

Centreville Press

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Bibb Medical Center Welcomes Two Dedicated New CRNPs to Serve the Community

BY SAVANNAH LOGAN
REPORTER

Bibb Medical Center is proud to highlight two exceptional providers during Home Health Week and the opening of the newly renovated Emergency Department: Dawn Jones, CRNP, and Andrew Lee, CRNP. Both bring deep experience, community connection, and a shared commitment to compassionate, high-quality care for the people of Bibb County.

Dawn Jones has been a vital part of BMC for the past seven years, serving in several key roles including RN, Director of Chronic Care Management, Director of BMC at Home, and now as a Nurse Practitioner. Her educational path includes completing her ADN at Jefferson State Community College, her BSN at Chamberlain University, and her MSN/NP training at UAB. It was her work in home health, however, that truly shaped her calling. In patients' homes, Dawn discovered the power of see-



ing and understanding the whole person, not just their medical condition. She built meaningful relationships with patients and families, offering dignity, comfort, and personalized care, especially when health or independence could not be fully restored. As Dawn shared, "Above all, I loved the human connection. Listening to their stories, honoring their journeys, and leaving them with the feeling of being genuinely cared for

was the greatest gift." Outside of work, Dawn is a wife, mom of five, and grandmother of two who recharges by spending time outdoors hiking, cycling, and golfing with friends. Now stepping into her new NP role, she remains dedicated to ensuring patients across Bibb County continue receiving comprehensive, compassionate care right at home.

Joining Dawn in bringing expanded care to the community



is Andrew Lee, CRNP, one of the newest faces in the Emergency Department. Andrew's connection to Bibb Medical Center began in 2002 during his very first nursing clinicals – an experience that planted roots he is proud to return to more than two decades later. His desire to become a nurse began much earlier, all the way back in second grade, when a friend's mother, a flight nurse, landed a helicopter on their school play-

ground. The moment stayed with him, lighting a spark that would guide his entire career. Andrew went on to earn his BSN and later two master's degrees, including his NP degree from UAB. His clinical background includes work in the Emergency Department in Tuscaloosa, roles in trauma coordination and leadership, and an impressive 16-year career as a flight nurse. As BMC opens its renovated ER, Andrew looks forward to

providing high-quality, compassionate care to the citizens of Bibb County and surrounding areas. Outside the hospital, he spends his time on the water with his wife and four kids or playing drums.

Together, Dawn Jones and Andrew Lee represent the continued growth, heart, and dedication of Bibb Medical Center's healthcare team. Their combined expertise and deep personal ties to the community strengthen BMC's mission to deliver exceptional care close to home – for every patient, every family, and every stage of life.

Bibb Medical Center continues to grow its team with providers who embody dedication, heart, and a deep commitment to the people of Bibb County. As healthcare needs evolve, BMC remains focused on expanding access to compassionate, skilled care – ensuring patients receive support from professionals who truly understand and value the community they serve.

Cam Ward will receive the 2025 Pillar of Excellence Award

Under Director Ward's leadership, ABPP focuses on job training, substance use treatment and mental health needs to position Alabama as a national leader in reducing recidivism

MONTGOMERY – Alabama Bureau of Pardons & Paroles Director Cam Ward will receive the 2025 Pillar of Excellence Award from the Addiction Policy Forum next week.

Director Ward will be one of seven national leaders – including U.S. Senator Shelley Moore Capito (R-WV) and Congresswoman Carol Miller (R-WV) – to receive the Addiction Policy Forum's annual award during an event at the U.S. Capitol Visitor Center on December 2.

The distinction recognizes leaders whose work transforms the landscape of addiction prevention, treatment and recovery. It honors policymakers and organizations in criminal justice who demonstrate exceptional leadership in improving response to individuals with substance use disorders

and communities in need.

"We're proud to represent Alabama, Governor Kay Ivey and our excellent officers and staff by bringing this award back to the Bureau," Director Ward said. "Alabama's leaders have been staunch supporters of our work while our team remains dedicated to these programs that lead to reduced crime, better outcomes and safer communities across the state."

Director Ward has served as the Director of the Alabama Bureau of Pardons and Paroles (ABPP) since 2020 – the same year he was appointed by Governor Kay Ivey as a member of her cabinet. In this role, he is responsible for all agency operations in support of the Alabama Board of Pardons and Paroles. Public safety is the Bu-

reau's primary mission and lowering recidivism has been a core driver to achieving that goal.

During his tenure, Director Ward championed programs that enhance public safety and reduce recidivism while also strengthening the workforce through evidence-based reentry programming offered at a vast network of Day Reporting Centers and the Perry County PREP Center. Programs at these facilities provide comprehensive reentry and rehabilitation services to probationers and parolees across Alabama. A major component of these programs includes job training and education, which complements the counseling and substance use treatment, to give formerly incarcerated Alabamians the tools



they need to succeed in reentry.

The PREP Center creates meaningful opportunities for individuals to rebuild their lives and make positive contributions to their communities. Since opening in 2022, the PREP Center maintains a zero percent recidivism rate and has helped more than 400 people find a positive path post-incarceration. It takes a comprehensive approach to ensure participants are ready to succeed in jobs, in recovery or with their families after prison

through programming that encourages incarceration diversion as a sanction response and by offering an option for individuals to receive support services and resolve barriers to successful reintegration. The primary program providers at the PREP Center are GEO Group under the advisement of the Alabama Department of Mental Health, the Alabama Community College System and J.F. Ingram State Technical College, and Alabama Power. The model will be replicated across Alabama -- including

a soon-to-open facility dedicated to women.

"PREP has become a best-practice and blueprint for what's working in reentry," ABPP Director Cam Ward said. "This is a life-changing program that provides the tools, knowledge and guidance – whether that's job training, mental health counseling, or substance use treatment – for success in life after prison. Of course, this model and its results are only possible thanks to our great partners and our folks on the frontlines."



