

A Salute to GOVERNMENT & INDUSTRY & 2017



Keeping you up to date

The publication you're reading – whether it's in its print or digital format – has been published by The Daily Home for more than two decades. Other newspapers produce their own versions, which they often refer to as their Progress editions.

We call ours Update.

As a title, there's certainly nothing wrong or ill-fitting about Progress, but we like Update better



Buddy Roberts

because of how well the word highlights the purpose of this project.

Look up the word "update" in a dictionary, and you're likely to find two definitions: one for when it's used as a noun and another for when it's employed as a verb.

"Update" the verb refers to the action of improving something, making it more modern and up to date. "Update" the noun refers to a report designed to bring someone up to date.

Both definitions are relevant to what you're now reading. The Daily Home's 2017 Update edition contains information about recent accomplishments made by local government officials and leaders in industry, civics and commerce, as well as the challenges they're facing. It explains what they have done – and what many newly-elected local officials hope to do – to improve their respective communities as one year closes and a new one begins.

In effect, this special publication brings you up to date about the stories of Talladega and St. Clair counties by taking a look back at some accomplishments and significant events of 2016 while considering the state of local governments, schools, health care and business at the start of 2017 and looking ahead at what is expected and hoped to be accomplished during the coming months.

As in the past, we've grouped these stories into four main categories.

Government & Industry examines the state of local municipal and county governments, also taking a look at how things stand as far as economic and industrial development is concerned.

In **Health & Education**, we offer a glimpse into the state of local schools and health care providers at the start of the new year while recounting some of their recent accomplishments.

Friends & Neighbors will introduce you or reacquaint you with some familiar faces in local communities, recognizing what they do for the benefit of others.

In the three **Commerce** sections, we'll visit some local businesses that are mainstays in or recent newcomers to Talladega, Munford, Lincoln, Sylacauga, Childersburg, Oak Grove and Pell City.

As you read these stories, it is our hope that you will support the advertisers who have enabled us to bring this information to you. They have invested in this publication because they believe it's important to recognize and document progress, and because they believe in investing in the communities they serve.

The Daily Home is grateful to them for this opportunity and to you as readers, both on a daily basis and on such special occasions as this Update.



Tucker Webb/The Daily Home

Talladega County has enjoyed a productive year in the areas of government and industry. New officials were elected in several local cities, and the Talladega County Commission has pursued major property developments and considered infrastructure improvements.

It's been a productive year in Talladega County, commissioners say

By **LACI BRASWELL**
Home staff writer

The last 12 months have been productive for Talladega County in the areas of government and industry. Not only were new officials elected in the cities of Lincoln, Munford and Sylacauga, but the Talladega County Commission approved several action items for the benefit of county residents.

Property Developments for south end of County

In 2016, Talladega County commissioners approved an estimated \$26.5 million development project with Hutton Team LLC for the city of Sylacauga on U.S. Highway 280.

Sylacauga purchased the property for \$1.8 million in the early 2000s.

The property development will sit on approximately 33 acres of land adjacent to Payton Park and will include anchor and small shops, with a spring 2018 target opening.

In return, the value for Talladega County will include approximately 150 construction jobs and an estimated \$265,000 of annual sales tax revenue.

Hutton has plans to construct a retail business, which the company and local officials believe will in turn encourage other economic development in the area. "It will cost the county approximately \$24,000 a year," Jamey Flegal, director of real estate for Hutton, said at an earlier meeting.

During the hearing, Flegal noted the project is set to break ground in March.

"I believe the development project will help stimulate the area economy, and I see this being a positive addition to the county," Commissioner Greg Atkinson said.

Maintaining county roads

Frustration and concerns regarding road maintenance have been continuous for some county residents. Many property owners are upset about or unaware of what can be done to repair dilapidated roads in the county.



Bob Crisp/The Daily Home

Members of the Talladega County Commission are, from left, Jackie Swinford, District 1; Tony Haynes, District 2; Chairman Kelvin Cunningham, District 3; Malley Limbaugh, District 4; and Greg Atkinson, District 5.

Several residents have voiced their grievances in recent Talladega County Commission meetings.

At a Sept. 12 meeting, Janie Martin of Lincoln requested Saddletree Lane in Lincoln be paved because "of poor travel conditions."

Drucilla Foster also presented her concerns about Twin Pines Drive in Alpine. Foster asked the county to pave the road because of travel problems, which she said have resulted in several damaged vehicles.

Markert noted that the county would have to research the background of the road before determining a solution. He said "part of the confusion stems back over 40 years," prior to him accepting the position of county engineer.

Markert said the maintenance ranged from repaving roads to repairing driveways.

As a result, the county received an order from a grand jury to set up guidelines and requirements for area roads to be maintained by Talladega County.

In 1992, a county roads list was created after holding a public hearing during a commission meeting.

The county is currently responsible for maintaining approximately 900 roads, which are documented on its

roads list.

The process for the county to adopt a road can be complex, Markert said. The following requirements must first be met:

- Roads must have a deeded right-of-way by the Talladega County Commission, or maintained by the county for 20 years or longer as a public road.

- Roads must also serve more than one non-related family dwelling.

Markert added that he often finds himself in a catch-22 situation. "Legally," he said, "the county can't do any work on a road until it is approved and added to our list."

Frequently the land developers responsible are often unreachable, leaving residents on their own to solve the issues of how to get a road up to standard, Markert said, offering county residents some advice.

"It's so important that property owners and future developers do their research about a road's public record," he said. "Anyone with any questions or concerns can contact us and we would be glad to tell them about the history of the road -- and do what we legally can."

Recognizing Patriotism

A request for a memorial plaque to honor Krissie Kissic Davis, who was killed in June 2015 as a civilian worker in

Afghanistan -- and other fallen civilians is an ongoing project for Davis's father, Leon Kissic.

Kissic expressed his request for a memorial plaque to be placed on the property of the Talladega County Courthouse in honor of his daughter and her sacrifice.

"I'm not doing this for me," Kissic said. "I'm wanting to make this happen for my daughter and for any of those that may suffer the same fate in the future."

Davis was a property disposal specialist with the Defense Logistics Agency in Anniston. She was serving her second deployment for the civilian expeditionary workforce.

During multiple commission meetings, a majority of local veterans argued that "constructing a memorial for civilian war casualties would take away the significance from the existing courthouse war monuments reserved specifically for veterans killed in the line of fire."

Although no action has yet to be taken, there has been discussion between Kissic and the veterans present about the possibility of a memorial plaque being placed at the south end of the courthouse square, instead of the north end, as was previously discussed.

"I have the utmost respect for all of you gentleman that have bravely served our country," Commissioner Malley Limbaugh said. "Going forward, I just want to make sure we do everything we can to make sure this is handled the in right way."

The Talladega County Commission meets at 6 p.m. the second and fourth Mondays of each month at the Talladega County Courthouse, located at 1 Court Square, Talladega. Work sessions are held an hour prior, at 5 p.m.

For more information, call the commission office at 256-362-1357.

2017 Update is the result of the cooperative and combined efforts of The Daily Home staff.

PUBLISHER
Robert Jackson

EDITOR
Anthony Cook

ASSISTANT EDITOR
Lew Gilliland

SPECIAL PROJECTS EDITOR
Buddy Roberts

PHOTOGRAPHY
Bob Crisp
Tucker Webb

STAFF WRITERS
David Atchison
Laci Braswell
Gary Hanner
Chris Norwood
Denise Sinclair
Kelli Tipton

GRAPHIC DESIGN
Fay Denton
Jennifer Mashburn
Geraldine Osburn

MARKETING/ADVERTISING DIRECTOR
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Gary Hanner/The Daily Home

Members of the St. Clair County Commission are interested in economic development and lowering the county's already-low unemployment rate.

Rapid growth continues in St. Clair County

By **GARY HANNER**
Home staff writer

In the 1970s, there were almost 28,000 people living in St. Clair County. According to the latest U.S. Census report, there were 86,697 people living in St. Clair County as of 2014.

St. Clair County has enjoyed a rapid growth, outpacing state-wide growth, which has been at 9 percent each decade.

Leading the county in the right direction through the years and into the future is the St. Clair County Commission.

In 2016, the commission:

- Partnered with the St. Clair County Economic Development Council to host three different job fairs to create new job opportunities for local residents.
- Saw renovations to the administration building in Ashville that is providing more space and efficient service for the county commission, revenue office, IT department, and probate court/offices;
- Announced that ATRIP (Alabama Transportation Rehabilitation and Improvement Program) projects were just

about completed in 2016.

“During 2015 and on into 2016, the commission, county engineer, department heads, press and others took a bus tour to evaluate the repairs needed to roads,” Manning said. “We saw firsthand a new micro-surfacing treatment being used to make road repairs. As a result, many county roads were resurfaced. That project started in 2015 and continued on into 2016 using local funds from the county fuel tax.”

Manning said St. Clair County is one of the fastest growing counties in the state.

“We are proud of this continuous growth and are prepared to meet the challenges it brings,” he said. “We are thankful for the service provided through our law enforcement agencies in this county. Providing a safe county and safe cities have been main focuses and they will continue to be.”

During 2016, the commission was willing to work with all municipalities to bring services that are beneficial to all residents, according to Manning.

