

Centreville Press

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Bibb County Schools Celebrate Growth on 2024–2025 Report Card

BY SAVANNAH LOGAN
REPORTER

Bibb County Schools are celebrating encouraging progress this year, earning an overall score of 83 on the 2024–2025 federal and state report card. This marks a one-point increase from last year's 82, a gain the district says reflects the steady, ongoing work happening in classrooms every day. District leaders shared their excitement about the results, noting that even incremental growth represents countless hours of effort from teachers, staff, students, and families. They emphasized that the improvement highlights a districtwide commitment to academic progress, student support, and creating success-

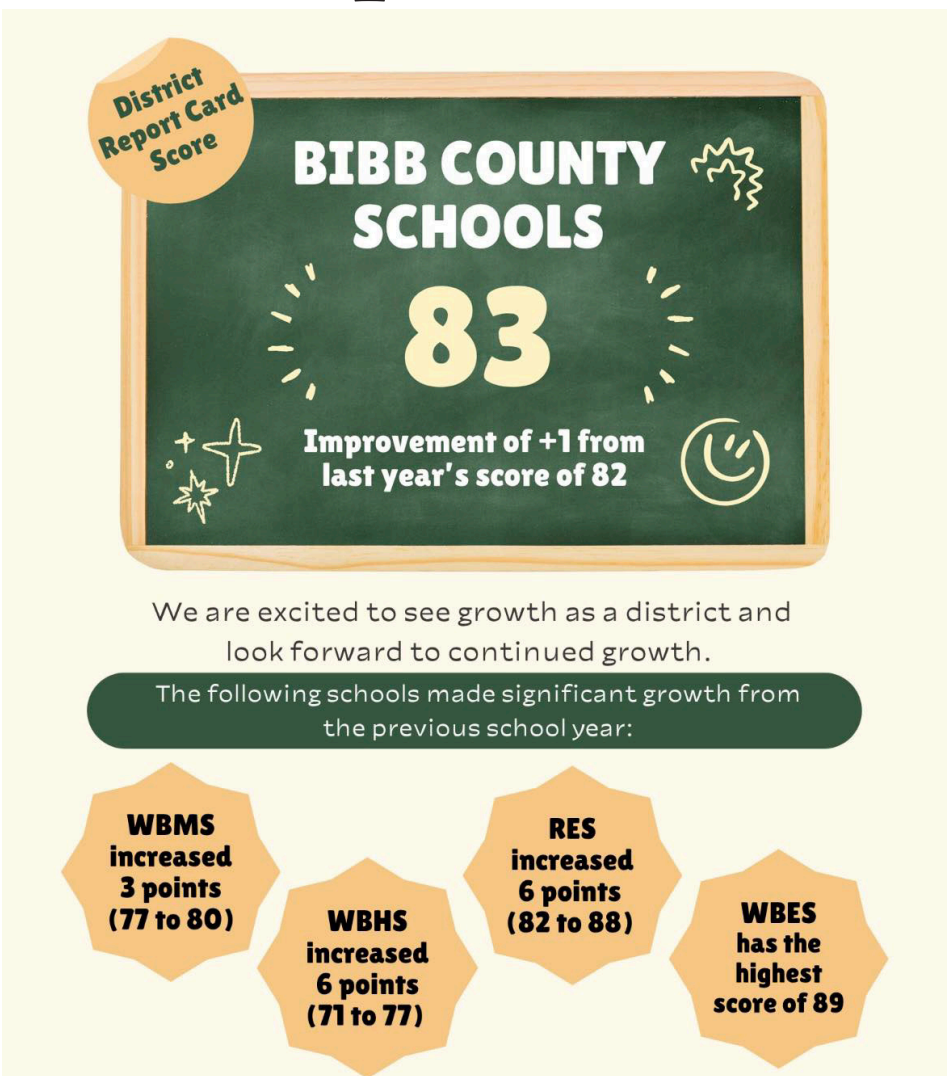
ful learning environ-

ments. Several individual schools also made notable strides. West Blocton Middle School increased its score from 77 to 80, showing a solid three-point gain. West Blocton High School recorded one of the largest jumps in the district by rising six points, from 71 to 77. Randolph Elementary School matched that growth with its own six-point improvement, climbing from 82 to 88. West Blocton Elementary School earned special recognition for achieving the highest score in the district, posting an impressive 89.

The district extended congratulations to these schools for their significant growth, while also acknowledging that every

school contributes to the overall success of Bibb County's students. Superintendent Kevin Cotner shared, "We are proud of the hard work our schools have put in to increase our district report card. We are thankful for all of our administrators, teachers and staff who made this possible. We look forward to the continued progress from each of our schools."

As the new academic year continues, Bibb County Schools says it looks forward to building on this positive momentum. With dedicated educators, supportive families, and hardworking students, the district remains committed to pushing forward and celebrating every milestone along the way.