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NEWS

Thanksgiving Dinner Costs Dip Again in 2025

BY SAVANNAH LOGAN
REPORTER

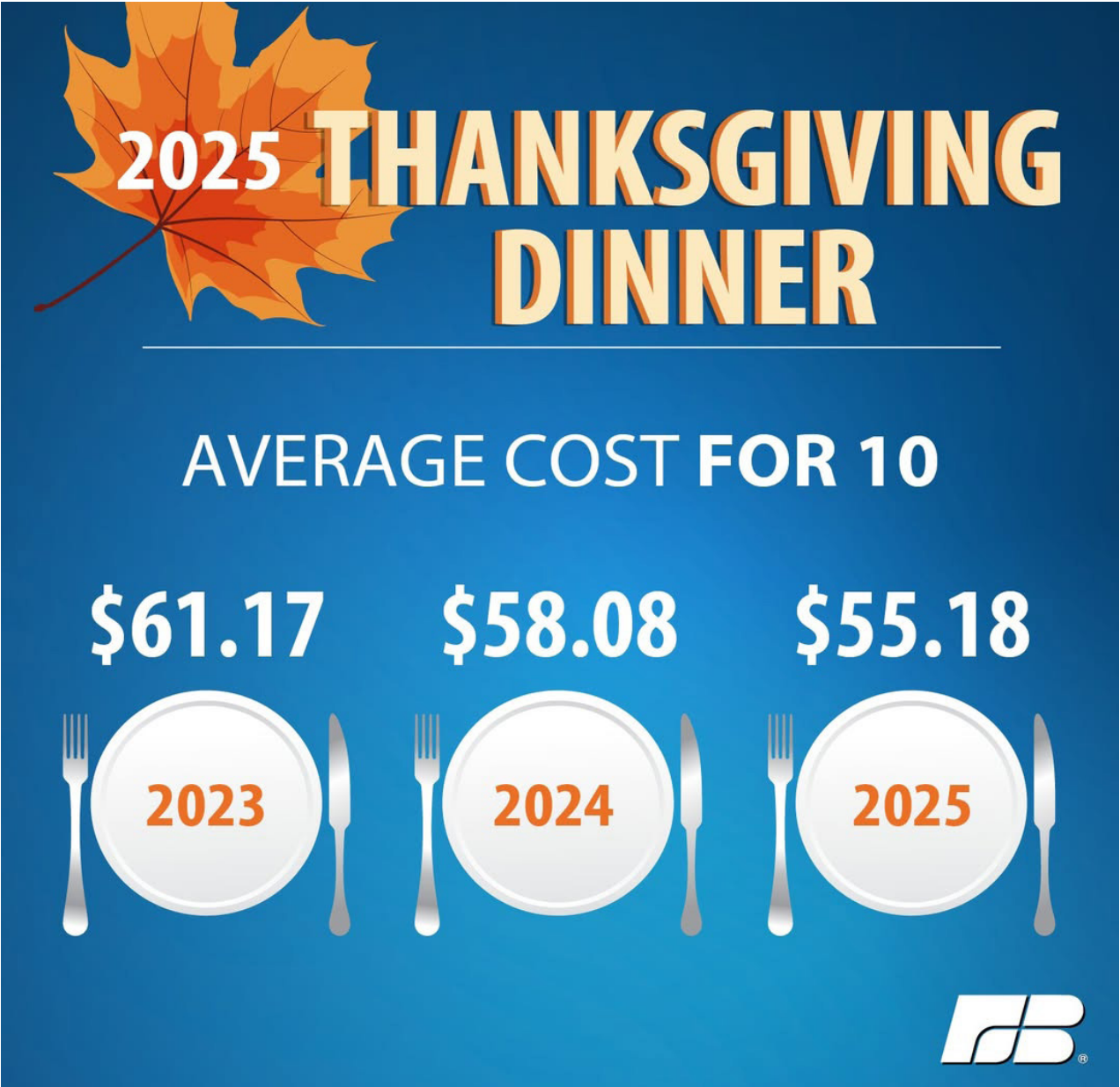
According to the American Farm Bureau Federation's annual Thanksgiving dinner survey, the cost of preparing a classic holiday meal for 10 people has dropped again this year, offering a little relief to families planning their gatherings. The average price now sits at \$55.18, or \$5.52 per person, reflecting a five percent decrease from 2024. While that break feels welcome, it still doesn't erase the memory of 2022's record-high average of \$64.05. Groceries may not be cheap, but this dip signals that inflation is finally easing its grip, even if only slightly.

The turkey, naturally the star of the Thanksgiving table, played a major role in the overall price decline. A 16-pound frozen bird now averages \$21.50, or about \$1.34 per pound, marking a drop of more than sixteen percent from last year. According to USDA data, frozen turkey prices continued falling into mid-November, largely driven by competitive holiday pricing from grocers eager to bring shoppers through their doors. AFBF Economist Faith Parum, Ph.D., noted that even as turkey farmers continue rebuilding flocks

affected by avian influenza, a slight dip in demand has helped keep consumer prices steadier. Sometimes even turkeys need a moment to recover.

The AFBF survey's traditional menu includes turkey, stuffing, sweet potatoes, rolls, peas, cranberries, a veggie tray, and pumpkin pie with whipped cream. This year, about half of those items saw price decreases, especially stuffing, rolls, and other wheat-based favorites thanks to lower grain prices. Not everything followed the trend, though. Fresh vegetables rose sharply, with veggie tray prices jumping more than sixty percent. Sweet potatoes climbed as well, largely due to hurricane damage in North Carolina, the country's leading sweet potato producer. Weather, labor shortages, and transportation delays continue to influence produce costs, turning everyday ingredients into unpredictable line items.

AFBF President Zippy Duvall emphasized that even with modest price declines, many families still feel the strain of rising food expenses. He noted that the nation lost fifteen thousand farms last year due to low crop prices, high supply costs, and trade uncertainty — pressures



that continue pushing farmers to the brink. Every farm that disappears, he warned, represents a step toward consolidation and increased reliance on foreign food sources. Despite those challenges, Duvall reminded Americans to recognize the abundance the country is still able to produce and the people who make it

possible. Gratitude, he suggested, extends far beyond the dinner table.