“One of the main focuses for 2016 was to provide skilled

workers for our businesses and industries,” he said. “Currently, our unemployment rate is 4.8 percent, which is one of the lowest in the state. Employers expanding or coming for the first time need workers who are available. We looked closely at the job market and worked with the EDC to provide training opportunities whether in the school systems or the public sector to assist those needing training if requested. This commission always provides help with projects in the cities.”

The St. Clair County Commission meets the second Tuesday of each month in Ashville at 9 a.m. and the fourth Tuesday of each month in Pell City at 9 a.m. Work sessions are held the Thursdays before the Tuesday meetings at 1 p.m. at the administrative office in Ashville.

Commission offices are at 165 5th Avenue, Suite 100 Ashville, AL 35953. They can be reached at 205-594-2100. Fax number is 205-594-2110.



Gary Hanner/The Daily Home

Paul Manning serves as chairman of the St. Clair County Commission.

St. Clair County Commission

165 5th Avenue, Suite 100
Ashville, AL 35953
205-594-2100 Fax 205-594-2110

Paul Manning is chairman of the County Commission. He can be reached at 205-365-3910 or pmanning@stclairco.com.

Jeff Brown is commissioner for District 1. He can be reached at 205-365-3896 or jbrown@stclairco.com.

Ken Crowe is commissioner for District 2. He can be reached at 205-365-5114 or kcrowe@stclairco.com.

Tommy Bowers is commissioner for District 3. He can be reached at 205-753-8246 or tbowers@stclairco.com.

Jimmy Roberts is commissioner for District 4. He can be reached at 205-577-9188.

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City of Talladega reintroduces itself to the world

By CHRIS NORWOOD
Home staff writer

The city of Talladega sought to reintroduce itself to the world during 2016, unveiling a new marketing campaign and unveiling a new Christmas tradition, among other things.

In late 2015, the Talladega City Council approved a \$75,000 contract with Telegraph Creative of Birmingham as part of the capital improvement project for the coming year. City Manager Patrick Bryant said the goal was to create "a new visual identity" for the city and to help Talladegans take back their city's narrative.

A new logo and marketing plan for the city was unveiled in June before a packed house at the Ritz Theatre. The new

logo shows the north side of Court House Square with the Ritz in the middle, mountains with pine trees growing on them in the background and the words "Talladega: At Every Turn" in the foreground. Residents are also encouraged to use the hashtag #mytalladega whenever posting anything about or from the city online.

Bryant explained that the rebranding process began with focus groups that identified the city's strengths as "nature, history, adventure, hospitality, creativity and opportunity. We believe that branding is as simple as 1+2=3, where what you say plus what you do equals what other will say about you."

The rebranding effort also includes a revamped city website and increased social media presence.

One of the first major events stemming from the rebranding plan was Christmas on the Square, which Bryant deemed "a success passing expectations."

The city council budgeted \$100,000 for the Christmas event, with \$50,000 to come from outside sources. Alabama Institutes for Deaf and Blind, Civilian Marksmanship Program, First Bank of Alabama, Talladega Superspeedway, Neels Schaffer Engineering, Brookwood Baptist Health Center/Citizens Baptist Medical Center, Charter Communications, Honda Manufacturing of Alabama, Insite Engineering and Raymond James Financial all helped the city to actually exceed that goal, with the extra funds being used for things like

signage and t-shirts.

The bulk of the sponsorships, however, went toward a separate contract with Telegraph Creative which, in turn, covered event design, television and web site advertising and production costs including professional decorations, a Christmas tree, Santa's work shop and a professional Santa, a DJ, children's games, movie licensing and a live remote broadcast from Magic 96.5.

Part of the event was to raise Talladega's profile in neighboring communities, and it seems to have accomplished that as well. "We had people coming in from all over central Alabama, and they were all very positive about it," Bryant said at the time. "I'm very pleased, very excited."

In September of 2016, after a little over a year on the job, the council voted to make Bryant responsible for industrial recruitment inside the city limits and the conducting of a feasibility study for the city to develop its own industrial park. His salary was increased from \$85,000 per year to \$116,000 per year, the same amount Pell City is currently paying Brian Muenger, Bryant's immediate predecessor.

In speaking for the increase, Councilman Horace Patterson said it makes the city more competitive and less likely to have an interruption in the continuity of leadership. It would also save the city the time and expense of having to conduct another national search should Bryant accept a better offer elsewhere.



BobCrisp/The Daily Home

One of the first major events stemming from the city's rebranding plan was Christmas on the Square, which was deemed an expectation-exceeding success.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, Talladega had a population of 15,676 in 2010.

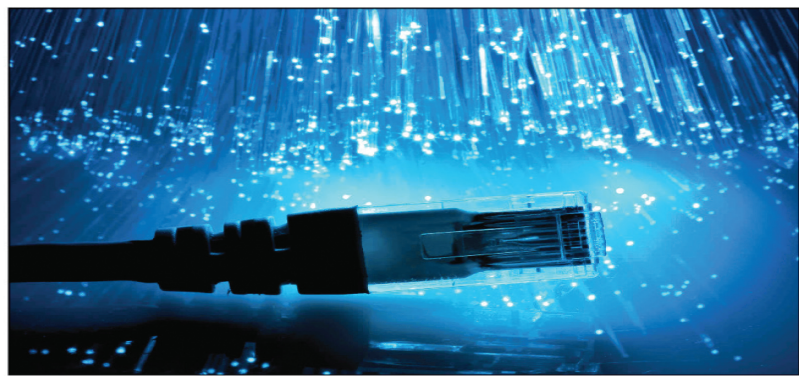


The city council consists of council President Ricky Simpson,

President Pro Tempore Dr. Horace Patterson, Jarvis Elston, David Street and Gerald Cooper. Jerry Cooper (no relation) is the mayor, although under Talladega's form of government, the mayor does not have administrative authority.

The council meets on the first and third Mondays of each month, with a public hearing and informal work session at 5 p.m. followed by the regular council meeting at 5:30 p.m. If one of the regular meeting nights is a holiday, the council generally meets the following Thursday.

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New businesses, renovations highlight Pell City's year

By **DAVID ATCHISON**
Home staff writer

Pell City saw completion of major city projects as well as growth in 2016, and city officials expect more of the same in the coming year.

In May of last year, the city opened its new 4,500-square foot splash pad with 39 water features at Lakeside Park.

"This is something I am very proud of," said Council President James McGowan.

The opening went off without a hitch, officials said.

The splash pad project, which included large parking lots, three pavilions and restroom and dressing room facilities, cost \$1.6 million.

The city also completed the renovation of the recently purchased municipal complex building, formerly the CenturyLink building, which now houses Pell City's public library.

The city purchased the building for \$1 million and spent another \$1 million on the renovation and upgrades to the facility, providing a new modern library that provided needed space for the growing library.

"It took way too long, but we finally have it," said former Councilwoman Dot Wood at the grand opening of the new facility.

Former Councilwoman Sharon Thomas also said she was proud of the new 14,000-square foot library, which is housed in the 53,000-square foot municipal complex building.

"It was the number one item people said they wanted, and four years later, we're opening up a new library," Thomas said at the official opening of the new library in June of last year.

Hundreds of people attended the grand opening of the new public library.

Pell City also saw a change in leadership in 2016, as the majority of the council and mayor positions were replaced with new faces.

Attorney Bill Pruitt was elected as the new mayor, as three new members on the council took their seats in November, Jud Alverson, Blaine Henderson and Jason Mitcham.

Pell City also saw a new restaurant open in November, Buffalo Wild Wings, as groundbreakings and announcements of new developments were announced.

Northside Medical Associates held the official groundbreaking of a new

addition, which will more than double the size of the existing facility, and site work for the new entertainment center, which will include a new movie theater and bowling alley, has begun.

The city is also seeing growth in its industrial park, with the planned \$14.5 million expansion of Eissmann Automotive. The new 130,000-square-foot building will provide additional space for 200 new employees to support increase production.

The city started the new year out with a bang as city officials officially announced that a new car dealership was opening its doors in Pell City, the second new car dealership to select Pell City as home, and the only two new car dealerships in St. Clair County.

City Manager Brian Muenger said the city has several projects on tap for the upcoming year, including the civic center renovation.

"The city has bond funding set aside for improvements at the center and is also in the process of pursuing a state LWCF grant for improvements to the tennis area," Muenger said.

He said the council is considering civic center renovation options and costs.

Work could include heating and air condition improvements, restroom upgrades, upgrades to tennis facilities and improved access and parking to the civic center and to Lakeside Park.

Muenger said officials are planning and revising the city's comprehensive plan, which has not been updated since 2001. It's a long-term plan for the city.

The city manager said another goal for the upcoming year is to open up the former Avondale Mills plant site to the public.

Muenger said the council should have a risk assessment proposal for their consideration in February. Testing of the soil on the property, during an environmental study, revealed soil contamination on the site.

"Street department crews are mobilizing to the site in the coming weeks to continue removal of subsoil concrete," Muenger said. "The city is also working with Alabama Power and our water and sewer department to relocate utilities that will conflict with the development plans. I do anticipate that some elements of the area will be accessible to the public during this year and that the property will be visually improved a great deal."



