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For the latest arrest and incident reports and obituaries visit CullmanTribune.com or pick up the Thursday edition of The Cullman Tribune.

WEATHER

51 29

SOURCE: WEATHER.GOV

SUNNY



ELLORIE HARBISON

– SPORTS –

'Little eyes are always watching': West Point's Ellorie Harbison talks time at Victory Cheer Academy

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Hanceville Council approves rezoning to allow duplex

Cayla Grace Murphy
caylagrace@cullmantribune.com

HANCEVILLE, Ala. — It was a relatively quiet meeting in Hanceville's council chambers on Thursday, Dec. 28, 2023. The council heard from resident Stephen Gannon concerning the second reading of Ordinance 656 to rezone a property he owns to R3, allowing the construction of a duplex to create more affordable housing in the area.

"I've actually lived on that street just two doors down for about 15 years now," said Gannon, expressing his intent to be a good steward of the property and stating that he owns and maintains two other properties as rentals.

"It will be a two-bedroom, two bath on each side. I'm hoping to provide some more affordable housing in the area," he explained.

In other council » PAGE 8



CAYLA GRACE MURPHY/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

Hanceville resident Stephen Gannon addresses the council about rezoning a property he owns to R3 to allow for more affordable housing in the area.

SPOTLIGHT: Cullman County Animal Shelter

'We are really trying to change how people think of the shelter'



CAYLA GRACE MURPHY/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

Anna Mae, a dog adopted shortly after this interview took place, poses in front of a shelf of donations at the Cullman County Animal Shelter.

Cayla Grace Murphy
caylagrace@cullmantribune.com

CULLMAN, Ala. — Cullman County Animal Shelter acts as a bridge between a stray on the street and a pampered pooch in a warm home. By working with dedicated volunteers and a community willing to open their hearts to a dog in need, the shelter throws a lifeline to the stray population of Cullman County, giving them a second chance at life.

"We are really trying to change how people think of the shelter," said Manager Andrea Hudson, who said that despite a higher-than-average adoption rate and clean and heated kennels, the shelter still sometimes

» PAGE 3

Local stylist holding 'Vitals for Victims' hygiene drive

» PAGE 7

PREP FOOTBALL

Hanceville taps Estes as new head coach



LEVI ESTES/FACEBOOK

Hanceville High School has hired Levi Estes (pictured with his wife, Morgan) to take over as the Bulldogs' new varsity head football coach. Estes is making the move from Oak Mountain where he has served as the associate head coach for the past three seasons.

Q&A with Cullman EMA: Stay safe while staying warm

» PAGE 2

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Bill Smith

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THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE
JANUARY 2, 2024

CCSO arrest roundup

Staff Reports
Contributor

CULLMAN, Ala. – The Cullman County Sheriff's Office made multiple unrelated arrests over the holiday weekend, including:

Dec. 22
Deputies arrested Faith Elizabeth Welbourn, 25, of Hanceville, on multiple failure to appear (FTA) warrants stemming from an incident that occurred earlier in 2023.

She is charged with unlawful possession of methamphetamine, unlawful possession of marijuana and unlawful possession of drug paraphernalia.

Dec. 23
Deputies arrested Ryan Joseph Jolly, 36, of Shelby, Alabama, on two bond revocations. He is charged with manslaughter and leaving the scene of an accident with death or personal injury.

Deputies conducted a traffic stop on a motorcycle in the Berlin community. Jessica Leigh Thursby, 34, of Cullman, was identified as the passenger on the motorcycle.

Deputies determined that Thursby had multiple outstanding warrants. A subsequent search also allegedly yielded narcotics.

Thursby is charged with



CULLMAN COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE
Faith Elizabeth Welbourn



CULLMAN COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE
Ryan Joseph Jolly



CULLMAN COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE
Jessica Leigh Thursby



CULLMAN COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE
Mitchell Donavon Lamar

Illegal possession of prescription drugs, unlawful possession of marijuana, burglary (FTA), three counts of unlawful possession of dangerous drugs (FTA), two counts of unlawful possession of drug paraphernalia (FTA) and unlawful possession of marijuana (FTA).

Dec. 24
Deputies arrested Mitchell Donavon Lamar, 41, of Hanceville, on an outstanding warrant stemming from an incident that occurred in August 2023.

Lamar is charged with leaving the scene of an accident.

Q&A with Cullman EMA: Stay safe while staying warm

Cayla Grace Murphy
caylagrace@cullmantribune.com

CULLMAN, Ala. – Ahead of future cold snaps, The Cullman Tribune sat down with the director of Cullman Emergency Management Agency, Tim Sartin, to gather tips for residents to keep safe while keeping warm this winter.

CGM: In case of a power outage, how can people use generators safely?
EMA: Don't use them in the house. Carbon monoxide comes from those generators, and you shouldn't use them in an enclosed space. You can run a heavy gauge extension cord from the generator on the porch, but you never want anything that will emit carbon monoxide in the house. Make sure your smoke and carbon monoxide detectors have good batteries, as well.

CGM: How can people use heaters safely, especially in mobile homes?
EMA: If you have wall heaters, you don't want anything close to them. No bed, dresser or certainly not a clothes basket close to them. Most heaters are about the same, but some have different fuel sources, so keep that in mind.

CGM: What type of weatherization needs to be done for cars, and should residents keep an emergency kit in their cars?
EMA: Oh yes. You need to make sure you have antifreeze in your car – when it drops down below freezing, there's a chance your radiator could freeze up, too, so keep that on hand. Ice scrapers and spray de-icer are great as well. As far as personal kits, always put a blanket, an extra set of socks, a pair of gloves and a hat or scarf. Hand warmers can be great, too. If it's below freezing outside, and you can't crank your car, you want things that will keep you warm at least until help can get there.

CGM: What about pets?
EMA: During below-freezing temperatures, pets need to be brought in if possible, but don't keep them too close to the heater. A lot of people will put their animal's food or bed close to the heater, and they think they're keeping them warm, but you could actually be harming them.

CGM: Do you have any other tips for our readers?
EMA: Make sure to watch the weather, and have multiple ways to be informed. For smartphones, I would recommend the National Weather Service app, or the Weather Channel app.



LEGALS

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CIRCUIT COURT OF
CULLMAN COUNTY, ALABAMA
LISA MCSWAIN, CLERK

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF CULLMAN COUNTY, ALABAMA

CRUMBLEY JAMES R., DECEASED,THE ESTATE OF,
Plaintiff,
V.
Defendant.
Case No.: CV-2013-000020.00

NOTICE OF HEARING FOR FINAL SETTLEMENT

That on the 6th day of December, 2023, a Petition to Reset the Hearing for Final Settlement was filed in the aforesaid Circuit Court by Randy Barnett, as Petitioner, and Personal Representative of the Estate of James R. Crumbley, and that the **15th day of February, 2024 at 9:00 o'clock a.m. has been appointed as the day for the Hearing for Final Settlement**, at which time you may appear and contest the same, if you deem it proper to do so.

