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SUNNY

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Community Calendar
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NICK GRIFFIN/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

– SPORTS –

Cullman collects area wins over Jasper

» PAGE 4

Body found identified as missing Holly Pond man Greg Mize

Noah Galilee
noah@cullmantribune.com

HOLLY POND, Ala. — Authorities have officially identified the body recovered from the Mulberry Fork on Friday, March 14, 2025, as that of missing Holly Pond man Greg Mize, 56.

Cullman County Coroner Jeremy Kilpatrick released the official identification on Monday, March 17.

Mize had been missing since Feb. 12, 2025, and multiple searches were conducted in the area near his residence.

Kilpatrick said Mize's body was found in the Mulberry Fork, between County Roads 698 and 688 in the Holly Pond community.

A spokesman for the Cullman County Sheriff's Office told The Tribune » PAGE 3



Greg Mize was an avid fisherman and especially loved fishing on Lake Guntersville. »

CONTRIBUTED BY FAMILY

2025 Cullman County Middle School Math Tournament results

West Point Middle School team named Grand Champion



CULLMAN COUNTY SCHOOLS

The West Point Middle School team was named Grand Champion of the 2025 Cullman County Middle School Math Tournament.

Staff Reports
Contributor

CULLMAN, Ala. — The 2025 Cullman County Middle School Math Tournament was held Friday, March 14, at Wallace State Community College.

Below are the results.

Grand Champion: West Point Middle

Eighth-grade winners

Team Awards
1. West Point Middle
2. Good Hope Middle
3. Hanceville Middle

Individual awards
1. Samuel Hembree, Hanceville Middle
2. Abram Motte, West Point Middle/Collin Cooner, West Point Middle (tie)
3. -
4. Jordan Price, Holly Pond K-8
5. Thatcher Armstrong, West Point Middle
6. Cole Chamblee, West Point Middle
7. Parker Nicholas, Fairview Middle
8. Zella Creel, Good Hope Middle
9. Riley Lansford, Good Hope Middle
10. Brayden Johnson, West Point Middle

Seventh-grade winners

Team awards
1. West Point Middle
2. Good Hope Middle
3. Vinemont Middle

Individual awards
1. Adon Graves, Hanceville Middle
2. Colt Ashley, West Point Middle
3. Isabella Neighbors, West Point Middle
4. Lilly Kate Bryant, West Point Middle
5. Asher Kirkpatrick, Good Hope Middle
6. Eric Covarrubias, Good Hope Middle
7. John-Luke Guthrie, West Point Middle
8. Mackenzie Phillips, Vinemont Middle
9. Miles Wood, Good Hope Middle
10. Gracie Horton, West Point Middle

Sixth-grade winners

Team awards
1. West Point Middle
2. Good Hope Middle
3. Vinemont Middle

Individual awards
1. Nathanial Davenport, Hanceville Middle
2. Hudson Mann, » PAGE 2

Alabama unemployment rate steady at 3.3%

Cullman County's rate ticks up to 3% » PAGE 6

Local family loses home to fire



CONTRIBUTED BY FAMILY

Rick and Draima Whitmire lost their home, cars and belongings in a house fire on Thursday, March 13, in the Hidden Lake subdivision in Cullman County. » PAGE 3

Auburn, Alabama and Wallace State earn tournament bids



AU ATHLETICS, UA ATHLETICS, WSCC ATHLETICS

» PAGE 2

Local judges speak at community luncheon » PAGE 7

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CRIME

Arrests and incidents reported March 17

Staff Reports
Contributor

CULLMAN, Ala. — Below are the arrests and incidents reported March 17, 2025. All persons are innocent until proven guilty.

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

CULLMAN COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

INCIDENTS

March 13

- domestic violence; Alabama Ave. NE Hanceville
- criminal mischief; Industrial Park Rd.
- harassment; CR 1720
- possession of drug paraphernalia; CR 431
- domestic violence; CR 1435
- criminal mischief; Reid Rd.
- harassment; CR 1116

March 14

- assault; CR 489
- possession of drug paraphernalia; CR 1141
- criminal mischief; CR 615
- possession of dangerous drugs; possession of drug paraphernalia; CR 1242
- unlawful possession of drugs with intent to distribute; possession of dangerous drugs; unlawful possession of controlled substance; possession of drug paraphernalia; US. 31

March 15

- theft of property; CR 1694
- domestic violence; CR 1184
- theft of property; CR 616
- assault; reckless endangerment; CR 1684
- criminal mischief; CR 700

March 16

- violation of protection order; CR 1435
- theft of property; CR 1635
- theft of property; CR 1634
- domestic violence; Edmondson Rd. NE Hanceville
- possession of drug paraphernalia; Commercial St. NE

ARRESTS

March 13-16

Aderholt, Shauna D.; 44
- FTA – possession of drug paraphernalia
- FTA – possession of dangerous drugs
- FTA – driving without drivers license

Banks, Timothy R.; 45
- financial exploitation of the elderly-2nd degree
- fraudulent use credit/debit card
- theft-miscellaneous, $500-less than $1500
- FTA – driving while license suspended

Chambers, Rayford O.; 60
- FTA – assault-domestic-menacing-fun
- FTA – sexual abuse-1st degree

Cook, Caleb G.; 31
- possession of methamphetamine
- possession of drug paraphernalia
- possession of dangerous drugs
- unlawful possession with intent to distribute a controlled substance

Cook, Jeremy L.; 40
- GJ – theft-grand jury arrest warrant

Doyle, Kenneth W.; 39
- family offense-NS non-support-child

Duckworth, David A.; 46
- FTA – driving while license suspended
- FTA – DUI (controlled substances)
- FTA – failure to signal
- FTA – improper lane usage

Duncan, Stephanie L.; 49
- possession of drug paraphernalia

Ellis, Daniel A.; 44
- possession of drug paraphernalia
- unlawful possession with intent to distribute a controlled substance

Gillilan, Irvin R.; 58
- GJ – theft-$500-less than $1500

Hill, Charles A.; 36
- FTA – possession of drug paraphernalia
- FTA – possession of dangerous drugs

Hooper, Jessy J.; 28
- receiving stolen property, less than $500

Hughes, Preonna S.; 23
- possession of drug paraphernalia

Kilpatrick, Brandi L.; 33
- FTA – crimes against persons selling/giving cigarettes to minors

Mathis, Nathaniel V.; 31
- FTA – theft-shoplifting, less than $500

Nail, Jonathan T.; 41
- BAIL JUMPING 2 – burglary-residence-no force
- BAIL JUMPING 2 – attempting to elude a police officer

Ray Jr., Phillip E.; 46
- PROBATION VIOLATION – theft of lost property

Sherrell, Joshua A.; 36
- possession of drug paraphernalia
- possession of dangerous drugs

Suggs, Brandon J.; 42
- public intoxication

Sweaza, Michael J.; 45
- FTA – driving while suspended, revoked or canceled

Tubbs, Corey L.; 35
- FTA – certain person forbidden possession of pistol
- FTA – possession of drug paraphernalia
- FTA – possession of dangerous drugs

Twilley, Natisha M.; 46
- FTA – possession of drug paraphernalia
- FTA – possession of dangerous drugs

Younglove, Anthony W.; 54
- DUI (alcohol)

CULLMAN POLICE DEPARTMENT

INCIDENTS

March 11
- theft of property-1st degree; Peoples Bank; cash

March 12
- domestic violence-3rd degree; person; 2nd Ave. SW
- duty upon striking fixtures upon highway; City of Cullman; damaged pole; $10,000; Cherokee Ave. SW

March 13
- identity theft; person
- forgery; Weiss Lake Egg Company Inc.; forged check

March 14
- unlawful breaking and entering of motor vehicle; theft of property-1st degree; person; miscellaneous; Lessman Cir. SW
- criminal trespass-3rd degree; Days Inn; 4th St. SW
- theft of property-2nd degree; Capitol Property Management Solutions; miscellaneous; $1,708; Lessman Cir. SW
- unlawful breaking and entering of motor vehicle; theft of property-4th degree; person; tools; $50; Lessman Cir. SW
- unlawful breaking and entering of motor vehicle; theft of property-3rd degree; person; wallet & contents; Lessman Cir. SW
- criminal mischief-3rd degree; person; damaged property; $100; Cooper Cir.
- domestic violence-3rd degree; person; Golf Course Rd.
- domestic violence-3rd degree – harassment; person; Hwy. 157
- assault-3rd degree; person; Hwy. 157