States Begin Restoring SNAP Payments Following Shutdown



BY SAVANNAH LOGAN
REPORTER

As states work to restore normal operations following the recent federal government shutdown, many are also beginning to roll out significant changes to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). These updates stem from policy changes passed this summer under the One Big Beautiful Bill, which revises eligibility, work requirements, and cost-sharing responsibilities between states and the federal government.

In Alabama, residents who did not receive their regular SNAP benefits during the shutdown were expected to receive payments beginning Nov. 14, according to state officials. While distribution is resuming, many households may still experience changes to their benefits as new federal regulations take hold.

The updated guidance from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, which administers SNAP, is expected to shift many people off the program. States are now beginning the

process of updating records, enforcing work requirements, and adjusting eligibility in accordance with federal rules.

Under the new guidelines, most able-bodied adults under age 65 must meet expanded work requirements to continue receiving assistance. Adults without dependents will now need to document that they work at least 80 hours per month, are enrolled in school, or are participating in an approved training program. Without meeting these criteria, bene-

fits may be limited to a maximum of three months.

Some parents may be exempt from the work requirement, particularly those caring for children under 14. Parents of children ages 14 to 18, however, will likely be required to meet the new standards. Several groups that previously held exemptions, including veterans, individuals experiencing homelessness, and young adults transitioning out of foster care, must now also meet work requirements to maintain eligibility. People with disabilities remain exempt.

The One Big Beautiful Bill also alters eligibility for non-citizens, narrowing the categories of individuals who qualify for SNAP benefits. Going forward, eligible groups include U.S. citizens, U.S. nationals, Cuban and Haitian entrants, and citizens of nations in the Compacts of

Free Association (Micronesia, the Marshall Islands, and Palau). Lawful permanent residents may qualify after a five-year waiting period, unless they qualify sooner because they are under age 18 or have a military connection.

Other groups, including refugees, individuals granted asylum, and survivors of human trafficking, will no longer be eligible under the updated rules.

States were instructed to begin implementing these changes on Nov. 1, with timelines varying as agencies work to adjust their systems and communicate updates to participants. Officials encourage residents receiving SNAP to stay informed, review eligibility requirements, and ensure documentation is up to date as these changes continue to roll out.

As programs stabilize after the shutdown, state agencies

are expected to provide further guidance to help residents understand how the new regulations may affect their benefits moving forward.

As programs stabilize after the shutdown, state agencies are expected to provide further guidance to help residents understand how the new regulations may affect their benefits moving forward. Community organizations also remind the public that food insecurity often increases during periods of policy change. Continuing to support local food pantries, churches, and community groups can make a meaningful difference for neighbors in need. Donations — whether food, funds, or time — help strengthen the shared safety net and ensure assistance remains available to families navigating these transitions.



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NEWS

Public Debate Grows as Alabama Considers Disaffiliation from PBS

BY SAVANNAH LOGAN
REPORTER

A statewide conversation is unfolding after Alabama Gov. Kay Ivey sent a letter to the Alabama Educational Television Commission requesting that a public survey be conducted before any decision is made about whether Alabama Public Television (APT) should disaffiliate from PBS. The request comes ahead of an upcoming APT board meeting, where commissioners will discuss the possibility of severing ties with the national public media organization. Public comment will not be permitted at the meeting, though many Alabamians have already begun voicing their concerns through letters, calls, and organized protests.

In her letter, Gov. Ivey acknowledged the concerns prompting the proposal while stressing that a significant change such as disaffiliation should not be made without careful planning and a clear understanding of public opinion. She noted

that although some question whether operating a public television network is an appropriate government function, Alabama law currently outlines APT's responsibility to provide educational broadcasting statewide. Until the Legislature determines otherwise, she stated, APT must continue fulfilling that mission.

The discussion began after APT Commissioners Les Barnett and Ferris Stephens suggested ending the network's partnership with PBS following federal cuts to the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) under the Trump administration. CPB funding historically supported PBS programming such as Sesame Street, Daniel Tiger's Neighborhood, NOVA, PBS NewsHour, and Ken Burns documentaries. During an October meeting, several commissioners expressed concern that maintaining the relationship with PBS might send the wrong message to political leaders who oppose federally fund-



ed media.

APT Executive Director Wayne Reid reported that he has heard no widespread opposition from state leadership regarding PBS programming, though he acknowledged that certain shows receive criticism for perceived political leanings. Gov. Ivey also highlighted her broader efforts to support what she called "Alabama values," stating that APT programming should align with those values while still meeting its legal obligations as an educational broadcaster.

APT holds a unique place in broadcast-

ing history, having launched in 1955 as the nation's first educational television network. It has partnered with PBS since the organization's founding in 1969. APT's stated mission is to enrich the lives of Alabamians through essential educational services and to help promote equitable access to learning across the state.

The governor's letter urged the Commission to take a measured approach: survey Alabama residents, gather feedback over an extended period of time, not just a brief snapshot, and create a detailed plan outlining the potential

impacts of disaffiliation. She noted that any decision should be informed by trends in public sentiment and accompanied by a plan ensuring APT continues to meet its legal and educational responsibilities.