DONE this 15th day of December, 2023.

/s/ GREGORY A NICHOLAS
CIRCUIT JUDGE

NOTICE OF
MORTGAGE FORECLOSURE SALE

STATE OF ALABAMA
COUNTY OF CULLMAN

Default having been made of the terms of the loan documents secured by that certain mortgage executed by James Mckinney And Nirvani Mckinney Husband And Wife to Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as mortgagee, as nominee for First Partners Bank, its successors and assigns dated November 10, 2016; said mortgage being recorded on November 14, 2016, in Book 1803, Page 365, as having been modified by an agreement recorded on and recorded in Book 2040, Page 77 in the Office of the Judge of Probate of Cullman County, Alabama. Said Mortgage was last sold, assigned and transferred to Lakeview Loan Servicing, LLC by assignment recorded in Deed Book 373, Page 668 in the Office of the Judge of Probate of Cullman County, ALABAMA.
The undersigned, Lakeview Loan Servicing, LLCunder and by virtue of the power of sale contained in said mortgage, will sell at public outcry to the highest bidder for cash before the main entrance of the Court House in Cullman County, Alabama during the legal hours of sale (between 11am and 4pm), on the 5th day of February, 2024 the following property, situated in Cullman County, Alabama, to-wit:
Lots 3 and 4 of the Hanceville Square Subdivision as recorded in Slide B222A in the Office of the Judge of Probate of Cullman County, Alabama. Subject to the following: Right of way as set forth in instrument recorded in Deed Book 478, Page 119 in the Office of the Judge of Probate of Cullman County, Alabama.
Subject to the following:
1. Utility and drainage easements as shown on the plat of Hanceville Square Subdivision as recorded in Slide B222A in the Office of the Judge of Probate of Cullman County, Alabama.
2. Easement granted to Cullman Electric Cooperative as recorded in Deed Book 557, Page 120 in the Office of the Judge of Probate of Cullman County, Alabama.

Said property is commonly known as 402 Whaley Ave NE, Hanceville, AL 35077.
Should a conflict arise between the property address and the legal description the legal description will control.
Said property will be sold subject to any outstanding ad valorem taxes (including taxes which are a lien, but not yet due and payable), the right of redemption of any taxing authority, all outstanding liens for public utilities which constitute liens upon the property, any matters which might be disclosed by an accurate survey and inspection of the property, any assessments, liens, encumbrances, easements, rights-of-way, zoning ordinances, restrictions, special assessments, covenants, the statutory right of redemption pursuant to Alabama law, and any matters of record including, but not limited to, those superior to said Mortgage first set out above. Said property will be sold on an "as-is" basis without any representation, warranty or recourse against the above-named or the undersigned. The successful bidder must present certified funds in the amount of the winning bid at the time and place of sale.
Alabama law gives some persons who have an interest in property the right to redeem the property under certain circumstances. Programs may also exist that help persons avoid or delay the foreclosure process. An attorney should be consulted to help you understand these rights and programs as a part of the foreclosure process.
The sale will be conducted subject (1) to confirmation that the sale is not prohibited under the U.S. Bankruptcy Code and (2) to final confirmation and audit of the status of the loan with the holder of the Mortgage.
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as holder of said mortgage
McCalla Raymer Leibert Pierce, LLC
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(205) 216-4238
FT21@mccalla.com
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Cullman Tribune
01/02/2024,01/09/2024,01/16/2024

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.
• Sunday, Dec. 31- New Year's Eve Candlelight Service 7-8 p.m. Youth Party 8 p.m.-midnight.

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.

2024 Polar Bear Plunge
Saturday, Jan. 20, at 10 a.m. at WildWater and the Cullman Wellness and Aquatic Center. Prizes include four WildWater season passes and one annual family CWAC membership. Event benefits Special Olympics. You MUST be present to win! The event is FREE to enter, and we will be accepting optional donations at the event for our partner, Special Olympics! Register NOW to take the plunge: http://tinyurl.com/PolarBear-Plunge2024

Shelter (from Front)

gets a bad reputation, particularly on social media. "Of the adoptable dogs, about 98% of those dogs do get adopted," she confirmed. "And we are so thankful for what y'all do for us with Pet of the Week!" Hudson grinned, referring to The Cullman Tribune's longstanding weekly feature that spotlights adoptable dogs.

"There are times that the right person sees it immediately, and they're instantly adopted. We even have people that call from out of the county that see it, and it helps us tremendously!" Hudson smiled, saying that for some it may not be so immediate – but there's no day limit looming over the dogs' heads.

"We don't put a number on the days. We're blessed in that way with the Commission, that we don't have a limit," she explained. "Some dogs stay a bit longer, but that's OK. Atlas (a previous Pet of the Week) stayed a bit longer, but we always just say that the perfect family is out there, they just haven't come yet."

Hudson said the shelter has an open-door policy, with no appointment required to visit or see an animal available for adoption. And, by adopting locally, you are helping give a four-legged resident of Cullman a second chance.

"We encourage the community to adopt from their local shelter. It helps the community they're in, and it really helps the dog. We really want them to come and visit the shelter, and spend some time. We love company!" she laughed, saying that adoption isn't the only reason to stop by; several community members drop by during their lunch breaks after a stressful morning of meetings.

"We have a lot of people who may have just had a bad day, and they come in and spend their lunch hour petting the dogs. We encourage that!" smiled Hudson, who said that regular interaction with residents is not only beneficial for those getting a healthy dose of puppy love but especially for those dogs who may need an extra bit of support during a stay in the shelter.

Hudson mentioned a few key players who help make the work they do at the shelter possible, giving high praise to many: Beverly Burke, who makes jewelry to be sold for donation with all proceeds benefiting the shelter; Donna Ruttkay, who selects and works with each dog for Pet of the Week; a donor who preferred to stay anonymous who sponsored 12 adoptions in December; and perhaps most notably and most longstanding, East Point Animal Hospital.

"They're unsung heroes over there, I mean, no matter how busy they are, they fit us in. We couldn't do what we do without them!" she smiled, referring to the checkup and spay or neuter procedure that is covered by the adoption fee.

Hudson said she often gets questions about what the shelter might find useful as far as donations, and she always suggests plain Milk-Bones and Valu-Pak dog food in the black bag, which can be purchased locally at Chambers Farm & Garden Supply. Kennel blankets and toys are sure to please, too!

