinking from a cup of no more than 16 ounces that bears the commercially printed name or logo of the place where he or she bought

it. There is no BYOB. Also, no one can bring more than a single cup out of an establishment, or carry an open container into another establishment where alcohol is sold.

Downtown merchants say the ability to stroll around downtown with a glass of wine or a beer would have more people window shopping (and potentially becoming customers) than standing around outside restaurants or bars. Bar owners say the ability to carry a drink to the sidewalk will keep patrons from guzzling just to get done so they can leave, which can make them tipsy a whole lot quicker. DGI officials say they've been to similar entertainment districts, in Gunter'sville and Opelika, and have seen few problems.

Police Chief Lamar Jaggars isn't so confident, however, saying he expects an increase in alcohol-related problems if the district is approved. He noted that the hours also coincide with his department's typical "busy period," so officers wouldn't be able to drop everything and rush downtown should there be issues. We think Jaggars' concerns are valid, and the police department should have input before an ordinance is finalized. We'll approach it this way.

There are folks who still bemoan the 1972 vote that made Etowah County wet and think the road to hell is lubricated with alcohol. They won't be using this entertainment district. There also are folks who like to dine, relax or unwind, or have some fun with friends while enjoying an adult beverage. They will take advantage of the district if it's implemented — and the onus is on them to behave themselves and ease Jaggars' concerns. The proposal contains a stipulation for a 90-day review, should changes be necessary. Mess this up, and it could change or go away very quickly.

<http://www.gadsdentimes.com/news/20170810/our-view-entertainment-district-plan-has-benefits-risks>



**Creating Jobs. Keeping Character.**

In Alabama, our downtowns are the heart of our communities. They are the core of our architectural and cultural heritage; the places where people gather to celebrate, the place where communities big and small are reinventing the way Alabama does business.

Today, Alabamians are looking at our downtowns not simply as places for memories but also as places for bold economic opportunity. New restaurants are coming to small towns, long time businesses are discovering new ways to thrive, and creative downtown events are breathing new life into once empty streets.

Our communities are rediscovering that the uniqueness of our historic downtowns offer a new frontier for innovation, creativity, collaboration and economic prosperity. Our state recognizes the importance of our downtowns in preserving history, celebrating diversity, and providing economic opportunity. To that end, we re-launched Main Street Alabama as a 501 (c)(3) in 2010.

In a few short years, Main Street Alabama has expanded to include small towns, cities, and commercial districts across the state into a network of volunteers, professionals, and partners with these simple goals: to provide training, networking, and educational opportunities to galvanize community leaders, merchants, and citizens with tools necessary to help turn their downtowns and neighborhood commercial districts into powerful economic development engines. Downtowns in Alabama are once again becoming centers for life.

Main Street Alabama's approach inspires people young and old not only to give back to their community but also to come back to their hometowns: to live, to become entrepreneurs, to breathe new life into our downtowns and neighborhood commercial districts, and most importantly to remember what is old can be new and thriving again.

Main Street Alabama isn't just about Building Better Downtowns - it is about making each district the best it can be. We invite you to be a part of this movement, and look forward to working together in making our state better through the vitality of our downtowns.

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# BURT JONES RURAL COMMUNITY EXPERIENCE

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## 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.

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### 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.

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Signature

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Date

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# BURT JONES RURAL COMMUNITY EXPERIENCE

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THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**ALABAMA** | Division of  
Student Life  
Blackburn Institute

## 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



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# BURT JONES RURAL COMMUNITY EXPERIENCE

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THE UNIVERSITY OF  
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## 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 attached for descriptions)
  - Wednesday - Business casual for afternoon session and dinner
  - Thursday - Business casual for full day (note that the morning will include a short walk outdoors)
  - Friday - Business casual for full day
  - Saturday - Business casual for full day
  - 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



BURT JONES  
RURAL COMMUNITY  
EXPERIENCE

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA | Division of Student Life  
Blackburn Institute

## Fall 2017 Post-Trip Self-Assessment

1. Name: \_\_\_\_\_
2. How would you rate your general level of knowledge of the East-Central 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?
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

(OVER)



6. What do you think are the biggest resources/advantages impacting this region of the state?

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7. What did you learn from this travel experience?

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8. What did you enjoy most about this travel experience?

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9. What did you enjoy least about this travel experience?

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10. What area of the state would you like to see next year's fall travel experience explore?

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11. Do you have any concerns about the content or format of the travel experience?

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