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CHASADY WOODS/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

'Once you're a Burgermeister, you're always a Burgermeister'

» PAGE 11

Bidding closes on Cullman Regional Airport midfield hangar project

Noah Galilee
noah@cullmantribune.com

CULLMAN, Ala. – Bidding has closed on another construction project at Cullman Regional Airport as the City of Cullman and Cullman County continue a multiyear expansion and improvement program at the jointly owned airport.

The latest project, identified as Cullman Regional Airport Midfield Hangar Development, was advertised under project number TBHM260015.

Bidding closed at 11 a.m. Wednesday, Sept. 16.

According to the City's bid documents, the work includes grading, drainage, base and paving work, electrical construction and the hangar building itself.

Goodwyn Mills Cawood is serving as engineer for the project.

The current solicitation follows earlier work to prepare the airport's midfield area for additional hangar development.

In March 2025, Cullman County records described a midfield hangar site-development project that included construction of a stub taxiway to provide access to future hangar development. At that time, engineering documents placed the anticipated construction » PAGE 3

Fall at 4D Farm kicks off this weekend

Lauren Estes
noah@cullmantribune.com

CULLMAN, Ala. - 4D Farm opens for the fall 2026 season on Saturday, Sept. 26, at 10 a.m. Fall at 4D Farm will run through Nov. 1.

Owner Beth Daniel said one of the biggest additions is the 4D Farm Happy Highland Coaster.

"We are extremely excited about our new family roller coaster," she said. "Children as small as 36 inches can ride with an adult, and guests 42 inches and taller can ride independently, so it's another attraction families can enjoy together."

Daniel said one thing they really try to do is pack a lot into the admission price.

"General admission includes the corn maze, pumpkin patch area, farm attractions, corn barn, massive tubing slide, two jumping pillows, flower fields for photos and our amusement rides," she said. "So families can come and spend several hours, or most of the day, with us. We're also continuing to add more lighting and nighttime elements around the farm. We want the farm to have a completely different feel once the sun goes down."

There will be special entertainment throughout the season, including the Flying Trick Dog Show, plus more like magicians and fireworks on the last four Friday nights of October. Hudd Music scheduled to come out regularly during the season.

"We are very excited about the Happy Highland Coaster, but some of our longtime favorites are our giant jumping pillows, tubing slide, kiddie ziplines, Coronado swings, pony carts, barrel train, corn barn, apple cannons, gem mine, pig races, hayrides, and our corn maze and pumpkin areas are still such an important part of fall at 4D Farm, too," Daniel said.



LAUREN ESTES / 2025 FILE PHOTO / THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

4D Farm opens for the fall 2026 season on Saturday, Sept. 26, at 10 a.m. Fall at 4D Farm will run through Nov. 1.

"We never want to lose the farm experience as we add amusement rides. One of the things we're most proud of is that there really is something for a wide range of ages.

"A little child may spend forever in the corn barn or on the kiddie rides, older kids may head straight for the coaster or tubing slide, and parents and grandparents can enjoy the hayride, shows, food, maze and many of the rides right alongside them. Of course, the food is part of the experience! Funnel cakes, fresh-dipped corn dogs, turkey legs, apple cider donuts, lemonade, specialty treats — we love creating those foods people look forward to having every fall."

This weekend is the perfect weekend to visit the farm if you enjoy lighter crowds.

"It's generally the slowest weekend of the season," Daniel said. On Friday evening, there was a special Season Pass Holder Preview Night. "It's our chance to welcome our season-pass families back and give them an early look at what's new."

Daniel shared how much they appreciate the families who choose to spend part of their fall with at the farm each year.

"4D Farm has grown tremendously, but our goal hasn't changed," she said. "We want families to come here, put their phones down for a little while, laugh together, ride rides together, eat something they probably shouldn't eat, make memories and leave saying, 'That was a really good day.' We put months of work into a season that only lasts a few weeks. Our family and our team work incredibly hard behind the scenes, and there's nothing better than finally opening those gates and seeing families enjoying everything we've worked on. We are really excited about what we've added for 2026, and we can't wait to welcome everyone back to 4D Farm this fall."

Visit www.4dfamilyfarm.com before visiting for the most up-to-date hours and special-event information and tickets.

4D Farms is located at 7066 County Road 703 in Cullman.

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FALL FUN

Fair parade today, band exhibition tonight



MIKE WITCHER/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

Members of the Good Hope High School band are seen in the 2025 Cullman County Fair Parade. Band Exhibition held at Oliver Woodard Stadium at Cullman High School on Sept. 28, 2024. » PAGE 12

By the numbers: Cullman County Commission FY 2026-2027 budget

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Bill Penney confirms $4M collision-repair project in Cullman

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56-unit Ashford Gardens apartment project advances in Cullman

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ZincFast preparing Hanceville plant expansion following tax abatement

» PAGE 10

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CRIME

Arrests and incidents reported Sept. 25

Staff Reports
Contributor

CULLMAN, Ala. – Below are the arrests and incidents reported Sept. 25, 2026. All persons are innocent until proven guilty.

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

CULLMAN COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

INCIDENTS

Sept. 21

- domestic violence; CR 1674
- criminal mischief; CR 1225
- theft of property; CR 623
- possession of drug paraphernalia; CR 1674
- harassment; 12th Way SW
- assault; CR 437
- harassing communications; harassment; CR 1538
- harassing communications; CR 1629

Sept. 22

- possession of drug paraphernalia; CR 735
- trespassing; CR 222
- harassment; CR 598
- burglary; CR 38
- possession of drug paraphernalia; Good Hope School Rd.
- theft of property; CR 1282
- harassing communications; Hwy. 69S

Sept. 23

- attempt to elude law enforcement officer; CR 656
- violation of protection order; CR 1177
- domestic violence – criminal mischief; CR 702
- violation of protection order; Beech Ave. SE
- theft of property; Hwy. 278E
- trespassing; Main Hanceville St. SE
- domestic violence; CR 656

ARRESTS

Sept. 21-23

Ashcraft, Maggie R.; 35
- FTA – theft-miscellaneous

Bair, Angela; 47
- discharging firearm into unoccupied building, railroad, aircraft, automobile, truck, or watercraft

Booth, Carmella N.; 40
- PROBATION VIOLATION – drug trafficking
- PROBATION VIOLATION – unlawful possession with intent to distribute a controlled substance

Cabrera, Joshua D.; 23
- FTA – possession of drug paraphernalia
- attempting to elude a police officer

Cross, Brandy R.; 47
- FTA – switched tag

Dang, Kristan S.; 44
- FTA – possession of drug paraphernalia
- FTA – possession of marijuana-2nd degree
- FTA – sell/distribution of dangerous drugs
- FTA – unlawful possession of certain chemical compound
- FTA – public intoxication

Dean, Bradley A.; 41
- DUI (alcohol)

Doss, Bethany N.; 39
- FTA – assault-child abuse-simple-family

Gean, Jr., Clifford W.; 30
- FTA – possession of drug paraphernalia

Gibson, Lacey M.; 33
- FTA – DUI (controlled substance)

Hall, David R.; 71
- criminal trespass

Harper III, James L.; 27
- FTA – domestic violence-3rd degree – harassing communications

Johnson, Brandi M.; 38
- PROBATION VIOLATION – burglary-residence-no force

Martin, Ricky D.; 54
- FTA – unlawful distribution of controlled substances

McMinn, Jillian M.; 46
- possession of drug paraphernalia

Price, Caleb H.; 19
- minor in possession of alcohol
- DUI (alcohol)

Raymond, Matthew T.; 18
- minor in possession of alcohol

Roberson, Zane M.; 23
- FTA – fail stop sign
- FTA – improper tag light

Rodriguez Perez, Jose G.; 34
- negotiating worthless instrument

Salter, Tyler R.; 32
- assault-domestic-harassment-family
- FTA – obstruction-governmental operations

Scott, Kenneth R.; 54
- FTA – possession of methamphetamine
- FTA – possession of drug paraphernalia

Sellers, Tasha D.; 35
- assault-domestic-harassment-family
- FTA – possession of drug paraphernalia
- FTA – possession of dangerous drugs

Slenker, Brian C.; 55
- FTA – driving while suspended, revoked or canceled

Spurgeon, Wade L.; 27
- FTA – possession of drug paraphernalia
- FTA – possession of marijuana-2nd degree
- FTA – possession of dangerous drugs

Swann, Fallon M.; 38
- FTA – possession of dangerous drugs

Wingo, Joshua E.; 34
- possession of drug paraphernalia

Wooldridge, Sandy E.; 32
- FTA – possession of drug paraphernalia
- FTA – possession of dangerous drugs
- FTA – theft-miscellaneous
- FTA – sale of stolen property

CULLMAN POLICE DEPARTMENT

INCIDENTS

Sept. 24

- burglary-3rd degree; theft of property-3rd degree; Davidson Homes; miscellaneous; $970; Raspberry Ln. NW
- theft by deception-2nd degree; person; cash; $1,900
- harassment; person; Cherokee Ave. SW
- theft of property-3rd degree; person; miscellaneous; $742; Marie St. NW
- retail theft of property-2nd degree; Publix; general merchandise; Cullman Shopping Center

ARRESTS

Sept. 23-24

Hancock, Roberta; 25
- FTA – driving without license

Oreaboe, Jr., Raymond H.; 35
- DUI
- improper lane usage

Rodriguez Perez, Jose G.; 34
- theft of property-3rd degree

Davis, Patrick L.; 52
- FTA – insurance violation
- FTA – driving while revoked

HANCEVILLE POLICE DEPARTMENT

No arrests or incidents reported.

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

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Cullman Regional (from Front)

value of that site work at approximately $1 million and said federal and state grant funding was expected to cover a portion of the project.

The latest hangar construction bid does not publicly identify an intended tenant, total project cost, hangar size or funding breakdown in the material reviewed by The Tribune.

It also comes as other major construction projects move forward at the airport.

In May 2025, the Cullman City Council awarded a $2,734,670 hangar contract to Newell, Park & Eleazer Construction LLC. The Cullman County Commission subsequently approved its portion of that project.

That project followed a $1 million Appalachian Regional Commission grant accepted by the City for an aviation partnership involving Martin Aviation and Wallace State Community College.

Plans called for Martin Aviation to establish aircraft maintenance operations at the airport while Wallace State developed aviation workforce training space associated with the project.

Airport officials have also undertaken taxiway, apron and pavement improvements as part of a broader capital program.

The public documents for the new midfield hangar solicitation do not establish whether it is an additional facility, a later phase of previously approved development or construction associated with one of the airport's existing projects.



