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The vision of Wallace State Lions' Village – 'to create lasting, generational change'

Gauge Day
gauge@cullmantribune.com

HANCEVILLE, Ala. — For many who decide to pursue college, adjusting to campus life can be a challenge. Balancing classes, financial aid and simply learning how to navigate a new campus environment is often enough to fill a student's plate. Now, add a child into the mix. The challenge grows and often stonewalls many prospective students from even enrolling at all. Wallace State Community College hopes to change that narrative with the creation of the Wallace State Lions' Village, a project designed to address two of the most significant obstacles facing student-parents: affordable housing and accessible childcare.

The planned residential community will include 10 micro-dwellings, fully equipped to provide most of a student family's needs. The village is designed to accommodate expansion to 20 dwellings, along with an on-site childcare center featuring four classrooms and a designated tornado shelter serving both residents and the surrounding community.

Suzanne Harbin, vice president for advancement and innovation at Wallace State, shared that the project emerged from a clear and pressing need.

"The Wallace State Lions' Village is an innovative residential community designed specifically for student-parents — one of the fastest growing, yet most underserved, student populations," Harbin said.

"This project became a priority because affordable housing and childcare access are barriers tied directly to student access and success," she explained. "Cullman County faces a » PAGE 2

Doggo love on tap

Pints & Paws pours out hearts for rescue dogs



CHASADY WOODS/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

Josie from Brindlee Mountain Animal Rescue

Chasady Woods
chasady@cullmantribune.com

CULLMAN, Ala. — Ethos Craft Brewing hosted a "Pints & Paws" adoption event on Valentine's Day. The occasion featured live music from Ex-Quartermasters and wonderful furry friends from the Cullman County Animal Shelter and Brindlee Mountain Animal Rescue.

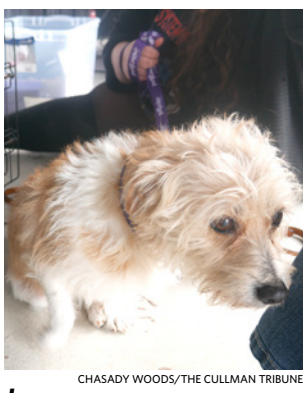
While the adoption event was a success, there are still sweet babies waiting for their forever homes. Here are just a few!

Brindlee Mountain Animal Rescue: Jasper

If you are looking for an outlet for all your love and affection, Jasper is your guy! He is a 7-year-old Beagle and Shih Zhu mix who loves car rides. It is advised that he be with a home that is child-free and where he can be the center of attention.

Brindlee Mountain Animal Rescue: Maverick

This 8-year-old Boston Terrier means business! He is very playful, loves car rides and is ready to go to the right home! He is great with children, other dogs and even cats.



CHASADY WOODS/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

Jasper



BRINDLEE MOUNTAIN ANIMAL RESCUE

Maverick

He even gets along with his buddy, Jasper.

When asked about how he does with children and other animals, Rhonda Lindsey, Brindlee Mountain Animal Rescue founder, said, "He thinks it's the greatest thing since sliced cheese." » PAGE 3

Alabama Severe Weather Preparedness Sales Tax Holiday set for Feb. 20-22 » PAGE 7

Mardis Gras Cullman



MIKE WITCHER/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

The Cullman Area Chamber of Commerce & Visitor Center held its inaugural Mardi Gras Parade & Gumbo Cook-off in downtown Cullman on Saturday, Feb. 14, 2026. The Chamber announced the gumbo cook-off winners as Roux'thless (first place and People's Choice) and Drifters (second place). » PAGE 5

Riders, drivers, yard crews urged to prioritize motorcycle safety across Cullman County » PAGE 6

Hanceville Irish Festival returning for 9th year; vendor, sponsor signups underway » PAGE 2



CRIME

Arrests and incidents reported Feb. 16

Cullman Tribune staff
Contributor

CULLMAN, Ala. – Below are the arrests and incidents reported Feb. 16, 2026. All persons are innocent until proven guilty.

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

CULLMAN COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

INCIDENTS

No arrests or incidents reported.

CULLMAN POLICE DEPARTMENT

INCIDENTS

Feb. 10

• theft of property-1st degree; person; AC Unit; $4500; 2nd Ave. SW

Feb. 12

• domestic violence-3rd degree – harassing communications; person

Feb. 13

• theft of property-4th degree; Dollar General; general merchandise; $11; CR 1435
• domestic violence-3rd degree; person
• theft of property-2nd degree; person; pistol; $500

ARRESTS

Feb. 13-14

McKnight, Chelsea C.; 35

• chemical endangerment of child (2 counts)

Myers, Brandon W.; 35

• public intoxication
• theft of property-4th degree

Clements, Rachel G.; 32

• FTA – driving without license (2 counts)

Nichols, Charles L.; 62

• FTA – theft of property-4th degree

Patterson, Dawson J.; 28

• public intoxication

HANCEVILLE POLICE DEPARTMENT

No arrests or incidents reported.

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

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Hanceville Irish Festival returning for 9th year; vendor, sponsor signups underway

Noah Galilee
noah@cullmantribune.com



CULLMAN TRIBUNE FILE PHOTO

A shot from the 2023 Hanceville Irish Festival

HANCEVILLE, Ala. – Green will once again take over downtown Hanceville when the ninth annual Hanceville Irish Festival returns Saturday, March 14, 2026.

Hosted by Friends of the Festival, the one-day celebration will run from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., bringing live music, food vendors, arts and crafts and family-friendly entertainment to the heart of the city.

In 2024, the eighth annual celebration drew a spirited crowd to historic downtown, with local vendors, musicians and food trucks lining Commercial and Bangor Streets.

Festival organizer and (now) Hanceville Mayor Nolan Bradford reflected on the event's continued momentum in prior coverage by The Cullman Tribune.

"This is our seventh year, and the festival continues to grow each year," Bradford said at the time, noting the event's role in boosting downtown activity and community pride.

According to Tribune coverage, the 2024 festival featured the event's largest vendor turnout yet, with more than 70 vendors participating and drawing families, music lovers and visitors from neighboring counties.

Participants enjoyed food trucks, face painting, inflatables and a slate of local musical acts, helping create an atmosphere that blended Celtic culture with small-town festivity.

Applications are now being accepted for vendors wishing to participate in the 2026 festival, with a deadline of March 7, 2026.

Single 10x10 spaces are $30. Double 10x20 spaces are $60. Spaces will be assigned on a first-come, first-served basis. No refunds will be issued.

Organizers note that while limited power may be available with advanced notice, vendors are responsible for their own tents, tables and displays. Generators are not permitted near stage areas.

Setup will be between 5:30-8:30 a.m. the morning of the event. Vendors must ensure booths do not block streets, businesses or parking access.

Applications may be mailed to Friends of the Festival. P.O. Box 600, Hanceville, AL 35077.

Vendors may contact Nolan Bradford at 205-249-5588 or FriendsOfTheFestivalAL@gmail.com with questions.

Sponsorship opportunities available

Local businesses and individuals can also support the event through sponsorship levels ranging from $50 to $1,000.

- Platinum Sponsor: $1,000
- Gold Sponsor: $500
- Silver Sponsor: $250
- Bronze Sponsor: $100
- Friend of Festival: $50

Sponsors must register by March 1, 2026, to be included on the official sponsor banner.

Organizers said sponsorships help cover festival costs and ensure the event remains accessible to the public.

