

# 'A THREAT AGAINST US ALL'

FBI foils plot of militia group to kidnap Michigan governor. 6A



# JACKET WEATHER

Oxford shows rust early, finds groove to beat Arab. 1C

# The Anniston Star

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## COVER STORY

# FORMING 'A TEAM'

Anniston's newly elected council members eager to work together



Bill Wilson/The Anniston Star

Ciara Smith, center, celebrates her victory with friends Demetria Houston, left, and Vinson Houston, right. Smith won the Oct. 6 runoff election for Anniston's Ward 3 City Council seat, defeating longtime incumbent Ben Little.

BY TIM LOCKETTE  
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The next four-year term for the Anniston City Council could see the start of construction on an extension of the Ladiga Trail, creation of a separate authority to run Anniston Regional Airport and negotiations with Alabama Power to install more streetlights.

But first, meetings. All four council members elected in Tuesday's runoff — the mayor and three ward representatives — said they want to meet with fellow council members before getting too deep into the details of their policy plans.

Mayor Jack Draper and Councilman Jay Jenkins won re-election on Tuesday, while Ciara Smith and Demetric Roberts were elected as new council members.



Bill Wilson/The Anniston Star

Demetric Roberts celebrates his victory Tuesday night in Anniston's race for the City Council Ward 2 seat.

They will be sworn into office on Nov. 3.

"The first thing from me that I think is extremely important is fostering a relationship with the team," said Smith, councilwoman-elect

for Ward 3. "And I'm always going to refer to my counterparts as a team."

Talk of teamwork and consultation with other council members might seem dull in most cities

where new council members are taking office. But in Anniston, a city long known for divisive politics and explosive council meetings, the eagerness to reach consensus on public policy may itself be the biggest policy change.

Draper said he hopes to convene a retreat for the incoming council at some point later this month to talk about the coming months.

For Draper, one of the biggest projects on the horizon is the extension of the Ladiga Trail, the rails-to-trails project that has brought hikers and bikers to Calhoun County but has yet to connect to downtown Anniston. The mayor said he expects the city to complete the paperwork to acquire the land needed by the end of the year, with construction beginning in 2021.

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## COUNTY COMMISSION

# Calhoun commission votes to rename Janney Furnace Park for Eli Henderson

BY TIM LOCKETTE  
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Calhoun County commissioners voted unanimously Thursday morning to rename Janney Furnace Park in memory of Eli Henderson, the longtime commissioner who died of COVID-19 in August.

Henderson was one of the chief advocates of the Confederate-themed history park in Ohatchee. After renaming, the park would be known as Eli Henderson Park at Janney Furnace.

"He put Ohatchee on the map with this park," said Carolyn Henderson, Eli Henderson's widow, who was appointed last month to serve out her husband's term on the commission.

"We worked hard on it," she said. "He labored every day."

The park in Ohatchee was built around Janney Furnace, a Civil War-era foundry. It now includes a monument to the county's Confederate dead, an open park space where a large Confederate battle flag flies and a museum with Civil War and American Indian artifacts.

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Tim Lockette/The Anniston Star

Janney Furnace, a Civil War-era foundry, is the centerpiece of Janney Furnace Park in Ohatchee.

## PIEDMONT

# Former Piedmont football player seeks youthful offender status in assault case

BY MIA KORTRIGHT  
Star Staff Writer

A former Piedmont football player charged with assaulting a younger teammate requested last week that a judge grant him youthful offender status.

The 19-year-old man and two juveniles, all football players at Piedmont High School at the time of the assault, were initially charged Sept. 28 by Piedmont police with third-degree assault. They allegedly held a younger boy down in the boys locker room at Piedmont High School and forced a key into his anal region in November.

The 19-year-old man's defense attorney, Sheila Field, filed the application for youthful offender status on Oct. 1.

Authorities told The Star in September that a grand jury will review the case and determine whether any more charges, including sex charges, stemming from the incident will be filed.

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## COMMENTARY

# 'It is what it is:' A change for Ward 3

One of Ben Little's talents is telling stories. Less professorial than ministerial, he's nonetheless fond of trying to make his point with parables and allegories prone to digressions. Sometimes they make no sense.

Four years ago he left me a polite voice-mail the morning after he was re-elected to the Anniston City Council. I still have it on my phone.

"Hey, Phillip," he began.

That voice, unmistakable. "I know it's back to business as usual now," he said.

After a few niceties, he launched into a cute story about Ralph Wolf and Sam Sheepdog, two Looney Tunes cartoon characters from back in the day. I promise I'm not making this up.

He asked if I remembered them. (I did.) He chuckled when recalling how Ralph and Sam were good friends until they clocked in at work and Ralph spent the next eight exasperating hours chasing Sam, a wolf stalking his prey.

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Trent Penny/The Anniston Star/File

Anniston City Councilman Ben Little speaks at a press conference in 2019.

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## OBITUARIES, 6C

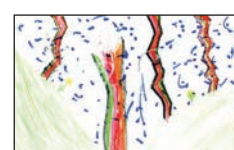
Ret. Stf. Sgt. Willie Lewis Ashford "Billy", Columbus, Ga.  
Mary Helen Benefield, Jacksonville  
Caffey Bell Bester, Kansas  
Edna Buckhanon, Pell City

Mary L. Burris, Oxford  
Ellen M Childers, Anniston  
Jimmy  
Leo "Jim" Craven, Jacksonville  
James E. McCloud, Oxford

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RAIN CHANCE  
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Kallie Mullen,  
Spring Garden Elem.