To volunteer, drop off donations or view animals available for adoption, visit the Cullman County Animal Shelter Monday through Friday from 9 a.m.-3:30 p.m.; the shelter is located at 935 Convent Rd NE. Follow on Facebook at www.facebook.com/cullmancountyanimalshelter.

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THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE
JANUARY 2, 2024

PREP CHEER

'Little eyes are always watching': West Point's Ellorie Harbison talks time at Victory Cheer Academy

Sammy Confer
sammy@cullmantribune.com

WEST POINT, Ala. — West Point sophomore Ellorie Harbison is in her eighth-year cheering at Victory Cheer Academy, and she has learned so much from her experience there so far.

"My experience has been amazing. I go to a Christian-based gym, so not only have I grown in my performance and tumble skills, I have also grown in my walk with the Lord. I've learned to work well with others," Ellorie said. "I've also learned that it takes dedication, because sometimes, I don't feel like showing up and giving it my all, but I do because I don't want to let my girls down. I've also learned that little eyes are always watching. I enjoy being their role model."

Ellorie feels blessed to work with her coaches and has seen so much improvement in her performance from when she first started until now.

"Josh Stancil, Emily Acosta, and Krislyn Scroggins are very good coaches. I am grateful to be one of their athletes. They are very disciplined in their coaching and push us to be our very best. What I've learned from all of them is to never give up, push through, rely on my teammates, and most importantly, trust the Lord," Harbison said.

"When I first started, I had never done anything like this and the only skill I had was a back walkover. Fast forward to today, I have mastered multiple skills, and I'm currently working to achieve my full."

She talked about what she has improved on the most and some goals that she is still wanting to achieve this season.

"I've improved the most on my running, tumbling, and stunting skills. When I started eight years ago, I had never stunted before, and now, I am a main base on my team. I am still improving on standing and tumbling skills, because they are my least favorite," she said.

"My goals for myself are to get my round-off handspring full, standing tuck on the dead mat, and for my team to win CheerSport and the US Finals."

She feels blessed to be around an amazing team and was given some great advice from an Ole Miss cheerleader. She talked about some of her favorite achievements and memories so far in her career.

"This year's team is very close in age, which causes us to be understanding towards each other. We are very supportive of each other on and off the mat," she said.

"I read this quote from an Ole Miss cheerleader: 'If you can't see yourself as a winner, then you can't perform as a winner.' This quote really stuck with me in my cheer life, because you have to perform to succeed. Some of my favorite achievements and memories has been getting new skills, winning CheerSport, and winning the US Finals last season."

Ellorie has a couple of role models that she looks up to and she talked about how important it is to be a role model for the younger girls She also shared some advice for any girls that want to be a cheerleader one day, and what she has learned about herself.

"Josh Stancil always gives us good advice like, 'Go humble quick.' This shows that you have to have the mindset that every bad day just helps us appreciate the good days. Another one of my role models is Krislyn Scroggins. She is a very good cheerleader, and I would love to be like her one day. She is also a person who I can talk to about anything," she said.

"It is very important, because I feel like I model behavior that is expected of them. My advice to them is start by joining a tumble class, because I feel like that's a vital part in cheering. When you get started, don't compare your skills to everyone else's. I have learned that you have to be considerate of other's point of view."



ELLORIE HARBISON

West Point's Ellorie Harbison

Pearl on the Plains: BP reflects on 'opportunity of a lifetime' at Auburn

Jeff Shearer
AU Athletics

AUBURN, Ala. — When the Tigers tipped off the 2023-24 season vs. Baylor Nov. 7, Auburn officially became the longest stop in Bruce Pearl's illustrious coaching career.

"You can say God's got a plan or you can actually believe it," said Pearl, whose previous longest stint was his first as a head coach, nine seasons at Southern Indiana from 1992-2001. "I go to work every day trying to reward Auburn for giving me and my family the opportunity of a lifetime."

Pearl has rewarded Auburn with three Southeastern Conference championships in the past six seasons, the program's first No. 1 ranking and the only NCAA Tournament Final Four appearance of any team from the state of Alabama.

"It's easier to get it going than it is to keep it going," he said. "My goal is to compete for championships every year."

Mindful of Auburn's basketball history, Pearl aspires to pass Joel Eaves to become the Tigers' all-time winningest coach.

"It's going to take a few more years of success to do that but I would like that if we can," said Pearl, whose nine wins so far this season give him 182 Auburn victories, just 31 shy of Eaves' 213.

Since his first day on the Plains on March 18, 2014, Pearl has consistently and creatively reached out to Auburn students, who have repaid that investment by packing their courtside section known as The Jungle hours before each game.

"Our student body has separated itself in the world of intercollegiate athletes," Pearl said. "What our students bring to Jordan-Hare and Neville Arena is the envy of anybody in college sports.

"The environment in Neville Arena could be the toughest environment in college basketball with the combination of the quality of our team and the intensity and passion of our fans."

"I go to work every day trying to reward Auburn for giving me and my family the opportunity of a lifetime." -Bruce Pearl

On-court success tells only part of Pearl's impact. His annual golf tournament has raised more than $1 million for Children's Harbor and his AUTLIVE initiative has raised more than $1 million for local cancer patients.

The Bruce Pearl Family Foundation sponsored the 2023 Southern tour of the musical "We'll Meet Again," and BP, as he's called by friends and fans, co-chairs Auburn University's Together We Will scholarship campaign to support a diverse student body.

"To whom much is given, much is expected," said Pearl, quoting Scripture. "Because we feel so blessed and supported, we feel driven to give back. As I get older, the more I want to serve."

In his first six years at Auburn, Pearl formed a friendship with former head football coach Pat Dye, modeling his role model's perspective related to community and campus involvement.

"If it was good for Auburn, then it was the right decision," Pearl said.

Recruiting some of the country's best high school prospects and future NBA first-round draft choices such as Jabari Smith and Isaac Okoro, Pearl has also adjusted to the transfer portal era, landing 2022 national defensive player of the year Walker Kessler and current Tigers Johni Broome, K.D. Johnson, Denver Jones, Chad Baker-Mazara and Chaney Johnson.

"It's here and we're going to take advantage of it," Pearl said.

In 2021, the NCAA revised its name, image and likeness policy, leading to the creation of On To Victory, the collective that benefits Auburn student-athletes.

"We do need the Auburn family to step up and embrace this opportunity," Pearl said. "The success of On To Victory is going to go hand-in-hand with the success of our intercollegiate athletic teams. Based on the landscape right now, I don't see how you can have one without the other."



ZACH BLAND/AU ATHLETICS

Auburn Head Coach Bruce Pearl

Nearly a decade has passed since Bruce and his wife, Brandy, joined the Auburn family.

