

The Cullman Tribune

SERVING CULLMAN – IN THE HEART OF DIXIE – SINCE 1874

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WEATHER

59 35

SOURCE: WEATHER.GOV

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NICK GRIFFIN/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

– SPORTS –

'We are more than a team; we are a family': Arab's Bennett Elrod recaps junior season

» PAGE 4

‘It’s an exciting day for our athletes’: Cullman City Schools breaks ground on new turf fields

Nick Griffin
nick@cullmantribune.com

CULLMAN, Ala. — Cullman City School Board members, along with Superintendent Kyle Kallhoff, joined Cullman High School administrators, coaches, players and others on Cullman High School’s Soccer Field Tuesday to celebrate » PAGE 8



NICK GRIFFIN/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

Cullman City Schools hosted a groundbreaking ceremony for the new field turf project at Cullman High School’s Soccer Field Tuesday.

Alabama Shine Co. donates 1st jar of legally produced, post-Prohibition Cullman Co. moonshine



CAYLA GRACE MURPHY/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

Alabama Shine Co. donated its first jar of legally distilled moonshine in Cullman County to the Cullman County Museum on Wednesday, Dec. 6, 2023. Left to right are Drew Green from the Cullman County Museum and Preston Prewett and Darryl Talley from Alabama Shine Co.

Cayla Grace Murphy
caylagrace@cullmantribune.com

CULLMAN, Ala. — Alabama Shine Co., a newly federally licensed moonshine distillery based off County Road 222 in Cullman donated its first jar of legally distilled moonshine on Wednesday, Dec. 6, 2023, to the Cullman County Museum. The freshman “Blackberry” blend is the first legally distilled moonshine to be produced in Cullman County since before the state’s early prohibition era in 1915 as a result of the “bone dry” law, passed four years before the federal era of prohibition in 1919.

“Alabama Shine Co. started because we wanted to introduce a local product here in Cullman,” explained CEO Preston Prewett, a Hueytown native and alcohol aficionado. With years of consulting experience in the alcohol industry, he said, he wanted to bring a fresh take to the local watering holes after calling Cullman home for years.

“I’ve been a moonshiner my whole life – been around liquor, been a consultant in the industry for many years – but we just wanted to have a homegrown product for Cullman,” he smiled.

Prewett also shared an interesting fact about Alabama Shine Co.; being right across the street from the (wet) Good Hope city limits, they’re technically producing in a dry county – though, they have received all proper federal licensure to do so. Distributing, however, more red tape to cut through.

“We’re kind of an anomaly with that!” laughed Prewett. “We have our federal licensing, you know, it takes a long time to get through all that red tape. We’re currently working with the State to get on the shelves through the ABC Board.” He said the move will open doors to legal and wide distribution, including restaurants, tasting rooms and liquor stores.

On the heels of a growing trend of flavored » PAGE 6

Cullman County EMA emphasizes critical need for volunteer firefighters » PAGE 2

Cullman’s Jake Burkey finds success as off-road vehicle titan



TENNESSEE TECH

Jake Burkey is pictured with one of the “rock bouncer” off-road vehicles manufactured at Busted Knuckle Off Road. » PAGE 8

Cullman City Council approves traffic light at Hwy. 278/I-65, rezoning for northside development » PAGE 5

Cullman County Farmers Federation, members recognized during Alabama Farmers Federation Annual Meeting » PAGE 5

PET OF THE WEEK

Spend the holidays with LuLu



DONNA RUTTKAY

LuLu peeks over at something piquing her interest at the shelter. » PAGE 6

MAKE IT A DECEMBER TO REMEMBER

Bill Smith

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CRIME

Arrests and incidents reported Dec. 6

Cullman Tribune staff
Contributor

CULLMAN, Ala. – Below are the arrests and incidents reported Dec. 6, 2023. All persons are innocent until proven guilty.

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

CULLMAN COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

No arrests or incidents reported.

CULLMAN POLICE DEPARTMENT

INCIDENTS

Nov. 29

• harassing communications; person

Nov. 30

• harassment; person; 2nd Ave. SW

Dec. 4

• leaving scene of accident; person; Fuller St. SW; damaged 2010 Ford Ranger; $500

• theft of property-4th degree; Wal-Mart; Olive St. SW; general merchandise; $187

Dec. 5

• theft of property-3rd degree; fraudulent use of credit/debit card; person; cash

Dec. 6

• harassment; person; 1st Ave. SE

ARRESTS

Dec. 4 – 5

Gilley, Kristie M.; 46

• theft of property-4th degree

Dec. 5

McKinnon, Jenn L.; 41

• possession/receiving controlled substance

• possession of drug paraphernalia

Huddleston, Jason A.; 33

• FTA- possession of drug paraphernalia

• FTA- driving without license

• FTA- switched tag

HANCEVILLE POLICE DEPARTMENT

No arrests or incidents reported.

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

CCSO Rodeo Sponsor Dinner sees record attendance

Lauren Estes
lauren@cullmantribune.com

CULLMAN, Ala. – The Cullman County Sheriff's Office hosted its annual Rodeo Sponsor Dinner Tuesday night at the Cotton Creek Warehouse in Cullman, ahead of this weekend's Jimmy Arrington Memorial Rodeo. According to Sheriff Matt Gentry, the dinner was an overwhelming success.

"It was by far the largest turnout in the history of the rodeo," Gentry said. "There were over 670 people in attendance; this was almost 150 more people than last year's event."

The sponsor dinner is an intro event to the rodeo, which is held annually at the Cullman County Agricultural Trade Center in Vinemont.

"The rodeo is such an important event not only for the Cullman County Sheriff's Office, but for the entire community," Gentry said. "Looking out at the record crowd of rodeo sponsors is truly humbling. Because of their continued support, the rodeo provides invaluable equipment for the sheriff's office each and every year. Their support also allows us to give back to our communities and our schools. We are so blessed to have a community that works this hard to support us year after year."

Elite Realty Owners Amy and Jamie Martinez purchased a table for the dinner and said they have done so for seven years.

"What this event does for the special needs community is so inspiring! We love supporting the sheriff's office and everything they do with and for the sheriff's rodeo," Amy Martinez said.

Sister of Jamie Martinez and owner of Dixie Duds and Decor Melia Martinez Mead said the event truly brings the community together and it's a highlight for Cullman and surrounding areas.

The rodeo is dedicated to the memory of former Cullman County Deputy Lt. Jimmy Arrington, who helped start the annual event.

According to the CCSO, the rodeo will provide family entertainment, with events including bareback riding, barrel racing, bull riding and more. Proceeds from the rodeo help purchase equipment for the CCSO such as vest carriers, tasers and additional safety equipment. Area schools also receive donations.

The annual mini rodeo, the Special Needs Rodeo, will take place Thursday, Dec. 7, for over 1,000 special needs children who attend Cullman County area schools and the Margaret Jean Jones Center.

The rodeo will take place Friday and Saturday, Dec. 8-9. Gates open at 5 p.m. Kids' scramble at 7 p.m. Rodeo starts at 7:30 p.m. Tickets will be sold at the door. CASH ONLY. Adult $10, child/student $8, children 6 and younger are free. There will be an ATM on-site because organizers are unable to process credit/debit cards at the venue.

The Cullman County Agricultural Trade Center is located at 17645 U.S. Highway 31, Cullman, AL 35058.

CCSO arrest roundup

Staff Reports
Contributor

CULLMAN, Ala. – The Cullman County Sheriff's Office (CCSO) made several unrelated arrests over the past week and weekend.

TUESDAY, NOV. 28

Deputies arrested Timothy Aaron Boone, 29, of Cullman, on multiple outstanding warrants stemming from an alleged domestic incident.

Boone is charged with kidnapping, menacing, theft and causing the delinquency of a child.

Deputies arrested Kenny Stanley Waldrop, 71, of Cullman, on an outstanding warrant. He is charged with second-degree sexual abuse.

He was released from the Cullman County Detention Center on a $10,000 bond.

FRIDAY, DEC. 1

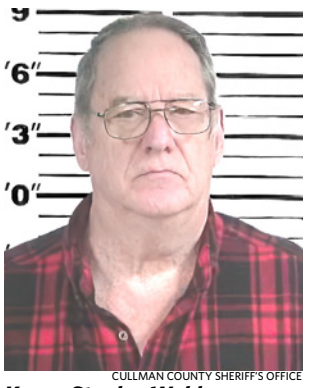
Deputies arrested Manuel Darwin Nickens, 55, of Hanceville, on a probation violation related to a charge of unlawful distribution of dangerous drugs.

Deputies arrested Zachary Griffin Neely, 43, of Blountsville, on multiple failure to appear (FTA) warrants stemming from an incident that occurred in 2021.

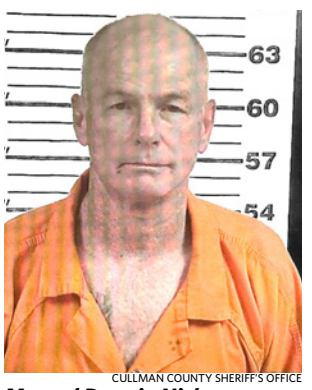
Neely was charged with two counts of unlawful breaking and entering a motor vehicle (FTA), five counts of unlawful possession of drug paraphernalia (FTA), trespassing (FTA), three counts of unlawful possession of dangerous drugs (FTA) and shoplifting (FTA).



CULLMAN COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE
Timothy Aaron Boone



CULLMAN COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE
Kenny Stanley Waldrop



CULLMAN COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE
Manuel Darwin Nickens



CULLMAN COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE
Zachary Griffin Neely

Firefighters (from Front)

Lauren Estes
lauren@cullmantribune.com

CULLMAN, Ala. – The Cullman County Emergency Management Agency (EMA) recently shared that many towns and communities in Alabama are facing a critical shortage of volunteer firefighters, with volunteer numbers dropping by an estimated 40% over the past 20 years.

According to Cullman County EMA Specialist/PIO Brent McDonald, local volunteer fire departments offer a platform for individuals to make meaningful contributions to their communities.

"One crucial reason for the urgent need for volunteers in our communities is the necessity for faster response times," McDonald said. "When a department receives a call, our volunteers are often the first on the scene and possess the most knowledge about the areas they serve. This not only benefits others responding to the emergency, but also aids the patient. In cases where volunteers are trained in first aid, time is of the essence to ensure positive outcomes. Beyond the medical aspect, having a well-informed team in a community's department, even for simple tasks such as guiding EMS (emergency medical services) and other responders to a call location, can have a more significant impact than many realize."

McDonald said that having both volunteered with Dodge City and working in EMS in the past, he has witnessed firsthand the importance of community members willing to dedicate their time to serve.