To reflect the variety found on modern Thanksgiving tables, the Farm Bureau also surveyed an expanded menu featuring boneless ham, Russet potatoes, and frozen green beans. This heartier spread brings the total to \$77.09, of-

fering a broader view of what many families prepare today. The national averages were calculated using data from volunteers across all fifty states and Puerto Rico, who recorded prices both in stores and online without relying on coupons or special promotions.

The survey, now in its fortieth year, keeps its core menu un-

changed to track how the cost of a traditional holiday meal evolves. Though prices rise and fall, the spirit of the day remains the same: sharing food, offering thanks, and recognizing the effort behind every bite. And that reminder feels important this season.



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Southern Chicken Dressing

Ingredients

For the cornbread:

- 1 ½ cups self-rising cornmeal
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 1 ½ cups buttermilk
- 2 eggs
- ¼ cup vegetable oil or melted butter

For the dressing:

- 4–5 cups cooked chicken, shredded
- 1 large pan of prepared cornbread (crumbled)
- 4 cups day-old white bread, torn into pieces
- 1 large onion, finely chopped
- 3–4 celery stalks, finely chopped
- 3–4 cups chicken broth (more if needed)
- 2–3 teaspoons poultry seasoning (or to taste)
- 1 teaspoon sage (optional, or more to taste)
- 1 teaspoon black pepper
- ½ teaspoon salt (adjust based on broth saltiness)
- 2 eggs, lightly beaten
- 2 tablespoons butter, melted

1. Make the Cornbread

1. Preheat oven to 400°F (205°C).
2. Mix cornmeal, flour, buttermilk, eggs, and oil until combined.
3. Pour into a greased skillet or baking dish.
4. Bake for 20–25 minutes, until golden.
5. Let cool completely, then crumble into a large bowl.

2. Prepare the Dressing Mixture

1. Preheat oven to 350°F (175°C).
2. In a skillet, sauté onion and celery in a little butter until soft.
3. Add them to the crumbled cornbread and torn white bread.
4. Stir in the shredded chicken.
5. Season with poultry seasoning, sage, salt, and pepper.
6. Add beaten eggs and melted butter.
7. Slowly pour in chicken broth until the mixture is very moist—almost pourable, like thick batter.

3. Bake

1. Pour the dressing mixture into a greased 9x13 baking dish.
2. Bake for 45–55 minutes, or until set and lightly browned on top.
3. Serve warm with gravy, turkey, or more chicken.



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LOCAL & GOVERNMENT

West Eoline News

By Jane Hannah

Halloween was so much fun for the children of Bibb County. Kaydi Kinney was dressed as Pebbles and visited Mama T & Papa Lou, plus Aunt Carol before BMC. Gigi Jera Fortner joined LaShelle & Ronnie with Kaydi fun around the BMC trunk & treat. Kaydi enjoyed it, but she was in her stroller. The adults said "not again" because they had to stand in a LONG line to advance.

Jim Kirkendall was visiting Chad & Stacey Thompson on Halloween. He had misplaced his wallet which delayed the Halloween outing that included Jane Hannah and Robbie Drake. We drove to Marion for Crab Claws, Fried Jalapenos, Cheese Curds, Mushroom appetizers, Burgers, Fish & more. Back home, we enjoyed games of Rummikub.

I feel so sad for Remington & Ruger, two beautiful white Pyrenees, lovingly called our big boys by Stacey Thompson. They are protectors and love children but have a tendency to roam. Some coyotes are roaming and some other aggressive dogs. R & R have been moved from the area to keep them safe from harm. They were moved to Cullman and now are lost in an unfamiliar area. We are praying for someone to care for them.

GOLF FUN ... It was a no rules play round Saturday the 15th at Cahawba Country Club for ten. Seven actually played and three of us watched and drove the carts. The Thompson's invited a few friends and kin to enjoy the beautiful day with them.

Tracey Holladay loves her flowers and now has a greenhouse for their winter home. I'm happy she had room for mine.

North Carolina Trip. Chad & Stacey Thompson visited his parents over Thanksgiving Weekend. Robbie Drake and Jim Kirkendall were excited to join them. They all had a great time making more memories with Cathy & Marion.

GET WELL PRAYERS for: Donna Kornegay as she recovers from recent surgery. Amy Ellison who continues to have health issues. Barbara Morrison's upcoming surgery to control her tremors. Wayne Deason's mending broken ankle. LaShelle Kinney recovering from ankle replacement. Paige Garner as she recovers from a recent surgery with complications. Ronnie Kinney upcoming biopsy. Ruth Deason in -hospital care and wellbeing.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY in December to: Lydia Nickelson 12-1, Linda Childress 12-2, LaShelle Kinney 12-4, Elizabeth Garrison 12-6, Hilary Vessels, Cam Webb & Amy Hamrick 12-7, Joe Fowler 12-9, Mickey Johnson 12-10, Marci Boothe 12-11, Aidan Watkins 12-12, Bobby Lightsey 12-13, Del Deason, & Jamie Watkins 12-18, Paige Garner 12-19, Natalie Dowdle, Jerry Pow & Jason Ingram 12-21, Barbara Morrison 12-23, Kayla Kitchen 12-24, George Marchant 12-25, Clay Deason, Sarah Smith & Michael Garner 12-26, Linda Creel, Joseph Marchant, Joseph Mathis & Madeline Rowberry 12-29, Cohen Fowler 12-30.

MEMORIAL - It's only been five years since I lost my son. He would have been on Medicare this year. It seems like more time has passed. He called me faithfully, visited quite often and always showed up when he was needed. I miss him. It's been thirteen years since Lou & Tracey Holladay said goodbye to their daughter Tiff. She was a loving, precious young woman and they agree, you never get over losing a child. CANCER took our children way too soon.