ARRESTS

March 13-16

Stricklin, Martin W., Jr.; 57
- FTA - insurance violation

Champion, Terry J.; 47
- theft of property-4th degree

Blanchette, Kyle B.; 36
- theft of property-4th degree

Tolbert, Wendy R.; 35
- FTA - driving while suspended

Karr, Gary A., Jr.; 39
- FTA - possession of drug paraphernalia
- FTA - certain persons forbidden to possess a pistol

Fields, Demico T.; 28
- criminal trespass-3rd degree

Adams, Kimberly G.; 40
- FTA - public intoxication
- FTA - resisting arrest

Easterwood, Perry L.; 59
- domestic violence-3rd degree

Thornton, Zachary B.; 37
- DUI

Moore, Christina J.; 47
- FTA - disorderly conduct
- FTA - resisting arrest

Bates, Christopher L.; 51
- domestic violence-3rd degree – harassment

Twilley, Natisha M.; 46
- FTA - theft of property-4th degree

Fields, Demico T.; 28
- criminal trespass-3rd degree

McKenzie, Seth J.; 29
- DUI

HANCEVILLE POLICE DEPARTMENT

No arrests or incidents reported.

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

Math (from Front)

West Point Middle
3. Molly Jenkins, Parkside
4. Jackson Goggins, Good Hope Middle
5. Beckitt Nunnelley, West Point Middle
6. Jayden Watts, West Point Middle
7. Hunter Woljevach, Vinemont Middle
8. Casey Laney, West Point Middle
9. Noah Porter, West Point Middle
10. Kyle Grant, West Point Middle

Bids (from Front)

Nick Griffin
nick@cullmantribune.com

The postseason is ramping up for all of our in-state college basketball teams and Auburn, Alabama and Wallace State each received bids for the respective tournaments on Sunday. Auburn received the No. 1 overall seed for the first time in program history and will play either Alabama State or Saint Franics in Lexington on Thursday. Alabama earned a No. 2 seed and will face Robert Morris in Cleveland on Friday.

Moving over to the NJCAA Tournament, the Wallace State Lions received the No. 22 seed and will take on Frank Phillips College in Hutchinson, Kansas on March 23.

The Wallace State Lady Lions earned the No. 19 seed and they will play Murray State in Casper, Wyoming on March 25.



IN THE PROBATE COURT OF CULLMAN COUNTY, ALABAMA

IN RE: THE MATTER OF)
)
CHRISTIAN ANTHONY WOODARD) CASE NO.: PC-2025-064
An alleged incapacitated person.

NOTICE OF HEARING
PETITION FOR APPOINTMENT OF GUARDIAN AND FOR EMERGENCY LETTERS OF GUARDIANSHIP and
AMENDED PETITION FOR APPOINTMENT OF GUARDIAN AND FOR EMERGENCY LETTERS OF GUARDIANSHIP

TO: CHRISTIAN WOODARD and ANY KNOWN OR UNKNOWN NEXT OF KIN OR INTERESTED PARTIES

Please take notice that a *Petition for Appointment of Guardianship and for Emergency Letters of Guardianship* has been filed by Annette Blakely, Petitioner, by and through Attorney, Beverly Paschal Poston, and *Amended Petition for Appointment of Guardian and for Emergency Letters of Guardianship*, filed by Attorney, Beverly Paschal Poston. A hearing on said *Petition Appointment of Guardianship and for Emergency Letters of Guardianship and Amended Petition for Appointment of Guardian and for Emergency Letters of Guardianship* has been **scheduled for the 17th day of April, 2025, at 11:00 A.M.**, Cullman County Courthouse, Probate Office Room 101, 500 2nd Avenue SW, Cullman, AL 35055.

DONE this 7th day of March, 2025.

Tammy Brown
TAMMY BROWN, JUDGE OF PROBATE
CULLMAN COUNTY ALABAMA

Beverly Paschal Poston
Attorney for Petitioner
201 Second Avenue SE
Cullman, Alabama 35055

IN THE PROBATE COURT OF CULLMAN COUNTY, ALABAMA

IN RE: The Estate of)
NATHANIEL EUGENE FENLEY) CASE NO.: PC 2025 - 068
Deceased.)

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

TAKE NOTICE that Letters of Administration have been granted to Randal Scott Fenley, as Administrator of the Estate of Nathaniel Eugene Fenley, deceased, on the 26th day of February, 2025, by the Honorable Tammy Brown, Judge of Probate, and that all persons having claims against said Estate are hereby required to present the same within the time allowed by law or the same will be barred.

Randal Scott Fenley

Shay Persall
SHAY PERSALL LAW, LLC
611 Seventh Street, SW
Cullman, AL 35055
(256) 841-7800

Attorney for Administrator

TO: The Publisher of The Cullman Tribune:

Please publish the foregoing notice once a week for three consecutive weeks and send an Affidavit of Publication.

Tammy Brown
TAMMY BROWN, JUDGE OF PROBATE

IN THE PROBATE COURT OF CULLMAN COUNTY, ALABAMA

IN RE: THE ESTATE OF *
JAMES KEENER WALKER, * CASE NO.: PC2024-459
Deceased. *

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

TAKE NOTICE that Letters Testamentary having been granted to JENNIFER WALKER MANNING as Personal Representative of the Estate of JAMES KEENER WALKER, deceased, on the 28th day of February, 2025 by the Honorable Tammy Brown, Probate Judge.

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

Jennifer Walker Manning
Personal Representative

Mark C. Nelson
MALONE & NELSON
2216 14th Street
Tuscaloosa, AL 35401
mark@malonenelson.com
(205)349-3449

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

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

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

STATE OF ALABAMA)
)
COUNTY OF CULLMAN)

NOTICE OF SHERIFF'S SALE

TO THE OWNERS OF THE WITHIN DESCRIBED REAL ESTATE AND ALL INTERESTED PARTIES

Date & Time of Sale: Monday, March 31 2025 at 11:00 a.m./p.m.
Sale Location: Cullman County Courthouse East Entrance
500 Second Avenue, S.W.
Cullman, Alabama 35055
Writ of Execution Parties: Redstone Federal Credit Union
vs.
David Aaron Morton
109 Auston Drive
Cullman, Alabama 35057

By virtue of an Execution issued to me by Circuit Clerk Lisa McSwain, pursuant to the Code of Alabama, requiring me to make the sum as provided for in said Execution issued on a judgment, with interest and cost. Upon the expiration of proper notice and advertisement, I will expose at public sale to the highest bidder at the date, time, and location listed above, all right, title, and interest of David Aaron Morton, to the property, described as follows:

The South one-half (1/2) of the Southeast quarter of the Southwest quarter of Section 5, Township 11, Range 3 West. Containing 20 acres, more or less. Situated, lying and being in Cullman County, State of Alabama.

Source of title: Pursuant to the description provided in Plaintiff's Writ of Execution issued on or about 28 January 2025 in case CV-2022-900232 in the Small Claims Court of Cullman County, Alabama.

THEREFORE, according to said command, I shall expose for sale at public auction, all the right, title, and interest of the above-named David Aaron Morton in and to the above-described real property on the date listed above, subject to all prior encumbrances of record.

Dated this the 3 day of March, 2025.

BY: Sheriff Matt Gentry

INVITATION FOR BIDS

Sealed bids will be received by the Board of Water and Sewer Commissioners of the City of Mobile, Alabama ("Board"), at the Wesley A. James Operations Center, 4725 Moffett Road, Suite A, Mobile, AL 36618-0249 until **12:00 p.m., Local Time, May 5, 2025**, and then publicly opened and read aloud at **1:00 p.m.**, for furnishing all labor, materials, and performing all work for the following project: Contract No.: D3887600, Project Name: **C C WILLIAMS WWTP CHLORINE / SO2 BUILDING AND DIGESTER MODIFICATIONS**.