"It's crucial for the community to understand that there's a role tailored for everyone," McDonald said. "When individuals unite, leveraging their diverse strengths, they can significantly enhance the well-being and safety of their community. Volunteering presents a unique opportunity, with a role suited for everyone, regardless of background or expertise. Whether you excel in organizational skills, possess a talent for communication or have technical aptitude, your distinct abilities can be applied to improve the overall effectiveness of the fire service, consequently benefiting your community."

Those interested in more information or signing up to volunteer can contact their local volunteer fire department. To find the closest one, visit www.facebook.com/CullmanCountyAVFD or call 256-739-2890.

Full post from the Cullman County EMA on Facebook (printed as written):

Most towns and communities in Alabama are facing a critical shortage of volunteer firefighters, with volunteer numbers dropping by an estimated 40% over the past 20 years.

Recent statistics highlight this significant decline—a trend impacting the safety of communities across Alabama. Cullman County is not alone in facing this challenge; it's a problem that most areas within our state are experiencing.

Becoming a volunteer firefighter is not just a commitment to one community—it's a pledge to protect and serve. Your dedication can make a substantial difference in the lives of those in need, fostering a sense of pride and unity that extends beyond county lines.

If you prefer not to engage directly in combating live fires, it's essential to recognize that volunteer departments have various areas of need beyond firefighting. This misconception, that their sole focus is on "fighting fires," is widespread.

Many volunteer departments can utilize your talents in different capacities.

How You Can Make a Statewide Impact:

Spread the word and share this post to reach Alabamians far and wide. Awareness is crucial in addressing this statewide challenge. Tag friends, family, and associates from both different counties and within your area who may be interested in volunteering.

Your support matters! Encourage those who can volunteer and show your appreciation for the heroes already serving in your own communities.

Our great state is built on the strength of its communities. Let's join forces and ensure the safety and well-being of all Alabamians. Together, We Can Secure the Future of the state we all love - one community at a time.

If you or someone you know is interested in serving your community and making a TRUE difference, reach out to your local fire department and ask how you can get involved.

We must change this alarming trend - not only for ourselves but for all the ones we love.

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LEGALS

PB MIN BK 220 PG 557 - 11/28/2023 02:20 PM
Tammy Brown, Judge of Probate, Cullman County, AL

IN THE PROBATE COURT OF CULLMAN COUNTY, ALABAMA

IN THE MATTER OF
M.G.W.D.
A minor child.
D.O.B. 12/16/2008

CASE NO.: PC2023-360

NOTICE OF PETITION AND DECLARATION FOR CHANGE OF NAME OF MINOR CHILD

TO: KENNETH RICHARD DEES AND ANY KNOWN OR UNKNOWN BIOLOGICAL FATHER OF A CHILD BORN TO STACY MCKEE OAKES KNOWN AS M.G.W.D.

A Petition to Change Name of Minor was filed in the Probate Court of Cullman County, Alabama by Stacy McKee Oakes, Petitioner. If you should contest this name change, 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 24th DAY OF November, 2023.

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

Jason P. Knight
Attorney for Petitioner
210 Second Street, Se
Cullman, AL 35055

PB ADT BK 67 PG 850 - 11/20/2023 01:55 PM
Tammy Brown, Judge of Probate, Cullman County, AL

IN THE PROBATE COURT OF CULLMAN COUNTY, ALABAMA

IN THE MATTER OF THE
ADOPTION THE PETITION OF
RONNY GENE DUKE AND
LEAH DIANE DUKE
FOR THE ADOPTION OF

CASE NO.: AD 2023-087

I.R.D. A MINOR.
D.O.B. 12/27/2021

NOTICE OF PETITION FOR ADOPTION

**TO: UNKNOWN FATHER OF I.R.D.
WHOSE IDENTITY, ADDRESS AND/OR WHEREABOUTS
ARE UNKNOWN OR UNDISCLOSED**

Please take notice that a Petition for Adoption of I.R.D., a minor child born on December 27, 2021 to Kaitlynn Renee Duke, was filed in the Probate Court of Cullman County, Alabama by Ronny Gene Duke and Leah Diane Duke, 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 petitioner, 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 30th DAY OF November, 2023

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

Annette Irons-Parker
Attorney for Petitioner
215 Main Avenue, Southwest
Cullman, Alabama 35055

JOY MCNIEL AND MARGIE JOHNS.

PLAINTIFF

Case No. CV-2023-900328.00

VS.

ONE ACRE OF LAND IN THE NORTHWEST QUARTER OF THE NORTHWEST QUARTER OF SECTION 26, TOWNSHIP 9, RANGE 2 WEST; SAID ACRE BEING DESCRIBED MORE PARTICULARLY AS FOLLOWS: BEGINNING AT A POINT 391 FEET NORTHEAST OF WHERE THE SECTION BETWEEN SECTION 27 AND 26 INTERSECTS SAID HIGHWAY; THENCE NORTHEASTERLY 210 FEET; THENCE IN A SLIGHT NORTHWEST DIRECTION 170 FEET; THENCE IN A SLIGHT SOUTHWEST DIRECTION 210 FEET; THENCE IN A SOUTHEASTERLY DIRECTION 170 FEET TO THE POINT OF BEGINNING;

AND

Alan Johns, Trustee of THE CHURCH OF CHRIST AT SIMCOE, Bennie Johns, Trustee, and former member of the Church of Christ at Simcoe; Alan Johns, Trustee, and former member of the Church of Christ at Simcoe; Joyce Buckalew, Wanda Clark, Lora Clark, Louise Smith, Nina Smith and the heirs and devisees of Ralph Buckalew, the heirs and devisees of H. G. Cornett and wife, Nancy Lou Cornett, Fictitious Defendants C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, K, and L, and all other persons claiming any present, future, contingent, remainder, reversion, or other interest in said lands,

DEFENDANTS.

NOTICE OF FILING LAWSUIT

NOTICE TO DEFENDANTS:

ONE ACRE OF LAND IN THE NORTHWEST QUARTER OF THE NORTHWEST QUARTER OF SECTION 26, TOWNSHIP 9, RANGE 2 WEST; SAID ACRE BEING DESCRIBED MORE PARTICULARLY AS FOLLOWS: BEGINNING AT A POINT 391 FEET NORTHEAST OF WHERE THE SECTION BETWEEN SECTION 27 AND 26 INTERSECTS SAID HIGHWAY; THENCE NORTHEASTERLY 210 FEET; THENCE IN A SLIGHT NORTHWEST DIRECTION 170 FEET; THENCE IN A SLIGHT SOUTHWEST DIRECTION 210 FEET; THENCE IN A SOUTHEASTERLY DIRECTION 170 FEET TO THE POINT OF BEGINNING;

AND

Alan Johns, Trustee of THE CHURCH OF CHRIST AT SIMCOE, Bennie Johns, Trustee, and former member of the Church of Christ at Simcoe; Alan Johns, Trustee, and former member of the Church of Christ at Simcoe; Joyce Buckalew, Wanda Clark, Lora Clark, Louise Smith, Nina Smith and the heirs and devisees of Ralph Buckalew, the heirs and devisees of H. G. Cornett and wife, Nancy Lou Cornett, Fictitious Defendants C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, K, and L, and all other persons claiming any present, future, contingent, remainder, reversion, or other interest in said lands, whose whereabouts are unknown, must answer the Complaint for Declaratory Judgment to Remove Restrictive Use Clause by joy McNeil and Margie Johns by the 9th day of January, 2024 or thereafter a Judgment by Default may be rendered against such Defendant in the above captioned case number CV-2023-900328.00, now pending in the Circuit Court of Cullman County, Alabama.

Lisa McSwain
Clerk of Circuit Court

Petitioner's Attorney
Beverly Paschal Poston
200 First Avenue SE
Cullman, Alabama 35055

Beverly Paschal Poston
Attorney at Law

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

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

Calling All Young Singers!
Cullman Community Young Singers (CCYS) is looking for YOU! All young singers (ages 8-15) are invited to join us on Tuesday afternoons from 3:30-4:45 at the Little House at Art Park, 1031 Second St. SW in Cullman. No auditions, just come for a fun afternoon of learning music from pop to classical styles. We will rehearse and prepare to perform at a variety of events in and around the Cullman community. Bring your friends- we will have music and everything you need to get started! For more information, text or email Miss Cindy at 256-338-4404, cindypass22@gmail.com. CCYS is sponsored by Cullman Parks, Recreation & Sports Tourism.

Baileyton Bargain Days
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. Beauty and health products, toys, home goods, pet items, food and many everyday items. 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. Cash and checks accepted. Proceeds will be used for park improvements and capital improvements for the town.

Alcoholics Anonymous
The Grace of God group of Alcoholics Anonymous has open AA meetings (all are welcome) Mondays and Thursdays 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
• Mondays-Fridays- Free hot meals for children Mondays 11 a.m.-noon, Tuesdays 1-2 p.m. and Wednesdays-Fridays 11 a.m.-noon. Cullman Housing Authority Community Center 1545 Vine Circle SW. Please call Kristie 256-636-5362 for more information. Eat in or take out. Sponsored by Kids Loving Kids, Raising Arrows Ministry and Spirit Life Church.
• Kids Loving Kids Birthday Blessings serves children ages 1-18 in need of assistance to celebrate their birthdays. Register your child and pick up a birthday box with cake mix, icing, sprinkles, decorations and toys! Pickup is the last weekend of the month. Saturday (5100 Curry Highway Suite 100-B Jasper, AL 35504) from 3-5 p.m. or the last Sunday of the month at Spirit Life Church Cullman from 12:30-1 p.m. Birth certificate is required at the time of box pickup. Register at https://form.jotform.com/203435614640045. For more information, text or call 205-717-7478.
• Friday, Dec. 8 - 7 p.m. Celebrate Recovery. Fellowship & Testimonies. Hurts, habits and hang-ups are a part of everyone's life. Come and see how to overcome these and more! Bring a dish, dessert or drink for a potluck meal at 6:15. Nursery provided!
• Saturday, Dec. 9 - Kids Loving Kids Christmas Giveaway 10 a.m.-noon
• Sunday, Dec. 10 - Prayer - Join Teresa at 9:15 a.m. in the prayer room to pray for our church, nation and those who need healing, salvation or deliverance.
• Sunday, Dec. 10 - 9 a.m. Van runs in the 5 Points area. Call Guy Sunter at 727-215-9092 for pickup. Breakfast at 9:30. Bible study classes for children, youth and adults at 10. Praise, worship and communion and message by Pastor Bobby Dodd at 11. Leadership meeting following service.
• Sunday, Dec. 10 - 5 p.m. Healing Service: Miracles, Signs & Wonders follow those who believe! Join us and invite others to join as well.