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY - Mike & Brenda Vessels 12-18 and Alan & Jera Fortner 12-31.

MERRY CHRISTMAS - As we celebrate, remember; Jesus is the reason for the Season, non other. It's not about Santa, it's all about the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ!

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Centreville Election Contest Looms In December

Contributed Content

Written by the Honorable Jack Meigs, Attorney At Law



A contest of the election for the Mayor of Centreville was filed on September 5, 2025, by Mike Oakley who lost by 2 votes to Barry Cooner after the results were certified by the Centreville City Council. The case is currently set for trial on December 5, 2025. With news media coverage, social media posts and talk on the street, many people have questions about what happens next and when will it be over. This article attempts to answer questions about election contests in general and this one in particular.

WHAT IS AN ELECTION CONTEST?

An election contest is a lawsuit in which the Contestant disputes the results of an election. This article addresses municipal election contests. Contest for certain elected offices are treated differently and will not be addressed. For municipal elections, the contest is filed in Circuit Court. Section 11-46-49 of the Code of Alabama provides who may file a contest, the reasons for a contest and when the contest must be filed.

Typically, a contest is filed by the losing candidate, however, the Alabama statute provides that any qualified elector may file the action. That person is called the Plaintiff or the Contestant. The party that won the election would be the Defendant or more properly, the Contestee.

The Code sets out the reasons or grounds for filing an election contest. Those are:

- “(1) Misconduct, fraud, or corruption on the part of any election official, any marker, the municipal governing body, or any other person;
- (2) The person whose election to office is contested was not eligible thereto at the time of such election;
- (3) Illegal votes;
- (4) The rejection of

legal votes; or
(5) Offers to bribe, bribery, intimidation, or other misconduct calculated to prevent a fair, free, and full exercise of the elective franchise.”

For the 2025 Centreville Mayor's election, the grounds stated in the lawsuit are that illegal votes were cast and legal votes were rejected.

The election contest is required to be filed within 5 days after the results are certified.

WHAT HAPPENS IN AN ELECTION CONTEST?

Just like any other lawsuit, evidence must be presented through witnesses and documents. The law provides that the Circuit Judge assigned to hear the case will make the decision. The law specifically provides that there is no jury trial allowed in election contests.

The person filing the contest has the burden of proof to convince the judge by a preponderance of the evidence. A preponderance of the evidence means “more likely than not” which is unlike a criminal case where the proof must be beyond a reasonable doubt. Before the case is tried, the parties have the right to conduct discovery. They have the right to inspect the ballots cast, given or rejected as well as to examine the voting equipment along with the voting machine computations and printouts. They may also obtain copies of the voter registration lists and the poll lists for the election. Those lists show who was registered to vote in the election and who actually voted in the election. They can issue subpoenas for documents and witnesses. They can take depositions of witnesses, which means they can question witnesses under oath prior to trial.

In an election contest, if a party claims that there were illegal votes cast or that legal

votes were rejected, that party has to give the other side notice in writing, prior to trial, of the number of votes that are claimed to be illegal along with the names of the persons that cast the illegal votes and who they voted for. This notice must be given at least 10 days prior to the trial. Hypothetically, if the contestant of the election claims that there were 3 illegal votes cast, he would have to tell the other party that there were 3 illegal votes cast for the other party and that John Doe, Jane Doe and Richard Roe (these names are made up for the hypothetical) were not legal voters and that they cast those votes. Likewise, if it is claimed that legal votes were rejected, the number and names of the voters who were not allowed to vote must be given to the other side. That goes for either side. Either party may claim that there were illegal votes cast for their opponent or legal votes were rejected.

If a voter is called to testify at the trial, that person would be required to answer if he or she voted at the election and to answer questions about their qualifications to vote in the election. If the Judge determined that he or she was not a qualified voter at the time of the election, then they could be required to answer for whom they voted. If they make full, true answers which may tend to incriminate them, he or she could not be prosecuted for voting at such election. This may raise in your mind the right to cast a secret ballot. If you are a qualified voter, you cannot be compelled to tell how you voted. You have no such protection if you were not qualified to vote. You would have cast an illegal ballot which may subject you to a criminal offense. The code section that requires the voter to testify shields them from criminal prosecution if they testify truthfully. If it did not, then it would violate their consti-

tutional right against self-incrimination.

In summary, an election contest is a lawsuit tried to a judge in Circuit Court without a jury. Evidence must be presented by witnesses or documents or both. Each side must give written notice to the other side of the names of voters that were claimed to have cast illegal votes or who were not allowed to cast a legal vote. A voter may be required to testify and if it was determined that they were not qualified to vote, they may be required to testify for whom they voted.

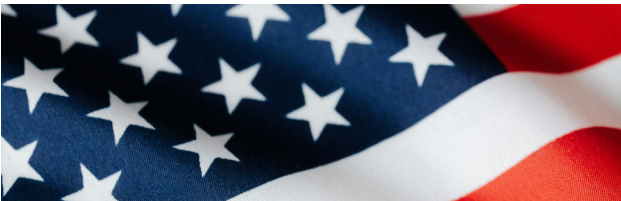
WHEN WILL THE CASE BE OVER

An initial hearing was held on October 27, 2025. Even though the case was set for trial on December 5, 2025, the attorneys advised the Judge that the case may not be ready for trial on that date. A review of the Court file shows that on November 21, 2025, the Contestant's attorney listed the names of 9 voters whom he contends cast illegal votes. That meets the 10 day timeline. If the Contestee claims that there were illegal votes cast for the Contestant, he must do so at least 10 days prior to trial.

It is not certain that the case will be tried on December 5 or if commenced that it will be completed on that date. The law does provide that Election Contests are to be given priority in scheduling. Delays are common and it would not be unusual for the trial to take place early in 2026.

Editor's Note: Jack Meigs is an attorney with a private law practice in Bibb County, Alabama. A 1982 graduate of the University of Alabama School of Law, he served multiple terms as a Circuit Judge for the Fourth Judicial Circuit before returning to private practice.

