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– STATE –

Ivey delivers State of the State address

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– LOCAL GOVERNMENT –

Baileyton welcomes back Gilbert, awards land leases

» PAGE 7

– FEATURE –

Remembering Robert Squires



APRIL BOWEN GERMAN

Robert Squires was known for his sense of humor, friendly customer service and his apparent fascination with every hat that passed through the doors of Victoria's Hope.

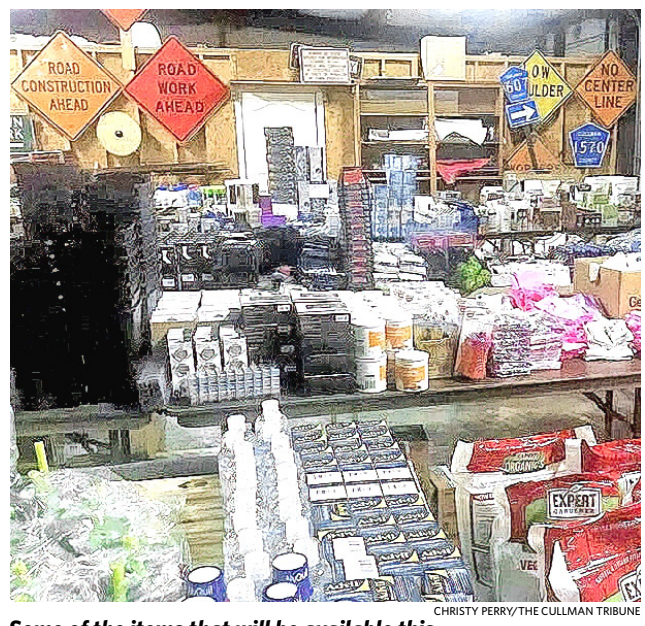
W.C. Mann
craig@cullmantribune.com

CULLMAN, Ala. – In its series that invites the community to remember its loved ones lost to COVID-19, The Tribune shares memories of Robert Dale Squires, known to many as the friendly face and hat expert at Victoria's Hope Thrift and Treasures in Cullman.

After she read the official obituary, Squires' niece Maegan DiLoreto Taylor decided to share her own via social media, and the Squires family gave permission for The Tribune to print it » PAGE 3

'Baileyton Bargain Days' begin this Saturday

Baileyton Bargain Days will take place the first and third Saturday of each month from 8 a.m.-1 p.m.



CHRISTY PERRY/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

Some of the items that will be available this Saturday at Baileyton Bargain Days » PAGE 7

Lions cancel 2021 Fish & Ham Dinner



CULLMAN TRIBUNE FILE PHOTO

In this photo from the 2020 Fish & Ham Dinner, Lion Charlie McBrayer fries catfish while Lion Steve Murphree swaps out a propane gas tank. » PAGE 7

CONSUMER NEWS

BBB Tip: Don't share your COVID-19 vaccine card on social media

» PAGE 7

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CRIME

Arrests and incidents reported Feb. 2

Cullman Tribune staff
Contributor

CULLMAN, Ala. – Below are the arrests and incidents reported Feb. 2, 2021. All persons are innocent until proven guilty.

GJ = grand jury; **FTA** = failure to appear

CULLMAN COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE
No incidents or arrests reported.

CULLMAN POLICE DEPARTMENT
No incidents reported.

ARRESTS
Feb. 1

Rice, Toney D., 45
- third-degree forgery
- third-degree possession of a forged instrument

McDonald, Shannon A., 39
- FTA- possession of drug paraphernalia (2 counts)

Lovett, Steven A., 33
- FTA- public intoxication
- FTA- resisting arrest

HANCEVILLE POLICE DEPARTMENT
No incidents or arrests reported.

Find arrest reports online Monday-Friday at www.CullmanTribune.com.

HEALTH

Ending the HIV Epidemic: A Request for Proposals

Adrinda Carter
Contributor

The Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH) has announced a funding request for Ending the HIV Epidemic (EHE) proposals from community organizations and other entities.

The Office of HIV Prevention and Care is now soliciting proposals for EHE with strategies that will focus on diagnosing all people with HIV as early as possible; treating people with HIV rapidly and effectively to reach viral suppression; preventing new HIV transmission by using proven interventions; and responding quickly to potential HIV outbreaks to get needed prevention and treatment services to people who need them.

Eligible applicants are public governmental and/or private organizations which can demonstrate current non-profit 501c3 status and that can demonstrate capability to meet the activities outlined in the request for proposal (RFP). The EHE plan relies heavily on new voices and non-traditional community-based organizations; therefore, these entities are strongly encouraged to apply.

To view the state's EHE plan, please visit: www.alabamapublichealth.gov/hiv/ehe.html.

Download the RFP at www.alabamapublichealth.gov/hiv/assets/rfp_endinghivpidemic.pdfor submit an email request to Chelsey Holland at chelsey.hollland@adph.state.al.us.

For questions, contact Chelsey Holland at chelsey.holland@adph.state.al.us or 334-206-7975, or Adrinda Carter at adrinda.carter@adph.state.al.us or 334-206-5945.

COVID-19 BY THE NUMBERS

Tuesday, Feb. 2, 2021 COVID-19 update from the Alabama Department of Public Health's COVID-19 Dashboard Hub

Case details
- Total confirmed cases in AL: 364,398 (+1,170 since yesterday)
- Probable cases in AL: 98,540 (+908 since yesterday)
- Total confirmed deaths in AL: 6,314 (+143 since yesterday)
- Probable deaths in AL: 1,580
- Total confirmed cases in Cullman Co.: 5,860 (+8 since yesterday)
- Probable cases in Cullman Co.: 2,732 (+10 since yesterday)
- Total confirmed deaths in Cullman Co.: 94 (+0 since yesterday)
- Probable deaths in Cullman Co.: 56
- Total tested in Cullman Co.: 34,987
- Total tested in the last 14 days in Cullman Co.: 3,467
- Cases in the last 14 days in Cullman Co.: 511
- Total tested in Alabama: 2,145,843 (BamaTracker)
- Cases in the last 14 days in Alabama: 37,479
- Total tested in the last 14 days in Alabama: 231,131
- Currently hospitalized in Alabama: 1,868
- Cumulative no. of hospitalizations in Alabama: 42,328
- Presumed recoveries in Alabama (reported weekly): 242,143

Vaccine details (updated Monday-Friday)
- Total doses delivered to Alabama: 798,125
- Doses delivered to Alabama providers: 714,275
- Doses administered: 373,907
- Doses delivered to federal Long-Term Care Program: 83,850
- Doses administered by the federal Long-Term Care Program: 46,328
- Currently eligible for vaccine: 326,000 health care providers, nursing home residents, law enforcement officers, firefighters and 350,000 persons age 75+
- Average first doses of vaccine shipped to Alabama per week: 50,000-60,000

Beginning February 8, vaccine eligibility will expand to include phase 1b and people 65 years and older. The Alabama COVID-19 Vaccination Allocation Plan outlines the various phases, and is available at www.alabamapublichealth.gov/covid19vaccine/assets/adph-covid19-vaccination-allocation-plan.pdf

Vaccination Eligibility Check and Scheduling Portal
The COVID-19 Vaccination Eligibility Check and Scheduling Portal is available at www.alcovidvaccine.gov. The portal allows people to schedule available vaccine appointments, access a map of drive-through and walk-in locations, and sign up to be notified as new priority groups are available to receive vaccine. Appointments may not be available immediately at this time, as ADPH continues to be limited by the amount of vaccine provided by the federal government. Access to appointments will grow as supply from the federal government increases. As of this morning, 18,820 appointments have been scheduled since the portal launched on Monday afternoon. The portal is seeing around 300 active users at a time and has booked an average of 900 appointments per hour.

Current assessment of vaccine supply
Current assessment of vaccine supply and expectations for shipments over the next month indicate that many public health clinics will have to focus heavily on providing second doses for the month of February. Individuals are encouraged to visit drive-through and walk-in clinics, or other vaccine providers, if appointments are not currently available at a county health department location.

Large-scale drive-thru clinics in 8 Alabama locations
Beginning the week of Feb. 8, there will be 8 large scale drive-through clinics throughout the state. Clinics will be located in Anniston, Birmingham, Dothan, Huntsville, Mobile, Montgomery, Selma and Tuscaloosa. The goal is for each location to be able to give 1,000 vaccines per day that week, totaling 40,000 doses administered. Additional information will be provided about the location in each city.

Vaccine distribution plans adjusted
We have had an extensive plan in place to administer COVID-19 vaccine statewide since October. The plan must pivot based on priorities from the federal government. Adjustments needed to be made to offer vaccine first to those at highest risk because of the small quantity of vaccine.

Accelerating pace of vaccine rollout
Healthcare provider surveys will help ensure vaccine administration is expedited. ADPH is surveying every healthcare provider in the state to ensure that all administered doses of COVID-19 vaccine have been properly reported in our electronic data system and to determine if there is any available vaccine that needs to be redistributed to other providers. To expedite vaccine administration, ADPH is removing unused doses and redistributing the vaccine to providers who will give shots faster. No vaccine doses have been discarded-4,000 doses have currently been identified and are in the process of being relocated.

Alabama Healthcare Providers Enrolled—883
- Toll-free Telephone Lines for Appointments—165
- Expansion of age groups for vaccination to persons 65 and above

At the final Operation Warp Speed briefing on Jan.12, 2021, spokespersons for HHS recommended that states expand age groups for vaccination to persons 65 and above.

However, these changes have not been made in Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidance for when vaccine supply is limited.

Vaccine supply is limited and does not meet demand at this time for the current numbers of persons identified as healthcare workers, first responders, fire, police, and persons 75 and above. Current recommendations from CDC are based on those from the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP).

ACIP is an independent panel of medical and public health experts who provide vaccine guidance to CDC.

See more details at https://bit.ly/3iVJwXK.



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COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Submit your calendar items or public notices to wendy@cullmantribune.com

Alabama Beta Delta Teachers' Sorority Annual Chocolate Tasting Extravaganza Canceled
With regret, due to COVID-19 restrictions, the Alabama Beta Delta Teachers' Sorority Annual Chocolate Tasting Extravaganza, has been canceled for this year. Thanks to the community's support for the past 13 years. Through your support, we have been able to award college scholarships to students majoring in education. We hope to see everyone back next year!

Scholarship Opportunity
The Cullman County Soil & Water Conservation District is now accepting applications for a $500 scholarship sponsored by the Alabama Conservation District Employees Association. Applicant must be a U. S. citizen, high school senior and living in the state of Alabama. Applications may be picked up at the District office located 501-B Fourth St. SW, Cullman, AL 35055. Deadline to receive completed applications in the District office is March 12, 2021. For more information, contact Kathy Holmes at 256-734-1431or kholmes@cullmanswcd.com.