The project is funded by the Alabama Department of Environmental Management State Revolving Fund (SRF) Loan Program. The selected bidder shall comply with all conditions and requirements of the program as they pertain to this Project.

Plans and Specifications may be inspected at the Board's offices at 4725 Moffett Road, Suite A, Mobile, AL, or at the offices of Jacobs, Consulting Engineers, 25 W. Cedar Street, Suite 350, Pensacola FL. 32502 (by appointment)., Telephone: (850) 396-4938.

A complete set of electronic contract documents including Drawings, Specifications, referenced documents and a model bid package may be obtained from Chris Lambert of Jacobs via e-mail to Chris Lambert at Chris.Lambert@jacobs.com. No Contract Documents will be issued later than twenty-four (24) hours prior to bid submission time.

Questions regarding the Contract Documents must be submitted in writing or electronically to Jacobs no later than **April 25, 2025** in order for responses to be provided via addendum prior to the bid date.

A Pre-Bid Conference will be held at Wesley A. James Operations Center, 4725 Moffett Road, Board Room, Mobile, AL 36618-0249 on **April 16, 2025 at 10:30 a.m.**, Local Time, to discuss bidding and project requirements. Prospective bidders and subcontractors are encouraged to attend.

Bids must be submitted on the standard forms included with the Contract Documents in the tabbed and color-coded format as indicated.

Envelopes containing bids must be sealed and delivered to the Director, Board of Water and Sewer Commissioners of the City of Mobile, Alabama, 4725A Moffett Road, Mobile, Alabama 36618-0249: "Bid for constructing Project # D3887600 - **C C WILLIAMS WWTP CHLORINE / SO2 BUILDING AND DIGESTER MODIFICATIONS**, to be opened at **1:00 p.m., Local Time, May 5, 2025**". The Bidder's Alabama State Contractor's License Number and discipline shall be on the envelope. Hand-delivered bid packages shall be delivered to the receptionist at the main entrance of the MAWSS office complex, 4725A Moffett Road, Mobile AL 36618.

Bid guarantee in the form of certified check, bid bond, or Irrevocable Letter of Credit acceptable to the Board will be required for at least 5 percent of the bid amount, **not to exceed $10,000**.

The Board reserves the right to reject any and all bids and to waive any informality in bids received.

THIS INVITATION FOR BIDS IS CONDENSED FOR ADVERTISING PURPOSES. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION/REQUIREMENTS FOR BIDDERS CAN BE FOUND IN THE CONTRACT DOCUMENTS.

THE BOARD OF WATER AND SEWER COMMISSIONERS
OF THE CITY OF MOBILE, ALABAMA

Mize (from Front)

after the body was recovered, "Sheriff Matt Gentry and the entire Cullman County Sheriff's Office would like to ask you to join us in offering up prayers and support for all the families undoubtedly affected by this tragedy."

An official cause of death has not been determined, according to Kilpatrick, who said the body was sent for autopsy.

Fire (from Front)

Staff Reports
Contributor

CULLMAN, Ala. — A local couple with deep ties to the community lost their home, cars and belongings in a house fire on Thursday, March 13, in the Hidden Lake subdivision in Cullman County.

Rick and Draima Whitmire owned the home, and their daughter Meaghan Long said the house was a total loss, but thankfully her dad and stepmom got out.

"Stuff is stuff. We are very thankful they were able to get out safely, but they have truly lost everything," Long said. "On behalf of so many people in our family, we want to say thank you to the UPS driver, all the first responders, neighbors, friends and so many others who have helped, called, prayed, donated items or sent monetary donations already."

Rick Whitmire was a band director at Vinemont High School and moved to Sardis for several years before he retired.

"He had played in the Cullman Community Band since it started and now is the band president," Long said. "He has always been the band guy and will forever be."

If you feel led to donate to the family:
Long's Venmo is @maeghan-whitmire. The last four digits of the phone number are 3785.

Clothing needs:
- Women's tops (large), pants (large), shoes (8.5) and scarves or head coverings
- Men's T-shirts (extra-large), button-down shirts (large), pants (34x29), shoes (8.5)
- Clothing donations can be dropped on the front porch at 1436 Clearwater Dr. NE in Cullman.

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COMMUNITY CALENDAR

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

Music Every Thursday Night in February at the Bethel Community Center
4-8 p.m. at the center, just off U.S. Highway 278, west of Cullman on County Road 1117. Bluegrass, gospel and country music. Musicians are welcome with acoustic instruments only. Covered dish supper and everyone is invited. Please join us! No entry fee, but donations are appreciated for building upkeep.

Grief Support Group
Every Sunday at 3 p.m. at First Presbyterian Church, 615 Third Ave. SE. Contact Reverend Warren Ruland at 256-962 2521.

Cullman County Republican Women Monthly Meetings
Second Tuesday of each month at 5:30 p.m. at the Cullman VFW. President Cathi Bradford: "We are going to begin training to track legislation in Montgomery. If you need information, you can directly message me on Facebook." Full meals at 5:30. Meetings start at 6.

The Crossing Food Bank
The Crossing is open on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9 a.m.-noon and 1-3:30 p.m. We are located at 1503 Second St. SW, Cullman (in the Housing Authority).

Cullman Low Vision Support Group Meetings
Third Tuesday of every month, from 10-11:30 a.m., at the Alabama Career Center, 1201 Katherine St. NW in Cullman. Contact Olivia Wade, case manager, at 256-389-2502.

Baileyton Bargain Days
First 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

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 the Donald E. Green Adult Active Center, 1625 Cleveland Ave. SW. 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 Al-Anon Meetings
The Al-Anon Family Groups are a fellowship of friends and family whose lives have been affected by alcoholism. The Cullman Serenity Al-Anon Group meets each Monday at noon at 1519 St. Joseph Dr. NE. There is also a Zoom meeting each Tuesday at noon. The Courage to Change Al-Anon Family Group meets on Thursdays at 6 p.m. at Grace Episcopal Church at 305 Arnold St. NE in the Carriage House, located between the church and the Arnold House on the corner. For more information call 256-734-2231 or 256-531-4429.

The 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.

Church Services: Spirit Life Church of GOD
- 1650 St. Joseph Dr. NW, Cullman
- Wednesday, March 19 - 7 p.m. Children and youth classes. Adult worship, teaching and testimonies in the sanctuary. Free pizza at 6:30. Van runs in the 5 Points Area at 6. Call Betty Hays at 256-338-3728 for pickup.
- Friday, March 21 - Celebrate Recovery. Fellowship and testimonies. Hurts, habits and hangups 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 5:45 p.m. Meeting starts at 6:30. Childcare provided.
- Sunday, March 23 - 9 a.m. Van runs in the 5 Points Area. Call Betty Hays at 256-338-3728 for pickup. Breakfast at 9:30. Bible study classes for children, youth and adults at 10. Praise and worship and message by Pastor Bobby Dodd at 11.

Fused Glass Art Class
Tuesday, March 18, at 12:30 p.m. at the Cullman Senior Center. 60 and older. For $22 per person, participants can make a fused glass flowerpot magnet to take home. Seating for the class, taught by Kimberly Love, is limited, so sign up soon. Sign up at https://square.link/u/mdLS2ZtL or by stopping by the center. The Cullman Senior Center is located at 1539 Sportsman Lake Road NW in Cullman. Get more info by calling 256-734-0145 or visiting Cullman Senior Center and Travel on Facebook.

Puzzle Tournament
Saturday, March 22, beginning at 10 a.m. at the downtown branch of the Cullman County Public Library System. Groups will put together 500-piece puzzles in two hours or less. The first three groups to complete the puzzle will win gift baskets. Interested participants should email cullmanpubliclibarary@gmail.com so there are enough puzzles for contestants. Groups will need to arrive early to get started. The library is located at 200 Clark St. NE in Cullman.

41st Annual Bloomin' Festival
April 5-6, held adjacent to the beautiful Ave Maria Grotto. Over 150 arts and crafts vendors, delicious specialty foods and a welcoming community atmosphere. Gate donation: $10 per person (Children 12 and younger – FREE!) Grand Prize Giveaway: 2025 Buick Encore GX – Sunday, April 6, at 4 p.m. (You do not have to be present to win!) NO PETS ALLOWED. All proceeds benefit St. Bernard Prep School. For more information, visit www.bloominfestival.com.