NOAH GALILEE/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

In this 2026 file photo, Cullman Regional Airport Director Ben Harrison shows off the latest plans to continue expansion and rehabilitation at the airport.

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COMMUNITY CALENDAR

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

Grace Episcopal Church Cheeseball Sales are Underway! Place Your Holiday Order by Oct. 5.
The Grace Episcopal Church Women are currently selling their popular cheeseballs for the holidays! This year we are offering nine cheeseball flavors. Orders must be placed by Monday, Oct. 5, 2026. You may place your order by going to www.gracechurch.org where you can order online or print out an order form to mail in. You can also call the church office 256-734-6212 on Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday between 9 a.m. and 1 p.m. to place your order. Cheeseballs will be ready for pickup on Thursday, Nov. 19, at Grace Episcopal Church. All proceeds from our cheeseball project go to outreach including Committee on Church Cooperation (CCC), the Good Samaritan Health Clinic, The Pilot Light Home, The Willow Path (formerly Victim Services), Hope Horses, Cullman Caring for Kid and Wallace State Campus Ministries.

PUBLIC NOTICE:
The Cullman County Special Education Program is seeking to locate children with disabilities ages 0-21 within the Cullman County School District. Ages 0-3 call Kristie Smith, 256-734-3253. Ages 3-21 call Katie Meigs, Special Education Coordinator, 256-739-0486, Ext 2.
The system is also seeking to locate intellectually gifted and talented children, with the emphasis on second-grade students.
Contact Special Education Coordinator Katie Meigs at 17600 U.S. Highway 31 N, Cullman, Al 35058.

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 North Alabama Agriplex Heritage Building. 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.

Alpha Delta Kappa Invitation
Are you a woman educator looking to connect, grow, serve, and make a difference? We want to invite you to contact our local Cullman chapters Alpha Theta or Beta Delta. Alpha Delta Kappa is a national honorary organization of more than 25,000 women educators who share a commitment to valuing all people and promoting quality education.
- Build lifelong friendships
- Connect with educators who share your passion
- Grow through leadership and professional opportunities
- Serve your school, community and beyond
- Celebrate the important work of women educators

Your dedication to education matters. Your voice matters. You belong with us.
For more information contact President of Alpha Theta Laurita Hogland 256-531-2298 or Presidents of Beta Delta Rhonda Vanzant 256-708-7980 or Lisa Hullett 256-962-4252.

Church Services: Spirit Life Church
- 1650 St. Joseph Dr. NW, Cullman
- 256-739-3326
- spiritlifechurchcullman@gmail.com
- FB-Spirit Life Church Cullman
- Sunday, Sept. 27 – 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
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.
- Wednesday, Sept. 30, 10 a.m. Children's book club and storytime with Briana Taylor and Angelyn Riggs, children's book club
- October-November, regular Wednesday 10 a.m. storytime continues. Please visit the Facebook page for weekly detailed information.
- Adult book club meets monthly- Saturday, Sept. 19, Oct. 17, at 10 a.m.
- Saturday, Nov. 7, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Mud Creek Festival BOOK SALE
- Library will be closed on Nov. 11 in honor of Veterans Day

We are looking for community volunteers to read storytime on Wednesdays. Contact Teresa Rivera for details. Volunteers make our library successful, so we thank our local community.

Cullman County Fair Parade
Saturday, Sept. 26, at 2 p.m. U.S. Highway 31, from Seventh Street Southwest to Arnold Street Northwest.

43rd Annual Cullman County Band Exhibition
Saturday, Sept. 26, at 6 p.m. at Oliver Woodard Stadium at Cullman High School. Gates open at 5. Nine area marching bands will perform. Tickets are $5 for adults. Kids 6 and younger get in free.

Sacred Heart Church German Dinner
Wednesday, Sept. 30, 4-7 p.m. in the Sacred Heart Church gym. Traditional German food, $15 per plate. Dine in or take out.

Little Pink Dress Benefit
Tuesday, Oct. 6, from 6-9 p.m. at The Venue at Stone Bridge Farms. Tickets on sale now! www.cullmanbosombuddies.com/service/little-pink-dress-event

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THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE
SEPTEMBER 26, 2026

Best-selling author Shelby Van Pelt visits Wallace State

Chasady Woods
chasady@cullmantribune.com



CHASADY WOODS/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

"It was two sentences that changed my life," author Shelby Van Pelt told the crowd at Wallace State Community College on Sept. 24, 2026.



CHASADY WOODS/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

"Remarkably Bright Creatures" by Shelby Van Pelt

HANCEVILLE, Ala. – Best-selling author Shelby Van Pelt visited Wallace State Community College on Thursday, Sept. 24. Earlier this year her debut novel, "Remarkably Bright Creatures" was adapted into a Netflix exclusive film starring Sally Field, Lewis Pullman and Alfred Molina.

"Remarkably Bright Creatures" was published in 2022, and became a New York Times bestseller soon after.

Van Pelt said she finished her book around 2020, but progress slowed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

She also noted that in 2020, the melodrama and documentary "My Octopus Teacher" was released, raising concerns about whether publishing the book would be wise. One of the main characters in "Remarkably Bridge Creatures" is a Giant Pacific octopus named Marcellus. But after her novel was published, it gained immense popularity – Van Pel's publisher described it as "lightning strike luck."

Van Pelt and her husband moved to Atlanta in the early 2010s when she began to show interest in creative writing.

She said she thought to herself, "I've always kind of liked writing. I've always been sort of good at writing. Even in the spreadsheet job the part that I was good at was writing up the report – the narrative that went with the model."

Being fond of fiction, she said, the idea of creating stories for a living, "felt like a life hack." Then emphasized, "Spoiler alert – it's actually kind of hard."

Van Pelt wrote in various coffee shops in Atlanta, writing stories about the people she saw and creating narratives based on them.

"I did a lot of eavesdropping," she mused. As names were called to retrieve food and beverages, Van Pelt made note of them for possible stories.

One day in 2012 she found herself in a coffeeshop watching YouTube, which somehow led to her watching videos of octopuses.

"Some of the videos were of octopuses behaving badly," she recalled, "Blowing out the light fixtures, escaping their tank and throwing rocks at the glass. And just really having these incredibly complex personalities and doing all these things that seemed larger than life."

She didn't know how influential this would be until later, but expressed this was the moment she knew she wanted to write a character that was "larger than life," just as she was watching on the screen.

Once she and her husband moved into their apartment they still received mail from the previous owners. One day, Van Pelt recalled, she received a catalog from Emory University Continuing Education. The classes were four to six weeks, and one of them was creative writing.

Van Pelt signed up for the class and recalled that on the first day, they were assigned a warm up to ease into the creative mindset.

"Our prompt, our assignment, was to write from an unusual point of view," she explained. "I thought immediately of this octopus idea I had."

She said all the students shared their pieces, and the other writers wrote from the perspective of toasters and even mailboxes.

After sharing her story, she said, her instructor told her, "I really liked that. I think you should keep going with that."

Said Van Pelt, "I don't think it's an exaggeration to say that I wouldn't be standing up here today had she not said that to me. It was two sentences that changed my life."



CHASADY WOODS/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

With that, she began drafting what would become "Remarkably Bright Creatures" in 2013. She ended up writing over 300,000 words, which were narrowed down to about 100,000.

The opinionated Octopus Marcellus was born – and the story begins in his diary.

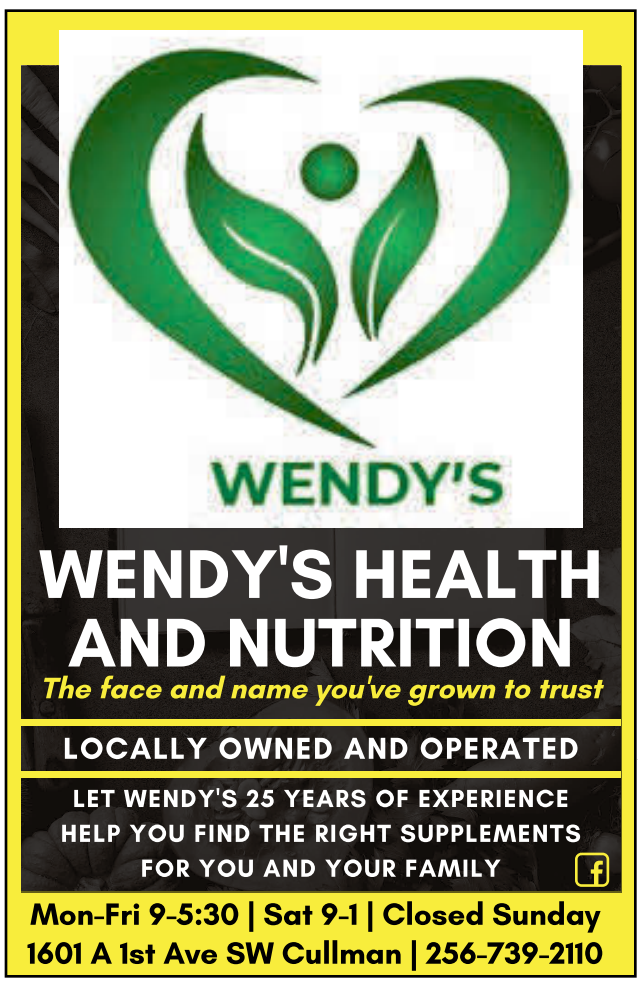
Van Pelt noted that she wanted to consider the perspective and dialog of a unique creature, bored behind glass. "He had no shortage of opinions – almost anything you could think of. If you could imagine yourself trapped behind glass and you're very bored, very smart, with your only entertainment being the humans going by in front of you – he just had a lot of opinions about human beings."

Van Pelt put herself in his place while also forming a touching story with main characters Tova and Cameron.

"You can watch the movie!" exclaimed.

Find out more at https://shelbyvanpelt.com.







Sips N Strokes offering book binding classes and more

Chasady Woods
chasady@cullmantribune.com

CULLMAN, Ala. – Sips N Strokes is an art shop located in Cullman's Warehouse District. It caters to adults and children, offering painting classes and other creative opportunities. It also allows others with artistic gifts to lead classes of their own.

One such event took place Saturday, Sept. 19, when local artist Cayla Grace Murphy-Carnes hosted a book binding class.

The class began with creating book covers from cardboard and paper. Once the front and back covers were assembled, it was time to decorate.

Along with materials provided by the organizer and shop, attendees brought items of their own.

One participant works at a nearby thrift shop and was able to provide pictures donated in frames that were to be discarded. This added a twist to the collage designs, each proving unique to its owner.

After the decorating, sheets of paper were provided to be measured and cut according to the size of the book itself. Careful measurements were marked to help in the last step of binding and assembling the final product.