Alcoholics Anonymous
The Grace of God group of Alcoholics Anonymous has open AA meetings (all are welcome) Monday and Thursday nights from 7-8 p.m. at the Carriage House, located next to Grace Episcopal Church, 305 Arnold St. NE Cullman. Contact phone numbers: 256-347-1097, 256-841-2209 or 256-708-1340

Church Services- Spirit Life Church of GOD
- Spirit Life Church of GOD, 1650 St. Joseph Dr. NW, Cullman
- Prayer meetings- Tuesdays at 10 a.m. Come and pray with us or come to receive prayer.
- Ladies' exercise classes- Wednesdays at 6 p.m. Children welcome.
- Classes- Wednesdays at 7 p.m. Children and youth classes. Adult class "You are Qualified" by Zach Beard-Youth Pastor
- Sundays at 9 a.m. Van runs in 5 Points area. Call 256-841-2060 for pickup. Small group classes for adults, children and youth at 10 a.m. Praise and worship and message at 11 a.m.
- Sunday, Feb. 7 message "Out of the GRAVE!" by Pastor Bobby Dodd
- Mondays-Fridays- Free hot meals for children and elderly 3:30-5 p.m. Cullman Housing Authority Community Center 1545 Vine Circle SW Please call Aimee at 256-841-2060 for more information. Eat in or take out. Kids' activities are available. Sponsored by Kids Loving Kids, Raising Arrows Ministry, and Spirit Life Church.
- Sunday, Feb. 14 at 5 p.m. Valentine's Banquet $10 per person. Dinner, entertainment and fun! To reserve your tickets, call Amy at 256-736-4657 Venmo @ AMYNCANTER

Free Community Dinner at Center Hill Baptist Church
- 5-6 p.m.- The first Wednesday of every month we will be offering a Free Community Dinner. Church members, community members, neighbors and friends are welcome. This will be takeout only. Please message or comment with how many plates you will need to help us prepare enough food for everyone. RSVP at http://bit.ly/centerhill.
- 13108 County Road 747, Hanceville, AL 35077

Miércoles de Despensas
- 6-7 p.m. ler. miercoles del mes, En Su Tierra Cullman FUMC
- Despensas para la comunidad. No requiere ID. Entrega en su vehículo. Por favor use mascarilla.

Community Blood Drive
- Wednesday, Feb. 3 from 1-5 p.m. at The Link of Cullman County, 708 Ninth St. SE
- Free COVID-19 antibody testing, $5 Amazon gift card and Red Cross T-shirt for all donors.

Cullman County Community Development Commission Meeting
Thursday, Feb. 4 at 6 p.m. at the Cullman County Economic Development office

St. Bernard Athletic Boosters Carry-Out Swamp John's Dinner
- Saturday, Feb. 6 from 4-7 p.m. Plates will cost $12 each and will include a choice of shrimp, chicken, fish or a combination of two. Dessert will be included.
- For tickets, contact the school at 256-739-6682. Tickets may also be purchased at the door.

Alabama Cooperative Extension Virtual Caregiver's College- "Love Yourself" Webinar
- Wednesday, Feb. 10 from 9 a.m.-12:30 p.m. There will be presenters on the following topics: Senior Rx, Medicare Part D, Estate Planning/Wills/Taxes, Identify Theft and Nutrition.
- This is the first virtual Caregiver's College. This program will be presented by ZOOM. This is a great opportunity for seniors and senior caregivers to gain resources and education and not have to leave the house if they have internet access.
- This event is free, but registration is required. Register by emailing jns0030@aces.edu or by calling the Dekalb County Extension office at 256-845-8595.
- Virtual attendees can ask to receive a goody bag for their attendance at this event. When you call or email, ask for the free goody bag.
- The speakers for this event are very knowledgeable experts and specialists in their fields. Please share half a day with us to learn more about how important caregivers are and how to "Love Yourself."

Cullman Education Retirees Association Meeting
Thursday, Feb. 11, 2021 at 11 a.m. at Stone Bridge Farms. Our program this month will be a COVID Impact Panel with Dr. Shane Barnette, Dr. John Waggoner and Tim Compton, explaining the impact this pandemic has had on our area. Following the program, we will have a short business meeting and then enjoy lunch together. All education retirees are invited to attend. We will practice CDC guidelines, including wearing masks and social distancing.

North Alabama Agriplex Living Landscapes Presents Raised Bed Gardening
Thursday, Feb. 11 from 6-8 p.m. on Zoom. This virtual class will cover everything you need to start your own raised beds, from bed types, to soil mixes, pest control and more. You can access this class through our events tab on Facebook or at http://bit.ly/3oEUgef.

North Alabama Agriplex Pruning Fruits Lunch & Learn
Wednesday, Feb. 17 from noon-1 p.m. on Zoom. Join local expert Tony Glover as he walks us through how to properly prune our fruit trees for best overall plant health and production. Access the class at http://bit.ly/3jaLqUt or through our events tab on Facebook.

EDUCATION

Wallace State releases fall 2020 President's and Dean's Lists

Russell Moore
WSCC

HANCEVILLE, Ala. – Wallace State Community College congratulates the 780 students named to the President's List and Dean's List for the fall 2020 semester. To earn a spot on the Wallace State President's List, students must maintain a perfect 4.0 GPA for the semester while taking a course load of 12 or more hours. Placement on the Dean's List is awarded to students maintaining a 3.5 GPA or higher while also taking a course load of at least 12 hours. The fall semester recognition is especially meaningful given the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Local President's List placements

- **Addison:** Levi Meigs
- **Baileyton:** Kristyn Gordon, Richard Hosmer, Steven Smith, Connor Tipton
- **Bremen:** Payton Attaway, Kyleigh Merring, Abby Montgomery, Stormy Schmidt
- **Crane Hill:** Emilee Goodwin, Kylon Hamby, Jeffrey Hirth, Lillian Owens, Allyson Wooten
- **Cullman:** Gabrielle Allred, Daniela Ballardo-Hernandez, Ashley Barbee, Caylin Barker, Cooper Beck, Stephanie Booth, Mallory Caldwell, Hayden Chandler, Kristin Chau Le, Jacob Clabaugh, Wesley Cornelius, Logan Drake, Jesslyn Draper, Isabella Edgeworth, Austin Fletcher, Jason Fowler, Mallory Golden, Payton Golden, Skye Graham, Hanna Hancock, Josie Harbison, Sophia Hardman, Lily Heard, Noah Hobbs, Blaitney Holcomb, Caroline Hollingsworth, Caleb Hutcheson, James Lenz, Makenzie Light, Lexi Marks, Jamie Marsh, Pia Muri, Anna Murphy, Olivia Noblett, Adriana Ortiz Rodriguez, RyLeigh O'Ryan, Malcolm Parker, Elise Payne, Taylor Perkins, Jason Phillips, Destiny Powe, Carter Robertson, Victoria Rodriguez, Lilith Russell, Alexander Rutherford, Khonstance Seagroves, Quinten Sharpe, Callie Shelton, Lacy Springer, Callie Sterling, Nathan Thompson, Mallory Walker, Duncan Warner, Emily Widner, Kyle Yarbrough
- **Hanceville:** Jonathan Allred, Logan Ayers, Yeniveth Benitez, Connor Blanchard, Mary Teresa Cabrera, Kallie Cook, August Floyd, Esther Gamble, Dillan Gandhi, Connor Glass, Stephanie Lara-Herrera, Whitney Maddux, Ashley Shanks, Joshua Skinner, Carly Starnes, Zachary Tankersley, Lauren Taylor, Courtney Townson, Alexa Whitlock, Mahaley Yates
- **Holly Pond:** Morgan Haynes, Maggie Ramirez, Leah Tarvin
- **Vinemont:** Karli Beck, Annalyse Cole, Henry Culver, Logan Eady, Carlie Fuller, Colton Millwood, Lainey Moses, Alyssa Nuss, Micah Oldacre, Kinlee Puckett, Allyson Sapp, Kolton Sapp, Joseph Timbs

Local Dean's List placements

- **Addison:** Katie Pigg
- **Baileyton:** Jarret Clayton-Hodges, Taylor Hosmer, Isabella Mcgukin
- **Bremen:** Weston Akridge, Alison Burleson, Kinley Campbell, Camryn Crider, Jessica Johnson, Jordan Light, Aubrey Negron, Mary-Katherine Woodard
- **Crane Hill:** Leeann Adair, Jesse Blackmon, Lauren Burrow, Jonathan Collett, Olivia Correia, Isabella Davis
- **Cullman:** Aiden Adcock, Isabella Allred, Zoe Arnold, Tess Bailey, Lydia Baker, Klowy Barrett, Morgan Barton, Linda Marie Bean, Isaac Bozeman, Keith Brewer, Mackenzie Brown, Megan Butler, Jacee Butts, Savannah Campbell, Retha Case, Robert Combs, Victoria Crenshaw, Hailey Crumbley, Eva Duke, Oliver Edge, Tyvn Ellis, Katelin Ferrell, Tyzhane Fisher, Justis Freeman, Benjamin Gorman, Makayla Gothard, Druss Hays, Madelyn Hendrix, Rebecca Hodo, Ally Hogeland, Eliza Hollingsworth, Olivia Hudson, Benjamin Hunter, Stephanie Ingram, Jesse Jones, Sophia Karolewics, Carter Lindsey, Ethan Looney, Samantha McAnnally, Mason Moniz, Kelson Moore, Thomas Mullican, Tyler Neal, Hannah Oakes, Dhruvkumar Patel, Alexis Perry, Mackinzie Pitts, Joshua Ponder, Krystn Pruett, Juana Radilla-Garcia, Lillian Randau, Jerome Reynolds, Alan Reynoso Bravo, Cydni Robertson, Jennifer Sanchez, Logan Schnittker, Kansas Shelton, Brittney Smith, Chloe Sotherland, Elizabeth Standifer, Caleb Still, Austyn Svenson Mills, Levi Swann, Lauren Tancredi, Shelby Tancredi, Jeremy West, Tyler White, Tiffani Wilhelm, Hudson Wood, Austin Turner
- **Eva:** Taylor Dudley, Chloe Hempfling, Nathan Petersen, Madison Smith, Rachel Wilson
- **Hanceville:** Ella Absher, Kimberly Bautista, Tess Brown, Danis Castro, Megan Childress, Layla Finley, Madelyn Folds, Samuel Kornegay, Brady Lang, Sean Lintow, Daniel Mattox, Jacob McCaffrey, Kristen Mernatti, Noelia Palma Amadore, Dawson Reynolds, Phillip Rivers, Zachary Sadler, Samantha Scruggs, Audrey Strickland, Katiah Ward
- **Holly Pond:** Victoria Anderson, Aleah Ayers, Kalea Mickle, Savannah Sivley
- **Vinemont:** Olivia Ball, Gabrielle Bennett, Rebecca Carter, Candra Cornelius, Fred Craft, Tyler Cutcher, Marshal Doherty, Karli Howard, Elyssa Mead, Ivy Preiss, Austin Richardson

For more information about Wallace State, visit www.wallacestate.edu.