Alcoholics Anonymous
Sundays, 3 p.m. at Cullman First Church of the Nazarene, 5415 Alabama Highway 157. CLOSED literature study. Handicap accessible.

TOPS (Take off Pounds Sensibly) Meetings
Fridays, 9:30-11 a.m., at Cullman Housing Authority Community Center (1545 Vine Circle SW, Cullman, AL 35055). The first meeting is free. TOPS, a national program, is a hands-on/pounds-off approach to weight loss and management through weekly meetings providing information, accountability, support and encouragement where you make the changes that make sense to you.

Cullman NAR-ANON Group Meetings
The NAR-ANON family group meetings are a worldwide fellowship for those affected by someone else's addiction. We offer Help by sharing our experiences, strength and hope. We carry the message of hope by letting others know that they are not alone by practicing the 12 Steps of NAR-ANON and changing our own attitudes. We Respect Your Anonymity. Our program is not a religious one, but a spiritual way of life. Meetings will be held at The Ruehl Building (Family Life Center of St. John's Church) Tuesday evenings at 6 p.m. Contact Jamie Weathersby Smith 256-708-7122 or Don or Nancy McKenzie 256-736-3327 or 256-736-3470 for more information.

Cullman Serenity AlAnon Meetings
The Cullman Serenity AlAnon group meets each Monday at noon at 1519 St. Joseph Dr. NE. There is also a zoom meeting each Tuesday at noon. The AlAnon family groups are a fellowship of friends and family whose lives have been affected by alcoholism. For more information, call 256-708-6645, 850-323-0490 or 256-734-2231.

Master's Hand Food Pantry at The Link
• 708 Ninth St. SE, Cullman, AL 35055
• Tuesday and Thursday 9 a.m.-3:30 p.m.
• Closed for lunch noon-1 p.m.

Winter Wonderland at Sportsman Lake Park
• Check out a variety of still and moving light displays, then hit the concessions stand for a warm cup of hot cocoa or a photo op with Santa Claus!
• The attraction is open 5-9 p.m. through Dec. 29 (closed Mondays and Tuesdays until Dec. 13). It will transition to a drive-through only experience Dec. 26-29.
• Admission is $10 cash per vehicle. Attractions include the Christmas train ($5 per person), horse and carriage rides (select nights at $5 per person), snow machine, photo booth, hot chocolate and additional Christmas entertainment.

Christmas at the Grotto
The spirit of Christmas has returned to the Ave Maria Grotto. Visit and enjoy Brother Joseph's creations, completely decked in lights. The attraction will be open every Friday and Saturday, some Sundays and Dec. 26-27. Friday, Dec. 15, and Saturday, Dec. 16, will be even more magical as food trucks, kids' rides, wagon rides and even Santa Claus! It's an experience you won't want to miss!

Dates
• Dec. 8-10 – 5-9 p.m. (kids' rides)
• Dec. 14 – 5-9 p.m. (kids' rides)
• Dec. 15-16 – 5-9 p.m. (food trucks, kids' rides, wagon rides, Santa Claus)
• Dec. 21-23 – 5-9 p.m. (kids' rides)
• Dec. 26-27 – 5-9 p.m. (kids' rides)

Admission
• Adults - $10
• Seniors - $8
•Military/veterans/first responders - $7
• Teens (13-17) - $8
• Children (5-12) - $7
• Children younger than 4 - free
• Wagon rides on Dec 15,16 - $5
• Kids' rides every night of event - $3

Christkindlmarkt
• Immerse yourself in a German winter wonderland at Cullman's Christkindlmarkt at Depot Park. Every Thursday to Sunday, through Dec. 23, indulge in rich flavors of traditional German Christkindlmarkt Cuisine. Experience ice skating, carousel rides and cherished moments with Santa. Our market's heart lies in its authenticity, from carefully handpicked vendors to the preserved centuries-old tradition that best exemplifies true German craftsmanship.
• Treasure offerings from revered German manufacturers like Christian Ulbricht, Dregeno Seiffen, Engstler, Graupner, Knox, Richard Glässer, Ino Schaller, and Richard Sellmer—where each item is a testament to legacy and meticulous artistry.
• Hours are Thursdays 4-9 p.m., Fridays and Saturdays 11 a.m.-9 p.m. and Sundays 1-8 p.m.
• www.cullmanchristkindlmarkt.com

Wallace State Fine and Performing Arts Christmas Spectacular
Thursday, Dec. 7, at 7 p.m. in the Betty Leeth Haynes Theatre. The free show is open to the public.

Cullman County Sheriff's Office Rodeo
• Friday, Dec. 8, and Saturday, Dec. 9, at the Cullman County Agricultural Trade Center.
• Gates open at 5 p.m.
• Kids' scramble at 7 p.m.
• Rodeo starts at 7:30 p.m.
• Tickets will be sold at the door. CASH ONLY. Adult $10, child/student $8, children 6 and younger are free. There will be an ATM on-site because organizers are unable to process credit/debit cards at the venue.

Berlin Volunteer Fire Department's Pancake Breakfast with Santa
Saturday, Dec. 9, from 7-10 a.m. at the Berlin Community Center, 3309 U.S. Highway 278. Plates include pancakes and bacon or sausage. Drinks provided for dine-in guests. No cost; donations only. All proceeds assist Santa with Christmas.

34th Annual Cullman County Christmas Parade
Saturday, Dec. 9, at noon. The parade will travel from Wallace State down U.S. Highway 31 to Hanceville Fire Station No. 1. www.facebook.com/hancevillecivitan

Town of South Vinemont 2nd Annual Christmas in the Park
Saturday, Dec. 9, from 4-6 p.m. at the Vinemont walking trail/Art Park, 88 Ridgeway St. Santa Claus, cookies and hot chocolate.

Fairview Lions Club Christmas Parade
Saturday, Dec. 9, at 4:30 p.m. at Randall Shedd Park in Fairview. The parade will start lining up at 3:45-4 at the turnaround by the school and start at 4:30, ending at the park. Anyone is welcome to participate. We will have a tree lighting and sing carols. There will also be a reading of the Christmas Story, free hot chocolate and cookies. Bring the kids because Santa will be there. For more information. call Kita at 256-358-8805 or William at 256-385-5596.

FHS Theatre Presents "A Charlie Brown Christmas"
Friday, Dec. 9, at 6 p.m. in the Fairview High School auditorium. Tickets are $6, with proceeds benefiting FHS Theatre. Santa will also be in attendance, arriving early; $5 will buy a photo with him to commemorate the night.

Wreaths Across America
Saturday, Dec. 16 at 10 a.m. The Dripping Springs DAR chapter will have its Veterans' Wreath Laying Ceremony at the Cullman City Cemetery. There will be a short ceremony followed by placing wreaths on veterans' graves. The public is invited to help place wreaths.

COMMUNITY CORNER



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PREP VOLLEYBALL

'We are more than a team; we are a family': Arab's Bennett Elrod recaps junior season

Sammy Confer
sammy@cullmantribune.com

ARAB, Ala. — This volleyball season was a special one for the Arab Lady Knights as they rolled past everyone to get to the Class 5A state finals, but they ended up falling just short in the title game to finish the season state runners up. Junior Bennett Elrod feels so blessed to have played a part in what was an amazing season for Arab.

"This season was very special to me, because I got to play and make memories with my best friends. We are a good team, but our bond and love for each other is what takes us the extra mile. Family is a big word that we use a lot, and we truly formed one of the best families this season," Elrod said. "I personally wanted nothing more this season than to give our seniors a special year, and even though it didn't end the way we wanted it to, I am so thankful for the memories and friendships that grew stronger over the season. Being a part of this team really is a blessing."

Bennett got to play with some amazing players this past season and learned a lot from them and from this year. She talked about what it was like to play with some great seniors.

"Playing with the talented players that we had pushed me to be the best I could be. I think one of the lessons I took away from this season was to not be afraid to step out of your comfort zone. As a team, if someone got down, we all tried to rally around them, and bring them back up. Throughout the season, we all learned that what you do off the court is just as important as what you do on the court. Encouragement played a major role in the building of our team chemistry," Elrod said. "As leaders, they were inspiring and supportive, guiding the team with their experience and knowledge. They set a great example for everyone and created a positive and motivating environment. They taught me the importance of leadership and keeping a positive environment for the team to be in."

Bennett feels blessed to play for head coach Amy Hudson and has taken away so much from her so far.

"It's been a great experience playing for coach Hudson. She pushes us hard to be our best, but at the same time, she is our biggest supporter. She's always reminding us that she is there for us no matter what, and I think that makes our relationship with her extra special. She has taught me lots of things, but most importantly, she's taught me the importance of being a leader and what kind of impact that can have on someone. She's helped me learn that communication is always necessary, especially when going through adversity. She has taught me to be there for my team and to let them be there for me too, because we are more than a team; we are a family."

Bennett has seen her overall game grow a lot over the past three years and talked about what she learned the most about the team and from this past season.

"Personally, I think I have grown my game by working hard and being dedicated to my team. Over the last three years, I have become more confident in myself, and I think that has played a big role in my improvement," she said. "I learned that trust, communication, and the happiest of teammates are key factors in how we perform. I truly believe that this team would do anything for each other on and off the court."

She will continue to work on her game through the offseason but will work on a couple of other things as well. She talked about her goals and the team goals for 2024.

"Going into next season, I am looking to improve every aspect of my game, but most importantly, I want to step up as a leader and help push the team to our highest potential," she said. "My personal goals are to get better at some parts of my game every day and to hold my teammates accountable. We have set the bar high for ourselves the last two years, so I would say our team goals are nothing less than making it back to the state finals and walking away with a different outcome."

The Lady Knights volleyball team was really special to watch this past season, and Bennett is looking forward to having another special season in 2024. She talked about her role models in volleyball, and how important it is to be a role model for the younger girls that are watching her and the rest of her teammates.

"I feel like our energy and encouragement to each other during the highs and lows of games made us entertaining and special to watch," she said. "I think it will be special to see the talented new players step up and face the challenges, as they assume their roles on the team. I have always looked up to my coaches and the older, more experienced players I have played with as my role models."

She added,

"It means so much to me to be a role model for the younger girls. I want them to see us be successful, but more importantly, I want them to be able to tell how much fun we are having and how much we love each other. I have made some of my best friends through volleyball, and I want them to see that volleyball is more than just a game."