The issue has drawn attention from longtime viewers and community groups. Some have written letters to state officials describing the role PBS programming plays in childhood development and adult lifelong learning. A letter submitted to The Centreville Press by concerned citizens emphasized the importance of PBS educational content, noting that 60% of Alabama children do not have access to Pre-K programs and rely on free PBS resources to build early literacy, math, and social-emotional skills.

Organizers are encouraging residents to contact state leaders or attend the upcoming APT Commission meeting on November 18 to share their perspectives. Community events such as post-

card-writing gatherings have also been scheduled to help residents participate.

PBS research shows decades of measured educational impact, with studies highlighting gains in early literacy, STEM learning, problem-solving, empathy, and social-emotional development through PBS KIDS programming. Many Alabamians who grew up with shows like Daniel Tiger's Neighborhood and Sesame Street say the content provided comfort, learning, and foundational skills that continued into adolescence and beyond.

As discussions continue, residents are being urged to stay informed, review the available information, and make their voices heard through the proper channels. Whether through surveys, written communication, or participation at scheduled public events, Alabamians have multiple ways to contribute to the decision-making process surrounding the future of APT's relationship with PBS.

Big Buck Photo Contest

MONTGOMERY, Ala. (Nov. 12, 2025) – Alabama's Black Belt has earned a reputation as one of America's premiere deer hunting destinations, and the Alabama Black Belt Adventures Association (ALBBAA) wants to showcase your best buck again this year.

ALBBAA is sponsoring its Big Buck Photo Contest for the 14th

consecutive year, and the winner will be determined by online voting.

"We love having the photos shared with us every year in the Big Buck Photo Contest," said ALBBAA director Pam Swanner said. "The contest showcases what we all know to be true, that Alabama's Black Belt remains one of the best places in America

to bag a trophy buck. We encourage every hunter who harvests a buck in the Black Belt to enter our contest."

The winner of the year's contest will receive a \$100 gift card and a copy of Black Belt Bounty, a coffee table book filled with stunning images, wildlife essays, colorful stories on our hunting and fishing traditions, wild game recipes and

more.

The contest is now open and voting will conclude on Feb. 13, 2026, at 11:59 p.m.

ALBBAA encourages all hunters to follow all deer regulations for the 2025-26 Alabama deer hunting season, which can be found online.

Here are key rules and guidelines for ALBBAA's 14th annual Big Buck Photo Contest:



ABOVE: Webb Pass harvested this buck while hunting with his grandfather and entered it into last year's ALBBAA Big Buck Photo Contest. (Photo courtesy of the Alabama Black Belt Adventures Association)

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their contribution to the management of wildlife.

- Voting violation which imposes an unfair advantage to others.

The contestant who receives the most online votes before balloting ends will be declared the winner. Before a winner is declared, ALBBAA will audit voting to make sure all contest rules were followed.

Voting will conclude at 11:59 PM on Friday, Feb. 13, 2026, which will give voters time to cast ballots for any photos submitted after the final week of the season.

"Alabama hunters enjoy bountiful outdoors recreational opportunities in the Black Belt, and deer hunting remains one of the reasons so many people visit this region during the season," Swanner said. "The Big Buck Photo Contest is de-

signed to showcase the abundance of wildlife found throughout all the Black Belt's 23 counties while celebrating the heritage and traditions of hunting in our region for generations."

All sportsmen and sportswomen should purchase a hunting license online through the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources before heading afield. Additionally, successful hunters are also reminded to report all harvested deer through Game Check.

The Black Belt includes the following 23 counties: Barbour, Bullock, Butler, Choc-taw, Clarke, Conecuh, Crenshaw, Dallas, Greene, Hale, Lee, Lowndes, Macon, Marengo, Monroe, Montgomery, Perry, Pickens, Pike, Russell, Sumter, Tuscaloosa and Wilcox.

LOCAL & GOVERNMENT

CENTREVILLE CITY COUNCIL

Meeting Date: November 4, 2025 by Lynn LHamric

Mayor Barry Cooner called the meeting to order at five o'clock. Don Mack opened with prayer followed by Linda Lawrence leading the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call: Present
Barry Cooner
Don Mack
Dianne Epperson
Linda Lawrence
Aaron Hood
Akelya Holifield
Dianne Epperson was elected Mayor Pro-Tem.
Appointment of Administrative Offices
Tracy Griffin – City Clerk/Treasurer
Fire Chief – Tommy Worrell
Police Chief – Rodney Smith
Municipal Judge – Brian Brinyark
City Prosecutor – Jason Neff
City Attorney - -Ellis, Head, Owens, Justice
Election of Mayor Pro-Tem – Dianne Epperson

Board Appointments:
Planning and Zoning – Remains the same.
Water Board: Barry Cooner stepping down. Randy Burke appointed.

Additional Board and Committee Formations – To be addressed at a later date.

New Business:
Motion to move forward with a forensic audit: Motion Linda Lawrence, second Dianne Epperson. Motion carried.

Motion to remove Mike Oakley, from bank accounts and add Barry Cooner and Don Mack. Motion Dianne Epperson, second Linda Lawrence. Motion carried.