Over the years, the Hanceville Irish Festival has become a springtime staple for families, musicians and artisans. The event gives local entrepreneurs and performers a platform while drawing visitors from across Cullman County and beyond.

From live music to handcrafted goods and festival food, the event offers something for every age group.

The 2026 Hanceville Irish Festival will take place Saturday, March 14, from 9 a.m.-5 p.m. in downtown Hanceville.

HANCEVILLE IRISH FESTIVAL: A LOOK BACK

2018 – The beginning

The inaugural Hanceville Irish Festival launches in downtown Hanceville as a community-driven event organized by Friends of the Festival. The goal: create a family-friendly celebration that supports local businesses and builds civic pride.

2019 – Building momentum

Vendor participation increases, live music expands and attendance grows as word spreads across Cullman County.

2020 – Pandemic pause

Like many events statewide, the festival is impacted by COVID-19 restrictions. Planning adjusts as organizers work to preserve the long-term future of the event.

2021 – Return and recovery

The festival returns with renewed energy. Community support strengthens as residents show up in force to support local vendors and musicians.

2022 – Expansion year

Vendor space fills quickly. More artisans, food trucks and performers join the lineup, signaling steady growth.

2023 – Regional draw

Visitors from surrounding counties attend in larger numbers. Downtown foot traffic increases throughout the day, benefiting brick-and-mortar businesses.

2024 – Largest vendor turnout to-date

More than 70 vendors participate, marking the largest vendor presence in festival history. Organizers note continued growth in both crowd size and sponsor support.

2025 – Continued growth

The festival cements itself as a spring tradition in Hanceville, blending Celtic-inspired celebration with local culture and small-town hospitality.

2026 – Ninth annual celebration

Set for March 14, 2026, the festival continues its mission of bringing live music, food, arts and crafts to downtown Hanceville while supporting local businesses and community partnerships.

Get more info at www.facebook.com/hancevilleirishfest.



The conceptual site place for the Wallace State Community College Lions' Village

Village (from Front)

48.7% childcare capacity gap, leaving a shortage of more than 1,600 slots for young children. When students cannot secure stable housing or reliable childcare, enrolling in college and continuing their education becomes nearly impossible. The Lions' Village is our proactive answer to those challenges."

The project became a funded reality through Congressman Robert Aderholt, R-Alabama's support via Congressionally Directed Spending. He secured $2,540,000 through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for the development.

"Congressman Aderholt's support was the catalyst that moved this project from a vision to a fully funded initiative," Harbin said. "For Wallace State students, it means the college can now offer a comprehensive support model that meets foundational needs, safe housing, affordable childcare and a stable environment, so students can focus on completing their education."

Unlike stand-alone "tiny homes," the Lions' Village follows closer to the "micro-housing model," designed for permanent campus integration. The homes will be built on foundations and meet residential building codes, forming a planned community that emphasizes walkability, family functionality and proximity to many campus services.

"At an average of 500 square feet, these homes prioritize efficient use of space, stability and access to wraparound services, making them ideal for student families in a campus environment," Harbin said.

With the inclusion of an on-site childcare center, Wallace State hopes to help eliminate much of the daily transportation challenges for student-parents juggling home, daycare and class schedules. The addition of a tornado shelter provides critical protection in a region where severe weather is a recurring concern. All of these features are being developed with student-family income levels in mind, ensuring the housing remains affordable for families with limited financial resources.

Beyond housing and childcare, Harbin emphasized that the Lions' Village is designed as a collaborative, community-supported initiative.

Partners, including Community Action Partnership of North Alabama (CAPNA), the Cullman and Hanceville Housing Authorities, The Link of Cullman County, Cullman Caring for Kids and the WSCC Future Foundation, will each play a role in strengthening the support network surrounding student-families.

CAPNA will contribute expertise in early childhood education and housing program management, while the Cullman and Hanceville Housing Authorities will assist with access to attainable housing resources and resident services. The Link will provide wraparound and crisis-support services to promote healthy long-term stability for the student-families, and Cullman Caring for Kids will help connect families with food and essential resources. Harbin noted that the WSCC Future Foundation has been instrumental in working to provide the land that makes the Lions' Village development possible.

"The Lions' Village is built on strong community partnerships, which ensure the project is not just housing, but a true support ecosystem," Harbin said. "Together, these partners expand the reach of services, enhance community-based support and ensure families have what they need to thrive."

But the goal doesn't stop there for the Wallace State vision and its aspirations to do more for student-parents to ensure their success.

For many students, especially those who are student-parents, who have found themselves face to face in the cycle of family poverty, Wallace State hopes to provide the ability to break the wheel as they earn degrees, giving them an opportunity to earn higher wages and grow the local workforce.

Additionally, with this foundation, Wallace State hopes to be able achieve greater student retention while taking away some of the burden that comes with being a student parent and giving them their best chance at success.

"Our long-term vision is to create lasting, generational change," Harbin said. "The Lions' Village will help families build stability, help Wallace State foster student success and help the Cullman County community grow stronger for generations."

Lunch & Learn: Images and copyright

Chasady Woods
chasady@cullmantribune.com

CULLMAN, Ala. — The Cullman Area Chamber of Commerce and Visitor Center recently hosted a Lunch & Learn with guest speaker Toni Carter, library director at Athens State University. Carter spoke about image use and staying within terms to avoid copyright issues.

Public domain is free use – to an extent. This would include royalty free sites with images you don't have to pay for and shouldn't have to cite the sources for when using. Examples are Pixabay and Unsplash.

Canva also has multiple templates that are free to use, but have to be altered in some way to be claimed as your own.

"It's always best to check the terms of use on any imaging," Carter advised the audience.

She also addressed images created by AI for content and other purposes. Typically, since these are made by the individual via prompting, you are free to use the image as your own.

There are copyright and trademark protection measures already in place. An example used was "Tweety Bird." If you ask ChatGPT to create an image with that character it will not process the image. Even if you ask it to again, it will continue to refuse to output any copyrighted text or images.

One person suggested using the wording "in the style of" when prompting ChatGPT for images of copyright characters, etc. There are restrictions, but it will get you as close as you can to creating the image you want.

Carter also explained noncommercial and commercial use content. Noncommercial is the more lenient of the two and can still have its own set of copyright and trademark laws. Though to differentiate the two, she said, think of Disney. Disney's trademarked characters and content are commercial use, meaning prohibited to use. You cannot sell any of Disney's content as your own.

Said Carter, "When you go to a site, double-check how they want you to use it.



CHASADY WOODS/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

Lunch & Learn speaker Toni Carter, library director at Athens State University

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COMMUNITY CALENDAR

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

The Poetry of Recovery: Recovery Support Group
Every Saturday at 10 a.m. at 514 Cleveland Ave. SW in Cullman. Facebook/The Poetry of Recovery. Contact Jeff at 727-542-6413 or John at 256-636-0612.

Cullman County Historical Society Meetings
We meet the fourth Sunday of the month from 2-4 p.m. at the Cullman County Museum. Each meeting features a specific program or speaker. Join us!

Attention Senior Citizens
If you are 60 or over, please come to the Cullman Senior Center at 1539 Sportsman Lake Road NW and have some fun with us and eat lunch. Good fun, good friends and good food. Different things going on Monday through Friday, 8 a.m.-noon. Volunteers needed to deliver meals to homebound. Call Commission on Aging for info. 256-734-1241.