NICK GRIFFIN/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE
Arab's Bennett Elrod

PREP VOLLEYBALL

'We are more than a team; we are a family': Arab's Bennett Elrod recaps junior season

Sammy Confer
sammy@cullmantribune.com

ARAB, Ala. – The Arabian Knights put together another special volleyball season, making it to the Class 5A state finals but falling just short to finish the as state runner ups. Freshman Millie Lackey had an amazing experience going to state in her first year on the varsity squad and learned so much during that time.

"This season was a journey, considering the target we had on our backs, but it was an amazing experience. It was great to get to state, but we weren't satisfied. We had our eyes on the blue map, and we just fell a little short," Lackey said. "I learned a lot from Anna Mcferrin last year. She showed me what being a leader looked like. With this year being my first one on varsity and in a big role, I learned that it comes with a lot of responsibilities, but it's the best experience ever. This season was a blessing with some of the best teammates, who helped me step into that big role. What I learned about this season is that there are so many things that can affect the outcome, but all you can do is control the things you can control. That is one thing coach Hudson always made sure we knew.

Millie feels blessed to play alongside an amazing group of girls, and she took away so much from them.

"This was a very special group of girls. They were very encouraging and helpful, especially considering I was so young. They took me in and showed me grace throughout the ups and downs of the season. The seniors really helped me to grow as a player and leader. I'm very thankful for this group," Lackey said. "I learned that the season isn't always going to be perfect, but even through the ups and downs, you have to play for each other. They taught me how to lead on and off the court. I learned how to play in pressure situations, knowing that the people on the court had my back. They taught me confidence in stressful situations, and they showed me that they cared about me in so many ways. The most important thing they taught me was that you have to love the people on the court with you, and if you do, then you can make it through all the ups and downs."

Millie has had a blast playing for Head Coach Amy Hudson; she saw a lot of improvement in her game during her first year on varsity.

"Playing for coach Hudson this season was a great experience. She supports us on and off the court and reminds us that she is always there for us. She works really hard for us, and that encourages us to do everything we can for her," she said. "I think I improved my game this season, but I think the thing that I improved the most in this season was the way I grew as a teammate. I learned how to step in uncomfortable and stressful situations and be there for my team. I learned how to handle pressure situations, and I grew as a leader on the court for my teammates. I learned how to lead/help each of them in different ways."

Millie will continue to work on her game in the offseason, and has some goals set for herself and for the team next season.

"I am going to work on being a more vocal leader, since at times, I lead more with my actions. I am also going to work on specific skills, like blocking, and attacking to make me more of a threat when I'm setting on the front row," she said. "I have long-term goals to play at the next level, with dreams of going D1. I also have more short-term goals of getting in the gym and working with hopes of receiving offers and being seen by recruiters. My team goals are to have a successful season and to finally take home the blue map."

Millie was a part of a special team this past season, and she can't wait to see what more special things are in store for them in 2024. She feels so blessed to have gotten the chance to play alongside some great seniors.

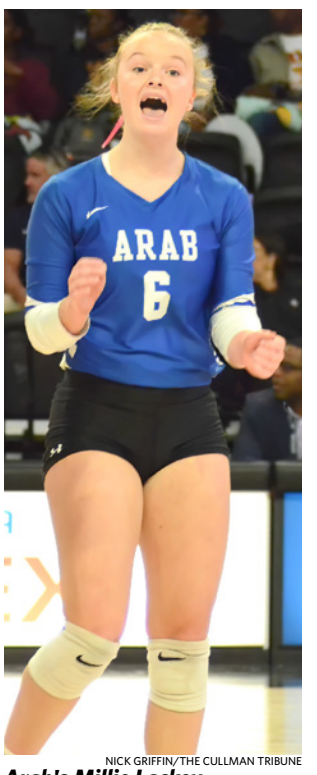
"This team was special to watch, because we faced a lot of adversity, especially with the big expectations we were given, and the target on our back. We persevered through many things, and we always had each other's backs. I think that made us very special to watch this season," she said. "This team is going to be special next year, but we have some good leaders with experience, but also, we will have lots of young players. I think the team chemistry will be really good, and I'm excited to see what we can do."

She added, "It was great playing with these seniors, because they took me in and helped me, despite how young I was. They celebrated my success and picked me up when I didn't succeed. It was truly a blessing to be a freshman and play with this group of seniors, and I am so thankful for their support."

Millie talked about her biggest role models, and how much it means to her to be a role model for the younger girls that are watching her play.

"My role models in volleyball are the people that are older than me. I look up to them in the way they carry the team and lead us. But my biggest role model was Anna Mcferrin, because she took me in as an eighth grader and helped me grow as a player, and she taught me so much, I learned a lot from her on how to be a leader on and off the court. She taught me to try to keep pressure off myself, even though setting has a lot of responsibilities. She gave me advice on how to handle big situations and encouraged me to step into those without stressing about the little things."

She added, "I think attitude is the biggest thing. You can't let your emotions get to you, and you have to stay positive, even when things are going well. You always have to encourage your teammates even through mistakes, and you can't get frustrated with each other. So, personally, I think attitude is one of the most important parts of the game and a great way to led by example. You also have to give effort at all times and leave it all on the court. You have to give it 100%, no matter how the game is going. That is another great way to be a good example."



NICK GRIFFIN/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE
Arab's Millie Lackey

LEGALS

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

Notice is hereby given that the City Council of the City of Cullman, Alabama, will hold a public hearing on January 8, 2024, at 7:00 o'clock p.m. in the Lucille N. Galin Auditorium at City Hall, 204 Second Avenue NE, Cullman, Alabama 35055. At this time, anyone wishing to be heard in favor of or in opposition to the adoption of Ordinance No. 2024-08 (set forth in full below) will be given an opportunity to speak. - Wesley M. Moore, City Clerk

ORDINANCE NO. 2024 – 08

AMENDING THE CURRENT ZONING ORDINANCE AND ZONING MAP OF THE CITY OF CULLMAN, ALABAMA, TO RE-ZONE CERTAIN PARCELS OF PROPERTY AS SET FORTH HEREIN

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF CULLMAN, ALABAMA, AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. Under the authority of Chapter 52, Articles 1 through 4, Section 11-52-1 through Section 11-52-84, Code of Alabama 1975, as amended, and specifically Sections 11-52-77 and at the request of property owner, the petitioner, the following describe the tracts or parcels of land, to-wit:

Property Owner: Blue Hole, LLC.

Lot 2. Legal Description: A TRACT OR PARCEL OF LAND CONTAINING 11.14 ACRES OF LAND, MORE OR LESS, AND BEING A PART OF THE SOUTHEAST QUARTER OF THE NORTHWEST QUARTER AND A PART OF THE NORTHEAST QUARTER OF THE NORTHWEST QUARTER, ALL IN SECTION 18, TOWNSHIP 10 SOUTH, RANGE 3 WEST, CULLMAN COUNTY, ALABAMA AND BEING MORE PARTICULARLY DESCRIBED AS FOLLOWS: COMMENCE AT THE SOUTHEAST CORNER OF SAID NORTHEAST QUARTER OF THE NORTHWEST QUARTER OF SAID SECTION 18 AND RUN THENCE NORTH 87 DEGREES 38 MINUTES 22 SECONDS WEST (BEARING BASED ON AL. STATE PLANE, WEST ZONE, NAD 83, GRID) AND RUN ALONG THE ACCEPTED SOUTH LINE, A DISTANCE OF 657.92 FEET; THENCE SOUTH 00 DEGREES 49 MINUTES 52 SECONDS WEST, A DISTANCE OF 159.45 FEET TO A POINT ON THE NORTH RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE OF U.S. HIGHWAY NO. 31 AND BEING IN A CURVE TO THE LEFT, HAVING A CENTRAL ANGLE OF 04 DEGREES 14 MINUTES 34 SECONDS, A RADIUS OF 1,979.85 FEET, A CHORD BEARING OF NORTH 76 DEGREES 54 MINUTES 31 SECONDS WEST AND A CHORD LENGTH OF 146.58 FEET; THENCE RUN ALONG THE ARC OF SAID CURVE AN ARC DISTANCE OF 146.61 FEET TO A SET REBAR (CONN-17831); THENCE NORTH 16 DEGREES 17 MINUTES 20 SECONDS WEST, DEPARTING SAID RIGHT-OF-WAY LINE, A DISTANCE OF 412.09 FEET TO A SET REBAR; THENCE NORTH 49 DEGREES 09 MINUTES 40 SECONDS EAST, A DISTANCE OF 437.20 FEET TO A SET REBAR; THENCE SOUTH 82 DEGREES 05 MINUTES 26 SECONDS EAST, A DISTANCE OF 269.56 FEET TO A SET REBAR; THENCE NORTH 48 DEGREES 11 MINUTES 10 SECONDS EAST, A DISTANCE OF 146.94 FEET TO A SET REBAR; THENCE NORTH 65 DEGREES 55 MINUTES 43 SECONDS EAST, A DISTANCE OF 40.24 FEET TO A SET REBAR; THENCE NORTH 86 DEGREES 23 MINUTES 30 SECONDS EAST, A DISTANCE OF 162.40 FEET TO A POINT ON THE WEST BANK OF RYAN'S CREEK; THENCE RUN IN A SOUTHERLY DIRECTION FOLLOWING SAID WEST BANK THE FOLLOWING 3 COURSES: SOUTH 22 DEGREES 30 MINUTES 15 SECONDS WEST, A DISTANCE OF 115.36 FEET; SOUTH 09 DEGREES 17 MINUTES 15 SECONDS EAST, A DISTANCE OF 190.67 FEET; SOUTH 26 DEGREES 23 MINUTES 33 SECONDS EAST, A DISTANCE OF 64.96 FEET TO A POINT ON THE EAST LINE OF THE NORTHEAST QUARTER OF THE NORTHWEST QUARTER; THENCE SOUTH 00 DEGREES 38 MINUTES 35 SECONDS WEST, A DISTANCE OF 316.90 FEET TO THE POINT OF BEGINNING.

within the city limits of Cullman, Alabama, and lying and being in Cullman County, State of Alabama, designated as Agriculture District AG-2 on the Zoning Map of the City of Cullman, Alabama under Ordinance No. 2004-03 and as may be reflected in any comprehensive master plan for the City of Cullman, Alabama, be, and is hereby changed from AG-2 Agricultural District and AG-1 Agricultural District.

SECTION 2. That this ordinance be published at least once a week for two consecutive weeks in advance of its final passage in a newspaper with general circulation within the City of Cullman, Alabama, the first publication of said notice and ordinance being verbatim and the second publication either verbatim or synopsized, with the last publication being at least 15 days prior to the date set for public hearing and passage of said ordinance.

SECTION 3. That a public hearing be held relative to the passage of this ordinance on the 8th day of January, 2024 at 7:00 p.m., at which time interested parties and citizens shall have the opportunity to be heard concerning said ordinance and any changes relating thereto.