With daughter Jacqui in Tennessee, daughter Leah, son-in-law Stephon and grandchildren Chaya and Jaden in Atlanta, sons Michael and Steven, Auburn's associate head coach, and daughter-in-law Brittany in Auburn, the Pearl family's roots have grown deep like one of the Japanese maples on the Crooked Oaks farm Coach Dye's family recently donated to Auburn.

"I've liked every place I've been, but I've never been in love with a university, a community and a league like I am here," Pearl said. "What more could a father and a grandfather ask for?"

Bill Noble Park wins Outstanding Outdoor Pickleball Facility of the Year Award

Ali Yenchick
Contributor

GARDENDALE, Ala. — Bill Noble Park in Gardendale, Alabama, has been awarded the first place, gold award for Outstanding Outdoor Pickleball Facility of the Year by The American Sports Builders Association (ASBA). This prestigious award is presented each year to facilities built by ASBA members that best exemplify construction excellence.

Winners of awards were announced at the Association's 2023 Technical Meeting, presented from December 1-4 in Houston, Texas. Projects are scored individually based on considerations such as layout and design, site work, drainage, base construction, surface, amenities, innovation, and overall impression. Winning entries are those whose cumulative scores met or exceeded the standard.

"We are proud of the work done by all members of ASBA, but this year's award-winning projects showcase true excellence," said David Clapp, CTCB, chairman of the Association.

"They are not only designed and constructed to exacting standards, as well as being aesthetically beautiful, but they provide an excellent playing experience for the athletes who use them and the spectators who come to watch them."

The park officially opened to the public on March 11, 2023. General Manager, Jesse Newsom expressed his pride in the park's recognition, saying, "I couldn't be prouder of how our new facility is being honored in our first year of being open. We are not only striving for excellence for our community but being recognized on a national level is incredibly impactful for our team."

The City of Gardendale park is managed by Sports Facilities Companies (SFC) and it offers a variety of outdoor pickleball courts and softball/baseball fields, as well as an indoor event center, and a variety of other amenities. The park is designed to provide a safe and enjoyable experience for all players, from beginners to experienced athletes.

The park also offers a variety of programs and events, such as tournaments, clinics, seasonal holiday events and leagues. The park is open to the public and is a great place for families and friends to come together and enjoy the thrill of sports.

"We are honored to receive this prestigious award, Bill Noble Park has quickly put Gardendale on the sports tourism map while continuing our emphasis on our resident's quality of life. "Maximize usage, while protecting the rights and expectations of the local residents" is the motto developed to ensure that the park functions as planned" says Gardendale Mayor Stan Hogeland.

"We are proud to have a facility that is not only a great place to play pickleball but also a place that brings people together and encourages a healthy lifestyle," said SFC Vice President John Sparks.

For more information about the venue please visit Bill Noble Park's website.

Bill Noble Park, located in Gardendale, Alabama, has been developed as the southeast region's ideal destination for premium sports and events. Operated and managed by the Sports Facilities Companies, the park features nine softball/baseball fields, eight tennis courts, eleven pickleball courts, one football/soccer field, a state-of-the-art inclusive playground and more. The $32 million complex will host sports events year-round for local Gardendale residents and traveling tourism families alike.



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The Sports Facilities Companies (SFC) are the Nation's leading resources for managing and developing sports, recreation, wellness, and events facilities. As a turn-key solution for community leaders and developers alike, SFC services span the gamut of sports and recreation needs from sports tourism & recreation master planning, program planning, and feasibility through professional facility management services. Our 50+ managed venues and 1500+ team members, represented by the SF Network, welcome more than 25 million guest visits and produce over $250 million in economic impact each year. To learn more, please visit Sports Facilities and theSFNetwork.

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PREP BASKETBALL

Day's last-second free throws lead Cold Springs to 57-56 win over Winston County

Sammy Confer
sammy@cullmantribune.com



SAMMY CONFER/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

Cold Springs freshman Ethan Day nailed a pair of free throws in the final second of the game to lead the Eagles to a 57-56 win over Winston County Thursday night.

BREMEN, Ala. — The Cold Springs Eagles were back home hosting the Winston County Yellow Jackets Thursday night and the home crowd was treated to a dramatic finish. Cold Springs held a double-digit lead at the half and after a wild second half, Eagles freshman Ethan Day hit a pair of free throws in the game's final second to lead Cold Springs to a 57-56 win over the Yellow Jackets.

Cole Bales put in a floater to put Cold Springs on the scoreboard first, then later drilled a trey to give the Eagles an early 5-1 lead.

Four straight points by Winston County tied the game up at five. Bales continued his red-hot shooting from the field, scoring the next five points, as that gave Cold Springs a 10-5 lead with 3:34 remaining in the first quarter.

A pair of treys by the Yellow Jackets gave them the lead right back at 11-10 late in the quarter. Bales, though, finished off his amazing first quarter in style, as he hit a three from the top of the key, to give the Eagles a 13-11 lead going into the second period.

Zane Brown and Day each hit a three early in the second to stretch Cold Springs' lead to 19-11. Winston County got their first points of the quarter on a pair of free throws to cut it to 20-13 with 3:35 remaining in the first half. Bales hit another trey to push the Eagle lead to 23-13, and later converted on an and-one opportunity, to make it a 26-15 game.

Tycen Kilgo got in on the fun, as his trey from the left wing increased the Cold Springs lead to 29-15. The Yellow Jackets cut it to 29-20, but the Eagles kept the three-point barrage going to end the first half. Day and Bales each added one more from long range to give them a 35-22 lead at the half.

Winston County got off to a red-hot start to the third period, scoring the first 14 points of the quarter, to give them a 36-35 lead, prompting head coach Cade Willingham to call not one, not two, but three timeouts during that run.

Josh Winfrey stopped the bleeding with a jumper from the free throw line to give Cold Springs the lead right back at 37-36 with 3:27 remaining in the quarter.

The Yellow Jackets continued their strong start to the quarter, scoring the next eight points, to take a 44-37 lead with a little over two minutes to go in the period. A free throw by Day, and a basket in the paint by Bailey Gann, cut it to 44-40.

The Eagles went into the fourth quarter trailing 46-40.

A Kilgo steal led to a basket down low by Bales to make it a 46-42 game, then Day hit a long-range shot to cut it to 46-45. Each team traded a three to keep it at a one-point game.

A layup by Day made it a 51-50 game, then after Winston County split their free throws, Seth Ingram hit a trey to give Cold Springs a 53-52 lead, but a pair of baskets in the paint by the Yellow Jackets gave them the lead right back at 56-53.

The game got really crazy at the end, as Winston County got hit with a technical for having too many players on the court. Bales hit both technical free throws to cut it to 56-55 with six seconds remaining.

The Eagles had a chance to win the game on their final possession and after Day was fouled with 1.2 seconds on the clock, he knocked down both free throws to give Cold Springs a 57-56 lead. Winston County's last-second heave missed wide of the mark and the Eagles held on to defeat the Yellow Jackets 57-56.