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
• 256-739-3326
• spiritlifechurchcullman@gmail.com
• FB-Spirit Life Church Cullman
• Wednesday, Feb. 18 – 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 5:15-5:30. Call Betty Hays at 256-338-3728 for pickup.
• Friday, Feb. 20 – Celebrate Recovery. Fellowship and testimonies. Hurts, habits and hang-ups are a part of everyone's life. Come and see how to overcome these and more! Dinner at 6 p.m. Meeting starts at 6:30. Childcare provided.
• Saturday, Feb. 21 – 9-11 a.m. Drive-through food bank
• Sunday, Feb. 22 – 8:15 a.m. Van runs in 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.

Shirley Burden Public Library in Hanceville
• February is Love Your Library Month, and we are having a BOOK SALE the entire month. The proceeds assist our children's program. The library is open Tuesday-Friday 8 a.m.-5 p.m. (closed from noon-1 p.m.) and Saturdays from 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Join us on Facebook for weekly details or please feel free to call us at 256-352-0685. Follow Facebook/Hanceville Public Library for event details.
• Tuesday, Feb. 17, at 11 a.m. Spanish class with Alejandra Pena
• Wednesday, Feb. 18, at 10 a.m. Storytime with Melissa Porter
• Wednesday, Feb. 25, at 10 a.m. North Alabama Agriplex storytime "Freddie the Fish" and book club led by Briana Taylor
• Tuesday, March 3, at 11 a.m. Spanish class with Alejandra Pena, a 16-year veteran in Spanish instruction with a bachelor's in bilingual education
• Wednesday, March 4, at 10 a.m. Summer with the Cullman Soil and Water District will read Dr. Seuss' "Mr. Brown Can Moo, Can You?"
• Wednesday, March 11, at 10 a.m. Storytime
• Saturday, March 14, from 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Hanceville Irish Festival and BOOK SALE
• Tuesday, March 17, at 11 a.m. Spanish class
• Wednesday, March 18, at 10 a.m. Storytime
• Saturday, March 21, at 10 a.m. Book club
• Wednesday, March 25, at 10 a.m. Lisa L. Ellard, MSN CRNP, RN instructor, Department of Nursing Education at Wallace State Community College, will present a program on first aid for children
• Friday, March 27, at 6 p.m. Poetry Night is back! Calling all amateurs, song writers, performers to share their talents with us!

Holly Pond Lions Club Annual Beans and Greens Dinner
Saturday, Feb. 21, from 4-7 p.m. at the Holly Pond Lions Club building. Admission is by donation, with proceeds supporting community projects related to vision, hunger, diabetes, environment and childhood cancer. Additionally, we are collecting canned and nonperishable food items for the local food pantry. Donations can be dropped off at the pantry (located between town hall and the fire department) or brought to the dinner Feb. 21.

Cullman Eagle Forum Ballot Hand-Count Training
Monday, Feb. 23, at 6 p.m. at the Hanceville Housing Authority, 819 Kiki Dr., Hanceville, AL 35077. alabamaeagle.org/event/hand-counting-ballots-whats-the-big-deal-cullman

67th Annual Chittlin' Supper
Saturday, Feb. 28, from 4-8 p.m. in the Meek Elementary School gymnasium. We will have great food, great entertainment and political candidates from across the state. Brought to you by the Meek High School Band of Champions and the Winston County Chittlin' Eaters Association. $15 per plate. Chicken will also be available.

Casino Night Benefiting Hope Horses
Saturday, Feb. 28, from 6-10 p.m. at Cotton Creek, 417 Third Ave. SW in Cullman. Let's go all-in for a fun-filled casino night benefiting Hope Horses! Tickets are $100 and include dinner, drinks and starter chips! Hope Horses, Inc. is a nonprofit organization. All donations made payable to Hope Horses are tax deductible. For more information, please email us at krice@hopehorsesinc.com.

Men of the Covenant Men's Conference
• Sunday, March 1, from 5-7 p.m. at Seventh Street Baptist Church, 708 Seventh St. SW in Cullman. Men, you're invited to a powerful and timely gathering designed to strengthen your walk, sharpen your leadership and renew your commitment to Christ and your family.
• We are honored to welcome two dynamic speakers: Jason Simpson, north Alabama meteorologist and faithful deacon at Valleydale Church in Hoover; and Christopher Smith, longtime Men's Ministry Team Member at Whitesburg Baptist Church in Huntsville.
• This evening will be filled with strong biblical teaching, real-life encouragement, worship and authentic brotherhood. Our theme is rooted in the bold declaration of Joshua: "As for me and my house, we will serve the LORD." - Joshua 24:15
• Whether you are a husband, father, grandfather, young professional or student, this conference is for you. Be challenged to lead your home with conviction, courage and commitment. Bring a friend. Bring your son. Bring your small group. Stand as a Man of the Covenant.
• Register at www.7thstreetba-12tist.com.

Cullman County Master Gardners Native Azalea and Wildflower Sale
Saturday, March 21, from 8 a.m.-4 p.m. at the fairgrounds at Sportsman Lake Park

WWA Wyld Wrestling Alliance Event to Support Cullman County Relay For Life
Saturday, April 11, at noon at the Cullman County Agricultural Trade Center. Doors open at noon. Bell time 6 p.m. General admission is $10, ring-side $15 and kids 5 and younger get in free. Get ready to rumble for a cause! The Cullman County Relay For Life Team Sassy Ladies is teaming up with WWA Wyld Wrestling Alliance for a high-energy fundraiser you won't want to miss! These wrestlers know a thing or two about strength, grit and fighting back — and together, we're channeling that same power straight into our mission to kick cancer's butt. Live music, wrestling and food.

Cullman County Master Gardners Spring Plant Sale
Friday and Saturday, April 17-18, from 8 a.m.-4 p.m. at the fairgrounds at Sportsman Lake Park

Pints & Paws (from Front)

Brindlee Mountain Animal Rescue: Josie
Precious Josie loves hugs and snuggles! She will gladly take any attention she is given. She is roughly 1-2 years old and would be perfect in a home able to give her the full attention she deserves!

If you are interested in adopting visit www.brindleemountainanimalrescue.com and fill out an application or call 256-200-2094 for more information.

To check out the doggos at the Cullman County Animal Shelter, visit www.facebook.com/cullmancountyanimalshelter or call 256-734-5448.



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THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE
FEBRUARY 17, 2026

Addison volleyball receives State Championship rings

Lucas Gray, Brandon Evans
The Cullman Tribune

ADDISON, Ala. — Head coach Sadie Hall took over for Addison Volleyball in 2025 with big shoes to fill. In the prior ten seasons, Kaydi Woodard had earned ten Area Championships and seven 1A State Championships, building on the dynasty Pam Wilkins had started before her.

June was tough, both Hall and her players said. As practices and training got underway, it took time for the team to mesh and for the intimidation of a new coach to subside.

Despite that, Hall knew she had the raw talent on the team to have a special first season, which she saw come to fruition in their first regular season match against Meek. The Lady Bulldogs won two comeback sets, then ran away with the third for the win.

They'd face rival Meek in the final game of the season too, in a 3-0 win to take the 1A State Championship in October to finish off a 33-14 campaign. Last Thursday, the Lady Bulldogs got together again to receive their State Championship rings at a ceremony at First Bank in Addison.

"It honestly feels so unreal. I just feel like the last two teams that I've been on, all the people weren't there to win. But this year, we gave it all we had and we were in love with the game, and there were times early where it was hard, I wanted it to be over because I was so stressed out. I really wouldn't have it any other way, though.