STATE

Registered Alabama voters to begin receiving voter update cards at home

Cullman Tribune Staff
Contributor

MONTGOMERY, Ala. – Registered Alabama voters recently started receiving postcards notifying them of the State's efforts to update voter records.

Voter file maintenance, which is required by the National Voter Registration Act of 1993, is a four-year process which uses a two-step mailing program to identify voters who may have moved.

The first mailer was sent to every registered voter in the state of Alabama.

Voters should check to make sure the name and address on the card are correct. If this is the case, no additional action is required.

However, if the person whose name appears on the card does not live at the address listed, the card should be marked "return to sender" and placed in the U.S. mail.

Voters with questions about this notice should contact their county Board of Registrars office.

Following the completion of this process later this spring, second mailers will go out to voters whose mailers were returned in an effort to maintain accurate and up-to-date voter rolls.

Squires (from Front)

here.

Taylor wrote of her uncle, "He taught me more than you could imagine about patience and how to find joy in the little things.

"I still can't believe I won't get any more phone calls from him (usually in the middle of me eating dinner) asking 'Hey Maeggie, what day does that new movie come out in theaters?'

"Robert Dale Squires had a personality that was larger than life, so Jesus decided it was time for him to come Home on Monday, January 25, 2021, at the age of 55.

"Robert, also affectionately known as Robert Dale, Bob, Bobby, Roberto, and Robert Dale-y, was born on July 21, 1965, in Charlotte, Michigan.

"He could make friends with anyone and happily did so in all the cities he lived in, which included Eaton Rapids, Michigan; Brevard, North Carolina; Minden, Louisiana; Dubberly, Louisiana; Cowpens, South Carolina; Crossville, Tennessee; and finally Cullman, Alabama. He was well known for his smile and ability to bring joy to others, just as much as he was for his regular bouts of happy tears.

"He worked tirelessly to coax a laugh out of even the most unwilling participant, usually through corny jokes, funny sweaters, or random bursts of song and dance.

"He also had an uncanny ability to dress up as any number of inanimate objects, usually in support of local businesses, such as hot dogs, cell phones, shampoo bottles, and occasionally the Statue of Liberty.

"All of these he performed while listening to pop music on his Walkman. Robert's patience knew no bounds, and he always saw the best in situations. He didn't let you forget when his birthday or Christmas was coming up, but he never complained and he was always genuinely willing to help others. In his free time, he liked to solve word search puzzles and ride his bicycle around town, constantly stressing out many of the people in his life who love and care about him. One of his favorite hobbies was calling his friends and family to chat or show them his latest find on FaceTime. He had a knack for calling at the most inopportune moments, though his poorly timed calls and long voicemail messages will be missed dearly.

"Robert found a second family with April and Craig German and Victoria's Hope in Cullman, where he made it a personal mission to try on as many silly hats as possible. His extended second family also included the team at Flourish of Cullman, where Robert was an active member, and Desperation Church, where he volunteered on the parking team."

Squires found his way to Victoria's Hope through Flourish of Cullman's community volunteer program. At the charitable thrift shop, he worked with manager Craig German and founder April Bowen German.

April German wrote of her shop's customer service and headgear authority, "Robert came to us through Flourish and he quickly became a regular name in our house for a while. All I would hear out of Craig was 'Man, I can't wait for you to meet Robert.' And I'm so glad I did. He immediately became a member of our family, even going to support my son at his football games. He looked forward to those Friday night lights.

"He taught me so much about life. He loved with all of his heart, knew no evil, loved life to the fullest, and was excited every day just to start a new adventure. And if there is one thing that we can take out of our loss, is to live more like him. I'm sure we all would agree this world would be so much better if we did. Victoria's Hope will never be the same without him, and he will always be a part of Victoria's Hope."

Lyndsay Long, who worked with Squires at Victoria's Hope, added, "We've all experienced a great loss. To anyone who met Robert, it was an experience in itself. So full of life, love, goofy, and the best hugs! I don't really know that there are words to truly express the experience, but he was definitely a once in a lifetime soul. He never met a stranger, he never had a bad day, but most of all he loved everyone every day! The world needs more Roberts!"

After news of Squires' death was posted, Victoria's Hope customers shared their thoughts on the shop's social media page:

"I loved his enthusiasm. He had fun bringing attention to the store when he was by the roadside. I always gave him a couple of honks as I drove by."

"Robert was a light and a blessing to all who met Him! He had an honest love and concern for helping others always. He was most definitely someone you wanted to take the time to stop and speak with. He has lightened my spirits many times, when I was heavy hearted. I am so proud to have known him! He will be missed by many!"

"Robert was such a shining light. I will miss seeing him riding his bike around Cullman."

"Heaven has truly gained an angel. Robert will truly be missed. His smile was contagious. The world definitely lost a sweet soul."

"He was such a friendly soul. Always the clown. I missed seeing him there (at the store). He loved to match the shoes up."

"He had the most infectious smile, the warmest heart and the kindest soul. He will definitely be missed."

"I will really miss him. He was always so happy to help no matter what. There will never be another Robert."

Taylor concluded, "He was met at Heaven's gates by his mom, Waneta Laughter; step-dad, Fred Laughter; dad, Douglas Squires; step-mom, Doris Squires; niece, Holli Tyler; and nephew, Troy Nealey. He leaves behind his sisters, Sally (Johnny) Whaley, Annette (Tony) Gee, and Maurica Brown; brothers, Rocky (Leigh) Tyler and Ralph Squires; and many loving nieces and nephews.

"A funeral service was held at Moss Service Funeral Home on Thursday, January 28. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to one of Robert's favorite places: Flourish of Cullman, Victoria's Hope, or Desperation Church.

"But if you really want to honor Robert, have a Double Quarter Pounder with Cheese, a Diet Mountain Dew, and if anyone asks what you're doing, tell them you're just takin' it easy."

WRECKER/TOW TRUCK Driver

Clean driving record, clean criminal record, able to pass DOT physical, able to pass pre-employment drug and alcohol screening, must have CDL's, must be 21 years of age or older, good positive work ethics.

NO PHONE CALLS

Stop in office to fill out application
Monday-Friday 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Mullins Body Shop, LLC
11042 US Hwy 31 South, Cullman, AL 35055

CULLMAN Strawberry FESTIVAL
SATURDAY, MAY 1

CORRECTION

In the Monday, Feb. 1 "COVID-19 by the numbers," (printed Tuesday) under case details, some numbers were noted as being (since Friday). Those numbers should have been noted as being (since yesterday). We regret the error.

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PREP BASEBALL

Addison gearing up for new year on the diamond

Nick Griffin
nick@cullmantribune.com

ADDISON, Ala. – Addison Head Coach John Everett hopes his second year at the helm of his alma mater will be better than his first. After all, they only got to play a handful of games before the COVID-19 pandemic wiped out what was starting to be a very promising season for the Bulldogs.

Coach Everett believes that this team has a chance to be just as good as last year's team, maybe even better.

"We have had a great turnout for early season practice. We have several more players out than last year and some of our younger guys make you believe that the future is bright here," Everett said. "Our youth baseball here in Addison is really strong and the kids get quality coaching."

As far as expectations for 2021, Coach Everett believes it starts with winning the Winston County Championship. The Bulldogs are also expected to compete in a wide-open Area 13 for the area title as well.

"Our area is Winston County, Falkville and Cold Springs. I know Coach (James) Moore from Winston County and Coach (Adam) Ward from Falkville and they always do a great job with their programs. I don't know Cold Springs Coach (Wesley) McSwain as well, but they always put a quality product out on the field.

"I really don't want our guys to think about anything but the next game in front of them. We don't need to get too caught up in what our record is or the standings. If we take care of business each and every day out on the diamond, we will be fine."

Addison will be without their ace starting pitcher Luke Waldrep, who graduated after three dominate starts last spring.

"That is the biggest difference between this year's team and last year's team. We don't have that truly dominating ace like Luke (Waldrep) was," Everett said. "They don't come around very often. What we do have is a ton of pitching depth. We have about eight guys that are legitimate pitchers. We may not have a true number one, but we have several that can take the ball and help the team. Ty Tuggle, Nelson Martin, Briley Holt and Mac Cagle are just a few of our guys that will take the mound this year."

Everett has high hopes for his team's offensive potential for the upcoming season as well.

"As far as our offense goes, we are going to be aggressive. We are going to run, hit and run, take the extra base and then run some more. I want my guys to be thinking aggressively on the basepaths. I told them we aren't a power hitting team, but we have speed, and we are going to use it."

Coach Everett will be depending on a couple of seniors in catcher/pitcher (Ty) Tuggle and infielder/pitcher (Nelson) Martin.

"Those two guys (Martin/Tuggle) are my vocal leaders, guys that try and get everyone involved. First baseman Brody Dollar is a junior and he is my quiet leader. He is the first to practice and leads by example," Everett said. "I know as a team you need both kinds, and we are blessed to have them on this team. I am really blessed that I have a great bunch of young men on this team."

As far as the defensive side of the game goes, Coach Everett believes that this team has the ability to be a solid, fundamentally sound ball club.

"Told the boys to just make the routine plays and all in all if you do that, we should win most games. Errors and walks kill a team" Everett said. "If we can hold those down to a minimum our season has the possibility to be special."

Coach Everett pointed out several upgrades to the Addison baseball facilities that have come together in the past year.

"We were able to add a warning track to the outfield this year. We also were able to install foam pads on the backstop to cover the concrete wall. We have a new windscreen as well as yellow fence toppers that surrounds the field. Our stadium looks better than it ever has, and I would like to thank some of the people that made that happen," Everett said. "The guys had several fundraisers in which their parents were amazing in helping out. Mr. Rex Seymour of Premier Bank of Addison, and Bank First of Addison as well as Mr. Wade Bentley of Eckenrod Ford all contributed to our upgrades and I would like just like to acknowledge the great help that they have been. Not one of them asked for recognition but I feel that people need to know that these businesses give back to the community in many ways that the public doesn't hear about."