Bob Crisp/The Daily Home

The city opened its splash pad in Lakeside Park last year. The new facility has 39 water features.



Bob Crisp/The Daily Home

In 2016, the long-awaited public library opened its doors in the Pell City Municipal Complex building.



David Atchison/The Daily Home

The makeup of the Pell City Council changed in 2016. From left, are Council President James McGowan, Councilman Jay Jenkins, Mayor Bill Pruitt and Councilmen Jud Alverson, Blaine Henderson and Jason Mitcham.

PELL CITY POPULATION:

As of July 1, 2015, the city's population was estimated at 13,646

COUNCIL MEETINGS/ WORK SESSION:

Second and fourth Mondays of each month. Work sessions are at 5:30 p.m., and council meetings follow at 7.

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Lincoln looks to future with changes in council and mayor's office

By LACI BRASWELL
Home staff writer

The city of Lincoln saw many changes in 2016, with promising improvements for the new year, including new members on the city council, a new solid waste collection contract and the possibility of Sunday alcohol sales.

Lincoln sees shift in city government

Last year, Lincoln residents re-elected former Mayor Lew Watson to once again represent the city. Watson defeated one-term incumbent Claude "Bud" Kitchin.

Voters also elected new officials to represent two of the city's wards. Jennie Jones (Ward 3) defeated incumbent Chris Watson. Joey Callahan (Ward 5) defeated incumbent Jean B. Burke. Council member Shelly L. Barnhart (Ward 4) ran unopposed.

Sunday alcohol sales a possibility for Lincoln

Earlier this year, members of the city council unanimously approved a Sunday alcohol sales resolution.

The resolution will be sent to the state Legislature, which will decide during its upcoming session whether residents of the city will be allowed to vote on Sunday alcohol sales at a future date.

"This is just a way for us to allow the residents of Lincoln the freedom to choose if they wish to have Sunday alcohol sales," Mayor Lew Watson said. "None of us on the council are publicly endorsing the request, but we feel the people should have a say."

Added Councilwoman Barnhart, "I have heard from many of my constituents requesting that we try to bring in bigger chain restaurants, such as O'Charley's and Applebee's. Many times, those types of businesses won't even consider locating here unless we

have Sunday alcohol sales."

"If approved, we hope this decision could potentially bring in more businesses and employment opportunities for our residents," Watson said.

City of Lincoln approves new solid waste collection contract

In the winter of 2016, the city council approved a new solid waste collection contract with Waste Pro Alabama Inc.

The city of Lincoln will "piggyback" off a Talladega County agreement, which was also contracted in 2016.

"I feel this will be beneficial to the residents in our city as well as those in the outlying areas," Watson said.

Waste Pro Representative V. Adams said, "We expect to pick up approximately 2,000 customers from Lincoln."

The council's decision was rooted in ongoing confusion between the city of Lincoln's and Talladega County's waste collections services. Lincoln was previously under contract with Advanced Disposal Services Inc.

The new contract with Waste Pro offers residents multiple services.

Optional available services include discounts for low-income senior citizens and back-door collection for the elderly and disabled. The agreement with Waste Pro includes lighter weight trucks to be used in residential collection to minimize damage to roads.

The Lincoln City Council meets the second and fourth Tuesdays of each month at 6 p.m., inside city hall.

The council holds work sessions on the third Tuesday of each month at 8 a.m. at city hall.

Lincoln City Hall is at 150 Magnolia St. It can be reached at 205-763-7777.



Laci Braswell/The Daily Home

From left are Mayor Lew Watson and council members Joey Callahan, Ward 5; Shelly L. Barnhart, Ward 4; Jennie Jones, Ward 3; Billy Pearson, Ward 2; and Sadie Britt, Ward 1.



Bob Crisp/The Daily Home

The Lincoln City Council meets the second and fourth Tuesdays of each month at 6 p.m. at City Hall.



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Munford welcomes new mayor, restaurant

By LACI BRASWELL
Home staff writer

2016 brought a multitude of changes and improvements for the town of Munford including election of new government officials, an ongoing bridge replacement project for Highway 21 and a new restaurant.

Munford elects new Mayor

The town elected life-long resident Joanne Fambrough to serve as mayor. Fambrough was elected by a margin of only 12 votes. She defeated former mayor David Dabbs. Place 5 council member Wade Champion was the only council member to run opposed. He defeated challenger Clinton Moon by 27 votes.

Highway 21 Bridge Replacement

An ongoing bridge replacement project is under way on Alabama Highway 21, at the south end of the Munford town limits.

The construction bid was awarded in May 2016, to Ikaros LLC for the amount of \$7.2 million, according to Tony Harris, media and community relations bureau chief for the Alabama Department of Transportation.

The company is based in Northport and anticipates the project will take approximately two years to complete.

Before the bridge can be replaced, a new road must be constructed parallel to Highway 21. Once the alternate route is complete, the existing bridge will be removed.

Munford welcomes new restaurant

Munford's newest business, Chubbie Chicks, officially opened its doors on Sept. 27 of last year and has since received many positive reviews.

"Opening a restaurant here is something I've wanted to do for a long time," owner Pam Butterworth said.

The restaurant's specialty is fried chicken served in a variety of ways -- wings, tenders, sandwiches, wraps or in a salad.

Butterworth described the menu as "foods you love to eat, but hate to cook."

Chubbie Chicks is open 11 a.m.-9 p.m. Sundays through Thursdays, and 11 a.m.-10 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays.

Chubbie Chicks is at 21 Ashley Lane in Munford. For more information, call 256-733-7070.



Laci Braswell/The Daily Home

From left are Munford council members Lee Garrison (Place 4) Tim Lipham (Place 3) and Phillip McWilliams (Place 2), Mayor Jo Ann Fambrough and council members Wade Champion (Place 5) and Shane Turner (Place 1).

The Munford Council meets the first Tuesday of each month at 6 p.m. at City Hall, 115 Lions Road. The council holds a work session every third Tuesday at 6:30 p.m. at City Hall. For more information, call 256-358-9050.

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Childersburg looking to a year of progress

By DENISE SINCLAIR
Home staff writer

Like many other cities across the state, Childersburg in 2016 saw a change in leadership, while looking ahead to a year of progress and moving forward in 2017.

The city council also saw the loss of one of its most civic-minded and longtime leaders with the death Councilman Robert M. "Bubba" Cleckler.

A dedicated public servant who loved his hometown, Cleckler lost his battle with cancer in last June.

The city council appointed his wife, Terry Kaye, to serve out the remainder of his term in 2016. She decided not to run for the seat during the city elections.

Also in last year's elections, incumbent Mayor Jimmy Payne and Councilman Billy Lester chose not to run for office again.

Elected mayor was Ken "Yank" Wesson. One incumbent, Angie Twymon in Ward C won re-election. The new council members are Brandon Robinson, Ward A; Bill Moody, Ward B; T. Glenn Stubblefield,

Ward D; and Michael McLain, Ward E.

Stubblefield has served on the council previously.

One of the major projects the council undertook in 2016 was a \$3-3.5 million street paving project. The paving project was completed in late summer.

As for what's ahead during 2017, Wesson said in November and December, the council was busy, adopting a new budget and board appointments for the coming year.

The new budget provides a raise for city employees that is effective February 1. A 2.5-percent pay raise was implemented. There was also a one-day longevity bonus based on years of service.

Wesson said it is important for the council to take care of its employees because "they take care of us."

In the months ahead, the city faces a big project starting through the Alabama Highway Department. The bridge on U.S. Highway 280 at the intersection of Alabama 76 and Fayetteville Road is going to be replaced.

Construction is tentatively scheduled for May. This will



Bob Crisp/The Daily Home

During the coming year, Childersburg officials anticipate the replacement of the bridge at the Highway 280-Fayetteville Road intersection, among other projects.

be a two year project, and traffic will be re-routed through downtown off U.S. 280.

Recruiting business and industry to Childersburg is another major endeavor for

Wesson, who wants to see his city move forward.

Plans are also underway to clean-up the downtown area, including some refurbishing of buildings.

Wesson says he is proud of Childersburg. "We have always taken care of business without getting in debt. That's is something special."

According to the mayor, there is not another city the

size of Childersburg that offers the amenities with the budget it operates under. These amenities include a police and fire department, ambulance service and EMTs, recreation, garbage, recycling and senior citizen services.

Wesson and council members said they are looking forward to a progressive and successful year in 2017.



Denise Sinclair/The Daily Home

Childersburg city officials are, from left, council members Michael McLain (Ward E), Angie Twymon (Ward C), Brandon Robinson (Ward A), Glenn Stubblefield (Ward D) and Bill Moody (Ward B) and Mayor Ken "Yank" Wesson.

Population: 5,090
 Mayor: Ken "Yank" Wesson.
 Council members: Brandon Robinson, Ward A; Bill Moody, Ward B; Angie Twymon, Ward C; T. Glenn Stubblefield, Ward D; and Michael McLain, Ward E.
 Meetings: First and third Tuesdays of each month at 6 p.m.
 City Hall: 201 8th Ave. S.W.
 Phone: 256-378-5521

Oak Grove hopes to attract new businesses this year

By DENISE SINCLAIR
Home staff writer

Looking ahead to what 2017 may bring, Mayor Tony White hopes his town can attract new businesses and prospective new residents will see that Oak Grove "has a lot to offer."