"All the stress, all the anger, all the tears I've shed for this sport, I wouldn't have it any other way," sophomore Annabelle Powell said.

Hall, a former State Championship-winning player under Wilkins at Addison, said earning state titles as both a player and coach has been "phenomenal," noting it was less stressful as a player, feeling more in-control on the court.



BRANDON EVANS/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

Addison's 2025 state championship-winning volleyball team

"I respect coach Wilkins so much more now knowing what all goes into the process behind the scenes, because the pressure of playing in the championship is one thing, because in my mind they can dictate the game and I'm just standing there waving my hands," Hall said.

Both Powell and senior Kendall Wyatt noted that while Hall's on-court coaching pushed them to new heights, she also helped them excel mentally.

"I started off the year in a bad spot, but coach Hall helped me realize that if I have a bad game, the next day I can come back and do it over.

"I feel like any time I made a mistake I blamed it on myself, but I had to realize that winning as a team and losing as a team is the same thing, and I had to realize that I am good enough, and winning state as a team, we all won it together," Powell said.

PREP BASKETBALL

Sub-Regional round scores - Feb 13-14

Lucas Gray
lucas@cullmantribune.com

CULLMAN, Ala. — Round one of the ASHAA State Playoffs took place over the weekend, with six of our girls teams and four boys squads punching their tickets to the Sweet Sixteen and spots in the Regional playoffs at Wallace State's Tom Drake Coliseum. The games will take place from Feb. 17-25, with dates and times for specific matchups TBD.

VARSITY GIRLS

6A

- No. 1 Hazel Green 57, Cullman 34

5A

- No. 5 West Point 69, Boaz 25

4A

- No. 4 Good Hope 76, Fultondale 23

3A

- No.5 Vinemont 72, No. 9 Carbon Hill 42
- Holly Pond 57, Winfield 34

2A

- No. 10 Cold Springs 71, Red Bay 17

1A

- No. 7 Meek 69, Waterloo 41

VARSITY BOYS

6A

- Cullman 55, Hazel Green 53

5A

- Boaz 62, West Point 46

3A

- Winfield 60, Vinemont 48

2A

- No. 6 Cold Springs 58, Lamar County 48

1A

- No. 10 Meek 57, Waterloo 31
- Addison 62, Athens Bible 26

PREP BASKETBALL

No. 4 Good Hope rolls past Fultondale 76-23 to move on to Regionals

Sammy Confer
sammy@cullmantribune.com

GOOD HOPE, Ala. — Coming off of a dominating area championship win over West Morgan, the Good Hope Lady Raiders looked to clinch a spot at Regionals once again, as they hosted the Fultondale Lady Wildcats on Friday night. Good Hope dominated from the opening tip, getting out to an early lead, and the trio of Ella Davis, Sophie Konrad, and Lexi Marshall combined for 57 points on the night, as they would go on to rout Fultondale, 76-23, to advance to Regionals.

Davis's rebound and putback put Good Hope on the scoreboard first, then the Lady Raider defense forced back-to-back turnovers, which turned into baskets by Davis and Konrad, and Marshall added a three from the left wing to give the Lady Raiders an early 9-0 lead. Davis hit four straight free throws, and six straight points by Konrad made it 19-0.

Gossett hit a basket in the paint, and Davis and Konrad continued to dominate in the paint, scoring Good Hope's final six points of the quarter to put Good Hope ahead, 27-2, going into the second.

The second quarter saw head coach Justin Aby play his bench for the majority of the period, and they contributed as well.

Zoe Gibbs drained a pair of threes, Gabby Richter added a basket, and Marshall drilled a pair of treys and later added a basket down low to give the Lady Raiders a 43-12 lead at the break.

Good Hope continued to dominate on both sides of the ball in the third quarter. Whether it was Konrad or Davis slashing to the paint or hitting treys, Lucie Adams hitting a pair of threes, or Marshall scoring off of turnovers, the Lady Raiders could do no wrong, as they ended up outscoring Fultondale, 30-7, in the third to take a 73-19 lead into the final period.

The hot clock was in effect for the entire fourth quarter, and Ella Eisner banked in a three from the left corner to put the finishing touches on a dominating 76-23 win for Good Hope, as they will be making their sixth straight trip to Regionals.

Davis led the way for the Lady Raiders with 21 points. Marshall wasn't too far behind with 19 points, and Konrad put in 17 points.

Good Hope will be facing off against a team that they've played in Regionals over the past several years, the Deshler Lady Tigers.

The two teams will take on each other next week at the Northwest Regionals at Tom Drake Coliseum with the time and date to be determined.



SAMMY CONFER/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

Good Hope's Sophie Konrad

PREP BASKETBALL

Cullman outlasts Hazel Green 55-53 to move on to Regionals for fourth time in five years

Sammy Confer
sammy@cullmantribune.com

CULLMAN, Ala. — After getting a hard-fought win in the Class 6A, Area 13 championship game at Jasper on Tuesday night, the Cullman Bearcats got the chance to host their Sub-Regional game once again on Saturday night, taking on the Hazel Green Trojans. Cullman looked to get back to Wallace after falling in their Sub-Regional game last season, and it was a tough battle from start to finish. Cullman trailed by six going into the final period, but some huge treys by Emory Bonds, some big free throws by Sam Dorough, Owen Graves, and Gray Hooper, and one more defensive stop helped the Bearcats get past the Trojans 55-53 making it back to Regionals for the fourth time in five years.

Both teams traded baskets and Hazel Green made a shot in the paint to take a 9-8 lead. Sam Dorough got fouled after making a tough shot down low and ended up completing the three-point play from the free throw line to give Cullman an 11-9 lead. Loftin put in a reverse layup to put the Bearcats ahead, 13-10, late in the first. A couple of late baskets by the Trojans, though, gave them the lead right back at 14-13 going into the second.

Hazel Green carried that momentum over into the second period, as they scored six straight points to stretch their lead to 20-13 with 4:39 remaining in the first half. Dorough once again scored through a foul and ended up hitting the free throw to cut it to 20-16.

After a reverse layup by the Trojans made it 22-16, Dorough found Owen Graves in the left corner for a three to trim it to three at 22-19. Hazel Green, though, countered with an 8-3 run to widen their lead to 30-22. Dorough knocked down a pair of free throws to make it a 30-24 game at the half.

Loftin found Dorough in the right corner for a three, then Dorough found Jonathan Witcher in that same corner for another trey to tie the game up at 30. Dorough drove to the basket and scored to give Cullman a 32-30 lead.

Just like in the second quarter, though, the Trojans would respond with another big run, as they scored eight straight points to grab a 38-32 lead with 2:26 remaining in the third. Both teams traded baskets and points to end the third quarter, and Hazel Green would hold a slim 42-36 lead going into the final period.

Cullman came out red-hot to start out the fourth, as Loftin hit another basket in the paint, and Emory Bonds caught fire from behind the three-point line, drilling three straight treys to put the Bearcats ahead, 46-44. A late basket by the Trojans gave them the lead right back at 47-46. Dorough buried two more free throws to give Cullman a 48-47 lead with 1:55 remaining in the game. With 1:11 remaining in the contest, Gray Hopper found a cutting Loftin down low for two, and Graves put in two free throws to put Cullman ahead, 52-48. Hazel Green knocked down a three from the top of the key to cut it to 54-53. Hopper split his free throws to make it 55-53, and the Trojans' last chance to win the game was off the mark, as Cullman ended up holding off Hazel Green 55-53 to make a return trip back to Regionals.