Everett is also happy to have a veteran staff to assist him in his coaching duties. Longtime coach Jeff Sudduth, who incidentally coached Everett in high school, as well as assistant coach Greg Dollar bring a wealth of baseball knowledge to the dugout and field. Addison will also have the recently graduated Waldrep helping out with the pitching staff when he can.

Addison opens the season at home on Feb. 13 at 11 a.m. with Oakman and Priceville. The three teams will play each other in a round robin that day.

All in all, it should be a good year for Addison baseball. Let's face it, after the way last season was cut short, any baseball we get is going to be great!

Auburn falls at No. 2 Baylor in SEC/Big 12 Challenge

Jeff Shearer
AU Athletics

WACO, TX. – Jaylin Williams scored 17 points to lead five Tigers in double figures and Auburn threatened No. 2 Baylor for a half before the unbeaten Bears pulled away to win 84-72 Saturday in the SEC/Big 12 Challenge.

"Disappointed," Auburn coach Bruce Pearl said. "Missed opportunity. I thought we had a good game plan. I thought we executed it really well for the first 15 minutes. Had some breakdowns at the end of the first half and didn't start the second half with any effort and energy."

Williams was 7-for-10 from the field and 3-for-6 on 3-pointers. Sharife Cooper scored 15 points, JT Thor scored 13, Allen Flanigan added 11 and Devan Cambridge scored 10.

"I knew going in that Jaylin at the 5 was going to be a good thing," Pearl said. "We didn't take enough advantage of him at the 5. Those two young guys (Williams and Thor) played really well. Their starting 4 and 5 had two points, and our starting 4 and 5 had 30."

Williams and Flanigan shared Auburn's rebounding lead with eight apiece. Flanigan led Auburn with six assists while Cooper grabbed seven rebounds and dished five assists.

Leading by five at the half, Baylor (16-0) made its first four shots of the second half to build a double-digit lead. The Tigers made seven of their last eight shots to trim a 21-point deficit to a dozen.

"Proud of the kids for coming back," Pearl said. "We pressed and closed the game out the last five or six minutes with some effort and energy. We made some plays."

Auburn trailed 35-30 at halftime after outrebounding Baylor 27-19 in the first 20 minutes.

Cambridge's putback slam gave Auburn a 22-21 lead before an 8-0 Baylor run.

After Williams and Thor made 3-pointers, the Tigers pulled within one point with 1:24 left in the half when Cambridge dunked Flanigan's alley-oop pass.

Cambridge led Auburn with eight first-half points.

Auburn, the least experienced D-I team, has played the top two ranked teams in the country this season, including a Nov. 27 neutral-site loss to No. 1 Gonzaga.

"These guys came here to play against a great schedule," Pearl said. "You're fortunate to be able to play in this arena against this program. We're close, we're improving, but we're not where we want to be or where I want us."

The Tigers (10-8, 4-5) return to Auburn Arena and SEC play when they host Georgia Tuesday at 6 p.m. CT on SEC Network and Ole Miss Saturday at 3 p.m. CT on ESPN2.

Auburn seeks the season sweep against the Bulldogs after beating Georgia in Athens 95-77 on Jan. 13. Ole Miss beat Auburn in Oxford 72-61 on Jan. 6.

"The mentality is to win the next nine games to try to finish first or second in the league," Williams said. "It's not going to be easy and we've got to be ready for [Georgia]. We're going to really want to play hard for that [Ole Miss] game because the first one didn't go so well for us."



ROD AYDELOTTE, WACO TRIBUNE HERALD

Auburn guard Devan Cambridge shoots past Baylor guard Mark Vital, left, in the first half.

No. 24 Oklahoma Defeats No. 9 Alabama, 66-61, in SEC/Big 12 Challenge

UA Athletics
roilltide.com

NORMAN, Okla. – The No. 24-ranked Oklahoma Sooners snapped No. 9 Alabama's 10-game winning streak with a 66-61 victory on Saturday afternoon inside the Lloyd Noble Center in Norman, Okla. In a game that featured eight ties and six lead changes, the Sooners ended the contest by scoring six of the final seven points to capture their fifth-straight win.

Alabama (14-4) was led by forward Alex Reese who scored a season-high 15 points, while guard Jaden Shackelford added 14.

Forward Herbert Jones, who was hobbled and a game-time decision, played 37 minutes and finished with team highs of six rebounds, five assists and three steals to go along with seven points in the loss.

Oklahoma (11-4), who was missing two starters, was led by De'Vion Harmon's 18 points to lead all scorers.

With the defeat, Alabama had its 10-game winning streak snapped – the program's longest streak since 1996-97.

Coach Nate Oats Postgame Comments

"We didn't come out ready to play. Oklahoma is a good team and we tried to warn our guys before the game that sometimes when a team is down a couple of players, it has a galvanizing effect.

"I've been coaching for a while and I've seen it happen a number of times – both for us and against us.

"I thought they really brought it being down two starters.

"We had six turnovers in the first five minutes and they started on an 11-2 run.

"We talk about starting and closing halves, they start on a 11-2 run and close the half on a 6-0 run.

"We had a decent start to the second half but struggled to close the half.

"It was a one-point game at the under four media timeout, but we went 0-of-7 from the floor and missed some open shots.

"Not our best performance. I told our guys that if we can learn from it, this will end up helping us in the long run. I like our leadership. I think they are saying the right things.

"I thought Reese had his best game this season. He gave us some great energy. It just wasn't enough to beat a quality team like Oklahoma.

Team Stats

- The contest featured six lead changes and eight ties throughout the contest
- The Sooners outrebounded the Tide, 42-34, which included a 13-6 edge on the offensive glass to result in a 10-0 advantage in second chance points
- Alabama shot just 38.9 percent (21-of-54) from the field and went 10-of-28 (35.7 percent) from the three-point line while the Sooners shot 40.3 percent (25-of-62) and hit 8-of-21 (38.1 percent) from beyond the arc
- In all, Oklahoma lead for 29:51 of the game and Alabama just 6:07
- Alex Reese scored a season-high 15 points on 6-of-14 from the field and three three-point baskets (3-of-10) in his 27 minutes of action

First Half

- Oklahoma took advantage of six Alabama turnovers in the opening five minutes to take an 11-2 lead at the first media timeout
- The Crimson Tide responded with a 9-1 spurt to cut the Sooners lead to 12-11 at the 10:46 mark of the opening stanza
- After a 5-0 run by the Sooners, Alabama answered with a 9-0 run to take its first lead of the game at 20-17 with 6:43 left in the half
- After a back-and-forth next few minutes, the Tide held the 27-24 lead at the under four media time out
- After UA took a 29-26 lead, Oklahoma ended the half with back-to-back threes, to take a 32-29 lead into the locker room

Second Half

- Alabama opened the first few minutes of the second half with a 5-0 run to regain the 34-32 lead over the Sooners
- With things even at 40-40, Oklahoma went on a 15-3 run over a span of 3:57 to take its largest lead at 55-43 at the 11:43 mark
- Alabama responded with an 11-0 run of its own to shrink Oklahoma's lead to 55-54 with 6:52 left to play
- A pair of free throws from Keon Ellis gave Alabama its first lead of the second half at 60-59 with 3:44 remaining in the second half
- The Sooners scored seven of the game's final eight points, holding UA to 0-of-7 from the field over the final 4:57

The Tide return to SEC action when it welcomes the LSU Tigers to Coleman Coliseum on Wednesday, Feb. 3, at 6 p.m. CT on SEC Network.





FAITH

Birmingham bishop visits Sacred Heart School

W.C. Mann
craig@cullmantribune.com



BARBARA RAGSDALE

Pictured with Bishop Raica are second-grade students (from left) Krislyn Contreras, Logan Moody, Symphiney Crawford, Ryan Keough, Jonlyn Gibbs, Wyatt Cron, Lily Kerber, Long Lam, Jackson Ruehl, Valeria Becerra and teacher Jenny Grey.

CULLMAN, Ala. – Bishop Steven Raica of the Birmingham Diocese visited Sacred Heart School this week. He visited all grades, K-3 through sixth, sharing his journey from his own Catholic school education through his last assignment as bishop in Michigan. He noted he did not miss all the snow up there on a day when a few snow flurries appeared in Cullman.

This particular visit coincided with the celebration of national Catholic Schools Week.

Sacred Heart students welcomed their bishop with banners, artwork and a special framed picture of Jesus with His flock of sheep.

Surrounding the picture are images of kindergarten students from the school.

Before leaving each classroom Bishop Raica blessed the teachers and students and complimented them on their special school.

Raica was appointed to the Birmingham post, his first in the South, in March 2020 by Pope Francis after serving as bishop of Gaylord, Michigan since 2014.

As bishop of the Birmingham diocese, he oversees all of north Alabama's Catholic churches and schools, and has stated a goal of visiting all 52 Catholic schools in the diocese and their students.

Sacred Heart School was founded in 1878 and has been a source of Catholic Christian education to the children of north Alabama for more than 140 years.

Enrollment is open to everyone. For more information, visit https://shscullman.com.

EDUCATION

Wallace State Fine and Performing Arts scholarship auditions Feb. 12, March 5

Gail Crutchfield
WSCC

HANCEVILLE, Ala. – The Wallace State Fine and Performing Arts program announced dates for scholarship auditions for current and future Wallace State Community College students. In-person and virtual auditions will be held Feb. 12 and March 5.

Advanced online registration is encouraged in order to schedule auditions, which will be held from 8:30 a.m. to noon each day. Auditions will be held for instrumental and vocal ensembles, dance and theatre. Register online through the Fine and Performing Arts web page at www.wallacestate.edu/fpa.

Scholarships will be awarded for the 2021-2022 academic year, which begins in Fall 2021.

Instrumental groups include the Wallace State Jazz Band, Concert Band, Pep Band, Saxophone Quartet and Brass Ensemble. Vocal groups include the Concert Choir, Wallace State Singers and Vocal Jazz Ensemble. The Dance program includes the Allegro Dance Theatre. Drama includes the Wallace State Theatre, with scholarships available for cast and crew.

Wallace State Fine and Performing Arts program presents at least one program each semester, and often collaborate for large performances. Several groups also perform in the community at events such as Oktoberfest and the Cullman County Fair.

Students interested in scholarships do not have to be music, theater or dance majors, but must have the ability and commitment to attend rehearsals and performances. Previous Wallace State Fine and Performing Arts students have gone on to work in performance venues such as Disney World, Universal Studios, Dollywood, music, television and film.

For more information about the Wallace State Fine and Performing Arts programs, contact Heather Gillikin at 256-352-8277 or heather.gillikin@wallacestate.edu or visit www.wallacestate.edu/fpa.