In looking back to 2016, the mayor said the town saved at least \$6,000 in funds by not having to hold an election to elect a new administration.

Instead, White and all five incumbents on the town council had no opposition, so an election was not necessary. They were all certified winners and took the oath of office on Nov. 7.

"We were able to save money, which was a good thing for our town," he said.

White thinks the incumbents had no opposition because "we either did our job very well or nobody cared."

White is in his second term as mayor after previously serving several terms on the council starting in 2000.

Other incumbents on the Oak Grove Town Council are Carl Armstrong, Place 1; Danny Reynolds, Place 2; Mary Carter, Place 3; David Harris, Place 4; and Mark Green, Place 5.

On looking ahead in 2017, White said the town "is okay. We are doing

better than at this time last year."

The mayor said he has been putting out information to get more business attracted to and hopefully opening in the Oak Grove community. "One positive item that could attract businesses here is the fact the town has no property tax," he said.

Also, White said the town has ordered a couple of new senior buses and a backhoe.

Plans have also been discussed to encourage more residents to annex into the town.

Overall, he thinks his town is ready to move forward with making sure residents in the surrounding area are welcome to come into Oak Grove.

Population: 536
 Mayor: Tony White
 Town Council: Carl Armstrong, Place 1; Danny Reynolds, Place 2; Mary Carter, Place 3; David Harris, Place 4; and Mark Green, Place 5
 Council meets: Second Tuesday of each month at 6 p.m.
 Phone number: 256-249-9971
 Email: www.townfoakgrove.org

St. Clair County
 District Two
 County Commissioner
Ken Crowe
 165 5th Avenue, Suite 100
 Ashville, AL 35953
 PHONE: 205-594-2100
 FAX: 205-594-2110



Denise Sinclair/The Daily Home

Oak Grove town officials are, from left, council members Mary Carter (Place 3) and David Harris (Place 4), Mayor Tony White and council members Carl Armstrong (Place 1), Mark Green (Place 5) and Danny Reynolds (Place 2). All were unopposed in the 2016 election.

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Sylacauga starts 2017 with new mayor, council

By DENISE SINCLAIR
Home staff writer

Voters went to the polls in the 2016 municipal elections and elected a completely new administration to run the Marble City.

That new administration has already started working on issues in 2017.

Five new council members and a mayor took office in November 2016. Mayor Jim Heigl was elected from a field of six contenders.

Heigl served on the city council from 2008-2012, when he was president of the council. He served as mayor from August to November of 2012.

Joining Heigl in the new city government are five newcomers to elected political office.

They are Council President Lee Perryman, District 4; Ashton Fowler, District 1; Tiffany Nix, District 2; Donnie Blackmon, District 3; and Dallas Davenport, District 5.

Several economic plans for Sylacauga were approved by the previous council and could become major developments for the city during the coming year, one for downtown and the other for U.S. Highway 280.

An incentive or redevelopment agreement was okayed by the council in the summer of 2016 for development of the old Coast to Coast property on West Ft. Williams Street.

The company, Second Street Plaza of Mississippi, is developing the property that could bring more than 40 jobs to Sylacauga.

The company is renovating the property and already has a major retailer committed.

The U.S. 280 project has been in the works for more than 15 months with the Hutton Team, LLC, of Chattanooga, Tennessee.

The previous council approved an incentive agreement with the company that will allow it to purchase the property once stores have committed to the shopping center proposed.

The city council in January set a public hearing to rezone approximately 33 acres of property on U.S. 280 for the retail development. That hearing is set for this March.

The city and Hutton are asking for the city-owned property to be rezoned to B2, general business district.

The property was zoned for B1, local shopping district; B2, general business district; and M2, general industry district. The request is for all the property to be zoned to a single B2, general business district, to accommodate a retail development on the site.

Jamey Flegal, director of real estate for Hutton, mentioned in January he works with national retail chains such as TJ Maxx, Dick's Sporting Goods and Hobby Lobby, along with some national shoe and cosmetic stores.

Hutton has a development agreement with the city to purchase the property once leases to stores are in place. Two of three anchor stores, Flegal said, are committed to the development, along with several other smaller retailers.

Heigl said the council has already started working on many other issues for 2017.

"We are focusing on effectiveness and efficiency in city government, financial planning, communication, legal issues and intergovernmental relations," he said.

The mayor said he is holding regular meetings with department heads toward the goal of allowing the city to better prepare and provide services to "our citizens that they are not able to provide for themselves."

Heigl added, "We will be focusing on the areas which offer the best promise of success for our city. Projects of importance and financial affordability that have already been implemented and will be followed up on."

The planning commission has recommended and the city council agreed that both bodies will work more closely toward making certain projects a reality.

"This year, infrastructure is and will continue to be addressed throughout this administration. Road paving is a big issue and paving projects are prioritized. We will focus on growth management, land use, business opportunities, industrial development and natural resources," the mayor said, adding that the city's new elected officials are working together with transparency to serve all of its residents.

Heigl said 2017 provides many challenges, and "our city is prepared to accept them as we work to make Sylacauga all it can be."



Bob Crisp/The Daily Home

From left are Sylacauga Councilman Ashton Fowler, Council President Lee Perryman, Councilwoman Tiffany Nix, Mayor Jim Heigl and Councilmen Dallas Davenport and Donnie Blackmon.



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Growth in Riverside



Submitted photo

The Riverside City Council noted a 35-percent increase in sales tax revenue during 2016, as well as significant new residential construction. From left are council members Jimmy Hollander and Frank Riddle, Mayor Rusty Jessup and council members Bill Cantley, Johnny Osborn and Kenny Womack.

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Republican Congress will make “much-needed progress,” Shelby says

By **BUDDY ROBERTS**
Special Projects Editor

Calling the 115th Congress “a great opportunity for Alabamians and all Americans under the leadership of President Trump and our Republican majorities,” Sen. Richard Shelby has introduced a balanced budget amendment.

If approved by Congress and ratified by three-fourths of states, the senator’s plan would amend the United States Constitution to require that the federal government’s spending during any fiscal year not exceed the revenue received during that same year.

“The idea behind a balanced budget amendment is simple,” said Shelby, who introduced the plan shortly after taking the oath of office for a sixth term. The federal government should be required to do what hard-working Americans do every day – balance a budget. “The nation’s mounting debt is simply unsustainable and will place a heavy burden on our children and grandchildren if we do not take steps to reverse this irresponsible course.”

According to his plan, federal spending during a fiscal year could also not exceed 20 percent of the nation’s gross domestic product during the previous calendar year, but an exemption for debt spending would be allowed during times of war. Shelby has introduced a balanced budget amendment in every Congress since taking office.

“I’m pleased to once again introduce this common sense policy that would reduce wasteful government spending, restore confidence in our economy and foster job growth,” he said.

Early last month, Shelby supported Senate approval of a budget reconciliation measure that he said “lays the groundwork necessary

to give Americans relief from Obamacare.” He opposed the Affordable Care Act when the Senate passed it in 2009 and has frequently called for its repeal.

By a final vote of 51-48 that came at 1:30 a.m. January 12, senators agreed to allow Congress to repeal portions of the health care law that involve federal funding.

“After more than six years since the enactment of the massive government takeover of health care, there is no doubt that Obamacare is broken beyond repair. I have heard from thousands of Alabamians about its harmful impacts on their health care, their family, their job and their wallet. The American people have entrusted Republicans with a unified government, and they demand, expect and deserve results. I am pleased that our first major act in the 115th Congress was to pave the way towards repealing and replacing this flawed law with patient-centered health care reforms.”

The 115th Congress began January 3, starting during the final weeks of former President Barak Obama’s administration and set to continue through the first two years of Donald Trump’s presidency. Republican lawmakers now control the White House, Senate and House of Representatives.

“I look forward to working with President Trump and all of my colleagues to provide leadership for our nation,” Shelby said. “There are many challenges ahead, and it is time to get to work on behalf of the American people. From filling the late Justice Antonin Scalia’s seat on the Supreme Court with a conservative voice to rolling back burdensome rules and regulations, I am confident that we will make much-needed progress for our coun-

try in the coming weeks, months and years.”

He supported Trump’s nomination of Jeff Sessions, Alabama’s junior senator, to serve as attorney general. Sessions was expected to be confirmed by the Senate Judiciary Committee in late January.

“During the past 20 years that I have served with Jeff in the Senate, I have had the opportunity to know him well,” Shelby said. “He is a

skilled attorney with an accomplished record as a prosecutor and legislator, and he is a man of extraordinary character. Unfortunately, political opponents have attacked his character with baseless and tired allegations. In reality, Jeff’s extensive record of treating all Americans equally under the law is clear and well-documented.”

While Gov. Robert Bentley had not as of late last month appointed Session’s replacement

in the Senate, Shelby expressed appreciation for having been elected in 2016 to a sixth term.

“It is a tremendous honor and privilege for me to represent the people of Alabama for another six years,” he said. “In this next term, I am committed to continuing my record of service and working to ensure that Alabama’s interests are represented and protected in Washington.”