Murphy-Carnes said she began binding books at 16 and even used the skill to craft her daughter's baby book.

Though the supplies were purchased at a nearby craft store, she said, she often seeks out used books at thrift stores to give new life through book binding.

"People have sent me recipes that I can print and add to the cover," she told The Tribune.

She said the upcycling possibilities are endless.

An additional book binding class is scheduled for October, but has already booked out. Murphy-Carnes said she has entertained the idea for a possible class in November.

She currently leads painting classes on Mondays and every other Wednesday. Sips N Strokes offers paint kits and options for canvases, which are included with the purchase of a class.

Sips N Strokes is located at 102 First Ave. NE, Cullman. Visit https://sipsnstrokescullman.rezclick.com for more details.



CAYLA GRACE MURPHY-CARNES

Sips N Strokes book binding class participants pose with their finished products.



CHASADY WOODS/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE



CHASADY WOODS/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

Cayla Grace Murphy leads a book binding class at Sips N Strokes on Sept. 19, 2026.



Bill Penney (from Front)

Noah Galilee
noah@cullmantribune.com

CULLMAN, Ala. – Bill Penney Motor Co. has confirmed plans for a full-service collision-repair facility at 4950 Alabama Highway 157, with a projected $4 million investment in construction and equipment and an anticipated workforce of eight to 10 employees.

The business will operate as BP Collision Dent & Glass, according to written responses provided to The Tribune by Hunter Johnson, Bill Penney's chief operating officer and partner.

The company's official staff directory identifies Johnson in that role.

Johnson identified himself and Zack Penney as the owners and named P&JBS LLC as the entity associated with the development.

The $4 million figure covers construction and equipment, Johnson said. Land costs are separate.

He said PJ Land LLC purchased the property, with the transaction closing Dec. 30, 2025.

Plans call for 20 repair bays, one paint booth, an alignment rack, a frame machine and calibration equipment, according to Johnson.

"Repairs will be done at the facility on site," Johnson said.

The Cullman location would also provide a place for customers to drop off some vehicles for repairs at the company's Huntsville facility, he said.

The business would therefore offer on-site repairs as well as access to the company's existing collision operation.

Johnson said the company holds certifications covering 17 vehicle brands, including Lexus, Audi, Honda, Mazda and Volkswagen. His response did not specify which certifications would apply directly to the Cullman facility and which would involve repairs performed in Huntsville.

Hiring has begun for positions including painters, body technicians, estimators and office customer service representatives, Johnson said. He projected a total staff of eight to 10 people.

The company's confirmation provides a business name and operating plan for a project previously identified in a published building-permit report. A Sept. 4 entry in Hville Blast's report listed CSS Building Co. LLC as the builder at 4950 Alabama Highway 157 and reported a permit valuation of $2,179,672. The publication attributed its permit information to Report Construction LLC.

Johnson's $4 million estimate includes construction and equipment, with the property purchase accounted for separately.

Bill Penney's existing operations include Toyota dealerships in Huntsville and Jasper and a collision center in Huntsville, according to the company's locations directory.

Johnson said the Cullman business would add to those operations.

"This will be additional business for us," Johnson said.

He said the location would serve customers of the company's Jasper dealership and provide another drop-off option for customers from Birmingham and south Alabama seeking manufacturer-certified collision repairs.





Notice is hereby given to all owners, secured parties and lienholders of the following described motor vehicles, which I have a right to sell at public auction, to the highest bidder, in accordance with the State of Alabama abandoned motor vehicle law, Statues, Chapter 13, Section 1-8, Title 32 and Alabama Law Act Number 83-494-S-80, as per Legislative Act 2015-470:

2002 Chevrolet Tahoe VIN:1GNEC13Z32J238605

2010 Nissan Frontier VIN:1N6AD0ER6AC448353

2005 Chevrolet Equinox VIN:2CNDL23FX56060902

2002 Buick Park Avenue VIN:1G4CW54K324232006

2001 Ford F-150 VIN:1FTZX17231NB75444

2023 Toyota Corolla VIN:5YFB4MDE9PP004963

2001 Honda CR-V VIN:JHLRD28471S019992

These vehicles will be sold on October 30, 2026 at 9:00 A.M. for towing/storage fees if not claimed. Located at Hammock Auto Sales, 17 County Road 406, Cullman, Alabama 35057, 256-775-3754.

PB MIN Book 247 Page 232
Recorded in Above Book and Page
09/24/2026 9 11AM
Tammy Brown
Judge of Probate
Cullman County, AL
1 Page(s)
ED

STATE OF ALABAMA * IN THE PROBATE COURT
*
CULLMAN COUNTY * CASE NO. PC 2026-380

IN RE: THE ESTATE OF FRANKLIN D. BUTTS, DECEASED.

NOTICE OF APPOINTMENT TO BE PUBLISHED BY PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE

Letters Testamentary on the Estate of said deceased have been granted to Stuart L. Butts on the 23rd day of September 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.

Stuart L. Butts
Personal Representative

To the publisher of *The Cullman Tribune:*

Please cause the above notice to be published once a week for three successive weeks in said newspaper, and thereafter forward an Affidavit of Publication to the Judge of Probate.

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 CUILLMAN COUNTY, ALABAMA

IN RE: THE ESTATE OF *
JAMES OLEN REID, * **CASE NO.: PC2026-369**
Deceased. *

NOTICE OF PUBLICATION

Letters of Administration having been granted to **ADRIENNE N. WHITEHURST** as Personal Representative of the Estate of **JAMES OLEN REID**, deceased, on the 17th day of September, 2026, 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 will be barred.

Adrienne N. Whitehurst
Personal Representative

Erin G. Adams
Attorney for Petitioner
5000 Grantswood Road, Suite 120
Birmingham, Alabama 35210

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

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

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

IN THE PROBATE COURT OF CULLMAN COUNTY, ALABAMA

IN RE: The Estate of)
DONALD JOE LYNN) CASE NO.: PC 2026 - 296
Deceased.)

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

TAKE NOTICE that Letters of Administration have been granted to Douglas E. Harris, as Administrator of the Estate of Donald Joe Lynn, deceased, on the 9th day of September, 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.

Douglas E Harris
Douglas E. Harris

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 CUILLMAN COUNTY, ALABAMA

IN RE: THE ESTATE OF *
IRA STONEY LEE MILBURN, * **CASE NO.: PC2026-242**
Deceased. *

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

Letters Testamentary having been granted to Nathan Milburn as Personal Representative of the Estate of Ira Stoney Lee Milburn deceased, on the 10th day of September, 2026, 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 will be barred.

Nathan Milburn
Personal Representative

Jerry L. Kilgo
Attorney for Petitioner
421 3rd Avenue SE Suite 245
Cullman, Alabama 35055

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

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

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

IN THE PROBATE COURT OF CULLMAN COUNTY, ALABAMA

IN RE: THE ESTATE OF)
BETTY KING DOOLEY AKA)
BETTY RENE BELL DOOLEY,) CASE NO.: PC2026-288
Deceased.)

NOTICE OF HEARING
PETITION FOR THE PROBATE OF LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT OF BETTY KING DOOLEY, DECEASED

TO: JIM LEE DOOLEY, TIMOTHY JOHN DOOLEY, SHANNON JAY DOOLEY, SHELTON SHANE DOOLEY, HOPE DOOLEY DUNN, HEATHER RUTH HARRIS, WILLIAM JACKSON DOOLEY, GENNEVA MAE CONANT AND ANY KNOWN AND UNKNOWN NEXT-OF-KINS OR INTERESTED PARTIES OF BETTY KING DOODLEY AKA BETTY RENE BELL DOOLEY

Petition for the Probate of Last Will and Testament of Betty King Dooley, Deceased filed by April Dooley Nunnelley, Personal Representative, through Attorney, Laura D. Jacobs has been set for hearing on **7th day of January, 2027, at 11:00a.m.** before Tammy Brown, Judge of Probate.

All persons are hereby given notice to appear, and contest said Petition if they see proper.

Cullman County Courthouse
Probate Office
500 2nd Avenue SW
Room 101
Cullman, Alabama 35055

DONE this 23rd day of September, 2026.

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

To the Publisher: The Cullman Tribune
Please publish the above notice three (3) successive weeks in said newspaper and send an affidavit of publication to the Judge of Probate.

Laura D. Jacob
2310 Market Place Suite B
Huntsville, Alabama 35801

IN RE: THE ESTATE OF * IN THE PROBATE COURT OF
*
OLEN LEO POPE, * CULLMAN COUNTY, ALABAMA
*
deceased. * CASE NO. PC 2026-144

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

TAKE NOTICE that Letters Testamentary having been granted to Glenda Gale Pope, as Personal Representative of the Estate of Olen Leo Pope, deceased, on the 9th day of September, 2026, 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 will be barred.

DONE this the 9th day of September, 2026.

Tammy Brown
TAMMY BROWN, PROBATE JUDGE

TO: Publisher
The Cullman Tribune

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

Attorney for Petitioner:
Michael J. Baggett
BAGGETT & WILSON, LLC
206 Ninth Street Southwest, Suite 102
Cullman, AL 35055
256/737-0740

IN THE PROBATE COURT OF CULLMAN COUNTY, ALABAMA

IN RE: THE ESTATE OF *
MARY ROBINSON, * CASE NO PC 2026-320
Deceased. *

NOTICE OF HEARING
PETITION FOR LETTERS TESTAMENTARY AND PROBATE OF THE LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT OF MARY ROBINSON, DECEASED, AND APPOINTMENT OF PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE OVER ESTATE

TO: JOEY ROBINSON AND ANY KNOWN OR UNKNOWN NEXT-OF-KIN OR INTERESTED PARTIES OF MARY ROBINSON

Petition for Letters Testamentary and Probate of the Last Will and Testament of Mary Robinson, Deceased, and Appointment of Personal Representative over Estate, filed by Robert Wayne Meadows, Petitioner, through Attorney John Eric Burnum has been scheduled for the **17th day of November, 2026, at 11:00 a.m.,** before Tammy Brown, Judge of Probate, Cullman County, Alabama.

All persons are hereby given notice to appear and contest said petition if they think proper.

Cullman County Courthouse
500 2nd Avenue SW
Room 101
Cullman, Alabama 35055

Done this the 24th day of September, 2026.

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

To the Publisher: The Cullman Tribune

Please publish the above notice three (3) successive weeks is said newspaper and send Proof of Publication to the Judge of Probate.