2020 FILE PHOTO/WALLACE STATE

Wallace State Community College Theatre students Jorelle Webster, left, Riley Adams, center, and McCoy Cleghorn, right, practice the "Alabama Stomp" with other cast members during rehearsal of "Big Fish The Musical."

Recycling Collection
Now Available in Cullman County for Residents and Businesses
Cardboard | Plastic | Paper | Metal | Glass

Reduce your garbage volume with Bi-monthly Recycling Pickup
It's Free to Try!

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(256) 615-2510
osirisrecycling.com

Not affiliated with Cullman County Sanitation Dept.
No drop-off location

free

2021 North Alabama Agriplex
lunch & learn schedule

open to all
no registration required
starts at noon

2/17 Pruning Fruits with Tony Glover
3/17 Pruning Ornamentals with Tony Glover
4/21 Alabama Rivers: A Celebration and Challenge with Dr. Deutsch
5/19 Cooking with an Air Fryer with Roberta McClellan
6/16 Growing & Cooking with Herbs
7/21 Tomato Time- Preserving & Cooking
8/10 Planting and Growing Fall Veggies
9/15 Extending the Growing Season

NORTH ALABAMA AGRIPLEX

HOME

Where, oh where are my winter bulbs?

Mary Leigh Oliver
Contributor

AUBURN UNIVERSITY, Ala. – Winter bulbs serve as remedy to the winter blues until spring. However, what if the bulbs simply refuse to bloom? For those who planted winter bulbs and have yet to see results, Lucy Edwards, an Alabama Extension home grounds, gardens and home pests regional agent, has solutions and tips for next season in order to have bright, blooming winter bulbs.

Winter bulbs

According to Edwards, winter bulbs are bulb varieties that are brought indoors to force an early bloom. Of these manipulated bulbs, the most common include tulips, narcissus, hyacinth, crocus and amaryllis. Fooling Mother Nature by placing these bulbs inside can require some training and adjustment.

As a part of their maintenance, most winter bulbs require a cool period prior to their development of shoots and flowers.

"This chill time takes 10 to 14 weeks depending on the species," Edwards said. "Make sure to read the packaging well because some bulbs are sold pre-chilled."

What to expect now

To get the longest blooming period, plant winter bulbs in late October or early November. If bulbs were planted during the late fall, the bulbs should be ready to transition from their cooling period to warmer conditions. Near a window that receives morning sun is a perfect place for a warm transition.

"As buds begin to form, move the bulbs away from the direct sunlight to ensure the blooms last as long as possible," she said.

However, if bulbs were planted during the fall and are not experiencing any growth at this point, it could be a problem with the bulb itself. It is often the case that the bulb may be an old, dry bulb. Another possibility is the bulb is too moist or too dry. Bulbs are typically planted in rocks, marbles or peat moss, so they can be easy to overwater and cause the bulbs to rot. Lastly, the bulbs may not be budding because they did not receive proper cooling.

What if outdoor bulbs aren't blooming?

There are several reasons gardeners may not be seeing blooms on outdoor bulbs yet. The first factor is bulb quality. Various fungi and bacteria can infect bulbs causing the bulb and roots to rot, as well as mold. Examine the bulb for discoloring, odd texture or shaping before planting. Also, unhealthy bulbs are often dry, too soft or appear moldy. Healthy bulbs are firm and do not feel light or hallow. Simply squeeze the bulb to check its condition.

Improper soil pH can also interfere with the bulbs. Each bulb thrives best in a different soil type. Research bulbs and take care to plant in a correct location. Next, conduct a soil test to ensure the bulb will grow well with the acid levels in the soil. If all of these conditions have been checked and bulbs still aren't blooming, it may be an issue of adequate drainage.

If bulbs are too deep in the ground or not in a location with full sun, this too may stunt the blooms. Plant the bulbs three to four times the height of the bulb itself. Planting depth, as well as exposure to full sunlight, ensures that the bulb will be able to sustain unusually cold winters. Take care to properly research the recommended depth to plant each specific bulb type in the garden or backyard.

What if I have yet to plant winter bulbs?

Those just beginning the planting process can expect blooms by Easter.

"To begin the process, plant the bulbs and place them in a cool room," Edwards said. "A good, cool place can be a garage or non-heated porch."

The ideal temperature range for the bulbs is about 35°F to 55°F. They should remain in the cool environment for 10 to 14 weeks. While it is important to leave the bulbs in the cool environment, leaving them for too long will cause short stems and poorly developed flowers. It is important to log the room temperatures and the amount of time the bulbs have been in the area.



ALABAMA COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SYSTEM

More information

Don't let failing winter bulbs leave a longing for spring. Grow radiant winter bulbs inside the home to drown out the dreary winter days. For more information on winter bulbs, visit the Alabama Extension website, www.aces.edu. Also, check out publications from the Virginia Cooperative Extension and University of Minnesota Extension.

LEGALS

Public Meeting Notice

The Alcohol Review Committee of the City of Cullman will hold a public hearing on Friday, February 5th, 2021 at 3:00 p.m. in the administrative conference room at City Hall located at 204 Second Avenue NE. The Committee will receive public comments for and against the alcohol license applicant listed below:

KanFLaBama LLC dba Hank's Sports Bar & Grill
601 4th Street SW, Cullman, AL 35055
Restaurant On-Premises Alcohol License

PB WIL BK 99 PG 963 - 02/02/2021 11:41 AM
Tammy Brown, Judge of Probate, Cullman County, AL

IN THE PROBATE COURT OF CULLMAN COUNTY, ALABAMA

IN RE: THE ESTATE OF)
HILDA JEANETTE TODD,) CASE NO PC2020-367
Deceased.)

NOTICE OF HEARING
PETITION FOR PROBATE OF WILL

TO: **HELEN JOHNSON, MARGIE CORDES, TINA SPEEGLE AND ANY KNOWN OR UNKNOWN OR INTEREST PARTIES**

The Petition of Rose Edmonson Langston to admit to probate the Last Will and Testament of Hilda Jeanette Todd, deceased, has been set for hearing on the 4th day of March, 2021, at 9:00 a.m.

All persons in interest residing or being without the state are hereby given notice to appear and contest said petition if they think proper.

Done this the 2nd day of February, 2021.

Tammy Brown
TAMMY BROWN, JUDGE OF PROBATE
CULLMAN COUNTY, ALABAMA

To the Publisher: The Cullman Tribune

Please publish the above notice three (3) successive weeks is said newspaper

Shelbie G. Hankey
Attorney for Petitioner
412 1st Ave. SE, Suite 100
Cullman, AL 35055
256-736-8744

PB WIL BK 99 PG 689 - 01/19/2021 08:30 AM
Tammy Brown, Judge of Probate, Cullman County, AL

IN THE PROBATE COURT OF CULLMAN COUNTY, ALABAMA

IN RE: THE ESTATE OF *
HARLISS J. MELTON, * CASE NO PC-2020-062
Deceased. *

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

Letters Administration with Will Annexed having been granted to Pamela E. Nail, as Personal Representative of the Estate of Harliss J. Melton, Deceased, on the 19th day of January, 2021, by Tammy Brown, Probate Judge. NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that all persons having claim against the said Estate are hereby required to present the same within the time allowed by law or the same will be barred.

Pamela E. Nail
Personal Representative

Pamela E. Nail
Attorney for the Estate
2nd Avenue SouthWest
Cullman, Alabama 35055

TO: **The Publisher of The Cullman Tribune**

Please publish the foregoing notice once a week for three (3) consecutive weeks and send an Affidavit of Publication to the Judge of Probate.

Tammy Brown
TAMMY BROWN, JUDGE OF PROBATE
CULLMAN COUNTY, ALABAMA

PB MIN BK 193 PG 896 - 02/02/2021 09:41 AM
Tammy Brown, Judge of Probate, Cullman County, AL

IN THE PROBATE COURT OF CULLMAN COUNTY, ALABAMA

IN RE: THE ESTATE OF *
JAMES HESTER LANCASTER, * CASE NO PC-2021-022
Deceased. *

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

Letters Administration having been granted to Kelly Cornett, as Personal Representative of the Estate of James Hester Lancaster, Deceased, on the 1st day of February, 2021, by Tammy Brown, Probate Judge. NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that all persons having claim against the said Estate are hereby required to present the same within the time allowed by law or the same will be barred.

Kelly Cornett
Personal Representative

G. Edward Coey
Attorney for Personal Representative
PO Box 834
Hanceville, Alabama 35077

TO: **The Publisher of The Cullman Tribune**

Please publish the foregoing notice once a week for three (3) consecutive weeks and send an Affidavit of Publication to the Judge of Probate.

Tammy Brown
TAMMY BROWN, JUDGE OF PROBATE
CULLMAN COUNTY, ALABAMA

PB WIL BK 99 PG 955 - 02/02/2021 08:59 AM
Tammy Brown, Judge of Probate, Cullman County, AL

IN THE PROBATE COURT OF CUILLMAN COUNTY, ALABAMA

IN RE: THE ESTATE OF *
THELMA J. ARNOLD, * **CASE NO.: PC202-337**
Deceased. *

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

TAKE NOTICE that Letters of Testamentary having been granted to DOUGLAS ARNOLD as Personal Representative of the Estate of THELMA J. ARNOLD deceased, on the 1st day of February, 2021, by the Honorable Tammy Brown, Judge of Probate.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that all persons having claims against the said Estate are hereby required to present the same within the time allowed by law or the same will be barred.

Douglas Arnold
Personal Representative

Pamela E. Nail
Attorney for Personal Representative
200 Second Avenue, Southwest
Cullman, AL 35055
256-734-3342

TO: **The Publisher of The Cullman Tribune**

Please publish the above Notice once a week for three consecutive weeks and send an affidavit of Publication to the Judge of Probate.

Tammy Brown
TAMMY BROWN, JUDGE OF PROBATE
CULLMAN COUNTY, ALABAMA

DOCUMENT 6

ELECTRONICALLY FILED
1/19/2021 2:52 PM
25-CV-2021-900022.00
CIRCUIT COURT OF
CULLMAN COUNTY, ALABAMA
LISA MCSWAIN, CLERK

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF CULLMAN COUNTY, ALABAMA

CASE NO.: CV 2021 - 900022

ROGELIO SOTELO,

Plaintiff,

v.