Dorough finished with 19 points for the Bearcats. Loftin put in 14 points, and Bonds ended up with nine points.

Cullman will take on the Clay-Chalkville/Decatur winner next week at the Northwest Regionals at Tom Drake Coliseum with the time and date to be determined.



LUCAS GRAY/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

Cullman's Sam Dorough

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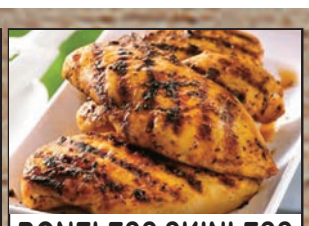
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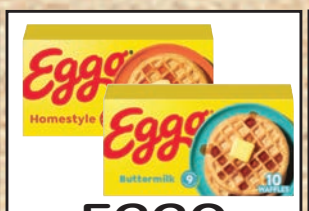
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$8.99 EA.

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Hot Baked
Loaf
$1.99 EA.

Cullman Electric Cooperative launches Community Cupboards in celebration of 90 years of service

Staff Reports
Contributor



CULLMAN ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

As part of its 90th anniversary celebration, Cullman Electric Cooperative has announced the launch of its Community Cupboards, a new initiative designed to support members and strengthen the spirit of neighbor helping neighbor that has defined the cooperative for nine decades.

CULLMAN, Ala. — As part of its 90th anniversary celebration, Cullman Electric Cooperative has announced the launch of its Community Cupboards, a new initiative designed to support members and strengthen the spirit of neighbor helping neighbor that has defined the cooperative for nine decades.

Community Cupboards are free little pantries located at the cooperative's Cullman and Addison offices. Built on the simple idea of "take what you need, give if you can," the cupboards provide immediate access to food and essential household items for individuals and families facing food insecurity with no forms, qualifications or questions asked.

"For 90 years, we've worked to improve quality of life for the communities we serve," said Lindsey Dossey, manager of communications. "These Community Cupboards are not meant to replace local food banks. They simply provide an additional resource for families who are having a tough time or are between assistance periods. It's a meaningful way for us to celebrate 90 years of service by giving back directly to our neighbors."

The Community Cupboards are available 24/7 at:

Cullman (main office)
1749 Eva Road NE
Cullman, AL 35055

Addison office
31132 U.S. Highway 278
Addison, AL 35540

Anyone may take what they need, and those who are able are encouraged to donate shelf-stable foods, hygiene items, paper goods and baby supplies by placing them directly in the cupboards at either location.

For more information and a full list of recommended donation items, visit www.cullmanec.com/community-cupboard.

Mardis Gras (from Front)



MIKE WITCHER / THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE



MIKE WITCHER / THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE



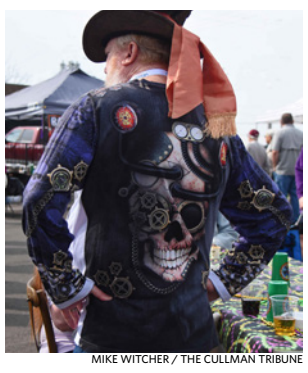
MIKE WITCHER / THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE



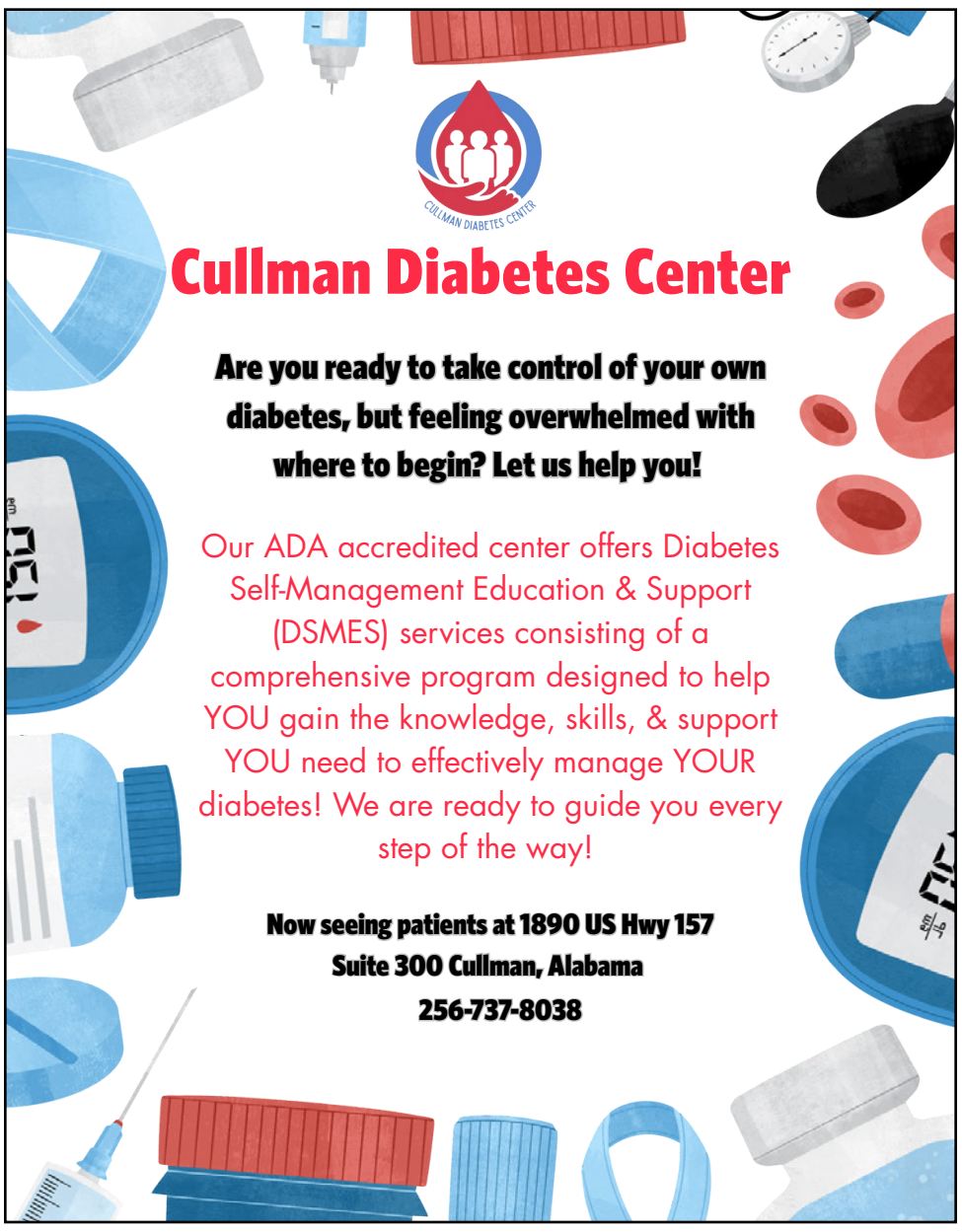
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MIKE WITCHER / THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE



MIKE WITCHER / THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE







Safety (from Front)

Noah Galilee
noah@cullmantribune.com

CULLMAN, Ala. — As temperatures rise and more motorcycles return to Alabama roadways, local and state officials are reminding the public that motorcycle safety depends on awareness from everyone who uses the road.

Recent crashes in Cullman County, combined with statewide fatality data, underscore how vulnerable riders remain in traffic.