John Eric Burnum
Attorney for Petitioner
14414 Court Street
Moulton, Alabama 35650

STATE OF ALABAMA)

NOTICE OF SHERIFF'S SALE

COUNTY OF CULLMAN)

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

Date & Time of Sale: *[Day, Month Date, 2026, at 11:00 (a.m.) p.m.]* 19th October

Sale Location: Cullman County Courthouse East Entrance
500 Second Avenue, S.W.
Cullman, Alabama 35055

Writ of Execution Parties: SouthPoint Bank v. Cody Hurt

By virtue of an Execution issued to me by Cullman County, Alabama 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 Cody Hurt, real property located in Cullman County, Alabama described as follows:

From the point where the New Prospect Church Road intersects a private road known as the Lalon Edwards Road for the point of beginning. Thence go South (105 feet, deed) field measurement 140 feet to an existing 1/2 inch iron pipe, thence West along the South line of above property 420 feet to the East bank of Cone Mill Branch, thence meandering along said branch 490 feet more or less to a point on the South right of way of County Road 38, thence meandering along said South right of way 555 feet, more or less, to the point of beginning, being a part of the East half of the Southeast Quarter, Section 24, Township 12 South, Range 4 West.

Property Address: 4469 County Road 38, Hanceville, Alabama 35077

Parcel ID: 27-06-24-0-000-017.000

Source of title: Pursuant to the description provided in Plaintiff's Writ of Execution issued on or about July 20, 2026 in case DV-2026-900066.00 in the District 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 Cody Hurt, in and to the above-described property on the date listed above, subject to all prior encumbrances of record.

Dated this the 11th day of September 2026.

BY: Matt Gentry, Sheriff
Sheriff Matt Gentry

To the Cullman Times:

Please publish for once a week for three (3) consecutive weeks:

September 12 - September 26, 2026

LEGALS

Notice is hereby given that CROM, LLC whose office address and phone number are as follows: 250 S.W. 36th Terrace Gainesville, FL 32607 and (352) 372-3436, has completed all work on the Utilities Board of the City of Cullman Water Treatment Plant Improvements Contract No. 5 Inspection, Cleaning & Rehabilitation of Ground Storage Clearwell Tanks. 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).

Legal Notice

Surplus property of Wallace State Community College (Hanceville Campus) will be offered for sale on the website www.govdeals.com Various sales will occur on this website, please check the www.govdeals.com website weekly to see any current sales. This is a government auction website and you MUST be registered on the website to bid on any items. You may view the surplus property to be sold without registration. The govdeals.com website will contain detailed information including descriptions and photos. Items may be inspected by APPOINTMENT ONLY: Monday – Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Contact Wesley Sams at inventory@wallacestate.edu to schedule any appointments. All items listed are to be sold "AS IS, WHERE IS". Wallace State Community College reserves the right to reject any or all bids.

Book 140 Page 975
Recorded in Above Book and Page
09/10/2026 8 33AM
Tammy Brown
Judge of Probate
Cullman County, AL
1 Page(s)
ED

IN THE PROBATE COURT OF MARSHALL COUNTY, ALABAMA

IN RE: THE ESTATE OF *
JOHNNY PIERCE STEWART, * CASE NO.: PC2025-429
Deceased. *

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

TAKE NOTICE that Letters of Administration having been granted to JASON PAUL WHITEHEAD, as Personal Representative of the Estate of JOHNNY PIERCE STEWART, deceased, on the 9th day of September, 2026, 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.

JASON PAUL WHITEHEAD
Personal Representative

David P. Dunford
Attorney for Petitioner
317 W Market St. Suite 201
Athens, AL 35611
256-620-0007

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

IN THE PROBATE COURT OF CULLMAN COUNTY, ALABAMA

IN RE: THE ESTATE OF)
JIMMY WILLIAMSON,) CASE NO.: PC2024-439
Deceased.)

NOTICE OF HEARING
PETITION TO PROBATE WILL AND FOR LETTERS OF TESTAMENTARY AND AMENDMENT TO PETITION TO PROBATE WILL AND FOR LETTERS OF TESTAMENTARY

TO: JAMES SKINNER, TIM HESTERLY, ANDY MORRIS, LYNN WILLIAMS, FELICIA HULSEY AND ANY KNOWN AND UNKNOWN NEXT-OF-KINS OR INTERESTED PARTIES OF JIMMY WILLIAMSON

Petition to Probate Will and for Letters of Testamentary, filed by Diane Skinner, by and through Attorney, C. Blake West, *and Amendment to Petition to Probate Will and for Letters of Testamentary* filed by, C. Blake West, Attorney for Personal Representative, Diane Skinner, has been set for hearing on **7th day of January, 2027, at 10:00a.m.** before Tammy Brown, Judge of Probate.

All persons are hereby given notice to appear, and contest said Petition if they see proper.

Cullman County Courthouse
Probate Office
500 2nd Avenue SW
Room 101
Cullman, Alabama 35055

DONE this 23rd day of September, 2026.

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

To the Publisher: The Cullman Tribune
Please publish the above notice three (3) successive weeks in said newspaper and send an affidavit of publication to the Judge of Probate.

C. Blake West
412 4th Avenue SW Ste 270
Cullman, AL 35055

Cullman County, AL
1 Page(s)

STATE OF ALABAMA * IN THE PROBATE COURT
COUNTY OF CULLMAN * CASE NO. AD2026-048

IN THE MATTER OF THE ADOPTION PETITION OF DANIEL LEE SWINDOLL and CHARLOTTE LOUISE SVENSON SWINDOLL.

NOTICE OF ADOPTION PROCEEDINGS

Notice to: CASEY MARIE BURTON,
RUSSELL ALFRED AUSTIN and
ANY UNKNOWN FATHER OF D.M.C.

Please take notice that a Petition for Adoption of D.M.C., a minor child born June 21, 2024, to Casey Marie Burton was filed on the 28th day of August, 2026, in the Probate Court of Cullman County by Petitioners Daniel Lee Swindoll and Charlotte Louise Svenson Swindoll. If you should contest this adoption, you must file a written response within thirty (30) days of the date of the last publication herein with counsel for said Petitioners, whose name and address are as shown below, and with the Clerk of the said Probate Court of Cullman County, Alabama, 500 2nd Avenue SW, Cullman, Alabama 35055. If you fail to respond within thirty (30) days, the court may construe that failure as an implied consent to the adoption of the minor child and as a waiver of the right to appear and of further notice of the adoption proceedings. Additionally, if the adoption is approved, your parental rights, if any, pertaining to the minor child will be terminated by the adoption proceedings.

DONE this 1st day of September, 2026.

Tammy Brown
Tammy Brown
Judge of Probate

To: *THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE* and *THE SELMA TIMES JOURNAL*

PLEASE PUBLISH ONCE A WEEK FOR FOUR SUCCESSIVE WEEKS.

Sherry H. Barrett
SMITH & SMITH ATTORNEYS, LLC
Attorneys for Petitioners
328 1st Avenue SE
Cullman, AL 35055
256-734-4721

Obituary Announcements: Sept. 24-25

Marion Ruttan Harris, 79

It is with deep sadness, yet with faith in the promise of eternal life, that we announce the passing of Marion Harris, a beloved wife, mother, grandmother, great-grandmother, and member of our Sacred Heart Parish family. Marion was born in St. Petersburg, Florida, on Jan. 24, 1947, to Gordon James and Ozell Withers Ruttan. At approximately five years old, her family moved to New Orleans when her father answered the call to ministry and began his studies at Baptist Seminary. Her childhood was spent in several communities throughout South Alabama. At age 14, while her father was serving as minister of the Baptist church in Pleasant Hill, Alabama, Marion met Glenn Harris. Their friendship blossomed into love, and they were married in May 1965. Marion and Glenn were blessed with two daughters. After several years in Selma, Alabama, where Marion worked in early childhood education as a preschool teacher and director and later as a kindergarten teacher at Meadowview Christian School, they moved to Cullman in 1979. Cullman remained their home for many years. Marion worked in retail sales at J.C. Penney and spent nearly 20 years at Ave Maria Grotto before retiring. Her greatest work, however, was the life of faith she shared with those around her. Marion entered the Catholic Church in 1996 and embraced her Catholic faith with a deep love and devotion. She continually studied Sacred Scripture and the teachings of the Catholic Church, becoming a spiritual resource and guiding light for her family and friends. She was often the person others called when they needed help finding a Scripture passage or understanding their faith more deeply. A woman of prayer, Marion was a true prayer warrior and a joyful witness to the love of Our Lord. She loved sharing her faith and encouraging others in their own journey toward Christ. Her wisdom, prayers, and gentle guidance touched many lives and will be deeply missed. Above all, Marion treasured her family. She was happiest when surrounded by her children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren, whom she considered among her greatest blessings. She also held her extended family close to her heart. Marion was preceded in death by her parents. She is survived by her beloved husband of 61 years, Glenn Allen Harris; daughters Arlean Harris Schaefers (Mel) and Glenda Harris Reilly (Rich); grandchildren Robert Schaefers (Kelly), Kathryn Schaefers Neese (Richard), Gabriela Reilly Kudlac (Bryan), Taylor Reilly, and Andreina Reilly; and great-grandchildren Amelia, Isabel, Thomas, and Tessa Neese, Joseph Schaefers, Savannah and Hunter Kudlac, and Mia Reilly. She is also survived by her sister, Sarah Elizabeth Eubanks, and brother, Gordon Ruttan III (Mikki). As we mourn Marion's passing, we give thanks to God for the gift of her life, her witness of faith, and the love she so generously shared. May the Lord whom she loved and served welcome her into His eternal embrace, and may the prayers and love of her family and parish community bring them comfort in the days ahead. "Well done, good and faithful servant... Come, share your master's joy." — Matthew 25:23 All services at Sacred Heart of Jesus Catholic ChurchSaturday, September 26, 2026

9:00 a.m. - Reception of the Body

9:15 a.m. - 10:30 a.m. Visitation with the Harris Family

10:30 a.m. – Rosary of the Blessed Virgin Mary

11:00 a.m. - Memorial Service

Burial to follow at Sacred Heart Cemetery. In Lieu of Flowers. The family suggests donations to Cullman Senior Center, St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, or Sacred Heart School. Eternal rest grant unto Marion, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon her. May her soul, and the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen. Obituary courtesy Sacred Heart of Jesus Catholic Church.