Lot(s) 2, Block A, according to the survey of Smith's Lake Catalina Cove subdivision as recorded in Map Book 6, pages 107-112 in the Office of the Probate Judge of Cullman County, Ala.
Parcel ID: 21-08-34-2-000-012.008; PIN: 4932; Account Number: 209264,

AND

Those Fictitious Parties A-Z, whose identities are currently unknown and who will be added to this Complaint by amendment when ascertained, including any persons claiming any present interest therein and including any persons claiming any present, future, contingent, remainder, reversion, or other interest in the above-described property,

AND

BILL CUNNINGHAM,

Defendants.

NOTICE OF PENDENCY OF ACTION

TO: Bill Cunningham, and all other persons claiming any present, future, contingent, remainder, reversion, or other interest in said lands, whose names and whereabouts are unknown.

You are hereby notified that on the 19th day of January, 2021, a Complaint to quiet title in rem to the above-described real property was filed in the Circuit Court of Cullman County, Alabama, by Rogelio Sotelo against Bill Cunningham, and all other persons claiming any present, future, contingent, remainder, reversion, or other interest in said lands, whose names and whereabouts are unknown, whose names and whereabouts cannot be ascertained after exercise of due diligence and who are believed may claim some right, title, interest, or claim in and to the above-described real property. All persons having an interest in said lands or any portion thereof, claiming any title thereto or encumbrance or lien thereon, are hereby directed to plead, answer, demur, or otherwise respond to the complaint on or before the 1st day of April, 2021, else at the expiration of thirty (30) days thereafter suffer a judgment by default to be rendered against them, it being intended that this notice shall be used to perfect service against all parties who cannot be personally served with a copy of the Complaint.

Hon. Lisa McSwain
Clerk of the Circuit Court
of Cullman County, Alabama

Plaintiff's Attorney:
Shay Persall
ST. JOHN & ST. JOHN, LLC
108 3rd Street SE
Cullman, AL 35055
256-734-3542

TO: The Publisher of The Cullman Tribune

Please publish the foregoing notice once a week for four (4) consecutive weeks and send an affidavit of publication to the Circuit Clerk.

Hon. Lisa McSwain
Clerk of the Circuit Court
of Cullman County, Alabama

DOCUMENT 6

ELECTRONICALLY FILED
1/19/2021 3:20 PM
25-CV-2021-900023.00
CIRCUIT COURT OF
CULLMAN COUNTY, ALABAMA
LISA MCSWAIN, CLERK

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF CULLMAN COUNTY, ALABAMA

CASE NO.: CV 2021 - 900023

ROGELIO SOTELO,

Plaintiff,

v.

Lot 1, Block E, according to the survey of Smith's Lake Catalina Cove subdivision as recorded in Map Book 6, pages 107-112 in the Office of the Probate Judge of Cullman County, Ala.
Parcel ID: 21-08-34-2-000-024.000; PIN: 13021; Account Number: 217556,

AND

Those Fictitious Parties A-Z, whose identities are currently unknown and who will be added to this Complaint by amendment when ascertained, including any persons claiming any present interest therein and including any persons claiming any present, future, contingent, remainder, reversion, or other interest in the above-described property,

AND

LOIS JINWRIGHT,

Defendants.

NOTICE OF PENDENCY OF ACTION

TO: Lois Jinwright aka Lois Jinright. and all other persons claiming any present, future, contingent, remainder, reversion, or other interest in said lands, whose names and whereabouts are unknown.

You are hereby notified that on the 19th day of January, 2021, a Complaint to quiet title in rem to the above-described real property was filed in the Circuit Court of Cullman County, Alabama, by Rogelio Sotelo against Lois Jinwright, and all other persons claiming any present, future, contingent, remainder, reversion, or other interest in said lands, whose names and whereabouts are unknown, whose names and whereabouts cannot be ascertained after exercise of due diligence and who are believed may claim some right, title, interest, or claim in and to the above-described real property. All persons having an interest in said lands or any portion thereof, claiming any title thereto or encumbrance or lien thereon, are hereby directed to plead, answer, demur, or otherwise respond to the complaint on or before the 1st day of April, 2021, else at the expiration of thirty (30) days thereafter suffer a judgment by default to be rendered against them, it being intended that this notice shall be used to perfect service against all parties who cannot be personally served with a copy of the Complaint.

Hon. Lisa McSwain
Clerk of the Circuit Court
of Cullman County, Alabama

Plaintiff's Attorney:
Shay Persall
ST. JOHN & ST. JOHN, LLC
108 3rd Street SE
Cullman, AL 35055
256-734-3542

TO: The Publisher of The Cullman Tribune

Please publish the foregoing notice once a week for four (4) consecutive weeks and send an affidavit of publication to the Circuit Clerk.

Hon. Lisa McSwain
Clerk of the Circuit Court
of Cullman County, Alabama

PB ADT BK 57 PG 798 - 01/11/2021 03:05 PM
Tammy Brown, Judge of Probate, Cullman County, AL

IN THE PROBATE COURT OF CULLMAN COUNTY, ALABAMA

IN THE MATTER OF **CASE NO: AD-2020-097**

THE ADOPTION PETITION
OF JOEL SKINNER and
PATRICE SKINNER
FOR THE ADOPTION OF
J.T.S. A MINOR
D.O.B. 5-17-2015

NOTICE OF PETITION FOR ADOPTION

TO: SAVANNAH BLAKE NOE, BIOLOGICAL MOTHER

A Petition for Adoption was filed with the Probate Court of Cullman County, Alabama by Joel Skinner and Patrice Skinner, Petitioners. If you should contest this adoption, you must file a written response within Thirty (30) days from the date of the last notice of publication. Your response must be filed with Counsel for said petitioners, whose name and address are shown below, and with the Clerk of Probate Court, 500 2nd Avenue SW, Room 101, Cullman County, Alabama.

DONE THIS 11th DAY OF January, 2021.

Tammy Brown
TAMMY BROWN, JUDGE OF PROBATE
CULLMAN COUNTY, ALABMA

G. Edward Coey
Attorney for Petitioners
PO Box 834
Hanceville, Alabama 35077

TO THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

Please publish the above notice once a week for four (4) successive weeks and send an affidavit of publication to the Judge of Probate.

Tammy Brown
TAMMY BROWN, JUDGE OF PROBATE
CULLMAN COUNTY, ALABAMA

Days (from Front)

Christy Perry
christy@cullmantribune.com

BAILEYTON, Ala. – The Town of Baileyton has a new shopping opportunity beginning this Saturday. Councilman Dewayne Sumner announced Monday night Baileyton Bargain Days, which will take place the first and third Saturday of each month from 8 a.m.-1 p.m. at the old Baileyton fire station next to the town's park.

The Town of Baileyton has partnered with Wal-Mart to receive pallets of merchandise which is unable to be placed on the store's shelves due to barcode errors.

"It's items that come in that are mislabeled or were not supposed to go to Wal-Mart," said Sumner. "They take all that merchandise and palletize it and then we call and go get it."

The merchandise includes s a variety of name brand items, ranging from "aspirin to Zippos," Sumner said.

"There is something for everybody, and it should benefit the community because people can come and get items they would use on a daily basis."

Volunteers and Town leaders had already received the first pallets of merchandise and were busy over the weekend organizing the goods and transforming the old fire station into a store. Beauty and health products, toys, home goods, pet items, food and many everyday items are among this week's available merchandise.

School and arts supplies are also plentiful in this week's haul. In a show of continued support to Parkside School, the council invited Parkside teachers to come out Friday to fill up a bag at no charge for their classrooms.

On Saturdays, a donation of $20 will allow a shopper to fill up a bag, and for $40 a shopper can fill a large box. Some of the items of greater value will require a larger donation.

There will be some restrictions and product limits on the items. All the donations are tax-deductible, and receipts are available. Cash and checks will be accepted.

Said Sumner, "All the donations that come in will be used for park improvements and capital improvements for the town. Not only does it become a tax-free donation for the people of the town or anybody else that wants to come and be a part of it, again they can fill up their cupboards, do some Christmas shopping and all kinds of things."

Leases (from Front)

Christy Perry
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BAILEYTON, Ala. – The Baileyton Town Council on Monday night was happy to welcome back Town Clerk Pat Gilbert. Gilbert was hospitalized for four weeks after Christmas with COVID-19.

Gilbert quickly got to work, opening the sealed bids for the four parcels of land the Town agreed to lease at its last meeting.

The bid results were:

- Parcel 1 (9.6 acres) on Oliver Place- Edward Meherg had the highest bid at $60 an acre.
- Parcel 2 (8.3 acres) Right side of Fairview Road- Bobby Gorham had the only bid at $7 an acre.
- Parcel 3 (5.0 acres hay ground) Left side of Fairview Road- Edward Meherg had the highest bid at $60 an acre.
- Parcel 4 (5.1 acres) Behind Kim's Parkside Catfish Restaurant- Chris Tipton had the highest bid at $60 an acre.

The council welcomed Blake Mathis, a local representative for AirEvac, who spoke about membership opportunities available for town residents. The Town of Baileyton pays to make sure its residents have coverage within Cullman County in the event they were to need to be airlifted by AirEvac.

Due to that coverage, town residents are also eligible for full coverage at a discounted rate ranging from $35-$45 a year. The additional coverage would cover an individual's AirEvac flight nationwide. An AirEvac flight without coverage is around $50,000.

Said Mathis, "Even if someone is not insured, they can still be a member."

For more information on AirEvac coverage, residents can contact Mathis at 256-503-8774.

The Town of Baileyton is gearing up for ball season. Youngsters can be signed up for T-ball and baseball now through the end of the month at Baileyton Town Hall. Baileyton's registration rates remain lower than surrounding municipalities', with fees set at $45 for one child, $70 for two children, $90 for three and $105 for four.

The Town is also taking applications for concession workers for the upcoming ball season.

The council entered into an executive session at the conclusion of its regular meeting to discuss candidates for park director.

Card (from Front)

BBB
Contributor

Got your COVID-19 vaccine? Great job! But don't share a photo of your vaccination card on social media. The self-identifying information on it makes you vulnerable to identity theft and can help scammers create phony versions.

What to watch out for:

You got your COVID-19 inoculation, and you are excited to share the good news and encourage others to do the same. You take a selfie holding your vaccination card and post it to Facebook, Instagram, or another social media platform.

Unfortunately, your card has your full name and birthday on it, as well as information about where you got your vaccine.

If your social media privacy settings aren't set high, you may be giving valuable information away for anyone to use.

Sharing your personal information isn't the only issue. Scammers in Great Britain were caught selling fake vaccination cards on eBay and TikTok. It's only a matter of time before similar cons come to the United States and Canada. Posting photos of your card can help provide scammers with information they can use to create and sell phony ones.

Share safely on social media:

- Share your vaccine sticker or use a profile frame instead. If you want to post about your vaccine, there are safer ways to do it. You can share a photo of your vaccine sticker or set a frame around your profile picture.