Pleasant View Missionary Baptist Church Spring Revival
Sunday, April 6, from 11 a.m.-5 p.m. and Monday-Wednesday, April 7-9, at 7 p.m. The evangelist will be Bro. Jared Dixon. The Dixons" will be singing Sunday. Everyone is invited. The church is located on U.S. Highway 278 East, approximately 2 miles east of Holly Pond on the left. For more information, call 256-796-5986 or 256-590-1501.

Ladies' Conference
Saturday, June 7, from 10 a.m.-2 p.m., with lunch at noon. At The Foot Of The Cross Church, 2101 County Road 1435 in Vinemont. Guest speaker Kristy Garrison Harris: Trusting God through every season. There will be games and door prizes. Please join us.

SAVE THE DATE
Pilot Club of Cullman
30th FASHION SHOW
APRIL 23, 2025
THE VENUE AT COTTON CREEK

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Established in 1999
Borden FAMILY PHARMACY
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256-734-7535

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PREP SOCCER

Cullman collects area wins over Jasper

Nick Griffin
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CULLMAN, Ala. — After stormy weather postponed Cullman's area matches against Jasper Thursday night, the 'Cats were back on the field to face the Vikings at the Cullman Soccer Complex on Friday. The Lady Bearcats pull scored one goal Thursday night to take an early lead before the storms hit and they added five more when play resumed to pick up a 6-0 win. In the boys' game, The Bearcats scored in the first few minutes to take an early, 1-0 lead and tacked on five more the rest of the way to earn a 6-2 win.

Before the games were postponed Thursday night, there were plans to recognize the 30th anniversary of Cullman High School's first ever girls' soccer team. Several members of the 1995 team were in attendance on Thursday and before the rain arrived, I got the chance to speak with one of the coaches on the 1995 team, Rickey Kreps. Kreps shared the story of how the school's first girls' team came and reflected on how much fun he had coaching them.

"We had never had a girls' soccer team before, but they had played recreationally. The other coaches Mike Hanes and Sue Williams had girls coming to them and saying, 'Hey we really enjoy playing soccer recreationally and we would love to represent Cullman High School as a soccer team.' So, they talked to the administration, and they said that if they can find a coach, we could do it. So, Mike called me, and he told me what we would need to do and that's what we did," Kreps said. "Mike and myself and Sue were the volunteer coaches and Cathy Miller was our faculty sponsor. We had 21 girls that signed up that year and 10 of them had never played soccer before. They just wanted to play because they had talked to their friends about it, and they were great. Their attitude was just phenomenal. From the time that we walked onto the field for the first practice they were just a wonderful group of young ladies to work with."

Kreps was excited when he found out the '95 team was being recognized. He's now coached multiple children of his former players, including his own grandchildren, so the relationships he made in 1995 are still impacting his life to this day.

"I thought it was great. A lot of these ladies like Laura (Ruehl) who was our goalkeeper back then, I've coached her daughter," Kreps said. "My daughter played and now I've coached my grandkids and there are several other players from that team whose children I've had the honor to coach."

The 1995 Cullman High School Varsity Girls' Soccer Team

- Ashley Manos
- Juli Leonard
- Mallory Parris Adams
- Dyroma Brown Burroughs
- Kristie Wilkinson Caffey
- Valerie Maddux Cowart
- Jennifer Kreps Cupp
- Rachel Peinhardt Dawsey
- Christi Throneberry Henry
- Katie James Kruger
- Katy Chambers McKenzie
- Meredith Freeman Middlebrooks
- Katie McSwain Shirey
- Meribeth Sparks
- Jamie Luker Troutman
- Katie Klopfer Beard
- Sashari Caretti
- Kourtney Lawrence Cuellar
- Amanda Edmondson
- Roxanne Branch Mauldin
- Rebecca Hanes Miller
- Cortney Hall Peed
- Laura Taylor Ruehl
- Amber Strickland

Cullman 6 – Jasper 0 (Varsity Girls)

Lily Lambert scored 18 minutes into the first half to put Cullman in front 1-0 before the weather delay stopped the game at the 21:51 mark. When play resumed on Friday, goals from Allie Bell and Eva Allen gave the 'Cats a 3-0 lead at halftime.

Cullman added to its lead in the second half. Another goal from Lambert made it a 4-0 game and goals by Khloie Harris and Macie Manning put the finishing touches on a 6-0 win for the Lady Bearcats. Jasper finished the game with zero shots on goal.

In addition to her two goals, Lambert posted a pair of assists in the win as well.

Cullman 6 – Jasper 2 (Varsity Boys)

Gianpaolo Cipollari scored the first goal for the Bearcats off an assist from Josue Sanchez to make it 1-0 just a few minutes into the opening half. A goal from Reid Bissot put Cullman ahead 2-0 at halftime and the 'Cats continued to pull away in the second half.

Grayson Meharg put one in the back of the net to make it a 3-0 game and Sanchez scored a pair of goals off assist from Meharg and Brandon Peña to stretch the lead to 5-0. After Jasper scored on the other end to make it 5-1, Peña score another goal off a Jed Hollis assist to give the Bearcats a 6-1 lead. The Vikings were able to score one more goal in the final minutes, but it wasn't enough to overcome the deficit, and Cullman secured a 6-2 area win.



NICK GRIFFIN/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

The Cullman Lady Bearcats defeated Jasper at home 6-0 on Friday.



NICK GRIFFIN/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

The Cullman Bearcats defeated Jasper at home 6-2 on Friday.

Bearcats Head Coach Will Drake was proud of the way his team competed in an important area game with postseason implications.

"I'm really pleased with the desire the boys showed, especially in the second half. Things were tedious going into halftime," Drake said. "Jasper is a good program and Gunter has them playing well. We knew we had to come out in the second half and play intensely to put the game to bed. In area games--tiebreakers--every goal you score or concede matters. We did what we needed to do tonight. Now we look to Mortimer Jordan next week."

PREP SOFTBALL

Lady Raiders shut out Hanceville 12-0



SAMMY CONFER/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

Good Hope's Kylee Smith finished with two hits and two RBIs in the Lady Raiders' 12-0 win at Hanceville on Friday.

Sammy Confer
sammy@cullmantribune.com

HANCEVILLE, Ala. – Good Hope traveled to Hanceville for a varsity matchup with the Lady Bulldogs Friday afternoon and the Lady Raiders dominated from start to finish. Good Hope racked up 13 hits in just five innings and got another great pitching performance from Molly Benefield to put together a 12-0 win at Hanceville.

After a scoreless first inning, Good Hope batted around in the top of the second.

They quickly put runners on second and third to lead off the inning, and one out later, Natalie Miller lined a two-run double to right field to give the Lady Raiders a 2-0 lead.

Miller scored on a ground ball by Addyson Burgess to make it 3-0. Good Hope put a pair of runners on base with two outs, then Maggie O'Neil hit an RBI single to extend their lead to 4-0. Campbell Koch added a two-run double, Haley Lay, Kylee Smith, and Miller each hit an RBI single, and Smith later scored on an error to put them ahead 10-0.

Benefield struck out the side in the bottom of the second.

A pair of hit by pitches in the bottom of the third had Hanceville in business, but a groundout quickly ended the inning. Good Hope added a pair of runs in the top of the fourth as an RBI double by Smith and an RBI single by Miller gave them a 12-0 lead, and the Lady Raiders would go on to shut out the Lady Bulldogs 12-0.

Miller finished three-for-three with four RBIs for Good Hope. Smith (two hits) and Koch (one hit) each added a pair of RBIs. Lay collected three hits and an RBI, while O'Neil (one hit) and Burgess each drove in a run in the game. Benefield gave up just one hit in her five innings of work and struck out 10. Kynzlee Farr collected the only hit of the game for Hanceville.