Sen. Richard Shelby



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Angesa Twymon, Council Member
Mayor Pro Tempore / Ward C
T. Glenn Stubblefield, Council Member / Ward D
Michael McLain, Council Member / Ward E



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Submitted photo

Gov. Robert Bentley delivers the annual State of the State address in the Old House Chamber at the state capitol in Montgomery.

'Alabama's best days are ahead'

Governor supports Trump, creates state office of minority affairs

By **BUDDY ROBERTS**
Special Projects Editor

Alabama is strong at the start of 2017 because its residents are strong, Gov. Robert Bentley said as leadership changes took place in the federal government, one of which will significantly affect the state's presence in the U.S. Senate.

"As leaders, we are placed here to serve our people, and that is exactly what we are going to continue to do," the governor pledged. "God has assigned us this task, and we will work hard to honor Him. We will all continue working together to solve the real problems facing our state and to help Alabamians. No matter how difficult the challenge, the people of this state will know we are working hard every day to serve them."

As the Trump administration begins, Bentley is called upon to appoint a replacement for Sen. Jeff Sessions, who has been nominated to serve as United States attorney general. Sessions' confirmation by the Senate Judiciary Committee had not taken place as this edition went to press, nor had Bentley named his successor.

"I look forward to having Senator Sessions' conservative leadership in our Justice Department," Bentley said. "Alabama enjoys strong representation in Congress, and I want to ensure that continues upon his confirmation. He has served our state and people with dignity and has been a bright example for conservative values."

The governor said he will choose an appointee who shares the values of Alabama residents and will support the new president's agenda. "All the while keeping Alabama first in his or her mind, this person must uphold the Constitution, value the rights of the Second Amendment, the rights of states, support pro-life issues, implement a strong national security policy and support domestic jobs creation."

Calling 2017 "a remarkable time in our state's history," Bentley expressed support for the newly-inaugurated President Trump. "The majority of the

people of Alabama supported Mr. Trump with their vote and by doing so have placed their humble trust in him to lead our country," the governor said. "While we as Americans certainly disagree on various policies, we must all agree that our country has suffered under the weight of a divisive and contentious campaign season. Mr. Trump is now the leader of all of our country and every citizen, and I look forward to supporting his leadership. Americans have also elected a record number of Republican governors to lead our states. I join my colleagues in working with the Trump Administration to create a strong economy, great jobs and abundant opportunities for every American."

A week before Trump's inauguration, Bentley sent a letter to Kevin McCarthy, U.S. House majority leader, in support of Republican-led efforts to repeal the Affordable Care Act and replying to a series of questions asked of governors and state insurance commissioners in December.

"Americans deserve more patient-oriented solutions, which would mean more state choices and fewer federal mandates," the governor's letter said. "States should be given the ability to reduce Medicaid benefits or enrollment, to impose premiums or other skin-in-the-game requirements for beneficiaries or to reduce Medicaid spending in other ways if needed to match cuts in federal Medicaid revenues that may accompany reforms."

While looking ahead to what 2017 may bring at the federal level, Bentley reflected on several accomplishments that took place at the state level during 2016, including legislative approval of the second largest Education Trust Fund Budget in the state's history, which included a 4-percent pay raise for teachers.

"Thousands more 4-year-olds will get a solid foundation for a successful education and the opportunity to attend a first-class pre-K classroom next year. We increased funding to pre-K by \$16 million. By the time I leave office in 2019, I intend for every child to

have the opportunity to attend a first-class pre-K program.

"We created scholarships for doctors, nurse practitioners and dentists who will serve in Alabama's poorest counties so our people can have a doctor in their town and get the medical services they need to make our communities healthier. We'll be able to provide low-interest loans to students studying to be physicians' assistants, as long as they commit to working in an underserved area of the state.

"Schools in some of Alabama's poorest communities will soon be able to afford high-speed, high-capacity internet service because of our Broadband Initiative, creating greater opportunities for children in the most underserved

areas of our state.

"We created the first state office in Alabama solely dedicated to serving minorities and women. The Office of Minority Affairs is only one of a handful of cabinet-level offices in the country serving minorities."

The Office of Minority Affairs was created last March to serve as "a great resource and a new perspective addressing minority and women's issues," according to Bentley.

Nichelle Nix was named state director of minority affairs. She has served as an attorney in the Governmental and Regulatory Affairs Division in Maynard, Cooper & Gale in Birmingham. A native of Mobile, she is a 2002

graduate of Spelman College, where she earned a degree in political science. She holds a Master's degree in public health from Emory University and a law degree from the University of Alabama School of Law.

Nix served as legislative counsel for former U.S. Rep. Artur Davis, a fellow at the Alabama Applesseed Center for Law & Justice and executive director of the Sickle Cell Disease Association of America.

The Office of Minority Affairs will advise the governor about issues affecting minorities, focusing on improvement of the overall quality of life in such specific areas as education, health, economics, political participation and empowerment, housing, employment, civil rights,

criminal justice and race relations.

"The opportunities and well-being of minorities and women will be our primary focus," Nix said. "I look forward to building broad coalitions to make Alabama a better state for everyone and supporting Gov. Bentley's efforts to create jobs, improve education, and increase quality of life opportunities."

According to the governor, specific duties of the Office of Minority Affairs include:

- Encouraging public debate about issues affecting Alabama's minority populations, including open access to public services and fair and equitable implementation of

See **Governor**, Page 3A

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Governor

From Page 2A



Photo by Jamie Martin/Governor's Office

The governor speaks prior to Alabama's electors casting their pledged votes for Republican candidate Donald Trump during the 2016 presidential election.



Photo by Jamie Martin/Governor's Office

Gov. Bentley talks with Angelynn Lucado and her classmates at Munford Middle School during their visit to the state capitol last year. Angelynn is the recipient of a rare double-lung and heart transplant.



Photo by Jamie Martin/Governor's Office

The governor meets weekly with members of the state cabinet, which includes the heads of such state agencies as the departments of labor, commerce, senior services, transportation and revenue.



Photo by Sydney A. Foster/Governor's Office

Bentley welcomes Consul General Diaz de Leon of Mexico to the state capitol in October. Diplomatic visitors from Italy, Belgium and other nations visited Alabama during the past year.

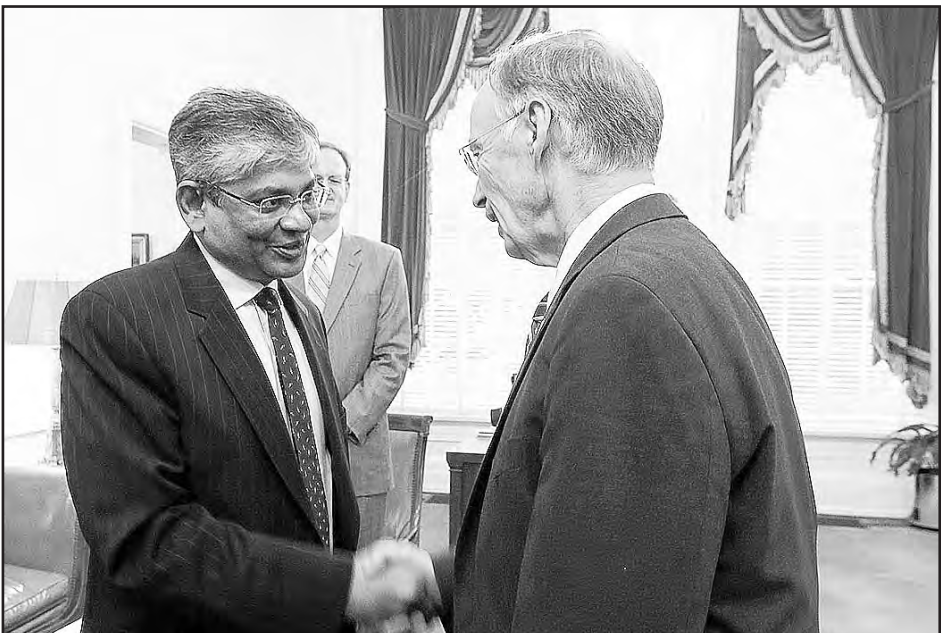


Photo by Daniel Sparkman/Governor's Office

Bentley greets Arun Singh, Indian ambassador to the United States, during the diplomat's visit to Alabama last February.

public policy.

- Assessing efforts by state agencies to assist women and minorities, promoting self-sufficiency through education and training.

- Collaborating with business and industry representatives, the Alabama Workforce Council, higher education stakeholders and the Alabama Small Business Commission to provide recommendations about how to foster economic development opportunities for women and minorities, toward the goal of increasing the number of minority and women-owned businesses.

- Advising the governor about state programs serving minority populations.

- Monitoring existing and proposed legislation designed to meet the needs of minorities.

"The state of Alabama has a strong population of diverse racial and ethnic groups, including African-Americans, Hispanics, Caucasians, Asians, Native Americans and others, and Alabama has a unique history in promoting civil rights for minorities," Bentley said. "The courage and boldness of our citizens is a testament to the principles on which our state and country were founded. My goal is to make Alabama stronger, and minorities and women are an important component."

Last year, Bentley also signed an executive order creating the Alabama Children's Cabinet, an advisory body aimed at developing policy and examining issues related to youths.