Bales finished the game with 27 points for Cold Springs. Day put up 14 points and Winfrey collected five points.

Cold Springs will host J.B. Pennington Friday night.

PREP CHEER

'To accomplish your goals, it takes hard work and discipline': Holly Pond's Bella Foust talks 8th grade season

Sammy Confer
sammy@cullmantribune.com

HOLLY POND, Ala. — Holly Pond eighth grade cheerleader Bella Foust just completed her second year of middle school cheer and has had an amazing experience during that time so far. She also talked about her time cheering for Xtreme All-Stars and how much that has helped her become the cheerleader that she is today.

"I have a dance background, and when my dance studio closed, I wanted to do something similar, so I decided to do competitive cheer and really liked it. When I could try out for the school cheer team, I went for that. It has taught me discipline and how to work with a team," Foust said. "Working with coach Ashley Wilbanks gave me the confidence to throw backhand springs and tucks. She also helped us work on facial expression, jumps, and stunts, which are all important to cheerleading. Since she was my first experience with cheer, I feel like it was a good foundation for cheer."

She, along with the rest of the team, has seen so much improvement during their time cheering in middle school, and she was blessed to learn from some great cheerleaders and from her coach.

"Well, with any sport, improvement comes with practice, and we practice to improve. My coach, Michelle Boulahanis, works with the team to improve daily. We went to the regional competition and placed third. We received a bid to state, where we competed earlier not too long ago. As a team, I feel like we have improved since the beginning of middle school a lot, but there is always room for improvement. With cheer being a year-round sport, we will now be practicing for cheer tryouts, " Foust said. "I like cheering with my team, because we develop relationships and friendships, which I hope will last a lifetime. I've learned that to accomplish your goals, it takes hard work and discipline and having encouraging teammates and coaches helps. My coach is an encourager that sees potential in our team and pushes us to be better."

Placing third at Regionals was a big accomplish for the Lady Broncos, and Bella looks to use that as momentum going into next season, plus she talked about what she will work on in the off-season to get ready for next year, and her goals and the team goals for next season.

"Going to Regionals and hoping for a bid to state were some huge goals for us this year. This year, we had cheerleaders that had experienced regional and state competitions and were able to help and encourage the new cheerleaders," she said."

I plan on working on all the elements of cheer to be able to improve and get ready for tryout. My goal is to be better tomorrow than I am today, and our team goals would be for us to work together as a team, appreciate one another's skills, and celebrate everyone's accomplishments."

Bella talked about her role models in cheerleading, the best advice that someone has ever given her, what has made this cheer team special to be around and how important it is to be a role model for the younger girls that are watching her.

"My sister, Ava Claire, and my cousin, Sarah Grace, are both varsity cheerleaders, and I have looked up to them for many years, because they also danced with me. They've also helped and encouraged me," she said.

"My family encourages me daily that hard work brings positive results. Even though we struggled a little bit in the beginning with some things, we set goals, developed relationships, improved as a team, and became friends. Being a role model is very important to me, because I was one of those kids that looked up to the bigger girls, and with little girls now looking up to me, it shows me that I can be a leader and are encouraging those girls just like the varsity cheerleaders are encouraging me."

She, along with the team, learned a lot about themselves and that will help them out a lot going into high school.

"I've learned that hard work really does give you a positive result in anything you do. What I learned about myself is that when something gets hard, you can't give up on it. It will help me in high school by working harder and giving my full effort. Moving up to varsity isn't always easy, so take things slow and work hard."



BELLA FOUST

Holly Pond's Bella Foust

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City of Cullman
Zoning Board of Adjustments

On Tuesday, January 16th, 2024, at Cullman City Hall Auditorium at 5:30 P.M., at the regular meeting of the City of Cullman Zoning Board of Adjustments, a public hearing will be held to allow affected parties to voice their concerns related to the following items:

1. Variance request on setback 1109 Old Bolte Road SE

For further information, contact Brian Landreth or Amber Duke at the City of Cullman Building Department at 256-775-7203.

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YOUR HEALTH

Social connections

Nurturing meaningful relationships leads to healthier lives.

Human beings are inherently social creatures.

Throughout history, our ability to connect, communicate and form relationships has been essential to our survival and well-being. Today, in an increasingly digital and fast-paced world, the importance of social connections remains crucial.

Social connections enrich our experiences, provide support during challenges and offer a sense of belonging. While the digital age offers new avenues for connection, it is essential to strike a balance between online and offline interactions.

As you nurture your social relationships, remember that building meaningful connections is an ongoing journey. It requires active listening, vulnerability and a genuine connection to fostering bonds with others. A socially rich life contributes significantly to mental, emotional and even physical well-being, making it a cornerstone of a happy and fulfilling existence.

Power of connection

Social connections come in many forms, from family and close friends to colleagues and acquaintances. These relationships provide a sense of belonging, support and meaning in our lives.

Strong social relationships are linked to improved mental health. Interacting with others boosts feelings of happiness and reduces stress. Conversations and shared experiences offer opportunities for emotional expression and catharsis. Social support acts as a buffer against life's challenges, improving our emotional resilience. When we face adversity, knowing we have a support network to rely on can enhance our ability to cope and bounce back from setbacks. It's not just our mental health, an active social life influences our physical health. Studies suggest that those with strong social ties tend to have stronger immune systems, lower blood pressure and better overall health.

Research consistently shows that people with robust social connections tend to live longer. The sense of purpose and fulfillment derived from relationships can extend our lifespan.

Fostering connections

Building and maintaining meaningful relationships takes effort and intention. Engage in active listening with others. Show genuine interest in their thoughts and feelings and ask open-ended questions. It's not about the number of friends or followers, but the quality of the relationships. Invest time and energy in a few close connections rather than spreading yourself thin. Participating in shared activities or hobbies can be an excellent way to connect with others who have similar interests. Join clubs, classes or online communities related to your passions.

Being vulnerable and sharing your struggles and emotions can deepen connections. It allows others to relate to your experiences and encourages reciprocity. Don't wait for others to initiate contact. Reach out to friends, family or acquaintances and make plans to meet up or have a conversation.

Digital dilemma

Technology has transformed the way we connect. While it offers opportunities for socialization, it can also pose challenges. Excessive screen time and shallow online interactions can lead to feelings of loneliness and isolation. To maintain a healthy balance, consider these tips:



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• Aim for quality screen time. Prioritize meaningful online interactions such as video calls, online community participation or educational webinars over mindless scrolling.

• Set boundaries. Stick to screen time limits and allocate specific periods for digital interactions.

• Disconnect when necessary. Find time to focus on face-to-face interactions. Enjoy the beauty of the offline world.