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FAITH

'A relationship with God offers comfort and peace': Fairview's Kaley Vincent reflects on how her faith has changed her life

Sammy Confer
sammy@cullmantribune.com

FAIRVIEW, Ala. — Fairview High School senior Kaley Vincent feels like God has played a huge role in her life and in this interview, she shared some of her favorite bible verses and talked about how much her faith has impacted her life.

"God is my everything, the source of my strength and happiness. I couldn't go a single day without dedicating time to the Lord. He guides my decisions daily and fills me with joy.

"God has completely turned my life around. He broke the hold the world had on me, and I am now free. Since surrendering my life to Christ, I've experienced a life filled with joy. I've been blessed with wonderful friends, and I've continued to grow in my faith every day," Vincent said.

"Deuteronomy 31:6 says, 'Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the Lord your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you'. For me, this verse served as a source of comfort during years of bullying. It's a great reminder that only God's opinion matters, and His presence is always with me."

Kaley talked about how important it is to her to help people of all ages discover God and to be a role model for kids looking up to her.

"It is essential for me to help people of all ages discover God. Teaching kids at a very young age instills a lifelong connection with God. They will always remember the values they were taught, so ensure you share the truth with them.

"If they stray from their faith as they grow older, remind them it's never too late to reconnect with God, and continue to radiate His love on them. A relationship with God offers comfort and peace.

"He provides for our needs, while teaching us valuable lessons along the way. I am dedicated to spreading the word, not only because it is our responsibility, but also because we are unaware of the challenges that others are facing. You never know who might be asking God for a sign, and your actions could be the spark for a transformation in their lives."

She added, "Being a Godly role model for children is a very important and valuable duty. As they aspire to be like you, who is striving to follow God's guidance, your commitment to Godly principles will spark their curiosity to adapt similar values. Children seek happiness, and sowing the seed of Christ and teaching them that the Lord is the source of happiness will transform their lives."

Kaley talked about a Godly role model that she feels blessed to have in her life. Giving her life to Christ has changed her life, and she wants to share that gift with more people.

"Anna Strane is a spiritual role model for me. Her dedication to Christianity inspires me to focus on God's perspective rather than worldly opinions. I admire her faith and ability to overcome challenges, and she reminds me that God loves us, despite our imperfections," she said.

"Surrendering to Christ has had a remarkable transformation within me. Every aspect of my life has been renewed, releasing me from worldly concerns. As I continue on this journey, I've become a more empathetic and loving person, inspired by the teachings of Jesus Christ. I'm now inspired to share this gift with others, empowering my peers to start their own spiritual journey, and deepen their connection with Christ."

She gave advice to people who might be struggling when it comes to having a relationship with Christ.

"I would remind them that their relationship with Christ is worth fighting for, even when the road ahead seems uncertain. No matter how hard we try, we will face setbacks, but it's in those moments of weakness that we discover the depth of Jesus' love for us, which remains constant, even on our worst days," she said.

"Although it is a challenging reality, my experiences with God have revealed to me the amount of people who identify as Christians display lukewarm behavior. It hurts me to see my peers embodying lukewarm activities, but I am thankful that God has granted me insight into this issue, allowing me to serve as a source of light for them."

Kaley went through a tough time when she first started high school, but she used that experience to get even closer to God.

"The first two years of high school were difficult times for me due to bullying. It led to severe anxiety, depression, and panic attacks, but I used this experience to grow closer to God. I chose to give my worries to Him and live for Him, rather than letting the opinion of others define me. This transformation has been life-changing for me, and I'm proud to say that I've been free from panic attacks for over a year now."



CONTRIBUTED

Fairview's Kaley Vincent

FAITH

'God loves all of His children': Cold Springs' Jozie Anderson discusses relationship with God

Sammy Confer
sammy@cullmantribune.com

BREMEN, Ala. — Cold Springs senior Jozie Anderson believes that having God in her life has been a huge blessing for her and in this interview, she shares some of her favorite bible verses and discussed how important her faith has been to her.

"God means everything to me. Everything I've ever prayed for has been more of a blessing than I had originally prayed for. He has blessed me with the sweetest friendships, and the little things that has happened to me so far has let me know that He's always walking side by side with me. He has changed my life for the best in every possible way. He's removed me from people and situations that I, at the time being, had no idea how badly they were affecting me. He's blessed me with so many amazing people and opportunities," Anderson said. "My all-time favorite Bible verse is 1 Corinthians 13:13: 'Now these three remain: Faith, Hope, and Love, the greatest of these is Love.' I love this verse, because it explains how, through everything, we can find love. We can find love in laughing with strangers, pouring your heart out to someone, looking outside at nature, and so much more. Also, no matter what, God loves all of His children, and He knows us, even if we don't know Him yet."

Helping people of all ages find God is at the top of Jozie's list.

"That's what's most important. We have to plant the seed of God's word and spread His love and devotion to our youth. To those who didn't grow up in church or believing, it's best to help them find God whenever you can," she said. "So many people struggle with loneliness and feeling unseen, but if you know God, you know someone is always there to listen and have the best intentions for you. At least when I get there, I'd like to see heaven crowded."

Being a role model for kids is important to Jozie.

"It's such an important role to play when you have children looking up to you at that young age. That's where they're learning how to be themselves and figure out who they are. Teaching them that they're God's creation and was made in His perfect image will help them along their path as they grow," she said. "My favorite thing to do is talk about God and His words to anyone who's willing and able to listen."

Jozie was rattled her at first when a life-changing event hit her family but her relationship with God has gotten stronger and helped her grow past it with each passing day.

"It was definitely when my grandmother passed away. When I lost her, I got lost on my walk with God, and she was the one who established that relationship with Him. It took me years to rebuild it myself through many conflicting feelings. I first thought, 'If someone this great, powerful, and loving would take away my biggest supporter, why should I try and be my best for Him?' Through reading scripture, praying my heart and soul out until I would be in tears, and begging Him to show me there's a reason for what He does, I learned that God had a greater need for her than I did in this temporary life."

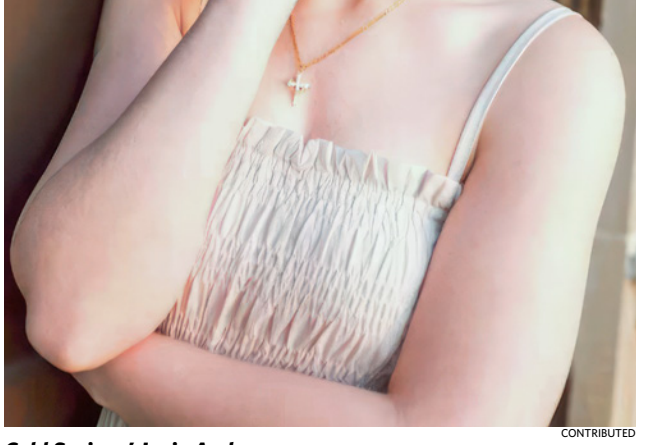
She gave advice to those people who want a relationship with God but might be new or struggling when it comes to doing that.

"My greatest piece of advice would be to know that, even if you feel like I did, like there's no reason such a loving God would put you through pain in your life, just know that God cries with you, and He celebrates with you as well. He's always going to be in your corner, even if you don't know He's there. Jesus died for our sins and washed them away with His blood, all because He loves us unconditionally.

"My favorite way to look at it is, even if the people who say He's not right is right, and it's nothing after death but the dark, at least you've lived your life being a good, devoted Christian, and you had something to keep you going during the rough times in your life, and you are doing good by God's word. If He is real, all of your hard work and devotion paid off, and you get to live a joyful, everlasting life in heaven."