"Alabama's children are our future, and we must ensure that their needs are being met just as meet those of adults," the governor said. "Whether it is education, health care, nutrition programs or other needs, children need someone to advocate for what is best for them. We have put together a great group of individuals who are already working hard on children's issues and have the knowledge and experience necessary to improve the lives of children."

The panel is comprised of representatives of the state departments of education, human resources, public health, mental health, early childhood education, youth services, rehabilitation services, child abuse and neglect prevention and the Alabama Medicaid Agency and the Office of Minority Affairs.

"The cabinet will work to develop measures of accountability to improve effectiveness in achieving positive outcomes for children and their families," Bentley said. "It will work to ensure coherence throughout a child's development and create system-wide activities and functions such as data collection, quality assurance and

measures of outcomes. The ultimate goal of this group will be to maximize efficiency in the use of resources, reducing duplication and providing a good return on state tax dollars."

Bentley continues to promote the Great State 2019 Plan, his legislative agenda through 2019.

"Alabama will celebrate its 200th birthday in 2019," he said, "and the Great State Plan is aimed at fundamentally changing Alabama, opening doors of opportunity, clearing the path to prosperity and solving decades-old problems by the time Alabama celebrates its bicentennial milestone."

Workforce development, greater investment in the state's pre-K program and increasing the number of health-care professionals in rural areas are part of the plan, as are prison reform, supporting veterans, assessing the state's water resources and supporting small business development.

"There is no better way to celebrate the state's bicentennial than by working together to make the lives of Alabamians better, and one thing I have learned as governor is that it isn't easy going against the status quo. It would be easy to be your 'caretaker governor,' but that's not what you elected me to do, and that's not why God placed me here. We have come so far and have accomplished so much in the past five year, and I truly believe Alabama's best days are ahead."

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Rogers sees end to congressional gridlock, calls for U.S. exit from United Nations



Photo by Jamie Martin/Governor's Office

Congressman Mike Rogers (seated, second from left) watches an actor portray Benjamin Franklin at an official ceremony before Alabama electors cast their votes for president and vice president in December. At Rogers' left is U.S. Rep. Mo Brooks, and to his right are U.S. Rep. Martha Roby, U.S. Rep. Robert Aderholt, Lt. Gov. Kay Ivey and Gov. Robert Bentley.

By **BUDDY ROBERTS**
Special Projects Editor

A month into the 115th Congress, Third District U.S. Rep. Mike Rogers believes federal lawmakers have an opportunity to move past contentious partisanship and gridlock that have characterized the legislative branch of the federal government in recent years.

"With President Trump and a Republican-controlled Congress, we have a real opportunity to pass meaningful legislation that will be signed into law," he said. "We will be able to pass legislation that appeals Obamacare, protects the unborn and reduces burdensome regulations that hurt the middle class. Also, we will pass legislation to secure our borders, create jobs and rebuild our military. Most importantly, we will restore constitutional balance."

Rogers attended the 58th presidential inauguration last month, which he described as "a truly historic event made especially great by the presence of Talladega's own Great Talladega College Tornado Marching

Band in the parade. I am excited to work with my colleagues in the House of Representatives in the new Congress, and I am looking forward to the president's cabinet – including Alabama's own Senator (Jeff Sessions) – being confirmed so we can get to work making America great again."

On January 3 – the first day of the 115th Congress – Rogers introduced the American Sovereignty Restoration Act, aimed at ending the United States' involvement in the United Nations. By the month's end, the bill was under consideration by the House Foreign Affairs Committee.

"The U.S. bankrolls over 20 percent of the U.N.'s budget, but the U.N. continually passes resolutions that infringe upon our constitutional rights and values," the congressman said. "That money can be better spent on American priorities."

If approved, the measure would repeal the United Nations Participation Act of 1945, calling for the president to terminate American membership in the international intergovernmental organiza-

tion. American armed forces would no longer support U.N. military or peacekeeping operations, U.N. officers and employees would no longer have diplomatic immunity in the United States and the organization would no longer receive American funding, according to the plan.

"The U.N. has attempted a number of actions aimed to encroach on the rights granted to U.S. citizens under our constitution," Rogers said. "Most recently, the U.N. Security Council sided with Palestine and passed a resolution condemning Israel's settlements in Jerusalem. Attacks against one of the United States' greatest allies are just the most recent chapter in the U.N.'s dangerous agenda. I believe our involvement in the U.N. is a waste of taxpayer dollars."

Whether or not Congress decides to repeal the United Nations Participation Act, Rogers said repealing the Affordable Care Act is at the top of Republican's congressional agenda.

"Obamacare is unworkable and is hurting folks back

home," he said. "I hear from them every day how hurtful it is. Repealing it will be one of our first acts this year. We have already passed the budget resolution to lay the groundwork for repeal, and we are going to work to find quality affordable healthcare options that will help hardworking families instead of hurting them."

Rogers has also expressed support for the Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act, the Defund Planned Parenthood Act and the No Taxpayer Funding for Abortion Act, co-sponsoring each proposal.

"I will never stop fighting for the rights of the most innocent in our society – unborn children," he said. "January 22 marked the 44th anniversary of the Roe v. Wade decision by the Supreme Court, a dark day in our country's history, and last year President Obama demonstrated how out of touch he was with East Alabama and all of American when he vetoed legislation that would have defunded Planned Parenthood. Fortunately, we can now look forward to work-

ing with the Trump administration that shares our East Alabama values and respect for the unborn. Nowhere will that be more important than choosing the next Supreme Court justice, and with a Republican-controlled Congress, we can get back to passing laws that are in line with the American people's wishes."

After "enduring what seemed to be a never-ending election season," Rogers said he is hopeful for what is in store. "Folks will always be upset that their candidate didn't win, but I'm hopeful they'll see the hard work we're doing on behalf of the American people and our constituents."

The congressman reminded Third District residents planning to visit Washington that his office has moved and is now open at 2184 Rayburn House Office Building. "I have always said my door is open to the people of the Third District. I am excited about our new location in Washington and hope local citizens will continue to come by and visit when they are in our nation's capital."

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Groundbreaking ceremony held for future industrial production facility in Moody

By GARY HANNER
Home staff writer

MOODY – St. Clair County continues to grow as a groundbreaking ceremony for a new facility was held late last month.

Gardner Denver Nash, a subsidiary of Gardner Denver, a global provider of high quality industrial equipment, services and technology, will lease a new 52,000-square foot facility from Graham & Company.

The Gardner Denver Nash facility will be a high-bay, world class service, repair and test center. The \$10 million facility will be on A.E. Moore Road in Moody.

Vince Trupiano, president of NASH/Garo at Gardner Denver Nash, Inc., said the company hopes to be up and running by August or September.

“The Nash/Garo Division of Gardner Denver Inc. is proud and honored to be a new resident of the city of Moody,” Trupiano said. “We are grateful for the exceptional support and very warm welcome received to date from the city of Moody, St. Clair County and Graham & Company.”

Trupiano said this greenfield, 52,000 square foot, high-bay, world class service, repair and test center will enable the company to serve customers in the Southeast and Gulf Coast areas of the United States with a completely integrated, lean factory.

“We will be creating new jobs in St. Clair County, and our existing local team will all be relocated to the new facility, and they couldn’t be happier,” he said.

County Commission Chairman Paul Manning said St. Clair always welcomes new investment and quality jobs to the community.

“We are happy to be able to work with the city of



Gary Hanner/St. Clair Times

Dirt was moved last month at a groundbreaking ceremony for a new industrial equipment, services and technology production facility in Moody, at which representatives from Gardner Denver Nash, Graham & Company, the St. Clair County Economic Development Council, the St. Clair County Commission, the city of Moody and the Moody Chamber of Commerce took part.

Moody again in welcoming a company known worldwide,” Manning said. “This investment opens doors for new opportunities for our citizens now and in the future.”

Moody Mayor Joe Lee said the city is once again honored to be partnering with Graham & Company on a development that will create additional jobs and stimulate the local economy.

“Today’s groundbreaking ceremony marks the fourth development Graham has spear-headed in our community since the mid-2000s, and once complete, Graham will have developed nearly one-

half million square feet of quality industrial space along the I-20 corridor of St. Clair County,” Lee said. “Gardner Denver Nash is joining a great group of industrial partners in the city of Moody, and we are so excited to welcome them to our community.”

Henry V. Graham II, vice president of development with Graham & Company, said Gardner Denver Nash is an incredible company that plays an integral role supplying industrial pumps and other equipment to industries around the world.

“The decision to operate a service center in

the Birmingham region ensures their clients in the Southeastern United States receive exceptional service in a timely manner,” Graham said. “Partnering with Cooper Construction guarantees that the design/build approach to this project will deliver exactly what Nash requires, namely eight overhead cranes, most of which are capable of hoisting up to 20 tons.

“We’d like to especially recognize the vital role that the St. Clair County Economic Development Council has played in making sure projects such as this can be achieved and benefit all par-

ties involved.

“Graham & Company looks forward to helping Nash call the city of Moody home for at least the next 20 years, and we remain optimistic about the possibility of bringing more development opportunities to the I-20 corridor.”

“This is so incredible, said Don Smith, executive director of the St. Clair County Economic Development Council. “Once again, everyone comes together to show their support for new investments in St. Clair County.”