EDITORIALS & OPINIONS



The Importance of Shopping Small

BY WHITNEY BUZBEE
REPORTER

In an age when shopping can be done with one click and a two-day delivery promise, the value of shopping small can easily be overlooked. But for many towns—especially those where Main Street still matters—small businesses remain the backbone of community life.

Walk into a locally owned shop and you're greeted not by an automated message, but by a neighbor. Small business owners remember your name, ask about your family, and often know exactly what you came in for. That personal connection is something no online algorithm can replicate.

More importantly, money spent locally tends to stay local. The café buys bread from the hometown bakery. The boutique features handmade goods from nearby artisans. A dollar spent at a small business can circulate through the community several times, strengthening the very place we call home.

Small businesses also give a town its identity. Chain stores look the same in every city, but local shops carry the character of the people behind them. The bookstore filled with mismatched chairs, the corner market that's been open for generations, the diner that knows your breakfast order before you sit down—these are the places that make a community feel uniquely ours.

Quality is another hallmark of shopping small. Many independent shopkeepers start with a passion for their craft, offering goods and services chosen with care rather than mass-produced for volume. Customers often discover items they'd never find in big-box stores—specialty foods, handmade gifts, locally grown produce, or custom services done with exceptional attention.

Behind every small business is a dream. A person who took a risk. A family working together. Employees who depend on local support to pay their bills. When you make a purchase, you're not padding a corporate profit margin—you're helping someone in your own community thrive.

And when the community needs support? Small businesses are often the first to step up. They sponsor youth teams, donate to school auctions, and give to local charities quietly and consistently. Shopping small helps sustain the very people who invest back into the community time and time again.

This shopping season—and every season—choosing a local shop over a giant retailer is more than a preference. It's a vote for your town's future. It's a way to keep storefronts filled, sidewalks busy, and neighborhoods vibrant.

Shopping small may be a simple choice, but its impact is anything but small.

Alabama's Data Center Boom: A Chance to Get it Right

An Opinion Editorial Submission

Every day, we read about massive data centers coming to the Southeast. Billions of dollars. Thousands of construction jobs. The promise of economic transformation. But as President of the Alabama Public Service Commission, I want to talk about what's really at stake beyond the headlines: your electric bill, the reliability of your power, and whether Alabama families will end up paying for infrastructure built for big tech.

Data centers are the backbone of our digital world. When you stream a movie, send an email, or use artificial intelligence, massive facilities somewhere are processing that data around the clock. The smallest ones occupy 50,000 square feet. The largest, called hyperscale centers, can exceed 4 million square feet, larger than 18 Walmart Supercenters combined. They consume power equivalent to a small city and use millions of gallons of water daily.

Right here in Alabama, we're seeing this transformation firsthand. Meta's Montgomery facility represents a \$1.5 billion investment spanning 1.3 million square feet. The proposed Bessemer campus, if it comes to fruition, would dwarf even that, with \$14 billion invested across 18 buildings, consuming more power and water than any site in our state's history.

I want to be clear about the benefits these projects can bring. Construction employment reaches into the thousands. Permanent operational jobs follow. Ad

valorem and education tax revenues flow to local governments and schools. Meta's Montgomery facility alone is projected to generate \$224 million in state taxes and \$382 million in payroll over thirty years. Many of these companies pursue renewable energy additions, such as wind and solar, to offset their load, potentially expanding Alabama's generation mix at no cost to ratepayers. When aligned with smart planning, new load can expand the customer base and create opportunities to keep electricity costs competitive for everyone.

The challenge is ensuring those benefits are realized and lasting, especially for the communities asked to host these projects and for Alabama Power customers who could be affected.

We are watching what is happening around us. Cities like Atlanta have become national data center hubs. Projects in Georgia, South Carolina, Louisiana, and Mississippi are scaling into the tens of billions of dollars, but not without controversy. Concerns over power consumption, water use, and community impacts are growing. Utility bills have spiked in some states as residential and small business customers subsidize the infrastructure investments needed to accommodate big tech.

We have a chance to learn from their challenges and avoid them here. Alabama's main challenge and my priority is clear: make sure our families and small businesses don't get stuck with the bill.

To meet our reliability requirements, we require Alabama Power to have sufficient resources to serve any data center contract. If additional resources are necessary, the Commission requires the data center to cover the costs of those resources. This isn't just about infrastructure. It's about your wallet.

One of the biggest risks we face is overbuilding, approving new plants and transmission lines for data centers that never fully materialize. If that happens, families and businesses could be left paying for unused infrastructure for decades.

We're avoiding these risks by requiring contractual terms and conditions that shield other customers from cost and risk shifting. Alabama is already requiring demonstrations to verify proposed demand, long-term contracts, minimum building requirements, upfront reimbursement of direct costs, and even termination fees to ensure that hyperscale projects pay their own way and communities are protected.

While keeping these costs off the backs of Alabama families, we must also ensure that these massive developments don't threaten the reliability of service to the rest of our customers. Large data centers put sudden and significant stress on the electric grid, water supplies, and natural gas demand. Our role is to ensure that Alabama Power plans for and manages such spikes so that service to other customers isn't impacted or interrupted.

The bottom line is

simple: no project should ever compromise reliability for existing customers.

Alabama is not behind other states. We're at a moment where we can set the standard. This is a rare window for Alabama to adopt best practices before the expected buildout accelerates, protecting ratepayers while still welcoming investment.

Our standards: no free rides for big tech. The entities driving up the costs must be the entities covering the costs.

This is a pivotal moment for our state. Data centers will be part of Alabama's future, but that future must work for everyone, not just the companies building these facilities. I'm committed to working with my fellow commissioners, utility providers, and the public to get this right for our ratepayers, our communities, and future generations.

The mission of the Alabama Public Service Commission is to ensure a regulatory balance between regulated companies and consumers in order to provide consumers with safe, adequate and reliable services at rates that are equitable and economical. For more information, visit psc.alabama.gov.