SECTION 4. That all notices as required by law be given by the City Clerk concerning said public hearing, and in addition thereto, a certified letter be sent by the Clerk to all contiguous property owners at their last known addresses as shown by the tax records for the City of Cullman, Alabama.

SECTION 5. That upon final passage of this ordinance, all zoning maps, master comprehensive plans or any other documents of the City of Cullman, Alabama, in conflict with this ordinance are hereby changed and amended to reflect the changes and amendments herein.

SECTION 6. Should any part or portion of this ordinance be held invalid, unenforceable or unconstitutional, for whatever reason, by a court of competent jurisdiction, such ruling shall not affect any other part or portion of this Ordinance.

SECTION 7. This ordinance shall take effect and be in force from and after its passage or adoption as required by law, including notice, publication and public hearing, all in accordance with Section 11-52-1, et seq., Code of Alabama 1975, as amended.

Submitted by Wesley M. Moore, City Clerk

ORDINANCE NO. 2024 – 03

AMENDING THE CURRENT ZONING ORDINANCE AND ZONING MAP OF THE CITY OF CULLMAN, ALABAMA, TO RE-ZONE CERTAIN PARCELS OF PROPERTY AS SET FORTH HEREIN

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF CULLMAN, ALABAMA, AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. Under the authority of Chapter 52, Articles 1 through 4, Section 11-52-1 through Section 11-52-84, Code of Alabama 1975, as amended, and specifically Sections 11-52-77 and at the request of property owner, the petitioner, the following describe the tracts or parcels of land, to-wit:

Property Owner: N31, LLC.

Parcel 1: Lot 3A. Legal Description: A tract or parcel containing 141.81 acres of land, more or less, and being known as Lot 3A of the Resurvey of Lot 3 (Future Development) of the Plat of Lot 5, of the Re-subdivision of Lot 3, Noble Ridge Subdivision as recorded in the Plat Records of Cullman County, Alabama, and is hereby changed from B-3 Business District and M-1 Manufacturing District to R-4 Residential District.

Parcel 2: Lot 6. Legal Description: A tract or parcel containing 4.24 acres of land, more or less, and being known as Lot 6 of the Resurvey of Lot 3 (Future Development) of the Plat of Lot 5, of the Re-subdivision of Lot 3, Noble Ridge Subdivision as recorded in the Plat Records of Cullman County, Alabama, and is hereby changed from B-3 Business District to R-4 Residential District.

Parcel 3: Lot 7. Legal Description: A tract or parcel containing 15.16 acres of land, more or less, and being known as Lot 7 of the Resurvey of Lot 3 (Future Development) of the Plat of Lot 5, of the Re-subdivision of Lot 3, Noble Ridge Subdivision as recorded in the Plat Records of Cullman County, Alabama, and is hereby changed from B-3 Business District to R-4 Residential District.

within the city limits of Cullman, Alabama, and lying and being in Cullman County, State of Alabama, designated as R-4 Residential District on the Zoning Map of the City of Cullman, Alabama, under Ordinances No. 2004-03 and as may be reflected in any comprehensive master plan for the City of Cullman, Alabama, be, and is hereby changed from B-3 Business District and M-1 Manufacturing District to R-4 Residential District.

SECTION 2. That this ordinance be published at least once a week for two consecutive weeks in advance of its final passage in a newspaper with general circulation within the City of Cullman, Alabama, the first publication of said notice and ordinance being verbatim and the second publication either verbatim or synopsized, with the last publication being at least 15 days prior to the date set for public hearing and passage of said ordinance.

SECTION 3. That a public hearing be held relative to the passage of this ordinance on the 27th day of November, 2023 at 7:00 p.m., at which time interested parties and citizens shall have the opportunity to be heard concerning said ordinance and any changes relating thereto.

SECTION 4. That all notices as required by law be given by the City Clerk concerning said public hearing, and in addition thereto, a certified letter be sent by the Clerk to all contiguous property owners at their last known addresses as shown by the tax records for the City of Cullman, Alabama.

SECTION 5. That upon final passage of this ordinance, all zoning maps, master comprehensive plans or any other documents of the City of Cullman, Alabama, in conflict with this ordinance are hereby changed and amended to reflect the changes and amendments herein.

SECTION 6. Should any part or portion of this ordinance be held invalid, unenforceable or unconstitutional, for whatever reason, by a court of competent jurisdiction, such ruling shall not affect any other part or portion of this Ordinance.

SECTION 7. This ordinance shall take effect and be in force from and after its passage or adoption as required by law, including notice, publication and public hearing, all in accordance with Section 11-52-1, et seq., Code of Alabama 1975, as amended.

ADOPTED BY THE CITY COUNCIL, this the 4th day of December, 2023.

/s/Jenny Folsom - President of City Council

ATTESTED BY: /s/Wesley M. Moore - City Clerk

APPROVED this the 4th day of December, 2023. /s/Woody Jacobs – Mayor

ORDINANCE NO. 2024 – 05

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF CULLMAN, ALABAMA, TO EXEMPT CERTAIN "COVERED ITEMS" FROM THE MUNICIPAL SALES AND USE TAX DURING THE LAST FULL WEEKEND OF FEBRUARY, AS AUTHORIZED BY 40-23-230 THROUGH 40-23-233, CODE OF ALABAMA 1975, GENERALLY REFERRED TO AS THE STATE SEVERE WEATHER PREPAREDNESS SALES TAX HOLIDAY LEGISLATION.

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF CULLMAN, ALABAMA, AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. In conformity with the provisions in 40-23-230 through 40-23-233, Code of Alabama 1975, providing for a State Sales Tax Holiday, the City of Cullman, Alabama, exempts "covered items" from municipal sales and use tax during the same period, beginning at 12:01 a.m. on the last Friday in February 2024 (February 23, 2024) and ending at twelve midnight the following Sunday (February 25, 2024), **and on the last full weekend of February each year thereafter** until and unless annual participation is rescinded by further action of the council.

Section 2. This ordinance shall be subject to all terms, conditions, definitions, time periods, and rules as provided by 40-23-230 through 40-23-233, Code of Alabama 1975.

Section 3. The City Clerk is hereby authorized and directed to certify a copy of this ordinance under the seal of the City of Cullman, Alabama, and to forward said certified copy to the Alabama Department of Revenue to be recorded and posted on the Department website.

Section 4. This ordinance shall become effective on December 4, 2023.

ADOPTED AND APPROVED THIS 4th DAY OF DECEMBER, 2023.

s/Woody Jacobs – Mayor

ATTESTED BY: /s/Wesley M. Moore - City Clerk

Council (from Front)

W.C. Mann
craig@cullmantribune.com

CULLMAN, Ala. — The Cullman City Council this week approved resolutions to place a new traffic light at the intersection of U.S. Highway 278 and Interstate 65 on the city's west side, and to rezone a business and manufacturing district on the northside for residential development.

The council voted to enter into an agreement with the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) to install a traffic control signal at the downtown's closest interstate access point. According to the City Engineer's Office, ALDOT determined the proposed traffic light to be necessary based on a recent traffic study.

The council also voted to rezone a large parcel of property on the northeast side of the U.S. Highway 31/Alabama Highway 157 intersection from business and manufacturing to residential, despite concerns from a local resident about the potential impact of development of the site on traffic and infrastructure.

The new R-4 zoning designation allows a range of construction, from single-family homes to apartment complexes.

The developer must next submit plans to the City Planning Commission.

The council also approved:

• A special event permit for an Our Lady of Guadalupe procession from St. Bernard Abbey to Sacred Heart School at 5 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 9, 2023

• An agreement with EPR Systems USA, Inc. to provide records management services for Cullman Fire Rescue

• The Severe Weather Preparedness Sales Tax Holiday from Feb. 23-25, 2024, and on the last full weekend of February in the future

The council set a public hearing to rezone property belonging to Blue Hole, LLC on U.S. Highway 278 from AG-2 to AG-1 on Jan. 8, 2024, and held first readings of ordinances to annex properties on County Road 1188 and County Road 468.

The Cullman City Council meets at 7 p.m. on the second and fourth Monday of each month at Cullman City Hall. The public is invited to attend.

Meeting (from Front)

Marlee Jackson
Alfa Farmers Federation

MONTGOMERY, Ala. — More than 1,300 farmers from across Alabama participated in the 102nd annual meeting of the Alabama Farmers Federation Dec. 3-4 in Montgomery. The event included elections, special recognitions and entertainment.

Business session elections

Four-hundred sixty-two farmers from the Gulf Coast to the Tennessee Valley served as voting delegates in Montgomery Dec. 4 to conduct business for the state's largest farm organization.

Agenda items included voting on policy recommendations and electing nine leaders to the Alabama Farmers Federation state board.

Steve Dunn was one leader elected during the group's 102nd annual meeting. The Conecuh County row crop and cattle farmer was reelected to his 13th two-year term as secretary-treasurer of the 353,000-member-strong Federation.

Meanwhile, Jon Hegeman and Jake Harper were chosen to serve two more years as vice presidents.

This is the third term for Hegeman, a Calhoun County greenhouse owner. His Central Area includes Autauga, Bibb, Calhoun, Chilton, Clay, Cleburne, Fayette, Greene, Jefferson, Lamar, Pickens, Randolph, Shelby, St. Clair, Talladega, Tuscaloosa and Walker counties.

Harper of Wilcox County now begins his 11th term serving the Southwest Area, which covers Baldwin, Butler, Choctaw, Clarke, Conecuh, Dallas, Escambia, Hale, Lowndes, Marengo, Mobile, Monroe, Montgomery, Perry, Sumter, Washington and Wilcox counties. Harper manages a timber and cattle farm.

Additionally, farmer-delegates elected four peers to three-year terms as district directors.

David Bailey of DeKalb County was chosen to serve District 3, which includes Cherokee, DeKalb, Etowah and Jackson counties. Bailey is a poultry farmer and replaces board member John Bert East of Cherokee County.

Shelby County's Phillip Hunter is beginning his third term serving District 6 farmers. That territory covers Calhoun, Clay, Cleburne, Randolph, Shelby, St. Clair and Talladega counties. Hunter owns and manages a tree farm.

Bill Cook of Montgomery County was reelected to represent District 9, which covers Autauga, Butler, Chilton, Lowndes, Montgomery and Wilcox counties. Now in his third term, Cook grows timber and operates a lawn care business.

Serving District 12 is newly elected Jerry Peak, a poultry and cattle farmer from Geneva County. His district includes Dale, Geneva, Henry and Houston counties. Peek replaces Thomas Adams of Henry County.