Local crashes highlight ongoing risks

Earlier this month, a motorcyclist was killed in a collision with a semi-truck at the intersection of Alabama Highway 157 and Childhaven Road. The Cullman Police Department's Traffic Homicide Unit is investigating the crash.

Incidents like that are not isolated. Past reporting by The Cullman Tribune has documented multiple motorcycle collisions in recent years, including fatal crashes involving passenger vehicles and larger trucks.

State data reflects the danger. According to the Alabama Department of Transportation's published crash statistics, 92 motorcyclists were killed on Alabama roadways in 2023. Those deaths accounted for nearly one out of every 10 traffic fatalities statewide that year.

Safety officials say those numbers illustrate a continuing need for both rider preparation and driver awareness.

Guidance for motorcycle riders

The Alabama Law Enforcement Agency's Share the Road campaign encourages riders to take proactive steps before and during every trip.

ALEA advises riders to wear helmets that meet federal safety standards and to choose protective gear that improves visibility, particularly bright or reflective clothing.

The agency also emphasizes using headlights at all times, signaling clearly before lane changes or turns and conducting routine maintenance checks before riding.

Pre-ride inspections, including checking tire pressure, brake responsiveness and lighting systems, can reduce the risk of mechanical failure while traveling at highway speeds.

Local first responders echo that message.

Cullman Fire Rescue Chief Darren Peeples previously told The Cullman Tribune that riders at all experience levels benefit from refresher courses and continued skills training.

"Safety courses are vital for riders of any level," Peeples said.

He has also stressed the importance of scanning for roadway hazards such as gravel, uneven pavement or wet surfaces that can quickly destabilize a motorcycle.

Advice for drivers of cars and trucks

While riders face direct exposure during a crash, officials say many motorcycle collisions stem from visibility failures by drivers of larger vehicles.

According to ALEA safety guidance, motorists should take extra care when approaching intersections, merging or changing lanes. Motorcycles can be more difficult to detect due to their size and profile.

Drivers are encouraged to check mirrors carefully, look over their shoulders to clear blind spots and allow motorcycles the full width of a traffic lane. Leaving additional following distance gives riders more space to react to sudden changes in traffic.

Law enforcement agencies consistently remind motorists that motorcycles may appear farther away than they actually are, which can lead to misjudging speed or distance during turns.

Grass clippings and debris pose hidden hazards

Safety concerns extend beyond moving vehicles.

The Cullman County Sheriff's Office has issued safety reminders in the past regarding grass clippings and yard debris left on roadways.

While it may seem minor, loose grass on pavement can create slick conditions, particularly for motorcycles whose tires have far less contact with the road than passenger vehicles.

Even a thin layer of clippings can reduce traction during braking or cornering.

Officials advise homeowners and landscaping crews to avoid blowing debris into streets and to sweep or remove any material that reaches the roadway. Keeping pavement clear helps prevent preventable crashes.

A shared responsibility

Motorcycle safety requires participation from riders, drivers and residents alike.

Riders must wear appropriate protective equipment and maintain their machines. Drivers must remain attentive and account for smaller vehicles in traffic. Property owners must consider how their yard work affects roadway conditions.

With local crashes serving as painful reminders and state statistics reinforcing the risk, officials continue to urge Cullman County residents to slow down, stay alert and share the road.

Because for motorcyclists, small mistakes by others can carry life-altering consequences.

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LEGALS

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

There will be a public hearing before the Cullman County Commission, Cullman County Commission Office, Cullman County Courthouse, Cullman, Alabama, February 19, 2026, at 4:00 p.m. to receive comment on closing a portion of County Road 1465, more particularly described as the following:

All portions of County Road 1465 crossing the property owned by Brock Miracle Egg LLC or Sheila Brock.

Which abutting property owners wish to vacate and abandon.

Cullman County Commission
Jeff Clemons, Chairman

IN THE PROBATE COURT OF CULLMAN COUNTY, ALABAMA

IN RE: THE ESTATE OF
MARY KATE MECHAW, AN INCAPACITATED PERSON
now deceased. CASE NO. PC~~2023-197~~ 2025-013

NOTICE OF APPOINTMENT TO BE PUBLISHED BY PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE

Case# PC2025-013
PB MIN Book 240 Page 722
Recorded in Above Book and Page
02/12/2026 2:15PM
Tammy Brown
Judge of Probate
Cullman County, AL
1 Page(s)

THE ESTATE OF MARY KATE MECHAW, DECEASED. WJC

Letters of Administration of said deceased have been granted to Judy Gray on the 12th day of February, 2026, by the Honorable Tammy Brown, Judge of Probate of Cullman County. Notice is hereby given 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.

Judy Gray, Personal Representative (Administrator),

TO: Publisher of *Cullman Tribune*:

Please publish the above notice three successive weeks in said newspaper.

Tammy Brown
Tammy Brown, Judge of Probate

Steven C. Smith
Attorney for Petitioner
SMITH & SMITH ATTORNEYS, LLC
P. O. Box 398
Cullman, Alabama 35056-0398
Phone: (256) 734-4721
Fax: (256) 734-4774
e-mail: steve@smithandsmithllp.com

NOTICE OF MORTGAGE FORECLOSURE SALE

Default having been made in the payment of the indebtedness secured by that certain mortgages executed by **J. G. BENNEFIELD, A MARRIED MAN and FRANCES BENNEFIELD, A MARIED WOMAN** to Traditions Bank, as follows: Mortgage securing the property described below, said Mortgage executed dated July 1, 2010, and recorded on August 2, 2010, in Mortgage Book 1630 Page 197 in the Office of the Judge of Probate of Cullman County, Alabama, the undersigned Traditions Bank, as mortgagee, under and by virtue of the power of sale contained in said mortgages, will sell at public outcry to the highest bidder for cash, in front of the main entrance of the Courthouse in Cullman, Alabama, on the **25th day of February, 2026,** between the legal hours of sale, the following described real estate situated in Cullman County, Alabama, to-wit:

The W ½ of the SE 1/4 of the SW 1/4 of Section 15, Township 11 South, Range 2 west, containing 20 acres, more or less

Property address: 278 County Road 545, Hanceville, AL 35077

This sale is made for the purpose of paying the indebtedness secured by said mortgage, as well as the expenses of foreclosure.

TRADITIONS BANK
Mortgagee
Steven C. Smith
SMITH & SMITH, LLP
P. O. Box 398
Cullman, AL 35056-0398
Telephone: (256) 734-4721
Fax: (256) 734-4774
steve@smithandsmithllp.com

IN THE PROBATE COURT OF CULLMAN COUNTY, ALABAMA

IN RE: The Estate of *
TAMELIA R. KILPATRICK LEMONS, * CASE NO. PC 2026 - 042
Deceased. *

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

TAKE NOTICE: Letters Testamentary having been granted to Jerry W. Kilpatrick as Personal Representative of the Estate of Tamelia R. Kilpatrick Lemons, deceased, on the 9th day February, 2026, 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.

Jerry W. Kilpatrick
Personal Representative

Shay Persall
SHAY PERSALL LAW, LLC
611 Seventh Street, SW
Cullman, AL 35055
Telephone: (256) 841-7800
Attorney for Personal Representative

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 to the Judge of Probate.