• Practice mindful consumption. Be mindful of what you consume online. Surround yourself with positivity and avoid engaging in toxic discussions.

YOUR HEALTH

Start your day with healthy habits

Your mornings set the tone for the rest of your day.

By establishing a healthy morning routine, you can unlock a multitude of benefits, including increased productivity to enhanced well-being. Healthy morning rituals can incorporate exercise, hydration and mindfulness practices.

A healthy morning ritual is a powerful tool for enhancing your physical and mental well-being. Start your day with intention and watch as it positively affects every aspect of your life.

CNBC reported that research done by psychologists found that developing morning habits such as exercise and healthy eating can improve one's energy for the entire day. That same study found that there were other effects on the amount of energy a person had — such as age, happiness levels and genetics — but that 60% of one's alertness depended on the environment and what a person chose to do upon waking.

Benefits

A well-structured morning routine can help you start the day with purpose and energy, enhancing your productivity throughout the day.

It can enhance physical and mental health. Incorporating exercise and hydration into your morning can kickstart your metabolism, improve cardiovascular health and promote overall physical well-being. Mindfulness practices like meditation and journaling can reduce stress, anxiety and depression, fostering better mental health.

Establishing a morning ritual creates consistency in your life, making it easier to manage your time and achieve your goals.

Elements

Start your morning with physical activity, whether it's a brisk walk, yoga or a quick workout. Exercise releases endorphins, increasing your energy and improving your mood. After hours of sleep, your body needs hydration. Begin your day with a glass of water to kickstart your metabolism and replenish lost fluids.

Incorporate mindfulness practices into your morning, such as meditation, deep breathing exercises or journaling. These activities promote mental clarity and reduce stress. Take a few minutes to set daily goals and intentions. This helps you establish priorities for your tasks and stay focused on what matters most.



ADOBE STOCK

Fuel your body with a nutritious breakfast. Opt for whole grains, fruits and lean proteins to provide sustained energy throughout the day.

Putting it into practice

If you're not accustomed to a morning routine, begin with small, manageable steps. Gradually add new practices as you become more comfortable. Let your ritual reflect your unique needs, personality and preferences. Choose those exercises, activities and food that resonate with you, that will let you welcome and enjoy your mornings.

Establish a consistent wake-up time to anchor your morning routine. Over time, it will become a habit. While consistency is important, allow flexibility for occasional variations due to travel or special occasions. Let your routines evolve with your changing needs and goals. Periodically review and adjust it to ensure it continues to serve you.

YOUR HEALTH

Nurture your gut

Your gut health is intricately linked to your overall well-being, affecting everything from digestion to immune function and even your mood.

Your gut plays a pivotal role in your overall well-being, influencing digestion, nutrient absorption and immune function. By nurturing your gut through a balanced diet, probiotics and stress management, you can support your digestive health and your body's ability to fend off illness.

Remember that a healthy gut isn't just about digestion — it's about strengthening your body's first line of defense against infections and maintaining vibrant health from the inside out. The National Institutes of Health cite research saying the bacteria in your gut reduces your risk of diabetes, inflammatory bowel disease and psoriatic arthritis.

Gut health connection

Your gastrointestinal (GI) tract, often referred to as your gut, is a complex system responsible for digesting food, absorbing nutrients and playing a crucial role in your immune response. It serves three primary roles: digestion, absorption and providing a microbiome.

Your gut breaks down the food you eat into essential nutrients that nourish your body. Nutrients from digested food are absorbed into the bloodstream through the gut lining. The GI tract hosts trillions of microorganisms, collectively known as the gut microbiome. These microbes aid digestion, synthesize vitamins and even influence your mood. Healthline explains each person has more than 200 different species of bacteria, viruses and fungi in their digestive tract. They vary between those that are harmful, healthy and essential.

Tips for a healthy gut

Consume a variety of fruits, vegetables, whole grains and lean proteins. A diverse diet supports a diverse gut microbiome and a robust immune system. Fiber promotes regular bowel movements and feeds beneficial gut bacteria. Incorporate food like oats, beans and broccoli. Probiotics are live bacteria and yeasts found in yogurt, kefir and fermented foods like sauerkraut. They help maintain a balanced gut microbiome. Also helpful are prebiotic-rich foods such as garlic, onions and asparagus. Drink plenty of water. Being well hydrated is good for your health in many ways. Meanwhile, limit excessive sugar and processed food as it can disrupt the balance of gut bacteria.

Antibiotic use has also been linked to an unhealthy gut by researchers who published in "Nature," so talk to your doctor about which antibiotics are essential and when alternatives might be possible. Chronic stress can negatively affect gut health. Practice relaxation techniques like meditation or yoga. Get adequate sleep to allow your body's immune cells to function optimally. Make it a priority to get enough sleep every night.

Physical activity supports gut motility and a healthy gut microbiome, so engage in regular exercise.

Immune function

Your gut and immune system are deeply intertwined. About 70% of your immune cells reside in your gut-associated lymphoid tissue (GALT).

The gut lining acts as a barrier, preventing harmful substances and pathogens from entering the bloodstream. Beneficial bacteria help regulate the immune system and protect against harmful invaders.

When the gut detects potential threats, it triggers an immune response, releasing antibodies and immune cells to defend against infections. An unhealthy gut can lead to chronic inflammation, which is linked to various diseases, including autoimmune conditions.

Drive (from Front)

Cheyenne Sharp
cheyenne@cullmantribune.com

CULLMAN, Ala. — The National Domestic Violence Hotline reports that over one in three women and one in four men in the U.S. have been or will become a victim of domestic violence in their lifetime. One service available to Cullman residents is Victim Services of Cullman, a place where abused individuals can seek help, resources and refuge. VSOC accepts donations for its clients in need, but some donations are in short supply: hygiene and beauty products.

Dynea Boyd, a stylist at The Legacy Salon, said she was digging in her bathroom vanity and stumbled upon a stash of small unused hotel soaps and travel-sized toiletries; not wanting to waste the goods, but not knowing what to do with them, they were pushed to the back of the drawer and the back of Boyd's mind.

Later, while chatting with a client, VSOC Board President and Interim Director Gwen Parker, a thought popped into Boyd's head – collecting unused toiletries and beauty products to be distributed to the clients VSOC in Cullman and Morgan counties.

The hygiene drive, Vitals for Victims, was born. Vitals for Victims will be collecting items from Jan. 2 until Feb. 10.

"About a year ago, I became aware of the potential for unwanted professional hair products.

"Then, I saw all these hotel soaps and lotions, just sitting under my bathroom sink.

"After a lot of thought, I asked Miss Gwen if VSOC could use these items and she heartily said, 'Yes,'" said Boyd.