Motion to approve DHR Lease Agreement Don Mack, second Linda Lawrence. Motion carried.

Budget Work Session set for November 18, 2025 at 4:00pm,

Appointment of Lynn Hamric as a volunteer worker at City Hall. Motion Aaron Hood, second . Motion carried.
Fire Department Financial Distribu-

tion – Follow the same procedure as last year. (# training sessions, meeting and years of service) to establish annual payment. Motion Dianne Epperson, Second Linda Lawrence. Motion carried.

Centreville Main Street report given by Katie Cheslock (handout).

Public Comments (3 min. limit).
Barry asked Police Chief Rodney Smith to obtain quotes on a new flag pole for the front of the Police Station.

Katie Cheslock. Reminded the Council of the November 6th AL Main Street Re-Branding at noon at the Rock Building.

Rodney Smith reported the new sign (95 % RCD grant funded) is up and operational. Can be used for event announcements, Emergency Alerts, etc.

Linda Lawrence asked if collections from insurance companies (Fire Dept.) is being done. Tracy affirmed this is being done.

Em Bowman asked if the 3rd party Forensic Audit would do a deep dive into the finance for back years. Mayor Cooner advised that the number of years will be determined by the council, and could be as far back as ten years.

Council meetings may be placed on YouTube with no comments and can be found on the City website.

Aaron Hood stated additional seating in the council chamber is needed. Mayor Cooner stated Office Supply will deliver these. Mayor Cooner stated he does not want anyone standing during meetings.

Linda Lawrence asked about possibly moving the meetings to a later start time. Mayor Cooner said this will be looked at and possibly alternating start times.

There being no further business the meeting adjourned.

WEST BLOCTON TOWN COUNCIL

Meeting Date: November 3, 2025

The Town Council of the Town of West Blocton, Alabama met in an Organizational/Regular Council Meeting at the Municipal Building on Monday, November 3, 2025, at 7:00pm. A quorum being present, Mayor Daniel Sims called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm. Prayer was led by Fred Lynch. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Glenn Johnson. Roll was called by Town Clerk Brandy Fancher.
Present: Fred Lynch, Glenn Johnson, Blane Sherron, Kristen Nash
Absent: Holly Barnett

ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING

Oaths of Office Administered by Town Clerk Brandy Fancher
A.) Mayor Daniel Sims
B.) Council Place 1 - Freddie Lynch
Council Place 2 - Howard Glenn Johnson
Council Place 3 - Stephanie Brasher
Council Place 4 -Anthony Blane Sherron
Council Place 5 - Kristen Nash

Council Approval:

Resolution 2025-11-03 Election of Mayor Pro-Tern
Council member Blane Sherron made the motion to approve Glenn Johnson as Mayor Pro-Tern. Motion was seconded by Council member Kristen Nash. All in favor and motion so carried.

Resolution 2025-11-03A Appointment of Town Clerk
Council member Blane Sherron made the motion to approve Brandy Fancher as Town Clerk. Motion was seconded by Council member Stephanie Brasher. All in favor and motion so carried.

Resolution 2025-11-03B Appointment of Police Chief
Council member Kristen Nash made the motion to approve Leonard Hicks as Police Chief. Motion was seconded by Council member Glenn Johnson. All in favor and motion so carried.

Resolution 2025-11-03C Appointment of Water Superintendent
Council member Glenn Johnson made the motion to approve Jonathan Lawley as Water Superintendent. Motion was seconded by Council member Kristen Nash. All in favor and motion so carried.

Resolution 2025-11-03D Appointment of Fire Chief
Council member Blane Sherron made the motion to approve Joseph McCool as Fire Chief. Motion was seconded by Council member Glenn Johnson. All in favor and motion so carried.

Oaths of Office Administered to Town Clerk, Police Chief, Water Superintendent and Fire Chief.

Resolution 2025-11-03E Designating Depositories of Funds. Council member Blane Sherron made the motion to approve the Designating Depositories of Funds. Motion was seconded by Council mem-

ber Stephanie Brasher. All in favor and motion so carried

Resolution 2025-I I-03F Appointment of Town Attorney
Council member Kristen Nash made the motion to approve Kasey Davis as Town Attorney. Motion was seconded by Council member Glenn Johnson. All in favor and motion so carried.

Resolution 2025-I I-03G Appointment of Municipal Judge
Council member Glenn Johnson made the motion to approve Kenneth Moore as Municipal Judge. Motion was seconded by Council member Kristen Nash . All in favor and motion so carried.

Resolution 2025-I I-03H Appointment of Town Prosecutor
Council member Blane Sherron made the motion to approve Kacey Davis as Town Prosecutor. Motion was seconded by Council member Kristen Nash. All in favor and motion so carried.

Ordinance No. 2025-11-03 Establishing Rules of Council Procedures
Council member Glenn Johnson made the motion to approve Ordinance No. 2025-11-03 Establishing Rules of Council Procedures. Motion was seconded by Council member Blane Sherron. All in favor and motion so carried.