Nicky Leon McClendon, 61

Nicky Leon McClendon, 61, of Vinemont, Alabama, passed away peacefully on Sept. 23, 2026. He was born on Jan. 13, 1965. Nicky was a loving husband, father, grandfather, brother, and friend. He will be deeply missed by all who had the privilege of knowing and loving him. Nicky is survived by his beloved wife, Annette McClendon; his sons, Lyle McClendon (Hannah) and Zac McClendon; his granddaughter, Layla; his sister, Melissa Mann (Brent) and nephew Alex McClendon Mann. He was preceded in death by his parents, Leon and Kay McClendon. Nicky found joy in the simple things in life and especially loved spending time outdoors. He enjoyed panning for gold, fishing, hunting, and raising his coon dogs. These hobbies reflected his adventurous spirit and his appreciation for being outside and enjoying the things he loved. Above all, Nicky will be remembered for the love he had for his family and the memories he created with them. His presence will be greatly missed, but the love and memories he leaves behind will remain in the hearts of his family and friends forever. Memorial services will be held on Sunday, Sept. 27, 2026, from 1-3 p.m. at Cullman Funeral Home, 461 U.S. Highway 278 E, Cullman, AL 35055. Cullman Funeral Home is honored to serve the family. Friends may sign the online guestbook at www.cullmanfuneralhome.com.

Alice Ann Looney, 79

Alice Ann Looney (Nana), 79, of Vinemont, Alabama, passed away on Sept. 19, 2026. Born May 21, 1947, lived a life defined by steady work, openhearted care, and a warmth that made people feel instantly at home. She will be remembered as deeply beloved—someone whose kindness was practical, whose generosity was constant, and whose humor could brighten even an ordinary day. Nana's hard work showed in the many ways she provided for her family and community. In the 1990s, she worked at Sports World Skate Center, and in the 2000s she worked at Cullman Bowling Alley. She didn't simply clock in and out—she made those places part of her family's world, often taking her children to the Skate Center so they could enjoy themselves, meet new people, and build friendships with other kids in the community that lasted. In her care, everyday routines became opportunities for connection. At home, Nana's love was patient and expansive. Her daughters might not have brought home pets, but they brought home friends—and those friends often became family. Nana was always ready to feed and nurture any of her daughters' friends, treating them as her own with a compassionate steadiness that never asked for anything in return. She also made sure her presence was felt where it mattered most: she attended her daughters' events—brownies, band, cheer, dance, baton—front seat and ready, cheering them on and supporting them in everything they did. Proud was an understatement when it came to her son's accomplishments. Between his military background, building a beautiful home for his family and multiple successful business ventures, she held his accomplishments close to her heart with endless pride and never-ending support. Nana found joy in the details, and it shone through in what she loved. She enjoyed canning and made the most beautiful displays, turning each jar into more than a delicious and healthy meal—each one was a small work of art, reflecting her care, her patience, and the pride she took in doing things well. Her community life brought her laughter and companionship. She was a member of the Cullman Moose Lodge and loved to play bingo. She attended Bell Springs Baptist Church, where her steady spirit and kind heart were part of the fabric of the congregation. Nana also knew how to savor life's simple adventures, especially with her best friend, Renee Link. Together they "ran up the roads" and were affectionately called Thelma and Louise—out from 6 a.m.-10 p.m., chasing the fun in yard sales, flea markets, and hours of window shopping, sometimes far from home. When Nana said, "I want to run into town real quick," it could mean a 12-hour adventure across state lines with multiple stops. You might not know where you were going, but you could count on good company, easy laughter, and a day made richer by her presence. Nana was preceded in death by her husband, William Lee Looney (Bill); her father, Floyd Stroup; her mother, Cara-Betty Stroup; her brother, Clifford Stroup; her sister, Dewnia Colbert, and nephew, Little Ricky Colbert. She is survived by her children, Relinda Harbison (Jonathan), Rebecca McGriff (Ricky Monfort), Taneasha Flanagan (Patrick), and Cliff White (Starsha); her siblings, Brenda McFall (Chester), Willie Stroup (Lorna), Randy Stroup (Stacy Freyvogel), and Roger Stroup (Ann); her grandchildren, Taneasha, Austin, Jordan, Keeven, Keyona, Mercedes, Presley, Johnny Ray, Ryder, Carson, Aliyah and Madison; 12 Great Grandchildren along with nieces and nephews, and a host of friends. Pallbearers will be Patrick Flanagan, Austin McGriff, Jordan Lancaster, Keeven Looney, Gavin Brock, and Jayden White. Nana's life was a gift—given in meals shared, rides taken, hands held, and laughter offered freely. Her legacy lives on in the people she loved, the friends she welcomed, and the countless moments she made brighter simply by being there. If you knew Nana then you knew she was a hoot and would tell you what was on her mind, whether you asked or not.She was always picking pecans or peas, canning anything and everything she could, and could never pass up a yard sale or a trip to Glovers. She was stubborn, loving, and completely herself. She was always there for anyone who needed her and took care of so many people. We may have to say goodbye to her, but we won't have to say goodbye to our memories with her, her crazy stories, and her love. We are deeply heartbroken by this loss but forever grateful for all of the laughter, tears, good times, and bad times that we've gotten to share with her. Everywhere Nana went, she left behind a trail of memories, stories, laughter, and a whole lot of love. Goodbye seems like the end but really just means we'll miss you until we see you again. Come share your memories, your stories, and your love as we say goodbye to our Nana. Services will be held at Moss Service Funeral Home in Cullman, Alabama. Guests are welcome to attend her visitation from 9:30 a.m. – 11 a.m. Tuesday, September 29th with a funeral service beginning at 11 a.m. Graveside services will follow at Bell Springs Cemetery, 307 Bell Springs Rd, Falkville, AL 35622.

Danny Lewis Self, 60

Danny Lewis Self, age 60, was born Nov. 8, 1965, in Cullman, Alabama, and passed away Sept. 22, 2026. He lived in Hartselle, Alabama. Danny is survived by his mother, Doris Self, and his brother, Tim Self. He was preceded in death by his father, Benny Self. Visitation will be held at Moss-Service Funeral Home, 1901 Second Ave. NW, Cullman, AL 35055, on Sept. 27, 2026, from 1-2 p.m. A committal service will be held at Etha Baptist Church, 8417 County Road 1545, Cullman, AL 35058, on Sept. 27, 2026, from 3-4 p.m. Those who knew Danny will remember a man whose steady loyalty was not spoken loudly, but lived consistently—through the way he stood by the people he loved and the convictions he carried. His faithfulness showed in the quiet strength of his presence, and in the dependable care he offered to others. In times that required courage, Danny met them with a brave heart and a resolute spirit, facing life with a dignity that will be long remembered. In keeping with a sentiment that captured his spirit simply and sincerely, Danny's final words were: "Roll Tide."

James David Melton, 87

Jim Melton of Vinemont, Alabama, passed away at home, surrounded by family, on Sept. 25, 2026. He was born in Anderson, Indiana, on Feb. 13, 1939, to James and Pauline Melton. He met Tamara Melton in 1955, and they would have celebrated their 66th wedding anniversary this coming Oct. 21. His daughters are Kelly Willenberg (Dale) of Greenville, South Caroline, and Jama Gay (Darrell) of Vinemont, Alabama. He worked for Nicholson File for 42 years, starting in Anderson, and moved his family to Cullman in 1976, where they stayed. He also drove for CARTS for 14 years. He was the proud grandfather of Brandy Troisi (Christopher) of Spartanburg, South Carolina; Mariel Norton (Duncan) of Columbia, South Carolina; Leah Harris (Cody) of Vinemont, Alabama; and Cordale Gay (Amber) of Vinemont, Alabama. Tamara and Jim truly found joy in their children, grandchildren, and thirteen great-grandchildren. Whit Harris, Brenna Troisi, Adaleigh Troisi, Walter Harris, Dale Norton, William Harris, Paxton Norton, Landon Troisi, Addie Gay, Teagan Norton, Wrenlee Harris, Ari Troisi, and Camber Gay. But Jim's love didn't stop there; he was proud of his nieces and nephews in Indiana: Johnna Barnard, Michelle Newton, David Clendenin; in Iowa: Brian Waugh, Todd Waugh; in Georgia: JB Achenbach and Amy Achenbach. Jim and Tammy also had three honorary family members who spent time with them as kids: Jonathan Ryan, Shannon Lee, and Blake Mann. Jim will be remembered for the many years he devoted to square dancing and for the joy he brought to dancers throughout North Alabama and Indiana. He began his career as a square-dance caller in 1970 and spent decades helping keep the tradition of square dancing alive. Over the years, he called dances for clubs throughout the area, including the 8ers in Decatur and Friendship Squares in Cullman. He called Mainstream through Plus dancing and also shared his talents as a line-dance cuer. As a member of CALLERLAB and licensed by both BMI and ASCAP, Jim was also a recording artist with C Bar C Records. His calling took him beyond local dance halls, including an annual role on the staff of the Smoky Mountain Ball in Gatlinburg, Tennessee. In 2022, he was inducted into the Alabama Square Dance Callers Association for his unselfish dedication to benefiting square dancers statewide. Jim Melton's voice may no longer be calling dancers to "promenade," but the friendships he helped create and the memories made on the dance floor will continue to live on.A memorial service for Mr. Melton will be at 1 p.m., Monday, Sept. 28, 2026, at Cullman Funeral Home Chapel, Bro. Steve Rodgers and Bro. Phillip Robinson and family members will officiate. The family will receive friends at the funeral home from 11 a.m.-1 p.m. prior to the service. In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to PrismaHealth-UpstateFoundation.org/Memorials or mail a check and note with Jim Melton's name to: Prisma Health-Upstate Foundation, 300 E. McBee Ave., Ste. 401, Greenville, SC 29601, with Willenberg Endowment in the memo line; OR Sonshine Preschool, 320 3rd Street SE, Cullman, AL 35055, in memory of Jim Melton. Cullman Funeral Home is honored to serve the family. Friends may sign the online guestbook at www.cullmanfuneralhome.com.

Ronnie Joe Westmoreland, 55

Funeral service for Ronnie Joe Westmoreland, 55, of Cullman will be at 2 p.m., Tuesday, Sept. 29, 2026, at Cullman Funeral Home Chapel with interment in Mt. Carmel Cemetery, Rev. John McKoy officiating. The family will receive friends at the funeral home from noon-2 p.m. prior to the service. Cullman Funeral Home is honored to serve the family. Ronnie passed away Thursday, Sept. 24, 2026, at his residence. He was born Dec. 30, 1970. He loved motorcycles, hunting, Alabama football, collecting football hats and being outside. He attended Berlin Baptist. Ronnie loved his family and was especially proud of his grandson, Finley. Ronnie was preceded in death by his step-father, George Walker; grandparents, J.T. and Eula Westmoreland, Ruth and Fred Bailey. Survivors include his mother, Doris Walker; father, Ron Westmoreland; daughters, Callie (John) DeFore, Casey Westmoreland; brothers, Rex Westmoreland, Ray Westmoreland, Chris Westmoreland; step-brothers, Richard (Dana) Walker, Michael (Ladonna) Walker; sister, Rita Westmoreland; step-sister, Sherry (Joe) Hendrix; grandson, Finley DeFore; aunts and uncles, Lester and Mary Loyd, Joann and Gordon Hughes, Wanda Bailey; nieces, nephews, family and friends. Pallbearers will be Dudley Hall, Terry Watwood, Steven Waldrop, Jamie Martinez, Ethan Bice, Donnie Anderson. Friends may sign the online guestbook at www.cullmanfuneralhome.