During the business session, delegates officially approved nominations for Debra Dunn and Dillon Turk to lead the State Women's Leadership Committee and State Young Farmers Committee, respectively. Geneva County's Dunn lives on a row crop and cattle farm, while Turk of Mobile County manages his family's ornamental nursery. Dunn and Turk will also serve one-year, ex-officio terms on the state board, where they'll gain deeper understanding of Federation business and the organization's connection with Alfa Insurance.

Elections, awards for State Women's Leadership Committee and State Young Farmers Committee

As committee chairs, Dunn and Turk will serve one-year, ex-officio terms on the Federation's state board.

On the WLC, Rachel Chastain of Talladega County was chosen to serve as vice chair and Carla Trantham of Calhoun County was elected as secretary.

Elected to serve Region 1 was Lisa Lake of Cullman County. Region 1 includes Blount, Cherokee, Colbert, Cullman, DeKalb, Etowah, Franklin, Jackson, Lauderdale, Lawrence, Limestone, Madison, Marion, Marshall, Morgan and Winston counties. Lake replaces Cullman County's longtime state committee member Lydia Haynes, who served the committee for six years.

Amy Belcher of Montgomery County will serve Region 3. This includes Baldwin, Butler, Choctaw, Clarke, Conecuh, Dallas, Escambia, Hale, Lowndes, Marengo, Mobile, Monroe, Montgomery, Perry, Sumter, Washington and Wilcox counties. Belcher replaces Mobile County's longtime state committee member Debbie Freeland. Freeland served the committee for six years.

The WLC at-large representative is Debbie Miller of Mobile County. Miller replaces long-time state committee member Ann Whatley from Lee County, who is the immediate past chairman, also serving the committee for six years.

Outstanding county committees were also honored during the annual meeting. They were Cherokee County, Region 1; Lamar County, Region 2; Sumter County, Region 3; and Chambers County, Region 4.

Additionally, 44 counties were presented Awards of Excellence. They were Autauga, Blount, Butler, Calhoun, Chambers, Cherokee, Choctaw, Clarke, Clay, Cleburne, Coffee, Coosa, Crenshaw, Cullman, Dale, DeKalb, Elmore, Etowah, Fayette, Franklin, Geneva, Houston, Jefferson, Lamar, Lauderdale, Lawrence, Lee, Limestone, Lowndes, Marion, Marshall, Mobile, Montgomery, Pickens, Randolph, Russell, Shelby, St. Clair, Sumter, Talladega, Tallapoosa, Tuscaloosa, Wilcox and Winston counties.

Meanwhile, Young Farmers ages 18-35 elected leaders during their annual business meeting Dec. 3.

District 5's Denzil Dees of Sumter County was elected as vice chairman, in addition to his newly reelected position representing Choctaw, Dallas, Lowndes, Marengo, Perry, Sumter and Wilcox counties.

Natalie Lee of DeKalb County will serve as secretary and continue representing District 2's Blount, Cherokee, Cullman, DeKalb, Etowah, Jackson, Marshall and St. Clair Counties.

Forrest Anders of Morgan County was chosen to serve District 1, which includes Colbert, Franklin, Lawrence Limestone, Madison, Marion, Morgan and Winston counties. Anders replaces James Hereford of Madison County. Hereford served a two-year term.

Jordyn Upchurch of Clay County will serve District 3. This includes Calhoun, Clay, Cleburne, Coosa, Randolph, Shelby, Talladega and Tallapoosa counties. Upchurch replaces Randolph County's Ben Johnson, who served the committee for three years.

Reelected to represent District 7 was Emmanuel Bankston of Henry County. His district includes Barbour, Coffee, Covington, Crenshaw, Dale, Geneva, Henry, Houston and Pike counties.

Bart Williams of Autauga County was reelected to serve as the South-At-Large representative. This includes Autauga, Baldwin, Barbour, Bullock, Butler, Chambers, Chilton, Choctaw, Clarke, Coffee, Conecuh, Covington, Crenshaw, Dale, Dallas, Elmore, Escambia, Geneva, Henry, Houston, Lee, Lowndes, Macon, Marengo, Mobile, Monroe, Montgomery, Perry, Pike, Russell, Sumter, Washington and Wilcox counties.

Brady and Anna Peek of Limestone County will serve an ex-officio role on the committee as Alabama's Outstanding Young Farm Family of the Year.

Fourteen counties were recognized for outstanding work, active participation and community involvement. They were Calhoun, Chambers, Clay, Elmore, Henry, Houston, Lee, Limestone, Marshall, Mobile, Montgomery, Talladega, Tallapoosa and Winston counties.

Elections, recognition of state commodity committee leaders

Alabama Farmers Federation grassroots leaders received high praise when voting delegates elected peers to commodity committees during the organization's 102nd annual meeting Dec. 3 in Montgomery.

State commodity committees are as effective as ever, said Federation Governmental and Agricultural Programs Department Director Mitt Walker.

"The process of allowing farmers to select the best among their peers for these committees has bolstered each group's influence and resilience," Walker said. "These members understand present and future issues facing agriculture. Our exceptional group of commodity directors is prepared to work with every member to determine strategy and make Alabama even better."

Walker said the Federation relies on policy recommendations from state committees to shape and direct the organization's work.

For the third year, elections took place during the year-end meeting. Brooks Wall of Shelby County was newly elected to the State Forestry Committee. Wall said he's looking forward to working with other members to promote and protect Alabama timber land.

"With any large industry, there are complications that will arise." Wall said. "I'm ready to work with many talented and bright people to solve those problems, grow the forestry business and improve it the best we can."

State committees provide commodity-specific educational programs across the state throughout the year, in addition to guiding research, promotion and education efforts.

Cade Grace of Walker County said he's grateful to serve farmers and help ensure checkoff funds are allocated to initiatives that benefit all producers.

"Being on the committee gives us the opportunity to sit with others who might have different perspectives and experiences," said Grace, who was elected to his second term on the State Soybean Committee. "We're well represented from all parts of Alabama, so we'll be able to promote programs that help farmers across the state."

Federation staff will work with committees to dive deep into distinct issues surrounding each of the organization's 17 commodities: bee & honey; beef; catfish; cotton; dairy; equine; forestry; greenhouse, nursery & sod; hay & forage; fruit & vegetables; peanuts; pork; poultry; sheep & goat; soybean; wheat & feed grain; and wildlife.

Catfish, fruit & vegetable and peanut elections will be held outside the annual meeting. Catfish producers will meet to vote at Catfish Industry Update Meeting Jan. 11 in Marion Junction. The Alabama Peanut Producers Association and Alabama Fruit & Vegetable Growers Association will gather at their corresponding conferences in Dothan and Gulf Shores to elect members. The affiliated organization Alabama TREASURE Forest Association will vote in 2024.

In addition to elections, state commodity committee members who rotated off committees were honored Dec. 4 for serving the maximum nine years.

• Bee & Honey – Justin Hill, Calhoun County
• Beef – Larry Bowen, Randolph County; Tim Whitley, Blount County
• Cotton – Richard Lindsey, Cherokee County
• Equine – Frank Chirico, Coffee County
• Forestry – Emory Mosley, Washington County
• Greenhouse, Nursery & Sod – Brian Keller, Mobile County
• Hay & Forage – Joe Ching, Mobile County
• Sheep & Goat – Charlie Loveless, Calhoun County; Melissa Palmer, Elmore County
• Wheat & Feed Grain – James Walker, Lauderdale County

Maggie Edwards, Tanner Hood contributed to this article.



ALFA FARMERS FEDERATION

The Cullman County Farmers Federation (CCFF) received an Award of Excellence during the Alabama Farmers Federation's 102nd annual meeting Dec. 4 in Montgomery. This honor recognizes counties for top-tier programs, community work and agricultural advocacy during 2023. From left are Federation Executive Director Paul Pinyan and CCFF President Lee Haynes.



ALFA FARMERS FEDERATION

Cullman County's Lisa Lake, right, was elected to serve Region 1 of the Alabama Farmers Federation's State Women's Leadership Committee during the Federation's 102nd annual meeting in Montgomery Dec. 3-4. Region 1 includes Blount, Cherokee, Colbert, Cullman, DeKalb, Etowah, Franklin, Jackson, Lauderdale, Lawrence, Limestone, Madison, Marion, Marshall, Morgan and Winston counties. Lake replaces Cullman County's long-time state committee member Lydia Haynes. The Women's Leadership Committee provides an opportunity for women to actively participate in policymaking and ag advocacy. She is pictured with Federation Women's Leadership Division Director Kim Earwood.



Moonshine (from Front)

shines, Alabama Shine Co. is starting strong with four distinct flavors, and more to come. "We starting with four flavors, and from there we expect to expand to anywhere from 12-15 within the first 18 months," said Prewett.

Current flavors include "Black and Blue," a blackberry and blueberry fusion; "Red Velvet Cake," a sweet and decadent dessert flavor; "Hippie Juice," with summery notes of coconut and watermelon; and "Lemon," a basic citrusy flavor ideal for mixing cocktails.

Prewett and Alabama Shine Co. CFO Darryl Talley hinted at future combination possibilities like banana pudding, peach cobbler and even a few featuring one of Cullman's biggest agricultural exports: sweet potatoes or strawberries.

Alabama Shine Co. hopes its product will be hitting the shelves by spring 2024. Prices are expected to range from $18-$30 per jar. Get more info at www.facebook.com/alshineco.

LuLu (from Front)

Cayla Grace Murphy
caylagrace@cullmantribune.com

CULLMAN, Ala. — LuLu, an approximately 2-year-old female pointer and American Bully mix with a spotted ivory coat, is available for adoption at Cullman County Animal Shelter.

LuLu has finally outgrown the puppy energy stage and is ready to chill. She savors the time she spends with humans at the shelter and is curious about them, expressing interest in all the day-to-day happenings and goings on. She'll surely express a vested interest in whatever hobby you happen to enjoy, and we can't promise that she won't be nosy about where the Christmas presents are hiding!

She has a good understanding of leash etiquette and would enjoy a romp in the park! Her extremely short coat and low-to-medium energy level provide the perfect trappings for a snuggly, furry friend, just in time to lounge around the fireplace for Christmas.

Are you ready to add a stocking to the mantle for LuLu? Head over to Cullman County Animal Shelter at 935 Convent Road NE, Monday through Friday, from 9 a.m.-3:30 p.m. for a meet and greet.

Her adoption fee includes spay, DHLPP vaccine, Bordetella vaccines, rabies vaccine, wormer, general exam at the vet and microchip.

Contact the Cullman County Animal Shelter at 256-734-5448 or cullmananimalshelter@co.cullman.al.us.