- Review your security settings. Check your security settings on all social media platforms to see what you are sharing and with whom. If you only want friends and family to see your posts, be sure that's how your privacy settings are configured.

- Be wary of answering popular social media prompts. Sharing your vaccine photo is just the latest social trend. Think twice before participating in other viral personal posts, such as listing all the cars you've owned (including makes/model years), favorite songs, and top 10 TV shows. Some of these "favorite things" are commonly used passwords or security questions.

For more information

For more information about privacy concerns on social media, see BBB's Scam Alert on Facebook quizzes and like farming.

BBB has identified many ways in which scammers are cashing in the COVID-19 pandemic. Learn more about vaccine scams, clinical trial scams, contract tracing cons, counterfeit face masks, and government agency imposters.

If you've spotted a scam (whether or not you've lost money), report it to BBB.org/ScamTracker. Your report can help others avoid falling victim to scams. Find more information about scams and how to avoid them at BBB.org/AvoidScams.

Sign up for BBB Scam Alerts to receive weekly notices of emerging scams to avoid.

Read more at http://bit.ly/3allP7e.

Dinner (from Front)

Wendy Sack
wendy@cullmantribune.com

CULLMAN, Ala. – The Cullman Lions Club on Tuesday announced the cancellation of its annual Fish & Ham Dinner. The popular event, which began in 1971 and is held in the Cullman Middle School cafeteria, was shelved due to COVID-19 concerns, according to Lion Frank Odell, the dinner's organizer.

Odell said the committee that oversees the Fish & Ham Dinner met Monday evening. "We agreed that, because of ongoing COVID-19 concerns, we're going to cancel it for now."

The Lions suspended their weekly meetings back in late December, making it more difficult to properly plan and prepare for the dinner, which last year was set to feed more than 1,500 people.

"Because of the COVID-19, we're not having our weekly club meetings, so in January we had very, very little communication," Odell said.

"Of course, it takes a lot of effort over time to coordinate all the different committees, prepare everything and also to print and sell tickets. It's not so much having the dinner itself, it's the logistics of getting out in the community and personally selling tickets to people is extremely hampered. And the fact that every week, things get worse instead of better. There's no certainty the first of March where we'll be, so we're just going to cancel it."

Odell said it takes two months to get everything organized and sell tickets. He did not rule out having the event later this year.

"I'm not real hopeful that we'll have one this year, but we're not going to say never," he said. "We could. There's a lot of different uncertainties. 'When's the pandemic going to be over? Is it going to be over in three months or in two years?' It depends on who you listen to. Nobody knows."

The Lions had originally planned to modify this year's dinner, making it safer for everyone involved.

"We had it figured out to do curbside only and spread out in the dining room to have all Lions distant from each other doing production, but we use all the Lions, plus the Lionesses, plus the Leos. We use a lot of people," said Odell. "Again, we want to be safe. We're producing food, so we want to make sure that everybody's properly protected so that you wouldn't have one person who's a carrier infecting somebody's food. We're not going to do that. We're not going to take a chance."

He continued, "When we did our planning in November, December for the Fish & Ham, I determined that we could have everybody with hair restraints and masks and gloves, and that we could set it up differently and not have everyone in the kitchen together. We could spread out and not have eat-in service, and that would give us more physical space to try to keep everybody separated and produce the food. We have been working on the challenge."

But now that the decision has been made to cancel the event altogether, Odell said the Lions are focused on what else they can do to be of service to the community.

"We're still there, and some of us are thinking, 'How can we support the community?' because that's what the Lions Club does," he said. "Right now, certainly, we have to figure out, 'How can we do it differently than we've been doing?' but we still need to help out the community, because that's what Lions do."

Odell said other venues have been considered for the Fish & Ham Dinner, but none are doable because of the amount of food being produced and the way in which the food is prepared and stored. The Lions also rely on two Cullman Middle School Child Nutrition staff members for food safety prep.

Obituary Announcements: Feb. 3

James Clayton Scott, 84, of Hanceville

James Clayton Scott, 84, of Hanceville, AL died Sunday, Jan. 31, 2021. He is survived by his wife Doris Scott; brother Edwin Scott (Carol); and several nieces, nephews, other family members, and friends. The family will receive friends at Shelton Grove Baptist Church Thursday, Feb. 4 from 1 p.m. until the celebration of James' life that will begin at 2 p.m. Burial will follow in the adjacent cemetery. In lieu of flowers donations may be made to Shelton Grove Baptist church in memory of James Scott. Please visit www.mossservicefh.com to leave condolences for the family. Moss Service Funeral Home directing.

Icile Wisener, 87, of Cullman

Icile Wisener, 87, of Cullman passed away Monday, Feb. 1, 2021 at her residence. She was born Feb. 21, 1933 to Joseph and Blanche Williams. She was preceded in death by her parents. Survivors include her daughter Angela Emigh; son Randall (Penny) Wisener; grandchildren Steven (Tiffany) Wisener, Michael (Megan) Wisener, Jessica (Jason) Green, and Daniel (Michelle) Emigh; and five great-grandchildren.

Bobby Eugene Lewis, 73, of Hanceville

Bobby Eugene Lewis, 73, of Hanceville passed away Monday, Feb. 1, 2021 at his residence. He was born April 21, 1947 in Stilson, Georgia to Ralph and Lena Bernell Lewis. He was preceded in death by his parents. Survivors include his wife Leesa Lewis; son Andy (Katelyn) Lewis; granddaughter Hollyn Lewis; brothers Ralph (Sherry) Lewis, Jr. and Dale (Linda) Lewis. A memorial service will be held at a later date.

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THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE
FEBRUARY 3, 2021

Address (from Front)

Cullman Tribune Staff
Contributor

MONTGOMERY, Ala. – Gov. Kay Ivey on Tuesday evening delivered her annual State of the State address. Below is the full transcript of her remarks.

My Fellow Alabamians:
I am speaking to you tonight just outside the old House Chamber in the Alabama State Capitol. Previously, other governors and I have used that historic chamber to kick off a Joint Session of the Alabama Legislature for the State of the State address.

Tonight, however, is different, just like 2020 was different from every other year in memory. Instead of addressing the 140 members of the Legislature in person, the Capitol building is empty tonight.

Because of COVID-19, our legislators have appropriately taken the added precaution of social distancing in their respective chambers as they prepare for the formal start to their Regular Session.

To the men and women of the Legislature, let me begin with a word of heartfelt thanks.

Thank you for working with my Administration and me as, together, we have looked for good ideas and solutions to the challenges and demands of this past year.

And, I know I speak for every elected leader throughout the state when I say we all owe the people of Alabama a debt of gratitude for their willingness to work with us as we have navigated one of the most challenging years in our state's history.

Make no mistake, this time last year things were different...much different.

At 2.7 percent, Alabama had the lowest unemployment rate in our state's history. We were seeing economic prosperity all around and, we were dealing with the wonderful problem of more jobs than people to fill them. During the past 12 months, Alabama – like the rest of the country – had no choice but to deal with one giant challenge after another.

In addition to social unrest and a polarizing national election, we also had eight federal disaster and emergency declarations in the state, including a hurricane, a tropical storm and floods from one end of the state to the other. So, make no mistake, there were no tears shed when we bid goodbye to 2020 a month ago.

While the year tested both our patience and perseverance, it never once tested our faith.

Despite all that was thrown at us, Alabamians remained grounded and kept our resolve. You never gave up.

And while COVID-19 has proven to be a worthy adversary with no regard for class, race or gender, the disease has shown us just how much more we can accomplish if we work together.

Many small businesses, retailers and restaurant owners utilized curbside service to keep their doors open, ensuring their employees could continue receiving a paycheck and their customers could be served in a safe way.

Also, our health care workers and first responders proved their mettle as they helped fight the virus and keep us safe.

Y'all, none of this has been easy.

Whether it was delaying an election, a wedding or a funeral...or wearing a mask and practicing social distancing... this disease created obstacles we all had to overcome.

But it is also revealed the "Angels Among Us," as my friend Randy Owen and the Band ALABAMA would remind us back in 1993, a song written for the challenges of a different time, nevertheless, highlighting the beauty of neighbors helping neighbors even as we all get through life's darkest moments.

One of those dark moments came just last week... with the deadly tornado that hit Fultondale and Center Point. We continue to pray for those who lost so much and renew our pledge that we will be with them as they pick up the pieces and start to rebuild.

While there are too many people to thank tonight, I would be remiss if I didn't make one exception by singling out the tireless efforts of our state health officer, Dr. Scott Harris.

There is no question that there are many things we would do differently if only given the chance. Dr. Harris has been a dedicated professional since day one and he and his team's top priority has always been to do what is in the best interest of all the people of our state.

While we are still living in a challenging year, I can report with confidence that things are getting better! As the supply of vaccine increases and is in more arms, the end of COVID-19 is closer than ever before.

My fellow Alabamians, my prayer – and our goals – for 2021, is not just to get back to where we were. Instead, I want us to look ahead with confidence toward where we aspire to be.

It's time to set big goals and lay out a bold vision for the year ahead.

The foundation for this agenda begins with a respectful, honest relationship with this Legislature. I have found it helpful to shoot straight, treat everyone with respect and establish our priorities with a realistic timeline for what is possible and what is not.

We have also ended a crazy year by maintaining all functions of state government without exception. Moreover, there was no reason to even mention "proration," or reducing state services.

Thanks to the online sales tax that was implemented in 2017, our state's receipts remain in the black despite an extremely challenging year for retail. And instead of talking about raising taxes, one of the first bills I want the Legislature to pass is a measure that will ensure everyone who received CARES Act dollars will not pay one penny in state income taxes on that relief.

After all, these monies were meant to tide people over until the economy recovered; it was never meant as an opportunity to grow the state's bank account.

Another bill that is a top priority is to renew our economic development incentives that we have used for years to build such a strong, diverse economy. The pipeline of new companies looking to come to Alabama is full, and these tax credits help ensure we are competitive enough to get them.

I am also grateful the Legislature is poised to enact legislation that will prevent our business and medical communities from frivolous lawsuits that might come because of COVID-19. They and our legal community worked to make this happen.

These are just the first of three priority bills that I hope the Legislature will send to me within the first couple weeks of this new session. When they do, I'll be sure to sign them into law without hesitation.

Ladies and gentlemen, compare this with the discord and division of what we have seen coming from our Nation's Capital. Sadly, the contrast is striking.

I'd like to again offer my sincere thanks to the members of the Legislature for designating how we were going to get $1.8 billion of Federal CARES Act money into the hands of those who needed it the most.