**The above press release is of the thoughts and opinions of President Cynthia Lee Almond and does not reflect those of Commissioner Jeremy H. Oden, Place 1, or Commissioner Chris V. Beeker III, Place 2, or the Alabama Public Service Commission.*



Centreville Press

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Bibb Baptist Association Centreville 926-7866	Rising Star Baptist Centreville 926-4115	West Blocton Bible Methodist Church 355 Camellia Lane, West Blocton 205.826.5763
Bibbville Baptist Woodstock 938-2015	Rehobeth Baptist Lawley 663-2907	Mt. Sinai Church Centreville 256-577-8137
Brent Baptist Brent 926-7687	Schultz Creek Baptist West Blocton 938-9766	James Chapel A.M.E. Zion Church 926-5607
Cahaba Valley Baptist Centreville 926-5927	Shady Grove Baptist Randolph 366-1163	Bible Methodist West Blocton 938-0091
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 West Blocton 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
Eoline Baptist Eoline 926-7448	CATHOLIC Church Of The Holy Spirit Tuscaloosa 553-9733	First United Pentecostal Church of Centreville
Faith Baptist West Blocton 938-7220	St. Thomas The Apostle Church Montevallo 663-3936	PRESBYTERIAN Brent Presbyterian P.C.A. 926-4722
First Baptist Church of Woodstock 205-938-7479	CHRISTIAN Marvel Christian Union Montevallo 345-7018	Centreville First Presbyterian P.C.A. 926-4261
Four Points Baptist Centreville 926-7775	CHURCH OF CHRIST Centreville Church Of Christ 926-LOVE	Green Pond Presbyterian Presbyterian Church Rd 205-938-2344
Green Pond Baptist Green Pond 938-7769	North Bibb Church of Christ Woodstock 477-6121	Pleasant Hill Upper Cumber- land Presbyterian Church Centreville 926-4409
Haysop Baptist Centreville 205-310-1316	West Blocton Church of Christ Woodstock 477-6121	SEVENTH DAY ADVENTIST First Brent Seventh Day Ad- ventist 926-6328
Hopewell Primitive Baptist West Blocton 553-7603	West Blocton Church of Christ West Blocton 938-7108	NON-DENOMINATIONAL Fellowship Community 926-6800
Johnstown Baptist West Blocton 938-7621	Evangelist Temple Brent 926-6430	Scottsville Union Church Co. Rd. 9 Scottsville 205-503-6096
Liberty Baptist West Blocton 938-2090	CHURCH OF GOD Church of God of Prophecy at Eoline 256-393-9625 Pastor Shane Pate	Victory Tabernacle Church 1008 Walnut Street Centreville 926-9455 or 361-2763 Pastor Butch Tucker
Liberty Baptist Duncanville 759-9647 / 759- 4074	Church Of God Of Prophecy West Blocton 938-2788	Yahweh's Harvest 926-9044
Liberty Freewill Baptist 926-6496	Caffee Junction Church Of God 205-477-5468	The Refreshing Place Church 24865 Hwy. 5 Woodstock, AL 35188 Pastor Wayne Keeton
Little Hope Primitive Baptist Centreville 926-4236	River of Life Church of God 9225 Hwy 82, Brent 205-926-7600	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	West Blocton Church of God City Rd. 21 Smith Hill 205-966-4988	Sandy Chapel Community Church 926-4934
Lucille Baptist West Blocton 966-3556	CHURCH OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST 2300 South Scottsville Rd Centreville 926-5393	
Mission Baptist Woodstock 938-7096	EPISCOPAL The Church Of The Holy Comforter Montevallo 665-2769	
Mt. Carmel Baptist West Blocton 938-2379	St. Andrews Episcopal Church 925 Plowman Street Montevallo 665-1667	
Mt. Ebell Baptist Brent 926-9223	HOLINESS Deliverance Temple Holiness Four Points 926-5565	
Mt. Grove Baptist 938-3410	Word of Faith Worship Center Centreville 926-4555	
Mt. Moriah Baptist West Blocton 926-5425	Free Will Apostolic Holiness Antioch 926-9252	
Mt. Pilgrim Baptist Church Brent 926-9009	Real Truth Holiness Church 646 S. Scottsville Road Brent 926-5009	
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		



“What a Friend We Have in Jesus”

Few hymns have traveled so widely, comforted so many hearts, or carried such a tender story of quiet faith as “What a Friend We Have in Jesus.” Sung in small country churches, whispered at hospital bedsides, and lifted in grand sanctuaries, the hymn’s message of Christ’s unfailing friendship continues to resonate more than a century and a half after it was written. Its origins, however, are surprisingly humble—born not from a desire for fame, but from one man’s attempt to comfort his mother from across an ocean.

The hymn traces back to Joseph M. Scriven, born in 1819 in County Down, Ireland. By all accounts, Scriven was a gentle and devout man, but his life was marked by profound sorrow.

At age 25, on the night before his wedding, tragedy struck. His fiancée drowned in a sudden accident. Heartbroken and longing for a fresh start, Scriven emigrated to Canada soon after. There he devoted his life to living out the Sermon on the Mount—serving the poor, tutoring children, and helping those without means. Many called him a “good Samaritan” in his community.

Tragedy found him again when his second fiancée, Eliza Roche, also died before they could marry. Despite these heartbreaks, Scriven lived a life of deep faith and compassion.

Around 1855, when his mother in Ireland fell gravely ill, Scriven wrote a poem to comfort her. He titled it “Pray Without Ceasing.” He intended it only for her eyes—a reminder that no matter the distance between them, she had a faithful Friend in Christ who would carry her burdens.

He never sought to publish it. In fact, Scriven never claimed authorship during his lifetime.

Years later, a friend discovered the poem in Scriven’s belongings. He was struck by the tenderness and spiritual depth of the words and urged that it be shared. The poem was eventually published anonymously, where it began circulating among Christians in both Canada and America.