REGULAR BUSINESS MEETING

Previous Council Meeting Minutes 10-6-2025
Council member Glenn Johnson made the motion to approve the previous Council Meeting Minutes for 10-6-2025. Motion was seconded by Council member Kristen Nash. All in favor and motion so carried.

September 2025 Financials
RCIII Call Vote was used to accept September 2025 Financials. Council member Glenn Johnson made the motion to Yes -Fred Lynch, Glenn Johnson, Stephanie Brasher, Blane Sherron and Kristen Nash All in favor and motion so carried.

Ordinance No. 2025- I I-3A Policy for Public Record Request Roll Call Vote was used to accept Ordinance No. 2025-II-3A.
Yes -Fred Lynch, Glenn Johnson, Stephanie Brasher, Blane Sherron and Kristen Nash All in favor and motion so carried.

Water Department Report given by Jonathan Lawley
Police Department Report given by Chief Pete Hicks
Fire Dept Report given by Joseph McCool

Citizens to Speak - None

There being no further business to come before the Town Council at this time, Council Member Glenn Johnson made the motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Council Member Blane Sherron. All in favor and motion so carried.



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EDITORIALS & OPINIONS

Creating a Simple Thanksgiving: Returning to What Matters Most



BY WHITNEY BUZBEE
REPORTER

In a world that often romanticizes the “perfect” holiday—overflowing tables, elaborate décor, and picture-perfect moments—Thanksgiving can feel more overwhelming than grateful. Yet at its core, Thanksgiving has always been about something much simpler: gathering, remembering blessings, and giving thanks with the people we love.

Creating a simple Thanksgiving doesn't mean settling for less. It means returning to what the holiday was meant to be: meaningful, unrushed, and rooted in gratitude. With a little intention, any family can experience a Thanksgiving that feels calmer, richer, and far more joyful.

Start with the Why

Before planning menus or setting tables, take a moment to ask: What do we want Thanksgiving to feel like this year?

A simple Thanksgiving often begins with clarity:

Do you want a more relaxed pace?

More connection and conversation?

Less stress in the kitchen?

More time reflecting on gratitude?

Letting your “why” guide your decisions helps you embrace simplicity without guilt.

Simplify the Menu

Thanksgiving dinners have a way of becoming marathon productions. But truthfully, you don't need ten side dishes for the day to feel special.

A main dish (turkey, roasted chicken, or even a pot roast)

Two or three favorite sides

One dessert

Focus on dishes that bring comfort and tradition to your home. Choose recipes you enjoy making—not

ones you feel obligated to prepare because “we’ve always done it that way.”

Remember: people come for the company, not the casserole count.

3. Create Space, Not Perfection

A simple Thanksgiving doesn't require color-coordinated décor or a magazine-ready tablescape. Small touches make a big difference:

a candle on the table

a few autumn leaves or pumpkins

handwritten place cards or a simple table runner

Choose cozy over fancy. Choose meaningful over extravagant. A welcoming atmosphere is created by warmth—not complexity.

Share the Work

Simplicity thrives when everyone contributes. Ask guests to bring a favorite dish, handle drinks, or help with clean-up. Children can set the table, fold napkins, or help stir ingredients.

Inviting others to share the responsibilities not only lightens your load, but also invites a sense of community—something deeply rooted in the heart of Thanksgiving.

Build Intentional Moments of Gratitude

Gratitude doesn't just happen. It grows when we make room for it.

Here are some meaningful, simple ideas:

Go around the table and let each person share one thing they're thankful for this year.

Create a “gratitude jar” where everyone adds notes throughout the day.

Pray together or read a short scripture or poem before the meal.

Take a walk after dinner and reflect on blessings from the

past year.

These small practices anchor the day in its truest purpose.

Slow Down—On Purpose

The beauty of a simple Thanksgiving is the permission it gives to breathe. To savor moments. To be present.

Say no to rushing. Let the meal take its time. Sit long around the table. Linger in conversation. Watch the parade, play games, flip through old photos—whatever makes your home feel like your home.

Slowing down allows gratitude to deepen and memories to take root.

Remember That Simple Is Sacred

The first Thanksgiving was not elaborate. It was humble, communal, and centered on the gift of survival and God's provision.

Simplicity has always held sacred power. It helps us see beauty we often miss in busier seasons—laughter around a table, the warmth of shared food, the blessing of being together.

When we choose simplicity, we create space for joy to rise naturally and gratitude to become more than a holiday theme—it becomes a way of life.

A simple Thanksgiving is not about doing less—it's about doing what matters most. Whether your celebration is large or small, fancy or casual, the heart of the day remains the same: gathering with grateful hearts.

By focusing on connection, gratitude, and presence, you can create a Thanksgiving that feels peaceful, memorable, and deeply meaningful. In the end, simplicity frees us to experience the holiday as it was always meant to be—a time to give thanks.



A Message from Centreville Press

Since we ended the print publication of our full newspaper back in September 2025 some of our faithful long-time subscribers have registered discontent with our decision. Some have cancelled their subscriptions as a result. We hear you.