I'm also proud of all the departments in my Administration for how they responded to the pandemic.

For example, the finance department worked within the parameters of the legislation to make sure every penny was spent wisely.

And whether it was our initial "Revive Alabama" small business grant program that got more than $96 million to nearly 8,000 small business owners, or the Revive-Plus program a few months later, which approved close to 11,000 applications and distributed more than $198 million, our mission was clear and simple... this money never belonged to the state, it always belonged to the people of Alabama.

I am especially proud that these grants went to 941 veteran-owned businesses and more than 4,100 minority-owned businesses. I'm also grateful we found ways to help our state's non-profits, faith-based entities, agribusiness and other groups. We were also able to replace critical funding into our state's unemployment insurance trust fund in order to minimize the impact on employer payroll taxes as much as possible.

While 2020 presented a host of challenges, the year also gave us opportunities to do some big things such as work with the Legislature to pass the Public School and College Authority Bond.

This $1.25 billion investment sent money to every K-12 school system, and to all of our two- and four-year colleges.

The proceeds of this bond will be transformational for years to come.

Whether it was assisting Tallassee High School replace a 92-year-old building or UAB's new genomics facility or a new medical school at the University of South Alabama, these projects – and others – will have a lasting impact on future generations of Alabamians.

Few areas were more challenged in 2020 than our education system. In fact, our teachers and students were among the first who were affected by COVID-19.

Last March, when we entered a state of emergency, we announced our schools would be closed to in-person instruction until we could wrap our arms around what was happening. Little did we know the remainder of the school year – and the current one –would be challenged.

Utilizing CARES Act dollars, we invested more than $434 million into our classrooms with $70 million going directly to local systems for the purpose of limiting the spread of COVID-19 in our schools.

Another program we championed was what we called ABC for Students where we allocated $50 million for low income families to receive internet through this current school year for remote learning.

While many parents, students and teachers struggled through this form of instruction, they all deserve praise for having the determination and patience to keep working to get it right.

As a result, my budget proposes a two percent pay increase as a way to express our state's gratitude to our teachers who rose to the challenge during an unprecedented time for our state.

I will also recommend that our state employees receive this same increase. As the old saying goes "the time is always right to do what is right," and we should express our thanks for these dedicated public servants who keep our state running.

Moving forward, we will continue to emphasize what we know works - a focus on our nationally-recognized Pre-K program, a solid foundation of reading and STEM education, while also providing teachers with the tools they need to teach our students.

I continue to believe that our students need to get back to the classroom as soon as possible. Across the board remote learning was always intended to be temporary. Take it from a former economics teacher, nothing replaces in-person instruction and, unfortunately, during COVID-19, many students have fallen behind.

Catching our students up won't happen overnight or during the traditional school hours.

As such, I am urging all our schools to partner with community organizations in your local area; this will be more important than ever before to be innovative and create new opportunities for summer and after school programs.

Another place where COVID-19 exposed a weak link in our state's infrastructure was in the area of broadband and internet connectivity.

Thankfully, the Legislature is already committed to working to address this deficiency, and I look forward to continuing to partner with them to assist internet providers to extend service for the underserved areas of our state.

And just last week, I partnered with C-Spire for their $500 million dollar investment in Alabama over the next three years. This investment will provide broadband to one hundred thousand homes and businesses in our state and create 250 jobs.

These investments and the commitment of elected leaders, will make great headway in this critical area of infrastructure.

Last year, we funded – and will soon open by May 2021 – three new crisis centers to serve as a safe place for those needing mental health services. Established along the I-65 corridor in Mobile, Montgomery and Huntsville, these centers were meant to serve as pilot programs with the intention of expanding into more communities as soon as possible. With strong leadership in the Department and in partnership with the Legislature, we are providing a wide range of new tools to divert individuals from hospital emergency rooms and local jails.

Tonight, I'm pleased to propose a $46 million investment to expand 96 beds at the Taylor Hardin facility in Tuscaloosa and another $6 million for an additional crisis diversion center.

Building upon the personal commitment of Governor Lurleen Wallace, my Administration will maintain our commitment to provide critical evaluation and treatment of our most vulnerable population regardless of their present circumstances.

A year ago, Alabama's record low unemployment rate was 2.7 percent. However, that number grew to 13.3 percent by April 2020.

By December, our unemployment rate was back down to 3.9%, the lowest since the pandemic began. The economic foundation we have built in Alabama over the past several years has proven to be solid, making our economic recovery a key reason why I am so optimistic for the future.

With help from the Department of Commerce, our businesses showed resiliency and flexibility as many manufacturers pivoted to make face masks and PPE in the early days of the pandemic. Now, Alabama companies are making the vials for the vaccine and expanding operations within the state to provide masks nationwide.

There is reason for continued hope in our economic growth. One sector of our economy, Alabama's auto industry, hasn't been slowed by the pandemic.

In 2021, Mazda Toyota in Huntsville will hit an important milestone of hiring around 3,000 production workers, and their suppliers are hiring thousands more.

Hyundai is also making a major investment this year at its Montgomery facility to introduce two new models to its Alabama production lineup – the Santa Cruz crossover and the Tucson SUV.

Honda is launching the mass production of the next-generation Ridgeline pickup, and Mercedes-Benz is now ramping up to build two new electric vehicles at its plant in Vance, propelling continued growth in the automotive supply chain in communities such as Jasper, Muscle Shoals, Greenville and Alex City.

Last year, I worked closely with the Legislature and strong corporate partners to launch a commission focusing on entrepreneurship and innovation called "Innovate Alabama," which is designed to help both individuals and startup companies. Special thanks goes to Dr. Condoleezza Rice, an Alabama native, who serves as chair of the Innovate Alabama Advisory Committee.

Alabama has always been at the forefront of developing new technologies to make our country and world a better place but, now, we are engaging our state's trailblazers to come up with new ideas and policies that will support entrepreneurship, economic development and jobs for the future.

When I became governor in April of 2017, I threw my support behind an effort to rebuild our state's infrastructure...our roads, bridges, and even our State Port needed significant upgrades.

On my second day on the job, I publicly supported the Legislature's efforts now known as "Rebuild Alabama." My fellow citizens, if you are traveling down a road or highway and see a blue sign that says "Another project to Rebuild Alabama," that is proof of your tax dollars being spent wisely and transparently to improve safety, increase efficiency and support commerce.

In the first year of this program, Alabama invested over 127 million new dollars in Cherokee, Limestone, Madison, Autauga and Tuscaloosa counties on projects to provide interstate connectivity and much needed repairs.

Additionally, 27 city and county projects were announced just last year. This is on top of other local projects and ongoing repairs all over the state.

Friends, it doesn't stop there. Tonight, I'm proud to announce we are moving forward with a project that other governors have talked about but, until now, no one has been able to do. Later this year, we're going to turn the shovel on a long discussed four-lane Highway 43 from Thomasville to Tuscaloosa.

This will provide interstate connectivity and economic development opportunities for many rural counties in Alabama's Black Belt between the cities of Mobile and Tuscaloosa.

I am also pleased to announce plans to connect two more rural counties with four-lane access in Geneva and Fayette counties – and plans for others are under development.

Folks, our roads are the arteries of Alabama's commerce. These projects are just a few of the many that we'll use to open doors of opportunity to all our people.

We all know that we can't have safe roads without having State Troopers patrolling them. In 2020, the Alabama Law Enforcement Agency was able to recruit, train and graduate 123 new troopers. They have also added sworn personnel to our waterways and Gulf Coast.

I would be remiss in not acknowledging the challenges our men and women in blue face every day and thank them for their service and sacrifice they make to keep us safe. We can never say thank you enough.

One of the most critical issues facing our state is the dire condition of our prisons.

It is no secret that the Department of Corrections has faced significant challenges that are a result of decades of neglect. Resolving these require a multi-faceted strategy and immediate action. The cornerstone of our ongoing efforts is the Alabama Prison Program – a bold undertaking to replace the state's aging and failing prison infrastructure with safe, new, sustainable and affordable men's prisons.

I have signed a lease on the first two of these prisons – to be located in Escambia and Elmore counties – and I am pleased to say that we soon will complete our negotiations with the developers whose proposals qualified them to construct new prisons. Not only will these modern facilities improve prison conditions and safety for both Alabama's correctional staff and inmates, they will also be designed to accommodate inmate rehabilitation. Rehabilitated inmates are much less likely to reoffend and much more likely to become productive, contributing members of society when they are released. It is incumbent upon all of us to make this investment which will, over time, help make all our communities, and all of us, safer.

We will also continue to move forward with criminal justice reforms, and I am grateful to have the support of so many in the Legislature as we seek to improve our criminal justice laws.

Since 1999, over 180 gambling bills have been introduced in the Alabama Legislature. However, you've not had a chance to make your voice heard.

Last year, I asked the people of Alabama to trust me to gather all the facts on what has been endlessly debated in our state but never adopted.

My first action was to establish a working group of some of Alabama's most distinguished citizens to present us the facts so we can make the most informed decision possible.

I'm proud of the work of this group, and they have delivered a comprehensive analysis of both the benefits and drawbacks of expanded gambling.

I've never been an outfront champion on this issue, but I have always believed that the people of Alabama should have the final say.

If established in an accountable and transparent manner, good can come from this effort. The current system only costs the state money and you, the people, don't benefit in any way.

I am confident the Legislature will be thoughtful and deliberate as they debate this issue. But let me be absolutely clear, this must be a transparent process – with no deals being cut under the table.

If something does not pass the smell test, I'll sure let you know.

I look forward to working with the men and women of the House and Senate to give Alabamians an opportunity to decide, once and for all, if a different approach to gambling is in the best interest of our state.

As I reflect on all that happened during this past year, one moment that rises above the rest was the honor and privilege our state extended to the late Congressman John Lewis. Although he represented Atlanta in Congress, this Pike County native never forgot where he came from. With his passing, he was given the distinct honor of being the first African American to lie in repose in our State Capitol.

After marching across the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma as a young man, John Lewis went on to become a legendary leader for civil rights alongside other giants of the movement like Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Rev. Fred Shuttlesworth.

To honor his final wishes in this way was simply the proper thing to do. It was incredibly moving to see people of all races, religions and political parties stand in line for hours to pay homage to, as he called himself, the "boy from Troy."

To quote John Lewis, "Every generation leaves behind a legacy. What that legacy will be is determined by the people of that generation."

I hope that as Alabama continues to make progress, we remember the lessons of history.

We must consider our challenges ahead as more than momentary struggles and view them in the lenses of our legacy. Remember, there is nothing we cannot achieve when we work together.

My fellow Alabamians, good night. May God continue to bless each of you and the great state of Alabama.