TAMMY BROWN, JUDGE OF PROBATE

EST. 1873
CULLMAN
ALABAMA

BUILDING DEPARTMENT

201 2nd Avenue NE
Cullman, Alabama 35055
256.775.7203
www.CullmanAl.gov

City of Cullman
Planning Commission

On Tuesday March 3, 2026, at Cullman City Hall Auditorium at 5:30 P.M, at the regular meeting of the City of Cullman Planning Commission, a public hearing will be held to allow affected parties to voice their concerns related to the following items:

1. Short form subdivision at 1351 Goehler Road SE & 1403 Goehler Road SE – create 4 lots
2. Short form subdivision on Catoma Lane NE / Convent Road NE – create 4 lots
3. Request to vacate alley / surplus property at 309 13th Street NE

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

STATE OF ALABAMA * IN THE PROBATE COURT
*
CULLMAN COUNTY * CASE NO. PC 2026-050

IN RE: THE ESTATE OF ANGELA RENAY JOHNSTON, DECEASED.

NOTICE OF APPOINTMENT TO BE PUBLISHED BY PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE

Letters Testamentary on the Estate of said deceased have been granted to Heather Kalyn Creel and Tyler Lee Creel on the 30th day of January 2026, by the Hon. Tammy Brown, Judge of Probate of Cullman County. Notice is hereby given 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.

Heather Kalyn Creel and Tyler Lee Creel
Personal Representative

To the publisher of *The Cullman Tribune*:

Please publish the above notice three successive weeks in said newspaper.

Tammy Brown
Tammy Brown, Judge of Probate

Steven C. Smith
Attorney for the Estate
Smith & Smith Attorneys, LLC
P. O. Box 398
Cullman, AL 35056-0398
(256) 734-4721

IN THE PROBATE COURT OF CULLMAN COUNTY, ALABAMA

IN RE: The Estate of)
MICHAEL ANDREW LEE) CASE NO.: PC 2026 - 055
Deceased.)

Case# PC2025-055
PB MIN Book 240 Page 722
Recorded in Above Book and Page
02/12/2026 2:15PM
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Judge of Probate
Cullman County, AL
1 Page(s)

WJC

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

TAKE NOTICE that Letters of Administration have been granted to Robert W. Lee, as Administrator of the Estate of Michael Andrew Lee, deceased, on the 13th day of February, 2026, 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.

Robert W. Lee

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, JUDGE OF PROBATE

STATE OF ALABAMA
COUNTY OF CULLMAN

NOTICE is hereby given that a bill substantially as follows will be introduced in the 2026 Regular Session of the Legislature of Alabama and application for its passage and enactment will be made:

«Project»**DRAFT DOCUMENT: NOT OFFICIAL LEGISLATION**

A BILL
TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT

Relating to Cullman County; to amend Section 45-22-70.01, Code of Alabama 1975; to further provide for when meetings of the county commission shall be held; and to make conforming changes.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA:

Section 1. Section 45-22-70.01, Code of Alabama 1975, is amended to read as follows:

"§45-22-70.01

(a) Effective for the term of the Associate Commissioners of the Cullman County Commission commencing in November 2022, the Cullman County Commission shall be composed of a chair and four associate commissioners who shall be nominated and elected by the qualified electors of the county at-large.

(b) One associate commissioner shall be elected for each district defined in this subsection and each associate commissioner shall be a resident and elector of the district that the member represents. The districts of the county commission shall be designated Commission District One; Commission District Two; Commission District Three; and Commission District Four. In order to stagger the terms of the

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associate commissioners, the associate commissioner initially elected from Commission District Three and Commission District Four shall be elected for an initial term of two years and the associate commissioners elected from Commission District One and Commission District Two shall be elected for a term of four years. Thereafter, successors shall be elected for terms of four years. The associate county commissioners shall serve on a part-time basis.

(c) The Chair of the Cullman County Commission shall continue to be a resident and elector from anywhere in the county and shall serve on a full-time basis. The chair of the county commission shall serve a four-year term.

(d) The powers, duties, terms, and manner of election for the members of the county commission shall be the same as now provided by law, except as provided otherwise in this section. The chair of the county commission may not vote except in the case of a tie vote of the associate commissioners.

(e) The county commission shall establish and holdmeetings as required by Section 11-3-8, and shall post and publish the days, times, and places of their meetings. The commission, by resolution, may alter the regular meeting days as necessary, and may schedule a special meeting when determined necessary in writing by a majority of the members of the commission or, in case of an emergency, at the call of the chair."

Section 2. This act shall become effective on October 1, 2026.

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Notice is hereby given that (Burks Building, Inc.) whose office address and phone number are as follows:(309 3rd Ave SW, Cullman, AL 35055; 256-338-8264), has completed all work on the Berlin Farmers Market. All persons having any claim for labor, materials, or otherwise in connection with this project should immediately notify the above-named Contractor and the Owner's Engineer (St. John & Associates, Inc., 256-734-2114).

OP-ED

Sonder

Chasady Woods
chasady@cullmantribune.com

Sonder, defined by the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, is "the awareness that other people all have their own complex set of feelings and experiences."

As a child I had this overwhelming sadness when I saw pictures of my grandparents when they were younger. It was odd to think of them so little and carefree. When they laughed I could see those faded smiles in those photographs. I would think of how much they had been through, but this picture of them as children kept them frozen in time when they were safe.

I had the same feeling when I was tasked to write about what I would say to my younger self if I could go back in time and see her for five minutes. Or when I listened to "Landslide" by Fleetwood Mac, as a mother, in comparison to when I was a teenager. The line, "I'm getting older, too" is getting a little heavy!

How often do we get angry at slow or fast drivers? We have all been there. Why do we feel the need to be angry at someone we don't know? Circumstances we don't understand? They want to make it home as much as you do. That person is someone's friend, sibling, loved one, parent or child.

I had a teacher give a scenario to our class to see our initial reaction. He asked how we would feel if, while driving, someone sped up behind us and then passed us. Most of the class replied that they would think they're rude.

He then elaborated on the scenario saying that the husband was rushing his wife to the hospital as she was in labor.

The class then said something along the lines of that being understandable.

He then asked how we would feel if we were late to school and someone in front of us was driving way under the speed limit?

Of course, most of the class admitted they wouldn't be thrilled. And after he suggested that, perhaps, it was one of our grandparents or someone experiencing an emergency, we all changed our perspective.

Why is our initial reaction usually the selfish one? We are all getting older. We were all children once, and in ways we still are and will always be. This is everyone's first time being alive, and I think we forget that.

We are so quick to pass judgement or to get angry at one another. When we are struck by a sense of sonder, we tend to slow down. The anger is quick to pass, because how can you be mad at someone for doing as we do.

OP-ED:

To those who are anxious to speak

Chasady Woods
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I used to be so scared to talk to people that I would have to avoid eye contact. If I were in a situation where being social was required I would shake and become so overwhelmed that I couldn't open my mouth. It felt as if my jaw were wired shut after clenching it so tightly to prevent my teeth from chattering.

This made high school feel like prison. Presentations in front of the class and reading out loud seemed to be humiliation rituals. One day in class we had been reading an epic poem and, of course, I got called on to read. I had an anxiety attack in the school bathroom that morning and hadn't calmed down since.

"Can you please pick someone else?" I asked my teacher.

She showed me grace and picked someone else. Though not without assuring me that I would be reading next time.

Did I get called on to read in her next class? Yes. Was I still anxious? Absolutely. Did I turn into an anamorphous blob? No. It sucked, nonetheless, but I did it. I stuttered, my throat felt like it was swelling, but I did it. It was at this point I knew I had to stop listening to the voice in my head telling me that being quiet and shy was a weakness.

