

After changing schools twice, Rod Elston excelling at Oxford. 1B

At The Train Station Cafe, the new stuffed apples are in high demand. 7A



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ELECTION 2020

Alabama Secretary of State: Election will be valid

As in 2016, Trump claims vote 'rigged', Merrill says Alabama vote safe

BY TIM LOCKETTE

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OXFORD — With three weeks left until the presidential election, President Donald Trump continues to claim the coming result will be invalid — but Alabama Secretary of State John Merrill said he's confident the state's Nov. 3 elections will have a credible result.

"Our election's going to be safe and secure," Merrill said Tuesday in an interview with The Anniston Star at the offices of WEAC-TV in Oxford. "It's going to have credibility and integrity just like every election we've administered since I've been secretary of state."

Merrill made the rounds of media

INSIDE

Power bills, transparency at issue in election for Alabama's PSC

PAGE 9A

eased restrictions on voter ID requirements and curbside voting because of the pandemic.

There's also an elephant in the room: the president's repeated claims, typically without supporting evidence, that the coming election will be illegitimate. Trump for weeks has

outlets Tuesday as buzz around the coming election, and its challenges, continues to grow. Concerns about coronavirus have many voters seeking absentee ballots. Merrill is locked in a federal court battle with voting-rights organizations seeking

kept up a steady drumbeat of claims that mail-in voting will lead to widespread theft of votes, and just Tuesday morning the president tweeted a television news story about alleged theft of mail in some Virginia counties and claimed: "This is happening all over the U.S. Rigged Election???"

It's an allegation that potentially puts state voting officials in a tough spot, because the United States doesn't have one single authority running its elections. Every state has an official like Merrill, elected or appointed to oversee the vote at a state level, with county and city officials running the vote locally.

Merrill has been in this tough spot

Please see MERRILL | Page 3A



Stephen Gross/The Anniston Star

Alabama Secretary of State John Merrill answers question ahead of November's election at the offices of WEAC-TV on Tuesday.

COVER STORY

Honda Ridgeline toughens up



Honda courtesy photo

Honda's made-in-Alabama pickup has undergone a makeover for the 2021 model year, which includes changes to the front end, a new skid plate, a set of standard 18-inch wheels and a tougher rear end with dual exhaust tips. New LED headlamps promise better lighting.

COMMENTARY

Lincoln-made truck takes on rugged exterior to better rival competitors

Is the Honda Ridgeline a real truck? Of course it is, but Honda has been having trouble convincing

customers that the Alabama-made, four-wheel-drive truck is as rugged and reliable as its competitors. It has fallen flat in most Southern markets.

The vehicle is one of five the Japanese automaker produces in Lincoln. Others include the Honda Passport, Odyssey, Pilot and Acura.

The Ridgeline, which has been around since March 2005 for the 2006 model year, ranks below the Ford F-150, Chevy Silverado and Ram series in sales, as the Big Three shift focus to truck brands over cars. The Toyota Tacoma is the biggest-selling Japanese

Please see BENNETT | Page 3A



James Bennett

Editor's Notes



James Bennett/The Anniston Star

Sunny King Honda sales team members (front, from left) Jessie Ballard, Nick Pope, Randall Doss and Eddie Sterling and (back) Cameron Dempsey, Tyler Causey, Desmond Thomas and Shane Skinner show off the 2020 Honda Ridgeline.

ANNISTON

City seeking volunteers for Saturday cleanup

BY TIM LOCKETTE

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The World Changers aren't coming to Anniston this autumn, but city leaders have a plan.

For the past several years, the religious nonprofit has brought volunteers from multiple states to Anniston to repair homes and carry out community cleanup projects, often for older residents with low incomes.

That's not happening this year because of COVID-19, city spokesman Jackson Hodges said. Instead, the city is inviting local residents to a Saturday cleanup at the Gateway to Anniston Mural Park, at 1507 Glen Addie Avenue.

That event will also be the launch of Anniston Changers, a local volunteer group that organizers hope will do regular community cleanups in the city.

"Our plan is to do a large-scale service project in October, and then another one in November," Hodges said. "Then we'll transition into a group similar to the World Changers."

For the Saturday cleanup, Hodges said,

Please see CHANGERS | Page 3A

WEATHER, 8B



Lyric Hackler, C.E. Hanna Elementary

SUNNY

HIGH: 83 LOW: 58

INDEX

Classifieds 5B
Coffee Break 8B
Comics 8A
Food 7A
Lottery 2A

Vol. 140, No. 288

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OBITUARIES, 6A

John Walter Burgess Jr., Lewiston, Maine
Kenneth Lee Butler, Jacksonville
Melvin Conley, Anniston
Shelby Jean Davis, Heflin
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INSIDE, 5A

Anniston's Little questions vote totals

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