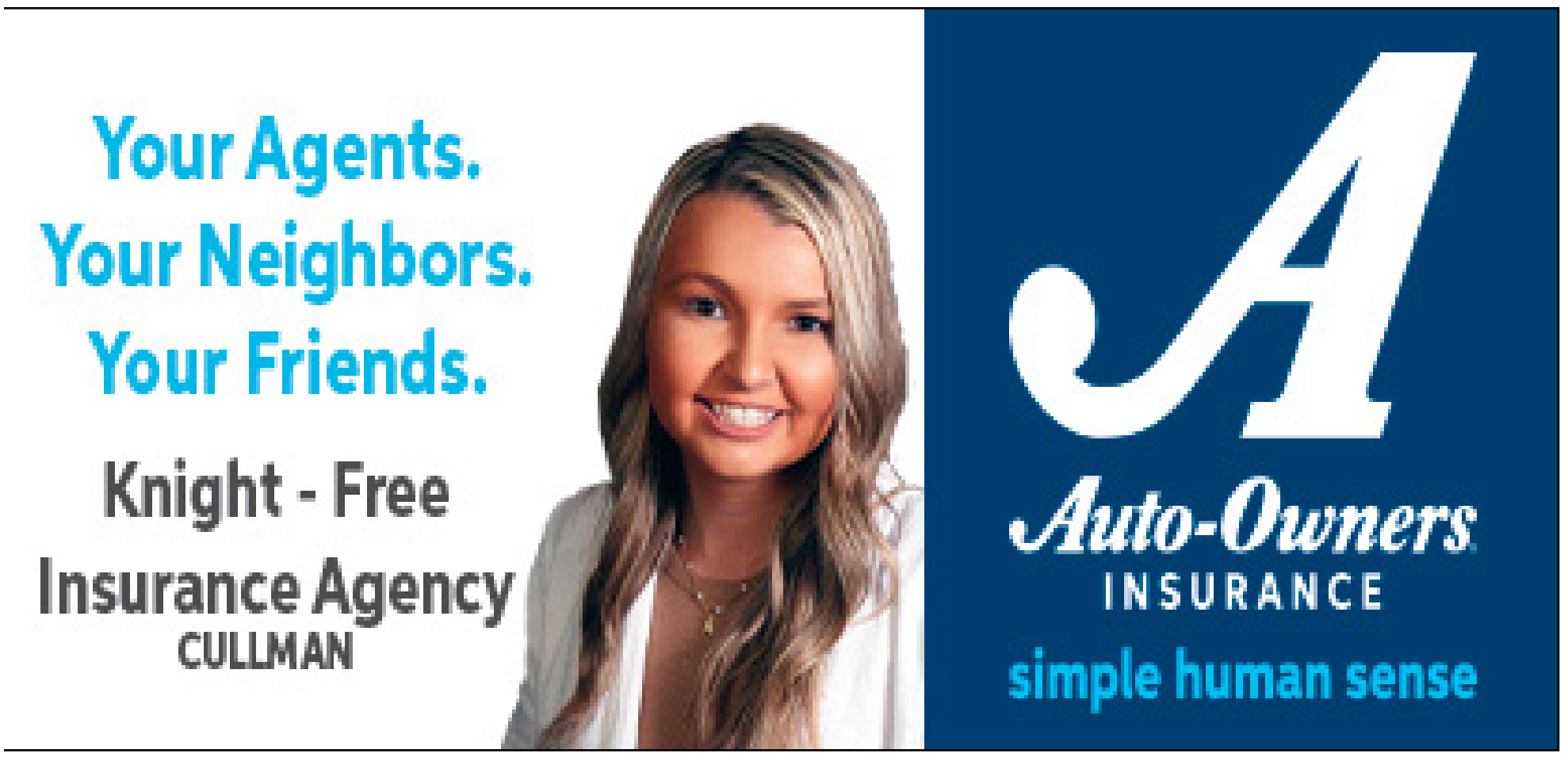
Jozie has learned some important things during her Godly journey, and she talked about her favorite Godly role models that she looks up to.

"What I've learned the most is to not question God's plans for you, and to go into everything full force with no doubts or concerns. God put this into your life for a reason," she said. "My Godly role models in my life is my mom, my great-grandfather, and my grandmother. My mom has been through so much in her life and has always turned to God for help and answers, and my great-grandfather is the preacher at my church. My grandmother was the one who started my walk with God."



CONTRIBUTED

Cold Springs' Jozie Anderson



Unemployment (from Front)

Staff Reports
Contributor

MONTGOMERY, Ala. — Alabama Department of Workforce Secretary Greg Reed on Monday, March 17, announced that Alabama's preliminary, seasonally adjusted January unemployment rate is 3.3%, unchanged from December 2024's rate. January's rate is above January 2024's rate of 2.9%. The rate represents 78,288 unemployed people, compared to 78,478 in December and 66,845 in January 2024. Cullman County's rate increased from 2.9% in December 2024 to 3% in January 2025. It was 2.7% in January 2024.

The number of people counted as employed statewide increased by 23,534 over the year to 2,285,631, a new record high, according to Reed. The civilian labor force also increased to a new record high of 2,363,919, with 34,977 more people joining over the year, according to Reed.

Alabama's labor force participation rate for January held steady at 57.6%. The percentage of prime-age workers by three-tenths of a percentage point to 78.9 % over the year. Prime-age workers are those aged 25-54 years.

"We continue to see gains in the participation of prime-age workers in Alabama," said Reed.

"That means that more than three out of four of these workers are in the labor force, and they are working. We will continue our efforts to increase this number overall, by increasing training opportunities and targeting populations that have traditionally been marginalized when it comes to labor force participation."

Over the year, wage and salary employment increased by 25,600 to 2,181,400, with gains in the private education and health services sector (+8,000), the government sector (+7,400), and the manufacturing sector (+4,500), among others.

"Regarding our jobs count, employers in Alabama added more than 25,000 jobs over the year," continued Reed. "This means that employers remain confident in our job market and are continuing to expand their businesses."

Counties with the lowest unemployment rates are Shelby County at 2.7%, Elmore, Limestone, Marshall and St. Clair at 2.8%, and Lee, Madison and Morgan at 2.9%. Counties with the highest unemployment rates are Greene at 9.1%, Wilcox at 6.9% and Perry at 6.6%.

Major cities with the lowest unemployment rates are Homewood, Trussville and Vestavia Hills at 2.4%, Pelham at 2.5% and Hoover and Madison at 2.6%. Major cities with the highest unemployment rates are Prichard at 7.4%, Selma at 6.4% and Anniston at 4.8%.



Rainer: Advisory Board gets update, expands snapper season

David Rainer
Ala. Dept. of Conservation and Nat. Resources

At the first Alabama Conservation Advisory Board meeting of 2025, held last weekend in Montgomery, Board members heard a state of the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (ADCNR) report from Conservation Commissioner Chris Blankenship as well as proposed tweaks to the white-tailed deer daily bag limit and changes to the red snapper season.

The proposed changes to red snapper season should be great news for those who love to fish for Alabama's signature saltwater species. Commissioner Blankenship brought to the Board's attention the Marine Resources Division (MRD) proposal to change the dates for the private recreational red snapper season that would keep the season open during the peak summer fishing period. According to MRD's Snapper Check data, private anglers harvested 570,856 pounds of red snapper during the 2024 season, well below the harvest limit of 659,654 pounds. MRD conducted a series of public meetings and provided a way to gain input from the public on fisheries management under the state's control.

"The recommendation from our Marine Resources Division is to the set the opening of red snapper season on the Friday before Memorial Day and be open seven days a week through June 30," he said.

"Then it would be open for four-day weekends starting July 4 until the quota is met. Since that season would start pretty close to our May meeting, I wanted to get this before the Board as new business so we can set that season and get that information out to the public. The majority of the people who responded to the (MRD) survey wanted that season instead of just a weekend season."

The Board unanimously approved MRD's red snapper season recommendation.

Other MRD proposals from Director Scott Bannon included the removal of the exception for anglers to keep one redfish larger than 26 inches in total length to protect the brood stock of the species, a reduction in the bag limit for sheepshead from 10 fish to eight because of increased fishing pressure, and an increase in the daily harvest limit for commercial gill net anglers who target flounder from 40 fish per day to 80 fish per day.

MRD also proposed a bag and size limit for common snook, which is expanding its range into Alabama coastal waters. The limit on snook would be one per day per angler with a 28-inch minimum size total length. Another proposal would allow commercial shark anglers to have 2,400 feet of line with a maximum of 50 hooks at least 15/0 in size. The line would be required to be anchored and marked with an identification number, and squid would be outlawed as bait because it can attract sea turtles.