Meanwhile, across the ocean, noted American composer Charles C. Converse encountered the poem. Moved by its simplicity and hope, he set it to the gentle, flowing tune now known today. With this melody, the hymn began appearing in church hymnals under the familiar title, “What a Friend We Have in Jesus.”

Only near the end of Scriven’s life did people learn he had written the beloved words. When asked how he came to compose such a hymn, Scriven simply responded: “The Lord and I did it between us.”

“What a Friend We

Have in Jesus” resonates because it was written from a place of lived suffering. Scriven knew grief intimately—yet instead of despair, he chose a life of humble service and trust in Christ’s companionship.

The hymn’s message is profoundly human:

We face trials, temptations, and sorrows. We are often weak, weary, and burdened. Yet Jesus invites us to bring everything to Him in prayer—every care, every heartbreak, every need. Its words remind us that we were never meant to carry life alone. Christ is not a distant Savior but a personal Friend who walks with us, weeps with us, and sustains us.

More than 150 years after Joseph Scriven penned a simple poem for his mother, the hymn continues to span cultures, denominations, and generations. It remains one of the most universally loved hymns in Christian worship—a gentle and unwavering reminder that God’s friendship is our steadfast comfort.

From small rural chapels to grand cathedral choirs, from whispered prayers to sunrise services, “What a Friend We Have in Jesus” endures because its message is timeless:

In every moment of our lives—joyful or broken—we have a Friend who never leaves us.

Loving Others When It’s Hard

Loving others is one of the clearest commands in Scripture—and often one of the hardest to live out. It’s easy to love people who agree with us, appreciate us, or treat us well. But Jesus pushes us beyond that kind of comfortable love. He calls us to love when it’s inconvenient, uncomfortable, or even painful.

Jesus said, “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another” (John 13:34). He didn’t say to love others when they deserve it, when they are easy to be around, or when we feel like it. His standard is “as I have loved you.”

And how does He love us? Patiently. Sacrificially. Faithfully. Even when we fail, resist, or push Him away.

God’s love toward us is steady, and He invites us to reflect that same steady love to others.

Some people stretch us. A coworker with a harsh personality. A family member who constantly misunderstands us. A friend who has drifted away or hurt us deeply.

It’s in these difficult spaces that Christlike love is actually formed. Loving difficult people forces us to rely on God instead of our own limited patience. It humbles us, refines us, and reminds us of how deeply God has loved us despite our own flaws.

Paul writes, “If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone” (Romans 12:18). Notice the balance: we pursue peace, but we also acknowledge our limits. Loving others doesn’t mean enabling sin or enduring abuse. It means responding with grace, truth, humility, and a willingness to let God guide our hearts.

It’s tempting to ask, “How can I love them when they act like that?”

But God gently flips the question: “How have I loved you even when you acted like that?”

We love difficult people not because they’ve earned it, but because God has freely poured His love into us (Romans 5:5). When we draw from His love instead of our own, we find that we have more patience,

more compassion, and more strength than we expected.

Practical Ways to Love When It’s Hard:

Pray for them. You can’t stay bitter toward someone you consistently lift before the Lord.

Choose patience. Slow down your reactions. Ask God to temper your tone and words.

Set healthy boundaries. Love is not the same as unlimited access. Boundaries protect relationships.

Seek understanding. Sometimes the hardest people are carrying the heaviest burdens.

Remember your own need for grace. Humility softens even the hardest interactions.

Jesus said the world would recognize His followers not by their theology, worship style, or accomplishments—but by their love (John 13:35).

When we love others in difficult moments, we shine a light that can only come from Him. It’s a quiet testimony that God is at work in us, reshaping our natural impulses into something supernatural.

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SCHOOLS

West Blocton Middle School Makes B on State Report Card

We recently received the fantastic news that WBMS improved its state report card grade to an 80 ('B'). This success is proof that when our community comes together, our children

thrive.

To reach even higher academic goals and ensure that every student at WBMS has the best possible education, we encourage continued support

from our parents and community!

We invite parents, guardians, and community members to become more actively engaged in our students' lives!



Pictured above are members of our faculty and staff with a celebratory cake in honor of our state report card grade.

There are Plenty of Blessings in Alabama this Year for Thanksgiving

*A Guest Opinion Editorial
By Paul DeMarco*

With Thanksgiving this week, it is a good time to reflect on Alabama's blessings. The state has seen so many good and bad days over its 205 years. Yet, Alabama is seeing a renaissance across the board that is drawing both individuals and job creators to the state.

Despite the pandemic, Alabama has become an economic juggernaut with manufacturing leading the way. The state annually ranks as one of the best places to do business in the Nation. When it comes to attracting new companies and having a business friendly climate, Alabama annually makes the list because of its commitment to economic development. In addition, the Port of Mobile recently celebrated the completion of dredging to create a 50-foot channel depth, making it the deepest container port in the Gulf of America. This will also increase commerce in and out of Alabama and draw more international trade to the state.

Industry is not only what is thriving in the state. Alabama has become a top destination for tourist. Alabama was ranked in the top 10 states drawing visitors to the state. Alabama had a historic number of visitors numbered at some 29 million bringing in \$24 billion in spending in Alabama last year. The diverse topography and attractions from the white sandy beaches to Alabama being the southern gateway for the Appalachian Mountains make the state a mecca for outdoor recreation with its trails, rivers and bountiful lakes. There is no question that tourism will continue to grow as one of the most important sectors of Alabama's economy.

Finally, after years of chronic issues in education, the state is improving its standards for public schools. The state school system moved up from 85 to 87 points out of 100 this past school year. Academic achievement went up as well from 64 to 67 percent. In addition, the student graduation rate ticked up from 90 percent to almost 92 percent this past year. Another area of improvement was in chronic absenteeism that dropped from almost 15 percent to 12 percent, which was a significant move but still needs more work. Finally, of the state's 153 school districts, 102 made improvements in scholastic achievement. Thus, Alabama's schools are heading in the right direction but education leaders have to continue to focus their efforts on providing the best opportunities for all state students.