Boyd is no stranger to community work, beginning her philanthropic journey over four years ago. Cullman's VFW Post 2214, Tunnel to Towers and The Ronald McDonald House have all been on the receiving end of Boyd's generosity.

"My biggest blessing is working at The Legacy Salon; what a great opportunity I have to utilize this public place for doing good!" Boyd exclaimed.

"The Legacy Salon Owner Sarah Wood also raises money every October for breast cancer awareness."

The Legacy Salon will begin accepting donations on Jan. 2 at the opening of business and is located in Town Square Shopping Center at 1640 Town Square SW. Hours of operation are Monday-Saturday from 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

Contact the salon at 256-775-0121.



SENIOR LIVING

Finding the right gym for you

Once you've got the all-clear from your doctor, it's time to find the perfect place to get moving.

Here's how to pick the best gym for your lifestyle and your fitness goals.

Location, location, location
You want a gym to be convenient for you. This doesn't necessarily mean close to home, even though it could. You want a location that either has several options for you no matter where you are or a location along a route you regularly travel, such as to church or to the grocery store.

Options
You want a gym that has equipment, trainers and classes that align with your goals.

If you're a beginner, maybe don't choose a facility that caters to bodybuilders. Visit in person before you join to scope out the facility, the equipment and the staff. Consider making a list of your must-haves for a gym.

Next, write down the like-to-haves and, finally, the avoids. Use your list to evaluate each gym you visit.

Check out social media
Your in-person visit provides some insight into how the gym works. Their social media channels can give you a broader look at how it runs day-to-day.

Consider checking reviews for the facility on sites such as Google or Yelp. If you're still unsure, ask the staff about signing up for a trial. It may even be free!

Cleanliness
Look for signs that the gym is cleaned regularly. With all the noise and music, it can be easy to get distracted. Check out the bathrooms and the locker rooms to make sure they're spic-and-span.

Also make sure the gym provides a way to disinfect equipment after use.

Usually, this is via a wipe or a spray bottle. If you don't see it, ask the staff how it's done.

Discounts
Once you've picked a gym, ask whether there are any discounts that may apply. This could include a discount for coming during off-peak hours or if you plan to take only group classes. Also make sure you completely understand how you will be billed, including for extras such as towels or classes.


ADOBE STOCK

SENIOR LIVING

Improving balance

Falls can become increasingly serious as you age.

Johns Hopkins says that each year more than 25% of adults over the age of 65 fall. More than 3 million are treated in emergency rooms for fall injuries.

Why seniors fall more
Seniors are at an increased risk of falling because, as we age, we tend to experience problems with vision and sensation in the feet, both of which can lead to falls. Seniors are more prone to vestibular problems, which can cause balance issues. Medications may be to blame, as well as low blood pressure and footwear issues.

Preventing falls
Exercises that focus on balance and strength can reduce the risk of falls, Johns Hopkins says. Always talk to your medical professional before starting an exercise routine, but once you get the all-clear, try these:

Sitting to standing. Start by sitting in a sturdy, standard-height chair. Sit comfortably with your feet flat on the ground. Have a sturdy support in front of you, such as a countertop or table, so that you can grab it if you start to feel unsteady. Scoot forward so your buttocks are at the front of the seat. Lean your chest forward over your toes, shifting your body weight forward. Squeeze your butt muscles and slowly rise to a standing position. Slowly sit back down and repeat 10 times. If you need to, place your hands or arms on the seat of the chair and push through your hands to help you stand and sit. The goal is not to use your hands at all.

Balance exercises
Try to have someone with you for this one, just in case you lose your balance. Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart and your eyes open. Hold steady for 10 seconds, working your way up to 30 seconds. If you find yourself swaying or reaching for the wall or other support, keep working on it. Once you can hold it for 30 seconds, stand with your feet together and your eyes open. Hold it for 10 seconds, working your way up to 30. Once you can do that, stand on one foot, eyes open and ... well, you know the drill. The next exercise has you close your eyes and try each exercise. The goal for each one is to progress from 10 to 30 seconds, with five repetitions per leg, two times per day.

SENIOR LIVING

Talking to your doctor

The first step to tackling a new fitness plan for people of any age is to talk to their medical professional before they schedule the first gym session.

This is especially true for seniors, who may have pre-existing conditions and other health concerns.

Make an appointment
If you're not already scheduled to see your doctor, make an appointment.

Make a list of the activities you plan to try and the frequency with which you plan to do them. Write down your fitness goals, along with any medications you take, including over-the-counter medications and supplements.

Even though you may be excited to get started, wait until you've spoken to your doctor. You could trigger side effects and conditions you were unaware of.

Medications
Your doctor may have you adjust the times you take them depending on the types of medications, the effects you may feel, and the activity you're planning on doing.

Some medications may lower your blood pressure or blood sugar, for instance, and when coupled with exercise, could cause negative health outcomes.

Listen to your body
Once you have the all-clear to begin exercising, remember to take it slow. Listen to your body and remember that exercise should never hurt or make you feel worse afterwards.

Stop immediately if you have shortness of breath, chest pain or pressure, or break out in a cold sweat. If you injure yourself, pay attention to your injury. Don't resume your workouts until you are pain-free.

Exercising with mobility issues
It's not impossible, you just have to get creative. Find a facility or a trainer that specializes in helping people with mobility issues.

You may even find special classes just for seniors or for those who have trouble getting around.

Working with someone who is mindful of your condition will make your exercise more productive and enjoyable. Your doctor may have recommendations for places, trainers and exercises for you.

Eat right
Now that you're moving more, you may need to adjust your diet as well. Talk to your doctor about what you like to eat and drink and see whether you should make any adjustments before and after working out. You may need to add more protein, including lean proteins like poultry or fish.

SENIOR LIVING

Why it's important to stretch

Stretching before you work out can help protect your muscles and joints from injury, but it's especially important for seniors, whether you're about to work out or not.

As we age, our ability to build muscle strength and flexibility declines. You can combat this by stretching. Try to stretch all your major muscle groups for at least 10 minutes, two days per week.

How to stretch
Before you stretch, warm up by taking a short walk or otherwise moving around for a little bit. Then, take a deep breath. Slowly exhale as you stretch. Hold each stretch for 30 seconds to give it time to work on the muscle. Don't bounce or hold your breath, and only stretch until you feel tension. Dial it back if you feel pain.

Neck stretches
This is important for posture and for driving. Slowly bring your chin toward your chest and turn your head to the right. Hold for 15 seconds, then turn to the left. Hold for 15 seconds. Repeat as needed.

Shoulder stretches
Hold a towel in one hand over your head and let it drape down your neck and back.

Grab the free end with your other hand and gently pull down until you feel a stretch in the arm over your head. This stretch focuses on shoulder mobility, which is important when you get dressed or reach for items over your head.