Chuck Sykes, ADCNR's Director of the Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries (WFF) Division, proposed only one change to the deer season framework that deals with the unantlered deer daily bag limit in most of the state. WFF proposed that the unantlered deer bag limit be increased to two per day in all zones for the entire season with the exception of Zone C in the north central portion of the state. The antlered deer season limit will remain at three.

Commissioner Blankenship apprised the Board of the $218 million in projects in Alabama State Parks, including upgrades at DeSoto, Lake Guntersville, Gulf State Park, Meaher, Monte Sano, Wind Creek and Lakepoint.

Projects that were completed in 2024 include the rebuilding of Gulf State Park Pier, Monte Sano Campground upgrades, new cabins on Lake Shelby at Gulf State Park and a total renovation of the Oak Mountain State Park Campground.



DAVID RAINER

The Alabama Conservation Advisory Board voted to open the private recreational red snapper season for the entire month of June.

"The three largest projects we have are now under construction," Commissioner Blankenship said of State Parks. "At Lake Lurleen, we're totally redoing that park near Tuscaloosa. That's a $14 million project. We also have the Gulf State Park Campground expansion, which includes a new executive campground being built on the site of the old golf course that was closed several years ago.

"That is a $24 million project. And we're building a new hotel at Cheaha State Park that is the highest point in our state. That's a $28 million project that is being built with mass timber construction to highlight the forest products industry in our state.

"That mass timber construction will not only be aesthetically pleasing, beautiful and a showpiece for State Parks, but also highlight the wood products from Alabama that are grown here, processed here and used to build the lodge.

"We also have 30 sewer and water projects that are underway in partnership with ADEM (Alabama Department of Environmental Management) at our State Parks," Commissioner Blankenship said. "It will be about $46 million in work on sewer and water upgrades."

Commissioner Blankenship also applauded the new reservation system for State Parks that makes reserving accommodations much easier.

"The new reservation system for State Parks came online last year, and it has gone extremely well," he said. "When I got here (2017), we were doing about 10 percent of our reservations online. Ninety percent of them had to call the park or go to the park and make those reservations in person, which takes a lot of time from our staff and is inconvenient for the public. With this new system, from the report last week, 95% of all reservations are being made online."

The Alabama Tourism Department recently held a kick-off event for the Year of Alabama Trails campaign, which will actually last two years because of the number of trail systems that crisscross the state. Commissioner Blankenship cut the ribbon to start the campaign.

"2025 and 2026 are the Years of Alabama Trails, a promotion done by Alabama Tourism with cooperation from the Department of Conservation," he said.

"We have more than 400 miles of trails in our State Parks and Forever Wild properties for hiking, biking and horseback riding and other activities. That will be a big interest in our marketing in highlighting the trails we have and trying to get more people to visit our parks and Forever Wild properties and use those trails.

"We're doing mountain biking upgrades through Innovate Alabama at Oak Mountain State Park and the Coldwater Mountain property near Anniston."

Commissioner Blankenship said one of the ADCNR's initiatives is to increase boating access through $30 million in projects that are complete, nearing completion or are underway. Those projects include upgrades at Mount Vernon; McIntosh; McCarty's Ferry in Choctaw County; Selma; Chocolatta Ramp on the Mobile Causeway, seven ramps on Lake Guntersville, Foster's Ferry and Riverview in Tuscaloosa, Brown's Creek at Guntersville, Highway 77 Ramp in Rainbow City, McFarland Park in Lauderdale County, Claiborne Lock and Dam Ramp, Cataco Creek in Morgan County, Weeks Bay Ramp and County Road 6 in Baldwin County, Billy Goat Hole on Dauphin Island, Kowaliga Ramp on Lake Martin; new tournament piers on Lake Jordan, and a new ramp on the east side of Lake Martin in cooperation with Alabama Power Company.

"Those are just the highlights," Commissioner Blankenship said. "We have more."

Commissioner Blankenship pointed out the work being done by ADCNR's State Lands Division at the M. Barnett Lawley Field Trial Area in Hale County to make the area one of the premier field trial areas in the nation.

"We're investing about $3 million in a new pavilion and events center, adding restrooms in the field trial area and doubling the size of the paddocks and barn to accommodate the horse-dog trial events," he said. "It's a first-class dog trial area. Now we'll have facilities that are commensurate with the field trial area."

State Lands also funded more than $97 million in GOMESA projects in Mobile and Baldwin counties in the past two years. GOMESA funds are derived from royalties from oil and gas production in the Gulf and through the sale of offshore leases.

"There are also more than $300 million in Deepwater Horizon oil spill projects currently under construction or recently completed on the coast," Commissioner Blankenship said.

"The largest of the projects are the Dauphin Island Causeway Protection Project, about $26 million; the Dauphin Island East End beach renourishment, about $23 million; and the beaches at Orange Beach, Gulf Shores and Gulf State Park with more sand replenishment. The Gulf Shores Ecotourism Center is under construction, about a $12 million project."

Other projects include moving the sewer outflow in Bayou La Batre, about a $19 million project, which has been in the works for more than a decade. Moving the outflow farther offshore would open additional areas off Bayou La Batre and Coden for oystering and oyster aquaculture.

A Working Waterfront project in Fairhope is about a $9 million project, and the Bayfront Park in south Mobile County is an $11 million project done in cooperation with Mobile County and funded through the Natural Resource Damage Assessment (NRDA) program. Commissioner Blankenship is NRDA's Lead Trustee for Alabama.

"ADCNR acquired more than 13,000 acres of public land in 2024 through ADCNR projects and Forever Wild," Commissioner Blankenship said. "We're glad to have that additional public land available for hunting and public access.

"We're upgrading shooting ranges in 2025 and 2026 with a new range being built in Columbiana that will be first-class and will rival anything in the state. We will also be upgrading other ranges over the next two years."

Luncheon (from Front)

Anabelle Howze
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ANABELLE HOWZE/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

Left to right are Cullman Regional Assistant Vice President Marketing Communications Jennifer Malone, Cullman Area Chamber of Commerce Ambassador Joel Cunnings from Listerhill Credit Union, Circuit Judge Gregory Nicholas, Circuit Judge Emily Johnston, District Judge Rusty Turner, District Judge Chad Floyd, Probate Judge Tammy Brown, Cullman Area Chamber of Commerce President Joey Orr and Cullman Economic Development Agency Assistant Director & Governmental Affairs Jamie Troutman.

CULLMAN, Ala. — The Cullman Area Chamber of Commerce held its monthly community luncheon on Friday, March 14, hosting a panel of local judges, including Circuit Judges Greg Nicholas and Emily Johnston, District Judges Rusty Turner and Chad Floyd, and Probate Judge Tammy Brown, to share insights into the county's judicial system, discuss key topics that impact the community and talk about current legal trends.

Brown shared the probate court's responsibilities, such as overseeing adoptions, wills and elections. Differences between circuit and district courts, the types of cases they handle and their processes were also discussed.

"Because of the hard work of these judges, our district attorney, our circuit court, our defense attorneys, we're making real progress there, but we still have work left to do," Nicholas said about the court's work in the community.

The judges shared the ongoing processes of reducing the backlog of cases that built up during the pandemic, the effects of drug abuse and mental health issues on court cases and how population growth is increasing demands on the judicial system. Recent innovations to improve efficiency include online systems and small claims resolution systems, which allow cases to be completed without requiring people to appear in court.

The panel also shared some of their continuing work with local ninth-grade students to educate them on the legal system, prevent juvenile delinquency and encourage victims of abuse to come forward. To reduce vaping within schools, they said, school resource officers have taught classes on the risks and dangers. A need for funding and donations toward mental health challenges in the court system was addressed. Judges also addressed the importance of accountability in courts in addressing addiction and mental health issues and shared stories of rewarding moments, such as adoptions and people overcoming addiction and beginning new lives with the assistance of court programs.

"Watching those individuals — probably catching them at one of the worst moments of their life — and then seeing a year later some of the happiest times in their life, that's why we do what we do," shared Turner.