Coming year will be one of opportunity for Alabama’s agricultural industry

By BUDDY ROBERTS
Special Projects Editor

2017 may be the start of a “golden age of opportunity in Alabama,” according to the state’s commissioner of agriculture and industries.

“There are a lot of things going on right now that we’re very excited about,” John McMillan said. “They will mean good things for the state of Alabama.”

Halfway through his second term as commissioner of the Alabama Department of Agriculture and Industries, he said the opportunities exist despite what could be seen as a severe setback.

“Agriculture in general suffered from a drought in 2016. Although we started 2017 with a better water supply, it still has a lingering impact, and its aftermath is likely to be profound. Still, despite the drought last year, the favorable water system we have here in Alabama is creating and bringing back many opportunities to grow produce that either doesn’t customarily grow here or hasn’t been significantly grown here in many years.”

An example is a project to produce kiwi fruit, “which is going on in Tallapoosa County, not that far from where you are in Talladega and St. Clair,” the commissioner said. “Auburn University has developed what they call the golden kiwi. It’s delicious – I’ve had some – and some significant plans are underway for its

production. It’s extremely exciting to see this start to be grown in Alabama.”

Dadeville-based Wickles Pickles is considering a new production facility in the state, according to McMillan. The company’s products are sold nationwide, and “they’re rapidly moving into products like okra and green beans, which will be a great opportunity for folks to diversify and for smaller folks to get involved in production of these crops. It makes us excited to see opportunities coming to Alabama for us to grow more fruits and vegetables.”

He described such opportunities “as a chicken-and-egg situation to some extent. Processing plants don’t want to invest in an area if there’s not a product for them, and growers need to be assured that there’s a place to process what they produce. But things are progressing nicely in Alabama thanks to free enterprise. There’s no question we’re going to see a continued investment in locally-grown foods, including organic products.”

President Donald Trump’s nomination of former Georgia Gov. Sonny Perdue as secretary of agriculture could mean even more opportunity for the state, McMillan said.

“It’s been a long time since we’ve had a Southerner appointed to that position, so I’m looking forward to working with him. He’s been in agriculture all his working life, and my counterpart

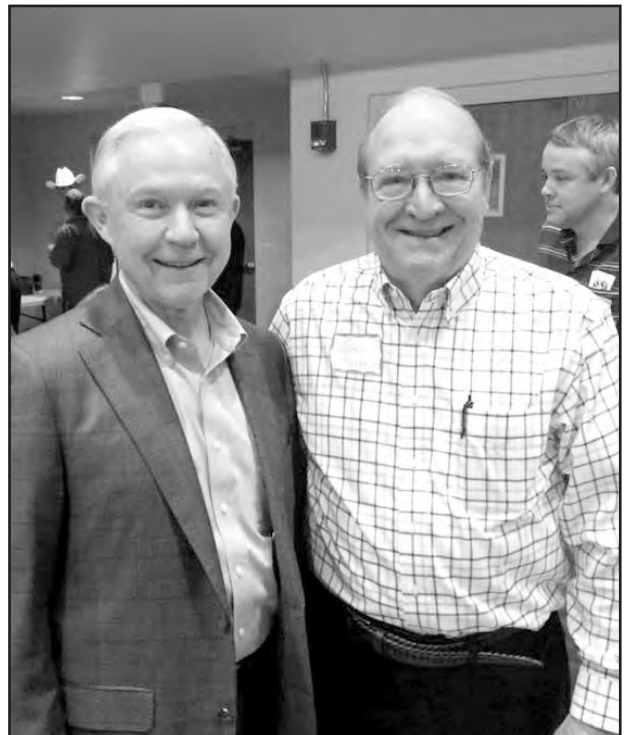
in Georgia, Commissioner Gary Black, has enjoyed a great working relationship with him. It’s important for us to have a guy like him in that position, especially with a new farm bill likely to come out of Congress this year. It will be very important for this state.”

McMillan said he expects the new presidential administration to be friendly to owners of large tracts of forest land. “I believe we’ll see a rolling back of what we believe are onerous regulations and out-of-control regulatory agencies. I also think it will be encouraging of exports. Our farmers depend on being able to export their products. Thirty percent of what we produce is exported, and

there’s a growing interest in Alabama products – peanuts are one example – so it’s an important economic issue of Alabama farmers.”

McMillan, a former Baldwin County commissioner, state representative, commissioner of conservation and natural resources and member of the Alabama State Personnel Board, has been named by political observers as a potential candidate for governor in 2018, and he isn’t ruling out the possibility of a gubernatorial run.

“I’m definitely seriously considering it,” he said. “I have a lot of experience in state government and other areas that I believe could be an asset to the state, but we’ll just have to see how things look as 2018 gets closer.”



Submitted Photo

The appointment of such Southerners as Sen. Jeff Sessions (left) and former Georgia Gov. Sonny Perdue (not shown) to cabinet positions in the Trump administration will prove beneficial for Alabama, according to Agriculture and Industries Commissioner John McMillan (right).

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50 years of service with integrity

Industrial Machine and Supply:
Family-owned, Christian-based since 1967

By **KELLI TIPTON**
Home staff writer

Industrial Machine and Supply is a family-owned, Christian-based business in Talladega celebrating 50 years of making replacement parts for machinery used by some of the top manufacturers in the country.

"We make shafts, gears, and other parts, and we do fabrication for clients such as GLAD Manufacturing, the company that makes garbage bags. We make parts for a subsidiary company of FS Solutions, they make big vacuum trucks and we do some work for Benjamin Moore, the paint company," said co-owner David Williams.

The company was founded by David's father Tom in 1967, back when textile manufacturers were up and running round the clock. "He started this company to serve the textile industry. He made replacement parts for their machinery. For years, that's how he built the business. Now the textile industry is gone, so we do very little for that industry, but we still make replacement parts for other industries," Williams said.

On rare occasions, a client will ask for a custom machine. "We

have, in the recent past, built a machine for a company's specific need. It was a packaging machine for the vinyl siding industry. The machine had two arms and assisted workers with stacking and boxing vinyl siding. It was a unique machine," Williams said.

The company employs 9 people and has several long-time employees. "Frankie Williams has been with us more than 40 years. He and I worked together when I was a teen-ager. He is a very good machinist and welder. Danny Horton has been with us 30 years, and he is the best mill man I've ever seen in my life," Williams said.

Today, the company is focused on building its customer base and upholding its reputation for service with integrity. "We try to provide the best service possible with integrity," said co-owner Sharon Williams. "If there's one thing I want this company to be known for, it's integrity. That's our goal."

Industrial Machine and Supply is in the Brecon area, at 101 Costner St. For more information about products and services, call 256-362-5611.



Bob Crisp/The Daily Home

Industrial Machine & Supply marks its 50th anniversary in business during 2017.

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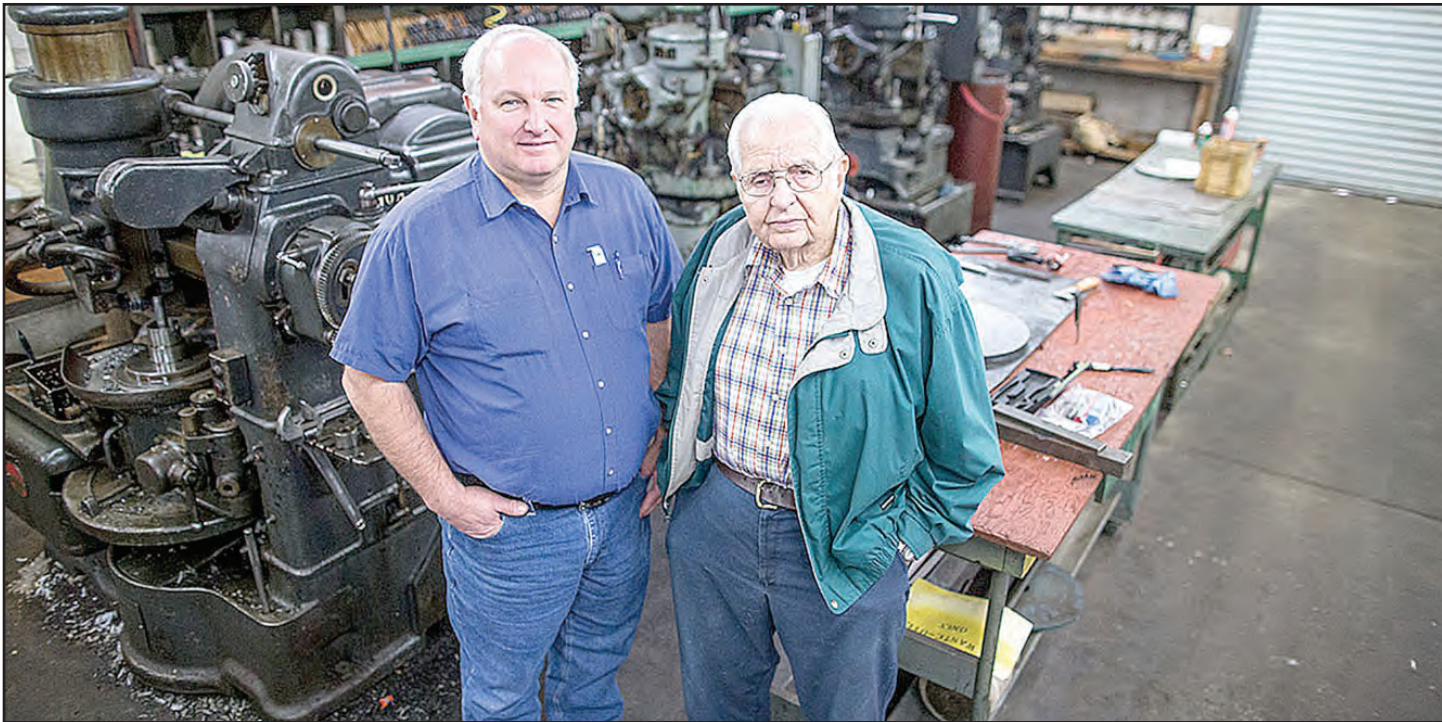
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Tom Williams, right, opened Industrial Machine & Supply 50 years ago. His first customer was Wehadkee Yarn Mills, a Talladega textiles producer. His son David took over the operation in the 1990s. Changes in the textile industry and in machining practices have led to less textile work, but the company's customer base now extends internationally and into such industries as material handling, agriculture and automotive and consumer goods.