We fully understand the situation of some of our readers who enjoyed holding a newspaper in their hand and may not be equipped with digital technology to consume a digital version.

Change is not always welcomed but the necessity of change is compelled by time and circumstance. Former President John F. Kennedy famously said sixty years ago, “Change is the law of life. And those who look only to the past or present are certain to miss the future”.

While some resist change, we were surprised to learn that many of our subscribers think the printed product we are now producing each week is a replacement for the Centreville Press. It is not. Our weekly print publication is designed and intended to meet the legal requirement for printing and circulating public notices. The style and content of the Centreville Press full edition has not changed but it is only available now online, in a digital format. If you are a subscriber, you will always have access to both products. The digital version is in full color, contains sharper images, and text that can be sized up with a few clicks.

News outlets in today's world are faced with a tough decision.

To reach and engage readers the product must be online. The cost of printing a newspaper for a declining and limited number of subscribers is no longer financially feasible. Digitally publishing news allows us to reach a worldwide market and attract advertisers who demand proof of circulation effectiveness in return for necessary revenue. We are compelled to go there.

The digital version of the traditional Centreville Press is available on our Bibb Voice digital platform each week. You will need a login and password to access this platform. If you don't have one or don't know how to use it we will help you get there. You will also receive weekly emails that summarize recent bonus content or breaking news that is available online but may not be in the newspaper each week. That is an additional benefit of being a Centreville Press subscriber.

If you do not have a subscription to Centreville Press you may find only limited access to the Bibb Voice platform in the near future. We encourage you to keep your subscription to Centreville Press. Help us keep the history and tradition of producing community news in a challenging business environment alive and well. Centreville Press has been producing a news product since 1895. We are not going away but we must change to survive; to see and enjoy the future. Thanks for your continued support.

Editor



Centreville Press

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OUR GOAL: The Centreville Press is published proudly for the citizens of Bibb County and adjoining counties by Bibb Community Media, Inc., Centreville, AL. Our Goal is to produce quality, profitable, community-oriented newspapers that you, our readers, are proud of. We will reach that goal through hard work, teamwork, loyalty and a strong dedication towards printing the truth.

OUR POLICIES: Signed letters to the editor welcomed. Please limit to 300 words and include address and phone number. Liability for an error will not exceed the cost of space occupied by the error. Political endorsements will only be accepted through paid advertisements. We cannot be responsible for return of pictures or material unless stamped, return addressed envelope is included.

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Calvary Baptist Centreville 926-4079	Shady Grove II Baptist West Blocton 938-0120 Pastor 834-2557	Hopewell A.M.E. Zion Harrisburg 926-5777
Camp Branch Baptist Church 2590 Camp Branch Rd West Blocton	Shiloh Baptist Centreville 926-7041	New Hope A.M.E. West Blocton 540-8016
Cedar Grove Baptist West Blocton 938-0828	Six Mile Baptist Brierfield	Tabernacle United Methodist Lawley
Centreville Baptist Centreville 926-7069	Smith Hill Baptist West Blocton 938-2379	Waymon Chapel AME Brierfield 205-665-4730
Community Baptist Centreville	Thomas Mill Baptist Centreville 926-6882	West Scottsville United Methodist Church North Scottsville Road 451-3624
Deer Creek Missionary Baptist Church Centreville 225-0460	Union Baptist Church 722 Magnolia St West Blocton	NAZARENE Ridgeville Church Of The Nazarene Brent
Ebenzer Baptist Church Brierfield 665-4865	West Blocton First Baptist 938-7392	Spencer Church Of The Naz- arene Brent
Enon Baptist Centreville 926-4517	BIBLE Grace Bible Woodstock 938-7763	PENTECOSTAL New Life West Blocton Pastor Greg Brock 205.441.2809
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First Baptist Church of Woodstock 205-938-7479	CHRISTIAN Marvel Christian Union Montevallo 345-7018	Centreville First Presbyterian P.C.A. 926-4261
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Haysop Baptist Centreville 205-310-1316	West Blocton Church of Christ West Blocton 938-7108	SEVENTH DAY ADVENTIST First Brent Seventh Day Ad- ventist 926-6328
Hopewell Primitive Baptist West Blocton 553-7603	Evangelist Temple Brent 926-6430	NON-DENOMINATIONAL Fellowship Community 926-6800
Johnstown Baptist West Blocton 938-7621	CHURCH OF GOD Church of God of Prophecy at Eoline 256-393-9625 Pastor Shane Pate	Scottsville Union Church Co. Rd. 9 Scottsville 205-503-6096
Liberty Baptist West Blocton 938-2090	Church Of God Of Prophecy West Blocton 938-2788	Victory Tabernacle Church 1008 Walnut Street Centreville 926-9455 or 361-2763 Pastor Butch Tucker
Liberty Baptist Duncanville 759-9647 / 759- 4074	Caffee Junction Church Of God 205-477-5468	Yahweh's Harvest 926-9044
Liberty Freewill Baptist 926-6496	River of Life Church of God 9225 Hwy 82, Brent 205-926-7600	The Refreshing Place Church 24865 Hwy. 5 Woodstock, AL 35188 Pastor Wayne Keeton
Little Hope Primitive Baptist Centreville 926-4236	West Blocton Church of God City Rd. 21 Smith Hill 205-966-4988	God's House of Prayer 489 Co. Rd. 162 (Heiberger) Marion, AL 36756 334-683-4933 Every Sunday 11:00 a.m.
Lowerytown Baptist West Blocton 938-2436	CHURCH OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST 2300 South Scottsville Rd Centreville 926-5393	Sandy Chapel Community Church 926-4934
Lucille Baptist West Blocton 966-3556	EPISCOPAL The Church Of The Holy Comforter Montevallo 665-2769	
Mission Baptist Woodstock 938-7096	St. Andrews Episcopal Church 925 Plowman Street Montevallo 665-1667	
Mt. Carmel Baptist West Blocton 938-2379	HOLINESS Deliverance Temple Holiness Four Points 926-5565	
Mt. Ebell Baptist Brent 926-9223	Word of Faith Worship Center Centreville 926-4555	
Mt. Grove Baptist 938-3410	Free Will Apostolic Holiness Antioch 926-9252	
Mt. Moriah Baptist West Blocton 926-5425	Real Truth Holiness Church 646 S. Scottsville Road Brent 926-5009	
Mt. Pilgrim Baptist Church Brent 926-9009		
Mt. Tabor Baptist Brent 926-7156		
Mt. Zion Baptist Centreville 334-366-5903		
New Hebron Baptist West Blocton 938-2101		
New Hope Missionary Baptist Randolph 334-366-1199		
New Life Baptist Church Centreville 205-541-7072		