Obituary Announcements: March 15-17

Danny Wayne Byram, 78
Danny Wayne Byram, 78, of Cullman, Alabama, passed away on Thursday, March 13, 2025. He was born on Aug. 6, 1946, in Boldo, Alabama, to Chart and Audrey [Huffstutler] Byram. Danny lived a life full of passion, dedication, and adventure. A proud graduate of West Point High School, Class of 1964, he went on to serve his country in the U.S. Navy, completing two tours aboard the USS Braine. He later became a Master Mason with West Point Lodge #758. A true outdoorsman, Danny was an avid coonhunter and a longtime member of the Alabama Coonhunters Association, the Cullman County Coonhunters Club, and the Professional Kennel Club (PKC). His skills in the sport earned him a place as a three-time Top 32 finalist in the PKC World Championship. Danny was also a well-known figure in his community. He worked as a used car salesman for over 30 years and was the proud owner of The Pawn Shop for two decades. He had a love for cars and enjoyed collecting Indian artifacts, coins, and anything of value. Above all, Danny was a devoted husband, father, grandfather, and brother. He is survived by his loving wife of 53 years, Patricia Byram; his children, Jody (Sonya) Byram and Tina Stricklin; and his grandchildren, Justice Waldrep, Kelce Byram, Paris Stricklin, Ace Stricklin, Graph Byram, and Khale Byram; and upcoming great-grandchild Haddix Wayne Waldrep. He also leaves behind his siblings, Tommy Byram, Donna (Gerald) Schafer, and Debra (Gary) McMinn, as well as his sister-in-law, Peggy Byram. He was preceded in death by his parents, two brothers, and three sisters. Family and friends are invited to a visitation on Tuesday, March 18, 2025, from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. at Missionary Grove Baptist Church, 1365 County Road 1141, Cullman, AL 35057. A funeral service will follow at 12 p.m., with interment directly after. Danny's legacy of love, hard work, and adventure will be cherished forever by those who knew him.

Michael 'Mikey' Calvin Campbell, 21
"Mikey" Michael Calvin Campbell 21 of Eva, Alabama passed on Thursday, March 13, 2025. Michael, best known as Mikey was a beloved son, brother, and uncle. Mikey was born on June 17, 2003, at Cullman hospital and resided in Eva, Alabama with his parents and siblings. Mikey was passionate for putting smiles on the faces of everyone he knew, he would go through great lengths just to get a laugh. His enthusiasm for life was infectious and his personality was contagious. He had a love for dogs like no other, it didn't matter if the dog had a home or not he would try his best to bring it home. If you knew Mikey you know he was known for his spontaneous adventures and his way of showing love was through large amounts of teasing. Mikey leaves behind a legacy of love, laughter, and a good time! His meaning of friendships and family will forever live in the hearts of the ones lucky enough to have known him. He is survived by: His father- Clifford Campbell (Michelle Campbell); His mother- Michell Worster (Rob Worster); His siblings- Twin brother Jesse Campbell (Hannah Reliford) Sara Campbell (Dallas Moore) B.J. Margotta Jessica Gable (Austin Gable); His nephew- Spencer Gable; His grandparents- Linda Stone Calvin Keisler (Bonnie Keisler). Psalm 23:4 - "Though I walk through the shadow of death, I will fear no evil for you are with me your rod and your staff they comfort me" A celebration of life memorial visitation for Mikey will be held Monday, March 17, 2025 from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. at Moss-Service Funeral Home Parlor G&H, 1901 2nd Avenue, N.W., Cullman, Alabama 35055. Moss Service Funeral Home directing.

Willie Mae Franklin, 94
Funeral service for Willie Mae Franklin, 94, of Cullman, will be at 1 p.m., Wednesday, March 19, 2025, at Northbrook Baptist Church, with interment in Cullman City Cemetery, Pastor Keith Warden, Rev. Wintford Haynes, and Rev. Wade Maynard will be officiating. The family will receive friends from 11 a.m.-1 p.m. at the church. Cullman Funeral Home is honored to serve the family. Mrs. Franklin was born on June 22, 1930, to Odie M. and Cora L. French Daniel. She was a member of 7th Street Baptist and then Northbrook, where she was the oldest and longest surviving member of the church. She was a Sunday School teacher for years and enjoyed working at the Northbrook Caring Center and helping with the funeral meals at the church. She was preceded in death by her parents; husband, William Myrl Franklin; sister, Mary Alice Kendrick; brothers, Walter Daniel and Bobby Joe Daniel. Survivors include her son, Bobby (Pat) Franklin; daughter, Linda Franklin; sister, Martha (Wintford) Haynes; grandchildren, Ashley (Marty) Tilley, Josh (Brandi) Franklin; great- grandchildren, Lex Stricklyn, Addison and Bella Franklin; and a host of nieces, nephews, family and friends.

Pamela Thompson Brown, 70
Pamela Sue Thompson Brown passed away at her home on March 14,2025, on her 44th wedding anniversary. Preceded in death by her father, Tom Thompson, and her dear mother Patrica Thompson. She leaves behind her loving husband Judson Brown, children Tara Brown, Tabitha Brown, Rebecca Brown and Susan Brown, her brother Stan Thompson, her sister Sandra Graves and her nieces and nephews. She loved life but now is at peace. "I still say I Love You, But now there's no reply. I always feel your presence As if you never left my side." Moss Service Funeral Home directing.

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ACES: Mystery seed packages appearing once again in Alabama

Justin Miller
Alabama Cooperative Extension System

AUBURN UNIVERSITY, Ala. – Similar to the reports in 2020, mystery seed packages have once again found their way into some Alabama mailboxes. These seeds could cause great harm to the state's environment through the potential spreading of diseases and invasive species.

According to the Alabama Department of Agriculture and Industries, it is illegal to import or export agricultural products that do not have the proper authorization or are in violation of regulations. Known as agricultural smuggling, these packages are often disguised as shipments of items like jewelry and greeting cards to avoid inspection.

"We urge all residents to be on the lookout for similar packages," said Alabama Commissioner of Agriculture and Industries Rick Pate. "These seeds may be invasive to Alabama plants or be harmful to livestock. Our staff is working diligently to keep Alabama's citizens and agriculture safe."

It is imperative for recipients of unsolicited seeds to not plant the seeds and not open sealed packages. Alabama Cooperative Extension System county offices statewide will serve as drop-off locations for unsolicited seed packages. Extension staff will coordinate proper pickup and disposal with the ADAI.

Threat of invasive species

David Russell, an assistant Extension professor who specializes in invasive-plant management, said these seeds could be plant species that would be invasive to Alabama.

"Alabama's climate is suitable for a wide range of plant species to establish and grow," Russell said. "Seed from unsolicited sources like this should never be planted, because some could have invasive potential like cogongrass, kudzu or Chinese privet that aggressively spread."

Invasive species, both flora and fauna, can threaten the environment in several ways. These include things like hybridization with native species, altering ecological processes and reducing productivity of forests, rangeland and cropland.

Once established, invasive species cost a great deal of time and money to manage and control. They can also reduce native biodiversity and wildlife habitats, limit land access for recreation and cause harm to humans and livestock.

Threat of pathogens and insects

In addition to the invasive species risk, Kassie Conner, an Alabama Extension plant pathologist, said these packages could also harbor harmful diseases and other plant pathogens

"Plant pathogens, including fungi, bacteria, viruses and nematodes, can be transmitted through seed," Conner said. "They can be inside the seed, on the outside of the seed or be present in the seed lot without obvious damage."

By planting these seeds, people could unintentionally introduce a plant disease to their garden. Depending on the pathogen and the plant species, Conner said one infected seed planted in an otherwise healthy garden can cause complete yield loss.



ALABAMA COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SYSTEM

A package of seeds disguised as a shipment of greeting cards

"Once introduced, diseases are difficult to control," Conner said. "Many can survive anywhere from one to more than 10 years in the environment. Some can survive for longer than that."

These seed packets also bring the potential risk of introducing invasive insects to Alabama's environment.

"These seed packets may contain invasive insect eggs or larva that have been feeding upon the seeds during transport," said Meredith Shrader, an Extension entomologist. "We do not want to inadvertently introduce new potential pest species into the U.S. by opening these packets. Please keep the seed packets sealed and report them properly."

More information

For more information, read the ADAI press release at www.agi.alabama.gov or contact your county's Extension office. Contact information is available at www.aces.edu.

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