I had read "The Lovely Bones" by Alice Sebold twice before, but decided to read it again. There was a quote from the book that stayed with me this time around.

"She wasn't much of a talker when there was nothing to say."

The character spoke of this woman with such praise that I was taken back. Her quiet demeanor and disregard for conversation seemed almost poetic, not shameful. It changed my perspective on being quiet and soft spoken.

As I got older, and out of high school, talking became easier. I still have moments when I'm around large numbers of people and want to be nonverbal.

Though I now have routines and ways to calm myself down. I also have a great support system that respects that I don't want to talk all the time. They are OK with my silence and they're also just fine when I want to talk nonstop.

It has been a learning process, but it didn't happen overnight. I used exposure therapy to gradually manifest calmer outcomes. For example, I took many grocery trips to Walmart. Yes, Walmart. For someone with a heavily introverted and anxious personality, Walmart was awful. So in my teenage years I would plan out grocery lists, plan an optimal route and go suffer! No one really enjoys going to Walmart, of course, but it got easier. I didn't shake as much and was able to just go without planning out my every move. Nowadays I can go and hate it a normal amount!



CHASADY WOODS/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

The sky in Spring Hill

I also had overwhelming, dreadful anxiety when it came to events. I would have bursts of adrenaline just thinking of it and get so nervous I wouldn't even talk about them.

To help myself feel more comfortable I would think of the worst-case scenario beforehand. Not like imagining the roof caving in or anything, but bad overhead lighting or something. You can laugh; it is silly, but it helped. If I had an interview I would picture a white concrete room with very bright office lights and imagine that it would be alarmingly quiet. Then when I showed up and it wasn't an absolute nightmare – I felt better.

Now I don't recommend being a pessimistic fuddy-duddy. This was just my spin on the whole, "picture everyone naked" thing. I didn't want to do that; I only wanted to not hyperventilate thinking I was breathing too loud.

Another thing that helped me was my faith. I was reading the Bible one day and came across Exodus 4:10-12. Moses tells God that he fumbles over his words and can't relay a message. God assures him and says that He put Moses' tongue in his mouth. He made Moses as he was and has made me exactly as I am.

Now when I stutter or mix up words I laugh instead of cowering and apologizing. If I'm anxious, I let someone know and step away until I'm feeling better. I'm not cured, but I know who I am and am proud of it.

Holiday (from Front)

Noah Galilee
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CULLMAN, Ala. – Alabama will hold its annual Severe Weather Preparedness Sales Tax Holiday from Friday, Feb. 20, through Sunday, Feb. 22, 2026, giving shoppers the opportunity to purchase qualifying emergency preparedness supplies without paying the state's 4% sales tax. Most cities and counties across Alabama also opt in to remove local sales taxes, further increasing savings for consumers. All municipalities in Cullman County that levy sales tax have opted in.

The tax holiday begins at 12:01 a.m. Friday and runs through midnight Sunday.

During that time, qualifying items may be purchased free of state and local sales tax, allowing families to prepare for severe weather while reducing out-of-pocket costs.

According to the Alabama Department of Revenue, the annual sales tax holiday is intended to help residents stock up on emergency supplies ahead of severe weather events by temporarily removing state and local sales tax on eligible items.

Eligible items, $94 or less per item

Qualifying items exempt from state and local sales tax include:

- AAA, AA, C, D, 6-volt and 9-volt batteries
- Cellular phone batteries and chargers
- Portable self-powered or battery-powered radios, including two-way radios, weatherband radios and NOAA weather radios
- Portable self-powered light sources, including battery-powered flashlights, lanterns and emergency glow sticks
- Tarpaulins
- Plastic sheeting and plastic drop cloths
- Other flexible, waterproof sheeting
- Ground anchor systems, such as bungee cords, rope or tie-down kits
- Duct tape
- Plywood, window film or other materials designed to protect window coverings
- Nonelectric food storage coolers or water storage containers
- Nonelectric can openers
- Artificial ice, blue ice, ice packs and reusable ice
- Self-contained first aid kits
- Fire extinguishers
- Smoke detectors
- Carbon monoxide detectors
- Gas or diesel fuel tanks or containers

Noneligible items

Items not included in the sales tax exemption include:

- Coin batteries
- Automobile and boat batteries

Generators

A single purchase of a portable generator and related power cords priced at $1,564 or less qualifies for the state and local sales tax exemption when used to provide light or communications or to preserve food during a power outage.

In prior years, exemption limits were capped at $60 for supplies and $1,000 for generators.

"By updating these exemption limits to better reflect today's costs, lawmakers ensured that this sales tax holiday continues to provide meaningful savings for Alabama families," said Alabama Retail Association President Rick Brown.

"These changes help consumers purchase the items they need while also supporting Alabama retailers in their local communities. A true win-win."

To learn more, visit www.alabamaretail.org/resources/salestaxholidays/severe-weather-preparedness.

Obituary Announcements: Feb. 14-16

Neley Romilda Roberts, 81

It is with profound sadness that we announce the passing of our beloved Mother, Millie Roberts, age 81, of Cullman Alabama. The Lord, Our god, unexpectedly called her home on Feb. 13, 2026, at 7:16 a.m. Those of us left behind are just devastated. Millie was born on Aug. 11, 1944. She was a devoted and faithful member of Mission Grove Baptist Church. Her life was marked by her unwavering faith, generous spirit, and commitment to her church and family. She found great joy in gardening, cooking, sewing, and spending time with her loved ones. Millie was known for her warm heart and welcoming nature, she never met a stranger and brought light and kindness into every room she entered. She is proceeded in death, by her mother and father, Christine and Lloyd Corbin, her brothers, John, Jeston, and Junior Corbin, son (in-law) Lee Hailes. Millie is survived by her husband of 64 years, Ray Roberts, her children, Regina Hailes (Lee), Lynn Hood (Billy), Darrell Roberts (Joanne); her grandchildren, Nathan, Shailyn, Daniel, Kaylee, Nicholas, Jeff, Cory, Blake; nine great-grandchildren; and numerous nieces and nephews. She is also survived by her brother Warren Corbin (Diane), and her sister Gay Riddle (James). A Celebration of Life service will be held at 2 p.m. on March 8, 2026, at Mission Grove Baptist Church, located on Shaffer Road in Cullman, Alabama. Family and friends are invited to attend and share memories as they honor and celebrate Millie's life and legacy.

FREE OBITUARY LISTINGS

HAVE YOUR FUNERAL HOME CONTACT US

Email: obits@cullmantribune.com

Complete obituaries may be found free of charge at CullmanTribune.com/obituaries.

Hanceville Funeral Home

100 Michelle Street Northwest, Hanceville, Alabama 35077

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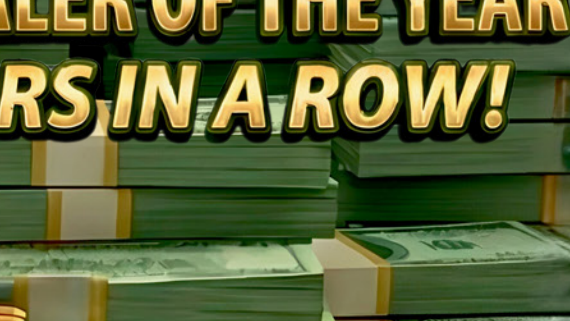
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