“Give Thanks”

“Give Thanks with a Grateful Heart,” often simply known as “Give Thanks,” was written in 1978 by Henry Smith Jr. Smith was born in 1952 in North Carolina and, despite early piano lessons, largely taught himself guitar—eventually composing hundreds of songs.

At the time he wrote “Give Thanks,” Smith was facing serious challenges: he had recently graduated from seminary but struggled to find employment, and he was dealing with a degenerative eye disease that would later leave him legally blind.

The inspiration for the song came during a sermon at his church in Williamsburg, Virginia. His pastor preached on 2 Corinthians 8:9, focusing on how Jesus, though rich, became poor so that others might become rich. Smith composed “Give Thanks” and performed it with his future wife Cindy in their church on several occasions.

After its first performances at Williams-

burg New Testament Church, the hymn began to spread in a somewhat unexpected way. A U.S. military couple stationed in Germany heard it and introduced it to their congregation there—helping to give the song a broader reach.

Despite its growing popularity, for many years the author of the song was not well-known. When Integrity Music(through its Hosanna! Music series) first distributed the song in 1986, they listed the writer as “unknown.”

What makes “Give Thanks” enduring is its profound simplicity. In just a few lines, it captures core Christian truths: Jesus’ sacrificial gift, our weakness redeemed, and the call to respond with gratitude. Its humble origins—in the heart of a struggling, faithful composer—mirror the song’s message: even from hardship, we can offer our thanks.

Smith’s personal story adds another layer of meaning. Facing unemployment and

the loss of his sight, he didn’t write a lament; he wrote a declaration of gratitude. That spirit of praise in the face of difficulty resonates with many who sing the song today.

Furthermore, Don Moen’s role was pivotal: by bringing this once-anonymous chorus into wide circulation, he helped it become a global anthem of worship.

“Give Thanks (Give Thanks with a Grateful Heart)” stands as a powerful example of how a simple, heartfelt song can become a cornerstone of modern Christian worship. From its humble birth in Virginia to its worldwide adoption, the hymn testifies not only to God’s goodness but to the power of faithful creativity. Henry Smith’s journey — writing amid adversity — and Don Moen’s championing of the song demonstrate how God can use both hidden and celebrated voices to shape worship that endures.



Gratitude is more than a pleasant emotion or a polite response; in Scripture, it is a defining mark of a believer’s life. The Bible consistently calls God’s people to remember His goodness, acknowledge His provision, and cultivate a thankful heart. In a culture that often moves quickly past blessings and dwells heavily on burdens, biblical gratitude offers a grounding, joyful, and God-centered way of life.

The story of Jesus healing the ten lepers (Luke 17:11–19) reveals a profound truth about gratitude: only one man returned to give thanks. All ten received a miracle, yet only one paused long enough to recognize the depth of what had been done for him.

This passage reminds us that gratitude begins with seeing. It requires awareness—paying attention to God’s daily graces and acknowledging them as gifts rather than accidents or entitlements. When we learn to recognize God’s presence in the ordinary—in breath, in relationships, in provision—we discover how surrounded we truly are by His goodness.

Throughout the Old Testament, God repeatedly commands His people to remember His works. The Israelites erected memorial stones after crossing the Jordan, celebrated annual feasts like Passover, and sang psalms that recounted God’s deliverance.