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Commission (from Front)

Liz Tankersley
liz@cullmantribune.com

CULLMAN, Ala. - The Cullman County Commission adopted its fiscal year 2026-2027 budget Sept. 22, with funding going toward county operations, roads and infrastructure, public safety, parks, water and sanitation.

The new fiscal year begins Oct. 1, 2026, and ends Sept. 30, 2027.

The county's major funds total approximately $94.62 million, excluding transfers between funds. Of that amount, the General Fund accounts for $33.89 million.

The FY 2026-2027 General Fund budget, including transfers to other departments and funds, totals approximately $40.1 million, an 8.64% increase from the $36.91 million budgeted for FY 2025-2026. The county anticipates approximately $38.6 million in General Fund revenue.

Sales and property taxes make up the largest sources of General Fund revenue. The county expects to receive approximately $15.93 million in county sales tax, $10.63 million in county property taxes, $2.64 million in simplified sellers use tax, $2.29 million in fees and billings and $1.65 million in motor vehicle property taxes.

The Sheriff's Office and jail make up the largest portion of General Fund expenditures, with approximately $19.28 million budgeted, or 48.1% of the fund. Other expenditures include approximately $1.87 million for the Commission Office, $1.76 million for the Revenue Commission, $1.51 million for the Probate Office and $1.39 million for courthouse maintenance.

The budget includes a 4.14% increase for personnel, consisting of a 1% cost-of-living adjustment and a 3.14% step increase. According to the county's budget presentation, the increase is aimed at keeping the county's pay scale competitive.

Road expenditures are budgeted at approximately $14.15 million, including $4.4 million for paving materials.

The road budget also includes funding for employee-related expenses, road paving and maintenance, Rebuild Alabama projects, the county shop and garage and construction equipment and vehicles.

The county's parks budget totals approximately $3.42 million. Smith Lake Park accounts for approximately $1.51 million, while approximately $838,000 each is budgeted for Stony Lonesome OHV Park and Sportsman Lake Park. Another $232,149 is budgeted for the Agricultural Center.

The parks system expects approximately $1.42 million in user fees, with approximately $1.83 million transferred from the General Fund.

The county also anticipates a Rural Trails Program grant for Stony Lonesome OHV Park that will be used to improve accommodations and upgrade facilities.

The County Water Department is funded entirely through user fees.

Major expenses include water purchased for resale, employee-related expenses, materials and supplies, maintenance and improvements and bond and interest payments.

Sanitation has a FY 2026-2027 budget of approximately $9.33 million, a 3.99% increase from the previous fiscal year. Its largest expense is approximately $4.06 million in employee-related costs. Other expenses include $1.1 million in tipping fees, approximately $1.01 million for equipment purchases, $888,500 for debt service and $560,000 for fuel.

Several other county funds will also see budget increases in FY 2026-2027. The Commission on Aging budget increases 11.78% to approximately $1.44 million, while Reappraisal increases 9.27% to approximately $2.07 million. State Juvenile Probation increases 27.38% to $405,739, and Economic Development increases 20.52% to $449,962.

The CARTS budget totals approximately $2.56 million, an increase of 0.99%. According to the county, the operational budget remains relatively flat, while additional funding will go toward fleet safety upgrades. Buses that were expected to be purchased during FY 2025-2026 were not purchased due to contract changes and are now expected to be purchased during FY 2026-2027.

The Commission also adopted a Fund Balance Reserve Policy beginning in FY 2026-2027.

The policy establishes a minimum General Fund reserve equal to 16.7% of General Fund expenditures and sets a target reserve of 25%.

According to the county, maintaining reserves above the minimum will help provide funding for state and federal grant matches and prepare the county for disaster-related road and bridge expenses.

Prior to entering any Alabama school or child care center, an up-to-date Certificate of Immunization must be submitted for each child.

www.alabamapublichealth.gov/imm

VFC Alabama Vaccines for Children Program · Alabama Public Health · IMM Immunization Division

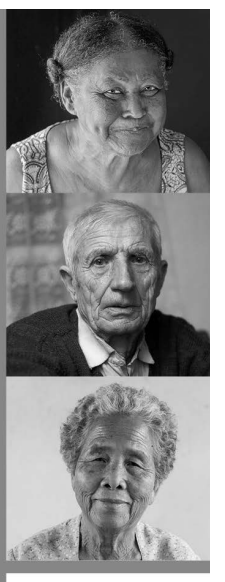


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Alabama Department of Human Resources

PAYMENT TRANSITION

Important Notice to Cullman County Water & Sanitation Customers

September 25 is the final day Cullman Electric Cooperative (CEC) will accept payments for Cullman County Water & Sanitation accounts. No water or sanitation payments can be accepted between **September 26th through October 4, 2026. Payment processing will resume October 5, 2026 with Cullman County Water Department.**

Grace Period
A grace period will be in effect during the transition period. **Customers will not be penalized for payment delayed due to the temporary system conversion.**

Payments made after September 25th, 2026
Any payment made to Cullman Electric Cooperative after September 25, 2026, will be applied ONLY to electric service accounts. They will not be credited to water or sanitation accounts.

Beginning September 26, 2026:
- All new water service applications/New meter taps
- Move-in and move-out request
- Disconnects
- All other water inquires

Must be handled directly through the Cullman County Water Department.

Automatic Bank & Credit Card Draft (AUTOPAY)
- Any draft established through Cullman Electric Cooperative **WILL NOT TRANSFER** to the new billing system.
- There will be some customers where draft will not come out due to the transition.
- After September drafts are completed, **NO MORE DRAFTS** will be processed until you set up draft directly with Cullman County Water Department.

Customers will need to enroll directly with Cullman County Water Department. To enroll you can go to ccwaterandsanitation.payub.com or come into the office (All this can be done once we go live October 5, 2026)

Sanitation Information
All sanitation information, including service questions, account updates, and other inquiries, should be directed to Cullman County Sanitation.

Cullman County Sanitation: 256-287-1142

Payments
Payments for both water and sanitation services will need to be made at or to the Cullman County Water Department.

Website: ccwaterandsanitation.payub.com
Payment Phone Number (IVR): 888-299-1527
In Office: 2020 Beech Ave SE Cullman, AL 35055 (In person, drop box, and mail)

Thank you for your patience and understanding as we work to improve our customer service and billing process.

LEGALS

STATE OF ALABAMA
PROCLAMATION
BY THE GOVERNOR

WHEREAS the Alabama Legislature at its 2026 Regular Session enacted Act No. 2026-141 (HB436), which ordered an election to be held on a proposed amendment to the Constitution of Alabama of 2022 relating to Cullman County, Alabama; and

WHEREAS notice of this election, together with the proposed amendment, is required by law to be given by proclamation of the Governor, to be published once a week for four successive weeks preceding the date appointed for the election in each newspaper qualified to run legal notices in the county affected;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Kay Ivey, as Governor of the State of Alabama, do hereby give notice, direct, and proclaim that on Tuesday, November 3, 2026, an election will be held in Cullman County, Alabama, in the manner and form provided by law upon the following proposed amendment to the Constitution of 2022 of the State of Alabama:

AMENDMENT PROPOSED BY ACT NO. 2026-141

(a) In Cullman County, an individual 65 years of age or older may claim a senior property tax exemption for ad valorem tax purposes on real property located in the county which is owned by the individual, classified as single-family owner-occupied residential property, and used as the principal place of residence of the individual for not less than five years immediately prior to the tax year for which the individual first claims the senior property tax exemption. The senior property tax exemption shall freeze the assessed value of the property for the year immediately prior to claiming the exemption.

(b) The following provisions shall apply to the individual claiming the senior property tax exemption:

(1) The taxpayer shall continue to receive the senior property tax exemption as long as the taxpayer continues to use the property as his or her principal place of residence.

(2) The individual shall continue to be eligible to claim a homestead exemption and any other exemption authorized by law on the property.

(3) The property shall continue to be subject to any millage rate changes on the property.

(4) The assessed value of any additions to the property after claiming the senior property tax exemption shall be added to the assessed value of the property and subject to ad valorem tax based on the increase in the assessed value of the addition after the taxpayer claims the senior property tax exemption.

(5) This exemption may be claimed beginning October 1, 2027, for the value of the property on October 1, 2026.

(6) This exemption must be claimed in writing with the Cullman County Revenue Commissioner between October 1 and December 31.

FURTHER, I proclaim and direct that this proclamation shall be published once a week for the four successive weeks immediately preceding Tuesday, November 3, 2026, in each newspaper qualified to run legal notices in Cullman County, Alabama.

BILLY BOB'S STORIES AND STUFF

Which doctor should I call?

Bill King
Tribune
Contributor



I used to hear old folks talk about this, but I never thought it would happen to me.

Sure enough, I believe I have surely crossed that line over into their camp. Now, I'm not admitting that I'm old.

I do have family members and friends who are older than me, but, honestly, not as many as I once had. I have realized, quite a while back, that I have more years on this earth behind me than I do ahead of me.

I used to look forward to the days when I could retire from working full time and slow down a little. I retired from full-time almost five years ago, but I am as busy as ever. I may be even busier, but some of it is not doing the same things I used to do.

Part of that may be because I can't do some of those things anymore. Part of it is because I don't want to do some of those things. I also have so many appointments that they eat up much of my time. Many of those appointments are with my doctors.

Like a car that has gotten older, as we get older our body parts have to be tuned up, patched up, taken out and sometimes replaced.

When I was growing up in Rainsville, Alabama, we only had two doctors, but not both of them at the same time.

Dr. Sanderson was the first one, but since he moved to Arizonia when I was about 3 or 4, I don't really remember him. Then Dr. William Gibson came and served as was our doctor the rest of my years in Rainsville.

I moved away in 1975, but Dr. Gibson kept his practice until 1995. He passed away in 2024 at the age of 97. The decorated World War II veteran kept me upright and running when I was kid... no matter the problem. When I was chewed up by a Doberman Pinscher, it was Dr. Gibson who stitched me up and put me back together.

He was kind of like our Doc Adams on "Gunsmoke." "Gunsmoke" was a staple at our house. It came on the air the same year I began breathing air.

Dr. Adams was the only doctor in Dodge. That wasn't a problem, because he could fix just about anything. He was a general doctor, surgeon, counselor and something of a psychiatrist, especially where Festus was concerned.