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LEGALS

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING
CITY OF HANCEVILLE

Pursuant to the instructions of the City Council of the City of Hanceville, notice is hereby given that a public hearing will be held by the City Council at the Hanceville City Hall, located at 112 Main ST SE, Hanceville, Alabama, 35077, on Thursday December 28, 2023 at 5:30 p.m. where all interested citizens shall have the opportunity to be heard for or against the rezoning application submitted by property owner, SAN GIUSEPPE, LLC, for described property below currently zoned R-1 (Low Density Residential) to be rezoned to R-3 (High Density Residential).

DRAFT

ORDINANCE 656 **(Proposed)**

AN AMMENDMENT TO ZONING ORDINANCE NO. 510 INCLUDING THE ZONING MAP
BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF HANCEVILLE, ALABAMA, AS FOLLOWS:

1. The public health, safety, morals, and general welfare requiring it under authority granted by Article 4, Sections 11-52-70 through 11-52-79, Code of Alabama, 1975, as amended and the Zoning Ordinance of the City of Hanceville, Alabama Ordinance No. 510, adopted the 1st day of May 2006, as amended, and more particularly the Hanceville, Alabama Zoning Map as a part thereof, is hereby amended, changed, and modified as follows:

   (a) That the real estate being the property of SAN GIUSEPPE, LLC located in Hanceville, Cullman County, Alabama, be re-zoned to R-3 (High Density Residential), described as follows, to-wit:

   A parcel of land being in the Northwest Quarter of the Northwest Quarter of Section 29, Township 11 South, Range 2 West, Cullman County, Alabama, described as: Commencing at a found axle locally accepted as the Southwest corner of the Northwest Quarter of the Northwest Quarter; thence N13°56'57"W 132.87 feet to a point on the Southeasterly right of way of Shady Lane Drive; thence along the right of way a chord bearing a distance of N55°54'31"E 19.07 feet to a found ½" iron in concrete marking the Northwest corner of property described in Deed Book 657 Page 158; thence continue along the right of way a chord bearing and distance of N55°50'40"E 399.36 feet to a found ½" iron in concrete marking the Northwest corner of property described in Deed Book 591 Page 539; thence continue along the right of way a chord bearing and distance of N55°50'42"E 200.03 feet to a found ½" iron in concrete being the point of beginning; thence continue along the right of way a chord bearing and distance of N55°52'22"E 99.91 feet to a found ½" iron in concrete; thence leaving the right of way S34°08'04"E 149.76 feet to a found ½" iron in concrete; thence S55°47'24"W 99.88 feet to a found ½" iron in concrete; thence N34°08'36"W 149.91 feet to the point of beginning. Being 0.3436 acres more or less. Subject to any rights-of-ways and/or easements of record.

2. That this Ordinance has been published once each week for two (2) successive weeks with the second being at least 15 days prior to passage, within the City of Hanceville, Alabama, and the publication of said notice and ordinance being verbatim.

   That a public hearing has been held relative to the passage of this ordinance on the 28th day of December 2023 at 5:30 p.m. at which time interested parties and citizens had opportunity to be heard concerning said ordinance and any changes relating thereto.

3. That all notices as required by law were given by the City Clerk concerning said public hearing.

4. That upon final passage of this ordinance, all zoning maps, master comprehensive plans or any other documents of the City of Hanceville, Alabama, in conflict with this ordinance be and are hereby changed and amended to reflect the changes and amendments herein.

5. Should any part or portion of this ordinance be held invalid, unenforceable, or unconstitutional, for whatever reason, by a court of competent jurisdiction, such ruling shall not affect any other part or portion of this ordinance.

DRAFT

6. THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the above-described property is zoned R-3 and that appropriate action be taken to change and modify the City Zoning Map to so reflect the said land as such.
7. This ordinance adopted ____ day of _____ 2023, shall take effect after its publication as required by law, including notice, and public hearing, all in accordance with Section 11-52-1, et seq., Code of Alabama 1975, as amended.

_____
Mayor Kenneth Nail

ATTEST:

_____
Tania C. Wilcox, MMC



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Santa's Workshop open for visitors

Cheyenne Sharp
cheyenne@cullmantribune.com

CULLMAN, Ala. — Following a move from its former location on Alabama Highway 157 to a larger building on U.S. Highway 278 West, Santa's Workshop is open and ready for visitors.

"The joy, excitement, energy and love we feel from each of the families that come through our door is nothing short of true miracles," said David Massengale, one of Santa's helpers.

After the smashing success of the Workshop's 2022 season, Massengale said, he knew the Workshop had the capacity to reach more local families and children during the holidays; he just needed more space. The quest for a building large enough to fully execute the vision for Santa's Workshop came to an end when he found an old storefront with perfect parking at 2285 U.S. Highway 278.

As a free admission venue aimed at local families and children, cookies and complimentary hot chocolate are available during all of the Workshop's operating hours.

Children can paint ornaments to take home and hang on their own Christmas tree or color festively themed coloring pages to stick on the fridge; parents and caregivers are encouraged to take as many photos as their hearts desire with any of the multiple photo backdrops, inflatables and even Santa with his reindeer.

Visitors of Santa's Workshop are also invited to drop their names into one of the raffles for prizes, toys and gifts.

Getting families and loved ones to spend time together has always been the goal of Santa's Workshop.

By creating a free Christmas event, the Helpers at Santa's Workshop broke possible financial barriers for families that may not otherwise be able to afford a Christmas outing. Entire families and friend groups are often included in each set of photos, proof that a very merry time was had by all.

Helpers and elves blend into the scenery perfectly, as they infuse the magic and wonder of the North Pole into the building; the joy they create for visitors at the Workshop is palpable.

"The look in a child's eye is always amazing, but it's the look in the parent's eyes when they see their child smile," said Massengale.

"The magic of Christmas should be about family and loved ones.

"Sharing a laugh, a hug and time together can mean more than any gift."

Santa's Workshop is located at 2285 U.S. Highway 278 West and will be open for visitors until Dec. 16.

Hours of operation for the workshop are Monday through Friday from 5-7 p.m. and Saturdays from 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

Obituary Announcements: Dec. 5-6

Mildred Eady Edmondson, 97
Funeral service for Mildred Eady Edmondson, 97, of Cullman, is Saturday, Dec. 9, 2023 at 2 p.m. at Mt. Hope Baptist Church in Crane Hill, with Bro. Brandon Watson and Bro. Tommy Graves officiating. Interment will be held at Mt. Hope Cemetery. Cullman Funeral Home is honored to serve the family. Mrs. Edmondson was born April 28, 1926 to Richard Early Eady and Linnie Effie Wood Eady. She passed from this life on Dec. 3, 2023. She was preceded in death by her husband, Clyde Homsel Edmondson; son, Roger Edmondson; great-granddaughter, Julia Spohn. Survivors include son, Jerry Edmondson; daughter, Regina Edmondson Tucker; grandchildren, Michaela Young (Brian), Heather Watson (Brandon), Wendy Spohn (Steve), Amanda Edmondson, Valerie Edmondson, Tasha Williams (Chris), Matt Edmondson (Angela), Keelan Tucker (Leslee); great-grandchildren, Nathan Young (Avery), Cristina Chapman (McCall), Ethan Young (Katy), Joshua Watson, Lukas Spohn, Isaak Edmondson, A.J. Watson, Elena Spohn, Bella Edmondson, Paisley Williams, Ealy Edmondson. Pallbearers include: Brian Young, Nathan Young, Keelan Tucker, Lukas Spohn, Chris Williams, Isaak Edmondson. Honorary Pallbears; Joshua Watson, A.J. Watson. Mildred is remembered by family as a natural caregiver and a loving person. Her greatest joy in her life was her family, especially all her great-grandchildren. She will always be remembered and cherished by those who loved her. Visit www.cullmanfuneralhome.com to sign the online guestbook.

Sarah Ann Quick, 80
McMinnville resident and White County, TN native Sarah Ann Quick, age 80, was born March 24, 1943 and died Nov. 30, 2023. A homemaker and a member of the Catholic church, she was the daughter of the late Roy and Sophie White. She was married to Herbert Quick who preceded her in death. In addition to her parents and husband, she was preceded in death by brothers, Jr. White, Don White and Leon White. Mrs. Quick is survived by children, Victor (Hazel) Vaughn of McMinnville and Suzanne (Mark) Casado of Hanceville, AL; nine grandchildren and six great-grandchildren. Visitation will be Friday, Dec. 8, 2023 from 11 a.m. until 2 p.m. at Hanceville Funeral Home. Inurnment will take place following the visitation at Bethlehem East Cemetery in Hanceville.

Letha Mae McKinney, 84
Funeral services for Letha Mae McKinney, 84, of Dalton, IL will be 1 p.m.., Saturday, Dec. 9, 2023 at Pleasant Grove Methodist Church in Colony, Alabama. Burial will follow the service at Colony Cemetery. Visitation will be prior to the service from 10:30 a.m. until 12:30 p.m. at Pleasant Grove Methodist Church. Mrs. McKinney was born on Nov. 26, 1939 to the late William and Mattie (Boyd) Malcom. She entered into rest on Nov. 28, 2023 at South Suburban Hospital in Hazel Crest, IL.

Patricia Miller Seymore, 75
Patricia Miller Seymore, age 75, of the Nesmith Community, passed away December 4, 2023 at home surrounded by her loving family. She was born March 13, 1948 to Louis Cecil and Elma Lou Miller. Patricia's world revolved around her loving husband, J.C., her children, her grandchildren, and her great-grandchildren. Visitation will be Thursday, Dec. 7, 2023 from 6 p.m. until 8 p.m. at Nichols Funeral Home in Addison. The service will be held Friday at 11 a.m. Burial will be at Nesmith Cemetery. Brother Steton Hayes will officiate. Patricia is survived by her husband of 36 years, J. C. Seymore; daughters, Michelle (Bobby) Brooks and Shantel (Shannon) Bell; son, Bradley Jay Seymore; grandchildren, Matthew (Gidget) Turney, Rayven (Ken) Peak, Heath (Meesha) Turney, Christopher (Jen) Peak, Holli (Collin) White, Fallon Peak, Jesselyn (Heath) Seaver, Jacas Shewbart, Destin Seymore, Lexi (Bryant) Farley, and Victoria (Trey) Bell; 21 beautiful great-grandchildren; her loving sisters, Linda (Downey) McGee and Angie Jarrett; and a host of nieces and nephews. She was preceded in death by her parents, Louis Cecil and Elma Lou Miller and one brother, Ricky Miller. Memories and condolences may be shared at nicholsfuneralhomes.com.