These practices weren’t mere rituals; they were spiritual anchors. A forgetful heart easily becomes discouraged, fearful, or self-reliant. A remembering heart, however, is strengthened by the evidence of God’s past faithfulness—and gratitude naturally flows from that remembrance.

Our own spiritual lives thrive when we pause to recall answered prayers, unexpected provisions, moments of peace, and the ways God has guided us. Gratitude grows when we take time to reflect.

Paul’s instruction in 1 Thessalonians 5:18—“give thanks in all circumstances”—is challenging and counterintuitive. Yet the wording matters: we are not told to give thanks for everything, but in everything.

This distinction matters deeply. Scripture never romanticizes suffering, but it does assure us that:

God is near to the brokenhearted, and He works through trials to develop perseverance and hope, and He redeems hardship for His purposes.

Gratitude in difficult seasons is not denial; it is faith. It is choosing to trust that God is present, active, and compassionate even when circumstances are painful or unclear. This kind of gratitude anchors the soul.

James 1:17 reminds us that “every good and perfect gift is from above.” Gratitude becomes worship when we trace our

blessings back to the Giver. When we acknowledge God as the source of our joy, provision, and strength, our hearts are drawn into deeper communion with Him.

Worship rooted in gratitude softens pride, nurtures humility, and re-centers our lives around the presence of God. It transforms thankfulness from a momentary feeling into a way of living devoted to honoring Him.

In an age of anxiety, complaint, and constant comparison, a grateful believer stands out. Gratitude shapes our attitudes, influences our conversations, and affects how we respond to others. When our lives reflect thankfulness, they subtly but powerfully proclaim that our hope is not in our circumstances but in Christ Himself.

A grateful heart draws people—not to us, but to the God who sustains us.

Biblical gratitude is not shallow optimism or a fleeting emotional boost. It is a spiritual discipline that reorients our hearts toward God’s enduring goodness. It begins with seeing, deepens through remembering, strengthens us in trials, leads us into worship, and becomes a beautiful witness to the world.

In cultivating gratitude, we cultivate intimacy with God. We become people who remember His faithfulness—and in doing so, carry His light into every place we go.

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The BACK PAGE

BMC Wellness Opens Registration for 2024–2025 Men’s Basketball League

BY SAVANNAH LOGAN
REPORTER

BMC Wellness has officially opened registration for its Men’s Basketball League, inviting adults across the community to lace up, get moving, and enjoy a competitive and fun season of team basketball. While youth sports often receive the spotlight, BMC Wellness is reminding the community that staying active isn’t just important for kids. Organized sports offer adults a valuable way to stay healthy, connect socially, reduce stress, and rediscover the excitement of team play.

Registration for the league is now underway, with team entry set at \$250, due in full at the time of registration. The season will be limited to six teams, creating a focused and competitive environment on the court. All players must be 21 or older, and each roster is capped at ten players. To maintain fair-

ness and consistency throughout the season, pickup players will not be allowed this year.

Team captains are responsible for submitting their full roster by emailing bibbwellness@gmail.com with each player’s name, birth date, and email address. Once registered, teams can look forward to another high energy season that blends fitness, competition, and community camaraderie.

BMC Wellness encourages adults of all skill levels to join in, noting that team sports remain one of the most enjoyable ways to stay active throughout adulthood. Whether participants are looking to sharpen their game, stay in shape, or simply have fun with friends, the league offers a lively and supportive environment.

Men’s Basketball League registration is officially open — gather your team and get ready for tipoff!

BMC MENS BASKETBALL LEAGUE

REGISTRATION

NOV 17TH - JAN 2ND

GAME DAYS: THURSDAYS

TEAM REGISTRATION

\$250

21+
6 TEAM LIMIT
10 PLAYER ROSTER
NO PICK-UPS ONCE SEASON BEGINS

BMC HEALTH AND WELLNESS CORNER

SPRING 2026 COURSES

Shelton State Community College

Classes available at Bibb Medical Center

BIO 103
Online with Virtual Student Hours Available

ENG 101-BC1 CRN 21419
Mondays and Wednesdays
3:40 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.

MTH 099-B50 CRN 21001
Mondays and Wednesdays
7:00 p.m. - 7:55 p.m.

MTH 100-B50; MTH 100C-B50
CRN 20999 CRN21000
Mondays and Wednesdays
5:30 p.m. - 6:50 p.m.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES
Advising | Tutoring | Meet with an SSCC representative

For more information or to set up a meeting, contact admissions@sheltonstate.edu

R.E.S.P.O.N.D

Learn life-saving skills at RESPOND, with Bess Russell, on November 25th. This free community course covers essential response techniques for emergencies like strokes, overdoses, and water rescues. Participants can also choose to receive CPR and First Aid certifications through the American Heart Association. Everyone will receive a water safety certificate.

bmcwellness.com/cpr

Diabetes Management Support Group

Discover encouragement, support, and community in our diabetes management support group. Whether you’re newly diagnosed or have been managing for years, this group provides understanding and strategies to help you feel empowered.

Monday, November 24th
5:30pm
BMC Wellness Center

Guest Speaker: Dr. Connie Richardson