Chest stretches
This is another stretch designed to improve posture. Extend both arms to the side with your palms facing forward.

Reach back with your hands until you feel a stretch across your chest and in front of your arms. If you have a hard time holding your arms up, lean against a wall, stepping forward until you feel a gentle stretch in your chest. Switch it up and stretch both sides.

Ankle stretches
Stiff ankles can cause poor balance. This stretch will help. Sit in a chair and slowly move your foot up and down and then side to side. Hold each position for 30 seconds, then repeat on the other foot. Make sure to do both feet each time.

Lower back stretches
These stretches will help maintain mobility in your spine, giving you better posture and balance. Lay down on your back with your knees bent and your feet together. Keep your feet flat on the floor. Keep your knees together and lower your legs to one side, twisting your torso until you feel a stretch in your lower back. Hold and repeat on the other side.


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Hanceville (from Front)

business:

• Lucille Powell was appointed to the Zoning Board of Adjustments, place 4, to serve a consecutive three-year term, beginning Jan. 2, 2024.

• The council approved paying $4,000 to the Hanceville Public Library for cabinet installation; the library has received a grant to pay for the installation and will repay the council when the monies are received.

• The council accepted former mayor Kenneth Nail's resignation and removed him from financial documentation.

What's on tap for the city of Cullman?

Cheyenne Sharp
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DAVE WARREN/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

A breathtaking view of Cullman's ever growing landscape, making room for innovation and progress for future generations

Our Founding Fathers understood the task of creating a flourishing environment that provides entertainment, solace and community for its residents. Growth begets change; change begets progress.

2023 was a huge one for Cullman. Notable changes include accomplishments by Cullman Parks, Recreation & Sports Tourism, including Skate Depot and a renovation of Depot Park, as well as Cullman's Strawberry Festival growing into the Alabama Strawberry Festival.

Cullman Regional completed a four-story, 30-bed expansion as part of a $30 million project. The project added 13 new beds for critical care, 12 new medical/surgical beds and five additional multiuse beds, making Cullman Regional a 175-bed hospital. Growing populations mean growing health care needs; the hospital also welcomed 20 new physicians to its health care team to assist the growing needs of the community. This was done alongside the highly anticipated four-lane expansion of Alabama Highway 157.

Cullman City Schools saw increased enrollment in 2023 and completed a two-year undertaking of expanding the current Cullman City Primary School to house all second graders from the district. CCPS now houses Headstart, Pre-K and K-2. West Elementary School and East Elementary School each house students in third, fourth, fifth and sixth grades.

Cullman Middle School broke ground on a new middle school expansion that will equip CMS to house all sixth through eighth graders from the district; completion of the CMS project is expected to extend into 2024.

Wallace State Community College completed a 30,000-square-foot Center for Welding Technology and Innovation; it is the largest Welding training center in the Southeast.

WSCC stated, "The Welding center has seven robotic welding stations; nine virtual welding simulators; 81 welding booths; 20 grinding booths; a fabrication area with two welders, a plasma CNC table and pipe welding equipment; and three state-of-the-art classrooms with built-in cameras, microphones and speakers to allow hosting online classes."

Cullman's population is always increasing, according to census.gov.

In 2021 Cullman's population was 18,635; that number is estimated to be around 19,505 in 2023. How can Cullman's infrastructure grow as rapidly as the city? Cullman Economic Development Agency Director Dale Greer and Governmental Affairs & Community Development Jamie Troutman had a few answers for Cullman residents.

"Cullman and Cullman County are experiencing tremendous growth. It is occurring in the residential, industrial, commercial, medical and professional sectors. I see no immediate slowdown," Greer declared. "Drive through the community and you will see new housing developments, apartments under construction, new retail, remodeling of retail and other signs of a prosperous community. There are no boarded up storefronts; all the signs support a vibrating, growing community."

Troutman explained some of the recent and upcoming repairs and improvements in the city of Cullman, saying, "The City will continue pursuing grants to update water and sewer lines.

"The streetscape projects downtown have not only added curb appeal, but the underground utilities have received badly needed updating, and we will continue pursuing potential funding for the widening of the St. Bernard Bridge on the US. Highway 278/Alabama Highway 69."

Troutman continued, "Depot Park will be completed, which will provide an expanded area for festivals, as Cullman has become known as the City of Festivals. These festivals give locals something fun to do and bring in thousands from neighboring areas. These people spend money in our community which in turn strengthens our economy, services and quality of life."

As many residents may feel the brunt of Cullman's growing pains, Greer and Troutman hope that eventually, the city will come together as a whole and embrace the changes and tweaks to their much-loved town. After all, the wheel keeps turning, and Cullman must keep up with demand. Higher populations lead to higher revenue for the City, revenue needed to enhance Cullman's appeal and support its residents.

Said Greer, "Most people support growth—maybe not in their particular neighborhood, but they still want their favorite shopping or dining spot here. Or they want more jobs that offer better compensation and advancement opportunities.

"It is important for community leaders to focus on meeting needs and enhancing quality."

Adding that Cullman's leadership has spearheaded the fight to keep Cullman comfortable and enjoyable, he said, "Progressive leadership has supported infrastructure improvements that ensure we have adequate water, sewer, electricity, natural gas, telecommunications and solid waste disposal services. Duck River added a water supply capable of sustaining the current agriculture, residential, industrial and retail demand while also allowing for continued growth. The City/County joint purchase of the landfill assures we control our waste disposal for 75 to 100 years. Inadequate infrastructure restricts growth."

Troutman said she hopes residents see how growing revenue positively impacts the community, saying, "Everything depends on tax revenue. Taxes generated by the businesses and industries in Cullman provide funding for roads, water, sewer, schools, police, fire and education. If a community does not continue to grow or 'keep up,' it will die.

"Young families are moving to Cullman and more high schoolers are saying they want to move back to their hometown after college than ever before. That is because we have things to do, good schools and an above-average quality of life."

Growth isn't always convenient, but it is always necessary. New businesses create new jobs; new jobs create more money going into the economy; more money going into the economy means more businesses want to flourish in that area.

Said Greer, "For years job creation was one of the most important needs in our community. Today that focus has shifted more toward quality of life enhancements that help attract individuals and families. Cullman routinely has the second or third-lowest unemployment rate in Alabama.

"Attracting workers is important to our future. Elements in that plan must include more shopping and dining opportunities, quality health care, good schools (secondary and post-secondary), entertainment and exceptional park and recreation facilities and programs."

For the City of Cullman, 2024 continued growth and expansion are expected, with several new retail and restaurant opportunities. New apartment complexes are popping up to assist with the demand for housing, allowing new families and individuals to be exposed to the small-town charm of Cullman. Those people will find employment, shop at locally owned stores, pay local taxes and become a part of the community.