Bob Crisp/The Daily Home



Bob Crisp/The Daily Home

Industrial Machine & Supply specializes in producing prototypes and large quantities of machined parts. The company's machining capabilities include milling, form turning, taper turning, contour turning, external and internal threading and thread milling.



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WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

St. Clair Economic Development Council focuses on new jobs

By GARY HANNER
Home staff writer

The St. Clair County Economic Development Council has been very instrumental in shaping the county in the past 16 years, making it one of the most desirable counties in which to work and/or live in.

Don Smith, executive director for the EDC, said as for what lies ahead on the horizon and the involvement of the EDC, workforce development in St. Clair County will continue to be the focus.

A new company that has already broken ground is Gardner Denver Nash in Moody. It is a global quality provider of high quality industrial equipment, services and technology. It will lease a new 52,000-square foot facility from Graham & Company. It brings 7 new jobs to the area with a payroll of \$344,000 and a capital investment of \$10.25 million.

Expansion projects in 2016 included Eissmann Automotive and Garrison Steel, both in Pell City.

The Eissmann expansion created another 200 jobs with a payroll of \$8.3 million and a capital investment of \$14.57 million, while the Garrison Steel expansion created 17 new jobs with a payroll of \$810,000 and a capital investment of \$275,000.

Commercial announcements in 2016 included Buffalo Wild Wings, Premiere Theaters and McSweeney Automotive, all in Pell City.

Buffalo Wild Wings created 125 jobs with a payroll of \$1.5 million and a capital investment of \$3.8 million. Premiere Theaters will create 35 new jobs with a payroll of \$750,000 and a capital investment of \$10 million. McSweeney Automotive will create 45 new jobs with a payroll of \$1.8 million and a capital investment of \$9.5 million.

Smith noted that retail and housing will continue to gain strength as new investments continue at The Shoppes at Grand River in Leeds, the Publix at The Village at Moody, Odenville's Highway 174 exit, Pell City's Bankhead Crossing, and the Springville Station Retail Center and Sports Park.

The St. Clair County EDC has offices on the third floor of Jeff State Community College. The address is 500 College Circle, Suite 306, Pell City. The telephone number is 205-814-1440. The fax number is 205-814-1441.

Don Smith can be reached at 205-473-9925 or dsmith@stclairedc.com

Jason Roberts, assistant director, can be reached at 205-281-0998 or jroberts@stclairedc.com

Candice Hill, retail specialist, can be reached at 205-370-9142 or chill@stclairedc.com



File photos

Above and left: With a major expansion, Eissmann Automotive created 200 jobs with a payroll of \$8.3 million and a capital investment of \$14.57 million.

Below: Buffalo Wild Wings opened in Pell City during the past year, creating 125 jobs with a payroll of \$1.5 million and a capital investment of 3.8 million.



Talladega's industrial growth: More up than down

By CHRIS NORWOOD
Home staff writer

It was an up and down year for Talladega County, with more up than down, in terms of industrial growth and development, according to Economic Development Authority Executive Director Calvin Miller.

"Nemak closed a division and had to lay off about 200 people," he said. "They're now down to 465 from over 700 at one time."

In spite of this, Heritage Freight in Sylacauga recently completed a 100,000 square foot warehouse for Nemak that they still have plenty of need for," Miller said.

Scot Industries, on the other hand, launched a "\$6.5 million expansion that will result in 10 to 15 new jobs. They haven't started yet, but that's coming. And the old Georgia Pacific building (in Talladega) is now up for sale for \$2.25 million. It's 240,000 square feet on 172 acres, so that's a very good price. And CSX Railroad and Virginia Transport have a new facility that is already employing 100 people."

The Virginia Transport project, which involves trucks fueled by natural gas rather than gasoline the things that need to be done to make sure we're million, not counting the

related work done by CSX.

Honda also had an excellent year, he said. "They moved more cars in 2016 than ever before, and they spent a lot of money. They even gave their employees a second bonus for the year."

Atlas Roofing finished an expansion project that started in 2015 after extending its tax abatement, and Blue Bell Creameries continued to bounce back, as employment and production continued heading toward pre-shutdown levels.

IKO, also located in Sylacauga, has added a second shift bringing total employment to 87 at a facility where 75 was supposed to be full capacity.

In the coming year, Miller said to be on the lookout for a 100,000 square foot speculative building in Lincoln, and Style Crest Mobile Home Parts and PGW in the Coosa Valley Industrial Park will be seeing some growth as well.

PGW will be adding 20,000 square feet and 15 employees, for instance.

"I'm optimistic," Miller said. "With the change coming in the federal government, development in Alabama and throughout the US will be picking up. We need to be doing the things that need to be done to make sure we're ready."



File photo

IKO has added a second shift to its Sylacauga operation that produces residential and commercial roofing supplies, bringing its total employment to 87.



File photo

Economic Development Authority Executive Director Calvin Miller said he is optimistic that industrial development will increase locally and throughout Alabama this year.

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Honda Manufacturing of Alabama sets production records in 2016

Locally-produced 2017 Ridgeline wins top industry award

By LACI BRASWELL
Home staff writer

LINCOLN -- Honda Manufacturing of Alabama (HMA) made 2016 a record-breaking production year, producing more than 350,000 vehicles and the V-6 engines that power them.

Preliminary numbers for 2016 show HMA built 130,591 Odyssey minivans, 140,053 Pilot SUVs, 34,592 Ridgeline Pickup Trucks and 64,302 Acura MDX luxury SUVs at the Lincoln facility.

HMA is the exclusive global production source for each vehicle. Final production numbers were unavailable at the time this edition went to press.

Last year's projected total topped 2015's final production numbers by more than 20,000 vehicles -- largely attributable to the resumed production this year of the Ridgeline. In 2015, HMA built 150,603 Odyssey minivans, 132,728 Pilot SUVs, and 66,062 Acura MDX luxury SUVs at the Lincoln facility.

Honda Manufacturing of Alabama also marked its 15th anniversary during 2016. Since the start of vehicle and engine production in Alabama on Nov. 14, 2001, HMA has built an estimated 4 million V-6 engines; 2.3 million Odyssey minivans; 1.45 million Pilot SUVs; 142,000 Ridgeline trucks; 225,000 Acura MDX SUVs; and 27,119 Accord V-6 Sedans.

Over a three-year period, the more than 4,500 associates at Honda's Lincoln facility also will have completed new model redesigns of all four Honda vehicles that are built in Alabama.

According to Honda officials, cus-



File photo

The Honda Ridgeline, produced in Lincoln, has been named 2017 North American Truck of the Year.

tomers demand also remains strong for the Odyssey minivan, the Acura MDX and the new Pilot, which was an all-new design for the 2016 model year.

Customer demand is also high for the completely redesigned and reengineered 2017 Honda Ridgeline, which has been named the 2017 North American Truck of the Year. Launched last June, the 2017 Ridgeline includes a host of industry-exclusive standard and available features including unibody construction, a Dual Action Tailgate, In-Bed Trunk, a scratch- and dent-resistant composite truck bed and the world's first Truck Bed Audio System.

"This award is a prized validation of the innovations and advantages the Ridgeline offers midsize pickup truck customers and a great recognition of the American development team's work," said John Mendel, executive vice president of American Honda Motor Co. Inc. "This is a terrific way to kick off 2017, and we're looking forward to sharing more innovative Honda products in the year ahead."

The North American Truck of the Year Award is given by a group of over 50 members of the North American automotive media and is distinctive because it is not tied to a single publication, radio

or television station but determined by an independent group of journalists from the United States and Canada. Presented each year at the opening of the North American International Auto Show in Detroit, the award recognizes the most outstanding vehicle of the year based on multiple factors including innovation, design, safety performance, handling, driver satisfaction and value.

The Ridgeline is a part of Honda's expanded lineup of innovative light-truck models, including the HR-V crossover, the CR-V and Pilot SUVs and the upcoming 2018 Odyssey minivan.

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