Rodney Wayne Sizemore, 65
Rodney Wayne Sizemore, of Cullman, Alabama, passed away on Dec. 5, 2023, at the age of 65. Mr. Sizemore was born on March 19, 1958, in Marshall County, Alabama, to George Kelly and Nelle Dean Silvers Sizemore. Mr. Sizemore enjoyed a good meal and watching television. Rodney was a fan of westerns and wrestling. As much as he enjoyed his shows, it seemed Rodney's favorite thing to do was to pick on and tease his sisters and family. Mr. Sizemore was a kind man with a genuine heart and his loving and playful spirit will be missed greatly by all who had the honor of knowing him. Rodney is preceded in death by his parents and a sister, Sharron "Lulu" Sizemore. Those surviving Mr. Sizemore are his sisters, Debbie Twilley, Kathleen Bohannon, and Susie Jackson; uncle and aunt, Paul and Linda Silvers; nieces and nephews, Jonathan Twilley, Zachary Twilley, Anna Jackson, Kassie Stewart, Kendall Goodwin; a host of great-nieces and great-nephews; and many extended family members and friends. A graveside memorial service will be announced at a later date. Holly Pond Funeral Home is honored to serve the Sizemore family.

Shelia Boatright Cofer, 66
Funeral service for Shelia Boatright Cofer, age 66, of Cullman, will be at 11 a.m. on Friday, Dec. 8, 2023, at Emeus Baptist Church with Greg Aldridge officiating; interment in Emeus Cemetery. Visitation will be from 10 a.m. until 11 a.m. prior to the service. An additional visitation will be from 6 p.m. until 8 p.m. on Thursday, Dec. 7, 2023, at Cullman Heritage Funeral Home. Cullman Heritage Funeral Home is in charge of arrangements. Ms. Cofer passed away on Wednesday, Dec. 6, 2023, at her residence. She was born Aug. 14, 1957, to William Eugene Boatright and Rosemary Boatright. She was preceded in death by her grandson, Bentley Cofer; parents; brother, Bill Boatright; father-in-law, Calvin Cofer; and mother-in-law, Margaret Cofer. Survivors include her children, Amanda (Danny) Cofer, Tina (Lee) Cofer, Roman (Cassidy) Cofer, Makayla (Colton) Kugler, Brian Smith, Bailey (Briana) Cofer, and Zaza Thompson; grandchildren, Lacie (Chris) Burks, Caleb (Kaitlyn) Ward, Savanna (Corey) Doss, Hayden (Morgan) Adamson, Gracie Cofer, Hayleigh Cofer, Braylee Cofer, Maycee Cofer, Gabe Kugler, Hadlee Kugler, Lilah Kugler, Baby girl Kugler, Colton (Mattie) Smith, Breaunah (Montgomery) Miller, and Jo Smith; twelve great-grandchildren; loving father of her children, Phillip (Wanda) Cofer; brother, Steve Boatright; sister, Sylvia Boatright; and a host of nieces, nephews, family, and friends.

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Burkey (from Front)

Jonathan Frank
Contributor

CULLMAN, Ala. — Sometimes finding the right career path means going off the beaten path – literally. That's the lesson of Cullman, Alabama resident and business leader Jake Burkey.

The 2009 graduate of Tennessee Tech University is now the CEO of Busted Knuckle Off Road, a local company that rakes in an estimated $6 million a year manufacturing 850-horsepower off-road vehicles known as "rock bouncers" as well as off-road vehicle parts ranging from brake lines to chassis and axles.

While Burkey and his team of 23 employees now focus on manufacturing and selling the vehicles, he also spent many years racing them. His early success behind the wheel helped him amass nearly 900,000 Facebook fans and 42,000 Instagram followers – an audience Burkey has effectively leveraged to grow his client base and land lucrative sponsorship deals.

It's a story that all started with a hunting trip gone awry thanks to getting stuck in the mud near his childhood home in Columbia, Tennessee.

"When I was a kid, my dad used to take us out four-wheeling and hunting," recalled Burkey. "We got stuck in the mud one time and I couldn't stand it. I was probably 13 or 14 at the time so I saved up all my money and, when I turned 16, I bought a Jeep."

Burkey immediately started tinkering with his vehicle, outfitting it with a bigger engine, axles and tires. When it came time to consider his post-high school plans, Burkey's Jeep played an outsized role in the decision.

"I thought if I could create an engineering mindset more than I currently have and go to a good school, I could make my Jeep even cooler," he said with a laugh.

Drawn to Tennessee Tech by its strong engineering reputation, Burkey started off as a mechanical engineering major before switching to industrial technology – now known as engineering technology.

Burkey recalls finding community as a Kappa Sigma and getting hands-on learning opportunities from Tech faculty like Fred Vondra, now the chair of the Department of Manufacturing and Engineering Technology, and the late Delbert Stone, who Burkey says taught him the ins and outs of welding.

"I could not have chosen a better path forward for my education," added Burkey. "I use it every single day with what I do now ... It was the perfect degree to get me where I am today."

Upon his graduation from Tennessee Tech, Burkey landed a role as an engineer with Plant Vogtle, a four-unit nuclear power plant in southeast Georgia.

Burkey dedicated 10 years to the company, working his way up to a project management role before resigning his position to start his off-road business.

Today, Busted Knuckle Off Road is an international success, selling to customers in countries as far ranging as Italy, Spain, Portugal and Canada – all from its bustling facility in Cullman. It didn't happen overnight, though. Burkey recalls several years of high turnover and sagging morale as the company found its footing.

"Getting people to believe in me and what we were doing here was probably the hardest part," he said. "People want to skip to the successful part without enduring the hardships of growth."

These days, Burkey faces no such challenge. The company is on pace to soon outgrow its 27,000-square-foot facility and has plans to design and release new models of its popular rock bouncers over the coming year.

Burkey has parlayed his business success into television appearances, multiple magazine spreads and has even been the inspiration for children's books.

He says he is grateful that his accomplishments enable him to provide meaningful careers to his team of employees and an expanding suite of products for his satisfied customers.

"To be able to create an industry that's never been created before and then see people following me towards those goals and being able to see families flourish off of the dream that I created – that's probably the most rewarding part," said Burkey.

Now, he wants to help other aspiring entrepreneurs learn from his journey.

"I would say for people to follow their heart and get a degree that aligns with their passion," said Burkey. "And I don't know that there's a better place that you could go to school than Tennessee Tech. You'll never get a better environment for knowledge, so soak it up as much as possible. You're going to use it down the road."

Fields (from Front)

the first steps of a project they're all excited to see get underway. The $2.3 million project includes a turf soccer field, as well as multi-use turf practice space that can also be utilized by the baseball and softball teams. Unlike the current grass field, a turf field will have much better drainage and be available for use year-round. Work is slated to begin immediately with anticipated completion in mid-spring of 2024. Kallhoff, CHS Athletic Director Mark Stephens and several CHS coaches shared some remarks on the impact these new facilities will have on their athletic programs.

Cullman High School Athletic Director Mark Stephens
"It's an exciting day for our athletes. Today marks a historic day in our community as we gather here to celebrate the groundbreaking of our new state of the art soccer facility and multi-purpose practice facility. This venture represents a significant leap forward in our commitment to fostering excellence in player development and creating a hub for sports enthusiasts to thrive. As we stand on the brink of this exciting chapter it's essential to acknowledge the profound impact a facility like this can have on our community, our athletes and the future of soccer.

"This groundbreaking event symbolizes not only the construction of bricks and mortar but the realization of a vision to propel player development to new heights. We believe the key to sustaining competitive varsity programs is dependent on a commitment to nurturing talent, fostering a love for the sport and creating an environment that cultivates excellence. These core values have brought us to this remarkable juncture."

Cullman High School Varsity Girls Soccer Head Coach Luke Hackbarth
"On behalf of the girls coaching staff and the entire girls' soccer program we would like to thank Mr. Kallhoff, the Board and our high school administration for this opportunity. We're so excited about it. Our senior class of girls are here and we're just over the moon that we get this opportunity.

"To say five years ago that we would have envisioned this, I'd be lying. This is such a special place, and it has been for so many years. We have so many people here with so much passion for this place and for this program. This has always been one of the premier places to play in the state but it's getting a facelift and its going to be the premier place to play in the state and its more than exciting."

Cullman High School Varsity Boys Soccer Head Coach Will Drake
"One thing that Coach Hackbarth and I did when we first came in was ask some of the players, 'What are your dreams? What do you want to see here in the next year? In the next three years? And then something that you could give to your kids in 10 years?'. And at the top of that list, which for them was a dream, was that they want their kids to have a turf facility. We mentioned that at the board meeting last year and low and behold within a year we're here. It really is unbelievable. We understood the commitment that it would take and the support from the community but to see it come out and to give these players here and opportunity to use this before they leave and create a legacy that they can share with their kids eventually, is just phenomenal."

Cullman High School Varsity Softball Head Coach Lawayne Morton
"I'd just like to thank our leaders for having such a commitment to our athletes here. Having access to modern day facilities gives us a competitive advantage and that was something we talked about. In February 2021, we were only to get on the field for two days the entire month due to rain and muddy conditions. We would find ourselves over at East Side Park on a tennis court just trying to get some work in.

"This facility upgrade will help us overcome the weather conditions because we're growing as a softball program, and we have over 35 kids and we just don't have enough room up there on the softball field to do what we'd like to do. So, this is going to help us out tremendously."

Cullman High School Varsity Baseball Coach Brent Patterson
"I think I'm the old guy here and looking at where we are now from where we came from, just a quick history lesson, my AD and principal back in the day used to drive by and see us practicing in the parking lot of the police station. Over the years we would find any dry spot that we could possibly find on campus and over the years more and more programs are pouring in wanting to be great and it makes it harder to find places to go.

"Every program is trying to advance themselves by putting time in and putting work in so for us to have a place that we can go now is a gamechanger. Our young guys are usually the ones that get kicked to the curb and we're usually looking for any dry spot in a parking lot or a driveway somewhere so to have this is incredible."

Cullman City Schools Superintendent Kyle Kallhoff
"I was speaking to some of our student athletes earlier and I just wanted to tell them that this is for you. Theres no adult here that's really going to benefit from this, it's you guys that are benefiting. We know for the seniors that are here your time is limited with high school athletics but it's also for students that are at the primary school and at East (Elementary) and West (Elementary) and for generations to come.

"As all the coaches alluded to, when you drive through town during soccer season and go by Heritage Park, there are kids everywhere that are interested in soccer and obviously baseball and softball too, so the interest is here. We're trying to build a legacy and something for the kids to come. This is a $2.3 million investment and I'm here to tell you it's worth every penny because it's for you guys."