He patched up Matt Dillion more times than Miss Kitty could handle. During the 20 years that the show aired, Marshall Dillion was shot in both arms, both shoulders, both legs, both sides of his torso, in the chest, in his back, and his forehead was grazed three times.

All total, he was shot around 56 times, but amazingly, he never died from any of them. That was because of Doc Adams. He could treat, cure and fix almost any problem, but that was the magic of television.

In these days of specialized medicine, we don't have just one doctor who does it all.

Now, I'm not complaining, because I'm still here and I can still see, partly because of some of those doctors.

I don't have just one doctor anymore; I think I have nine of them. It seems like I visit one of them every week. My social calendar is taken up by doctor visits! The good news is that in the 1870s, when Doc Adams practiced, the average life span in America was only around 40, but today the average is approximately 79! That gives me plenty of time to visit all nine of my doctors!

Bill King can be reached at bkpreach@yahoo.com.

HISTORY

Files from Yesteryear: Sept. 26, 1937

Files from Yesteryear: Sept. 26, 1937

Cullman Bearcats Open the Football Season Next Friday

Friday afternoon at 3 o'clock Cullman will meet Ardmore and open the football season. This is the first time for the Bearcats to meet Ardmore.

The coming season is expected to be an interesting one for local fans since Cullman is playing six out of nine games at home.

The boys have been reporting for practice for three weeks now and hope by Friday to be in good condition. There are only 6 letter men back this year. This means of course that the team will be principally of inexperienced men. The Bearcats are expected to be favored with improved kicking this year with the addition of Sonny Burke and Paul Wright to the squad to do the booting.

Captain Hall is expected to turn in a good account of himself in a backfield position. Kelly, Trimble, Aldridge, Wolf, Barnett, Richter, Hart, Weaver, McMinn, Knight and Wright are expected to earn positions in the line.

The boys have plenty of tough work to do between now and Thanksgiving, but spirits are high and a successful season is expected.

Cullman County Singing Convention

We wish to remind the singers and also those who enjoy singing, that the Cullman county annual singing convention will meet on Sunday, Oct. 6th at the city school auditorium. Every one is cordially invited to come and help make it a day of song and praise for the master.

J. D. Burns, Secretary.
Ellis Burns, Chairman.

Elementary Schools to Open Monday, Oct. 14

Legislature Makes Important Changes in School Law.

All the elementary schools of the county will open on Monday, October 14. It is believed that by this date the crops will be gathering and that there will be nothing to prevent all the children of the county entering school on the first day. Parents are requested to cooperate in attaining the 100% enrollment of the children on the opening day.

Trustees and patrons are urged to make all necessary arrangements for the beginning of the school work in proper order. The grounds and building should be thoroughly cleaned and supplies arranged for in order that the teachers and the children will not have to spend several days after the opening of school to get this work done. A loss of one day of our short term to the child is of serious consequence.

Among the changes which the recent session of the legislature made in the school laws, the three set out below will be of special interest to the school patrons of this county.

1. Incidental fees in grades one to six were abolished. No incidental fees will be collected this year in those grades. Incidental expenses in those grades will be paid from the public school funds.

It is very important that all parents bear in mind that incidental fees will be necessary in all grades above the sixth. The law still provides that incidental fees in grades seven to twelve shall be assessed and collected as in the past. Incidental expenses in these grades must be taken care of from fees collected.

2. A law was passed providing for textbooks at state expense in the first grade during the school year 1935-36; for the first two grades during the school year 1936-37; and for the first three grades during the school year 1937-38. Observe that during this school year now beginning the books will be furnished at state expense only in the first grade.

The books will be furnished through the office of the county superintendent directly to the principals and the teachers of the schools. No child may come to the superintendent's office and get a book. He will get his book from his teacher in the school which he attends.

3. The law fixing the age at which a beginning child may enter school was changed. Any child becoming six years of age on or before the first day of October, 1935, may enter school this year.

The law provides that beginners should enter at the beginning of the term and not later than the first day of the third week. Parents are urged to comply strictly with the provision of the law.



POET'S CORNER

A Poem About Dad

Author Unknown



We little knew that morning
That God would call your name.
In life, we loved you dearly;
In death we do the same.
It broke our hearts to lose you,
But you did not go alone
For part of us went with you
The day God called you home.
You left us beautiful memories,
Your love is still our guide.
And though we cannot see you,
You're always by our side.
Our family chain is broken
And nothing seems the same.
But as God calls us one by one
The chain will link again.

In memory of my father
Boston Hale 5-27-37 -9-19-26

CULLMAN TRIBUNE WORD SEARCH

SEPT. 26

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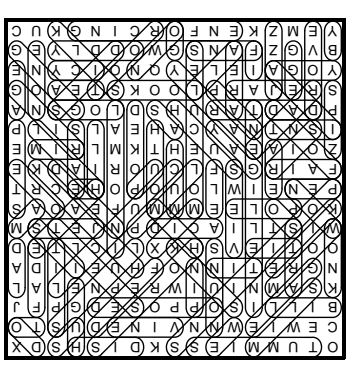
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CULLMAN TRIBUNE SUDOKU

SEPT. 26

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9	1	4	5	6	3	8	7	2
2	6	9	3	5	7	4	1	8
3	4	8	9	1	2	5	6	7
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COLUMN

Coming out of the closet

Joe Hobby
Contributor

I laugh when I think about college students today. They go off to school with interior designers, then buy curtains, expensive sheets, nice furniture, throw pillows and wonderful décor for their apartments and dorm rooms.

I believe this is fundamentally wrong. College may be the only time in your life when it is perfectly acceptable to live in poverty. It's a rite of purification.

During my four years, I experienced just about every type of college accommodation there was: the dorm, the apartment and the fraternity house.

And one semester, I lived in a closet. Really.

It was certainly not an extra bedroom. This apartment could barely sleep two people, and I'm pretty sure the fire marshal would have had some questions about the setup we came up with. But it worked. Thank goodness.

During the second half of my freshman year, I roomed with two of my high school friends in an apartment. And I actually had a bed.

The following semester, Uncle Sam claimed one of my roomies, throwing our living arrangements askew. And somehow, due to a communication breakdown – I like to think it was – I found myself starting the fall semester with no place to live. Essentially homeless.

Before I began searching for refrigerator boxes to live in, or worse, going back to a dorm, I approached two friends who were splitting a one-bedroom apartment. I appealed to their sense of decency.

They wanted to help. The problem was that there simply wasn't anywhere to put another person.

This was an efficiency apartment, and that was being generous. I had seen more space in a Volkswagen. There was barely enough room to hang a Farrah Fawcett poster.

However, once I stepped into the closet, I had a stroke of genius. Or maybe it was just a stroke.

"What if I sleep on a mattress in the closet and we split the rent three ways?"

They looked at me. I looked at them. And apparently nobody could come up with a better plan.

At some level, it appealed to all three of us. Like most college students, we were struggling financially, so it seemed like a win-win situation. I would have a place to live, and they would have another person helping with the rent. The only difference was that at night, my bed was a mattress in the closet.

And so it began. One of my new roommates, in a thoughtful gesture, or perhaps as a semester-long practical joke, strung some beads across the opening of the closet to give me a little privacy. Classy.

It didn't turn the closet into a master suite, but at least I had a semblance of a doorway.

There was definitely an adjustment period for all three of us. Unfortunately for me, one of my roommates had an 8 o'clock class on the day I had a 10 o'clock. That meant he was rooting around the closet for his shoes or a sweatshirt or a raincoat while I was trying to get an extra hour of sleep. At times like that, it might have been easier to sleep in a cardboard box.

To further complicate matters, I had acquired a girlfriend during the summer, and those beads offered very little in the way of privacy.

In the unlikely event you've tried to maintain a romantic relationship while sleeping in a closet, let me save you some trouble. Lying on a mattress in a closet, with someone else's T-shirts and sneakers as your only decor, can be a serious mood killer.

A few times during the semester, both roommates would go home for the weekend and give me a couple of days of normalcy. I got to spend a couple of nights in a real bed. It felt like the Presidential Suite at the Waldorf Astoria rather than a student apartment that was smaller than Barbie's house.

Honestly, once you got past the humiliation of sleeping in a closet, it really wasn't that bad. Aside from the seven hours a night I spent sleeping, it was pretty much like being a visitor. And being in the closet muffled the sound in case anybody in the bedroom was snoring. The bathroom arrangements were managed without much problem – remember, it was three guys. And we had a little more money in our pockets – money that was probably funneled into fast-food joints or student bars downtown. Some of it may have been wasted, too.

In the meantime, I had made some connections with guys at a fraternity I really liked.

So, when the spring semester rolled around, I traded my closet for a bed in a frat house. I stayed there until I graduated.

It was a lot like the dorm from the first semester, except it was more intimate. There was one floor, and I knew everybody. We also ate together, socialized together and grew up together.

And all of that happened after I finally came out of the closet.

Joe Hobby is a barbecue-loving comedian from Alabama who wrote for Jay Leno for many years. Find more of Joe's stories on his blog at mylifeasahobby.blogspot.com. Follow him on Facebook at www.facebook.com/JoeHobbyComedian.

YOUTH FOOTBALL

Fairview sweeps Addison in week 5 makeup games

Jared Spears, Bobi Jo Creel, Sammy Confer

FAIRVIEW, Ala. – Cash Hill scored twice to help Fairview rally past Addison 13-7 in the Fireplug game Thursday, Sept. 24, beginning a three-game sweep for the Aggies in week 5 youth football makeup action.

Fairview also defeated Addison 34-0 in Wee-Wee and 47-0 in Pee-Wee, outscoring the Bulldogs 94-7 across the three divisions.

The games were originally scheduled for Saturday, Sept. 19, before extreme heat forced their cancellation.

Addison at Fairview

Fireplug my JV bomb mm m: Fairview 13, Addison 7

Addison capitalized on a Fairview fumble on the opening possession, scoring on a long touchdown run during its first possession to take a 7-0 lead.

Hill answered with a first-quarter touchdown for Fairview, but the Aggies' conversion attempt failed, leaving Addison ahead 7-6.

Neither team scored in the second quarter, and the Bulldogs carried their one-point lead into halftime.

Hill scored his second touchdown with 4:35 remaining in the third quarter to put Fairview ahead. The Aggies held Addison scoreless throughout the second half to secure the 13-7 victory.

Wee-Wee: Fairview 34, Addison 0

Fairview shut out Addison 34-0 in the Wee-Wee game.

Pee-Wee: Fairview 47, Addison 0

Connor Widner and Eli Calloway contributed touchdowns as Fairview defeated Addison 47-0 in the Pee-Wee game, giving the Aggies a second shutout in the series.

Vinemont at Cold Springs

Cold Springs won both games against Vinemont, taking the Fireplug contest 19-8 and the Wee-Wee game 12-0.

No Pee-Wee game was played because Cold Springs does not field a team in that division.

Good Hope at Hanceville

Good Hope defeated Hanceville 29-15 in the Fireplug game.

Remaining week 5 makeup games

Holly Pond is scheduled to visit West Point on Tuesday, Sept. 29, beginning at 6 p.m. The series includes Fireplug, Wee-Wee and Pee-Wee games.



(SAMMY CONFER / JARED SPEARS / THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

Calvert, Corder named CCBOE/AmFirst Employees of the Month

Staff Reports
Contributor

CULLMAN, Ala. – Cullman County Schools and AmFirst have named Good Hope Primary School Pre-K Teacher Brittney Calvert and Cullman County Child Development Center employee Jeff Corder as their Employees of the Month, recognizing their work supporting students and fellow employees.

The school system announced the honors Sept. 24. Calvert was selected as Teacher of the Month, while Corder, who works in maintenance and custodial services at the CDC, was named Staff Member of the Month.

Calvert has taught Pre-K for several years. According to the school system, she works to meet the needs of each student while also helping other pre-K teachers across the district.

"Brittney works hard to make sure every child in her classroom feels supported, included and successful," said CCBOE Preschool Coordinator Kristy Harris. "She is also always willing to help other Pre-K teachers across the district."

Following a recent visit by the district's Pre-K coach and a state coach facilitator, Calvert's classroom is being considered as a state mentor classroom for Pre-K, according to the release. She also welcomes other teachers into her classroom to observe and learn.

The recognition comes as early childhood education opportunities expand locally. Good Hope Primary is among six Cullman County schools listed by the state as receiving newly funded First Class Pre-K classrooms for the 2026-27 school year.

At the Child Development Center, Corder was recognized for his work ethic and willingness to address needs beyond his regular responsibilities.

"Jeff goes above and beyond every day, and his work ethic is truly unmatched," said CDC Principal Josh Davis. "He cares about our school family and is always willing to lend a helping hand."

Davis said Corder considers his work at the CDC his mission field and expresses his faith through his service and care for others.

AmFirst sponsors the school system's Employee of the Month program and provides each recipient with a $100 gift card.

Ashford Gardens (from Front)

Noah Galilee
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CULLMAN, Ala. – A planned 56-unit apartment development on County Road 770 has reached another stage of development following a state housing-credit award and review by the City of Cullman Planning Commission.

Ashford Gardens is planned as a new-construction family housing development, according to records from the Alabama Housing Finance Authority.

AHFA's 2025 funding records identify Ashford Gardens Ltd. as the project owner and list 56 planned units. Four are included in the agency's disabled/homeless set-aside category.

The project received an allocation of $1,781,761 in housing credits through AHFA's 2025 funding process.

That housing-credit figure should not be interpreted as the total construction cost of the development.

The project subsequently appeared before the Cullman Planning Commission.

The Commission's June 2 agenda identified Ashford Gardens as a proposed apartment complex on County Road 770 and listed its site plan for consideration.

A new construction-permit report provides the latest development.

A permit dated Sept. 7 lists Ashford Gardens Ltd. as owner of a project at 1655 County Road 770 with a valuation of $1,873,710. Fyffe Construction Company Inc. is listed as the contractor.

The publicly available permit summary does not describe what portion of the overall development is covered by that permit. The $1.87 million valuation therefore should not be treated as the final construction cost of the entire 56-unit development.

AHFA's records use an approximate project address of 1668 County Road 770, while the recent permit report uses 1655 County Road 770. The Tribune is seeking clarification on whether the addresses refer to the same development site or different portions of the property.

State records identify the development as family housing financed in part through housing credits, but the records reviewed for this report do not establish the project's expected rents, tenant income requirements, unit mix or anticipated opening date.

ZincFast (from Front)

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HANCEVILLE, Ala. – ZincFast is preparing an expansion of its Hanceville galvanizing operation following approval of a tax abatement by the Hanceville City Council.

The council approved the abatement Sept. 10. Details including the company's planned capital investment, value of the abatement and projected employment were not provided during the public portion of the meeting reviewed by The Tribune.

Separate employment materials from ZincFast provide additional evidence of the project.

The company is currently seeking a maintenance technician for its Hanceville facility and describes the position as joining the operation during what it calls a significant plant expansion.

The job description says the employee will have responsibilities associated with expansion projects, including coordinating with contractors and vendors. The position also involves maintenance of cranes, hoists, furnaces, boilers, electrical equipment and other industrial systems.

The full-time position is advertised at $25-$30 an hour.

ZincFast operates at 301 Industrial Blvd. in Hanceville and is part of Birmingham Fastener.

Birmingham Fastener announced ZincFast in July 2025 as a new company focused on hot-dip galvanizing, a process that applies a protective zinc coating to fabricated steel.

The Hanceville operation handles products ranging from smaller fasteners to larger steel structures.

ZincFast's expansion comes at a property that is also subject to an environmental cleanup plan overseen by the Alabama Department of Environmental Management.

ADEM records show LaBella Associates submitted a voluntary cleanup plan on behalf of ZincFast for the Industrial Boulevard property after soil and groundwater sampling was conducted at the site.

ADEM determined the draft cleanup plan was technically adequate and said remedial work and institutional and engineering controls would be required at the property.

The available ADEM record does not establish that the environmental work was caused by ZincFast's operations, nor does it establish that the cleanup and the newly disclosed plant expansion are connected.

ZincFast began operating in Hanceville in 2025, adding a specialized galvanizing operation to Birmingham Fastener's longstanding presence in the city.

Birmingham Fastener has operated a major distribution facility in Hanceville since 1995.

The company has not yet publicly detailed the size of ZincFast's expansion, additional building square footage, equipment investment, construction schedule or number of jobs expected to be created.



CHASADY WOODS/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE



CHASADY WOODS/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

Executive Director of the Cullman County Tourism Bureau, Harmony Heard.



CHASADY WOODS/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

President of the Cullman Area Chamber of Commerce, Joey Orr.



CHASADY WOODS/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

Director of Cullman Parks, Recreation & Sports Tourism, Nathan Anderson.



CHASADY WOODS/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

2023 Burgermeister, Dale Greer and his wife, Larraine Greer.



CHASADY WOODS/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

Edgar and Beth Veigl

Burgermeister (from Front)

Chasady Woods
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CULLMAN, Ala. – The 2026 Burgermeister Ball took place Thursday, Sept. 25, at the Abbey Byre Venue at St. Bernard.

It was a celebration of Cullman's German heritage, with German-inspired games, music, dancing and food – and the official introduction of 2026 Cullman Oktoberfest Burgermeister Edgar Veigl.

Cullman Area Chamber of Commerce President Joey Orr said, "The Burgermeister Ball is the kickoff to the Oktoberfest season. The Chamber is honored to be able to have this kickoff. At this event we have a great German dinner that All Steak provides and it's wonderful."

The meal included three courses: Gerancherte Entenbrust (smoked duck breast), which was served with roasted pumpkin, pickled mustard seeds, lingonberry jam and pumpernickel crisp; Bayrischer Schweinebraten (Bavarian roast pork), served with celeriac root puree, charred cabbage, cucumber-green apple slaw and smoked paprika jus; and Bienenstitch (Bee Sting Cake), consisting of honey, almond and Bavarian cream.

Orr added, "We will put the medallion on the new Burgermeister.

"Edgar Veigl, this evening, will have the medallion of the Burgermeister and this will kick off his reign!"

Cullman Parks, Recreation & Sports Tourism Executive Director Nathan Anderson shared cheerfully, "We're really excited about Edgar Veigl being this year's representative.

"The Burgermeister is the chief ambassador for the Oktoberfest. This is an exciting night! We are so thankful for the Chamber of Commerce for putting this on because this is where the mantle passes from last year's Burgermeister to this year's Burgermeister."

Anderson thanked the many friends and partners that make the event happen every year.

Cullman County Tourism Bureau Executive Director Harmony Heard told The Tribune, "This is an Oktoberfest like none you've ever experienced."

She highlighted the impact of tradition the festival brings, while also noting new changes. "We've even brought on a Kinderburgermeister! The impacts that festivals like this, our festivals here in Cullman County, have on the community goes on and on.

Every dollar that's spent here is invested into our community. To make a difference in our community."

Noted Heard, "We honor our heritage here. It's important for us for people to know that we honor our German heritage with our Southern charm and that people come here and they're going to find it is more than they ever expected!"

Veigl was named Burgermeister in August. He'll serve as Oktoberfest's official ambassador throughout the festivities Oct. 1-4 at Depot Park.

"It's a big deal," Veigl said. "It's an honor of a lifetime and one that isn't afforded to very many people."

He spoke of those who came before him and his appreciation for being added to such an honorable list of past Cullman Oktoberfest Burgermeisters.

Veigl told The Tribune, "Once you're a Burgermeister, you're always a Burgermeister."

Fair parade today, band exhibition tonight

The 43rd annual Cullman County Band Exhibition will take place tonight, at 6 p.m. at Oliver Woodard Stadium at Cullman High School. Gates open at 5. Nine area marching bands will perform. Tickets are $5 for adults. Kids 6 and younger get in free.

The Cullman County Fair Parade will take place today, Sept. 26, at 2 p.m. along U.S. Highway 31, from Seventh Street Southwest to Arnold Street Northwest.



HOWARD COLE

The West Point Warrior Band takes the field at the 41st annual Cullman County Band Exhibition held at Oliver Woodard Stadium at Cullman High School on Sept. 28, 2024



MIKE WITCHER/THE CULLMAN TRIBUNE

Members of the Good Hope High School band are seen in the 2025 Cullman County Fair Parade.



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Bill Smith

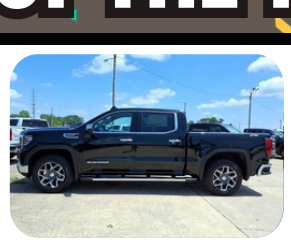
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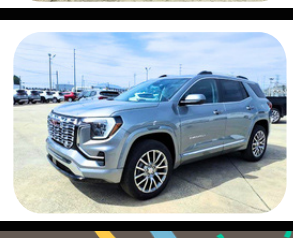
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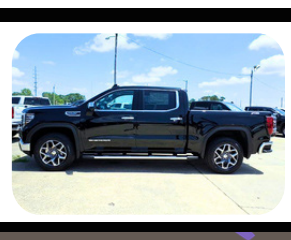
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