There is plenty of work ahead to do to move Alabama forward to be the best it can be for its citizens, however, this past year provided many reasons to be thankful for our state and living in Alabama for sure.

Paul DeMarco is a former member of the Alabama House of Representatives and can be found on X, formerly Twitter, at @Paul_DeMarco



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

It is the policy of the Alabama Community College System Board of Trustees and Shelton State Community College, a postsecondary institution under its control, that no person shall, on the grounds of race, color, national origin, religion, marital status, disability, gender, age, or any other protected class as defined by federal and state law, be excluded from participation, denied benefits, or subjected to discrimination under any program, activity, or employment.

In partnership with



Local Learning Made Easy: College Courses Continue at Bibb Medical Center

BY SAVANNAH LOGAN
REPORTER

For the past several years, Shelton State Community College has partnered with Bibb Medical Center to make higher education more accessible right here in Bibb County. As we approach another spring semester, now is a great time to remind the community of the valuable college courses and student support services available close to home.

Shelton State continues to offer a convenient mix of online and in-person classes at the BMC campus. For Spring 2026 registration, students can

once again enroll in BIO 103 online, with virtual student hours available, as well as ENG 101-BC1, MTH 099-B50, and two sections of MTH 100. All in-person courses meet on Mondays and Wednesdays, providing consistent scheduling for those balancing family, work, and school commitments.

In addition to the coursework, BMC students have access to important academic resources, including advising, tutoring, and opportunities to meet with a Shelton State representative. These supports have helped many local students

begin or continue their college journey without traveling far from home.

This ongoing partnership reflects a shared commitment to education, workforce development, and community growth. Whether you're looking to start a degree, build new skills, or return to school after time away, these classes offer a flexible and affordable way to take the next step – right here in your own community.

For more information or to schedule a meeting, reach out to admissions@sheltonstate.edu.

A family of four, consisting of a mother, a father, and two young children, are sitting together on a light-colored sofa. They are all looking at a tablet held by one of the children. The mother is on the left, the father is on the right, and the two children are in the middle. They are all smiling and appear to be enjoying their time together. The background is a bright, modern interior with large windows and light-colored walls.

Bibb County Board of Education Condensed Statement of Revenues, Expenditures and Changes in Fund Balances Governmental and Expendable Trust Funds For the Year Ended September 30, 2025						
DESCRIPTION	GENERAL	SPECIAL REVENUE	DEBT SERVICE	CAPITAL PROJECTS	TRUST	TOTAL
REVENUES						
STATE REVENUES	30,471,124.49	0.00	681,028.58	588,172.42	0.00	31,740,325.49
FEDERAL REVENUES	840.00	5,543,898.48	0.00	0.00	0.00	5,544,738.48
LOCAL REVENUES	7,562,621.63	1,624,025.71	99,722.06	0.00	756,947.63	10,043,317.03
OTHER REVENUES	54,460.55	25,287.87	0.00	0.00	0.00	79,748.42
TOTAL REVENUES	38,089,046.67	7,193,212.06	780,750.64	588,172.42	756,947.63	47,408,129.42
EXPENDITURES:						
INSTRUCTIONAL SERVICES	20,596,189.13	2,376,414.14	0.00	0.00	350.00	22,972,953.27
INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT SERVICES	7,562,371.19	801,980.20	0.00	0.00	348,173.72	8,712,535.11
OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE	4,154,230.75	74,428.54	0.00	37,097.00	36,193.15	4,301,949.44
AUXILIARY SERVICES	3,778,076.07	3,373,512.26	0.00	1,677,500.00	3,922.35	8,833,010.68
GENERAL ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES	1,720,599.70	373,126.65	0.00	0.00	0.00	2,093,726.35
CAPITAL OUTLAY	933,507.95	9,750.00	0.00	1,283,742.56	466.78	2,227,467.29
DEBT SERVICE	1925	0	1857928.42	0.00	0.00	1,859,853.42
OTHER EXPENDITURES	1,296,929.33	582,182.92	0.00	0.00	168,251.10	2,047,363.35
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	40,043,829.12	7,591,404.71	1,857,928.42	2,998,339.56	557,357.10	53,048,858.91
OTHER FUND SOURCES (USES):						
OTHER FUND SOURCES	581,128.79	728,699.22	1,420,957.80	0.00	8,366.60	2,739,152.41
OTHER FUND USES	1,692,714.97	362,464.05	0.00	244,137.64	143,317.26	2,442,633.92
TOTAL OTHER FUND SOURCES (USES)	(1,111,586.18)	366,235.17	1,420,957.80	(244,137.64)	(134,950.66)	296,518.49
EXCESS REVENUES AND OTHER SOURCES						
OVER(UNDER)EXPENDITURES AND OTHER FUND USES	(3,066,368.63)	(31,957.49)	343,780.02	(2,654,304.78)	64639.87	(5,344,211.01)
BEGINNING FUND BALANCE - OCT 1, 2024	15,814,211.24	1,913,373.75	3,289,268.00	3,325,089.81	418,921.80	24,760,864.60
ENDING FUND BALANCE - SEPT 30, 2025	12,747,842.61	1,881,416.26	3,633,048.02	670,785.03	483,561.67	19,416,653.59
Indebtedness of the Board as of September 30, 2025		32,473,718.09				

Type of Indebtedness:	Capital Lease	Bonds and Warrants Payable
Retirement of Debt from:	Fleet Renewal	PSF/Local
FY2025	20,577.00	1841272.61
FY2026	20,577.00	4800526.14
FY2027	18,862.23	1738602.47
FY2028		1731637.12
FY2029		1697462.17
FY2030-2034		7374382.18
FY2035-2039		5,722,759.45
FY2040-2044		4,590,509.34
FY2045-2050		4,778,400.00

I certify that this report is correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.
Kevin Cotner, Superintendent

The BACK PAGE

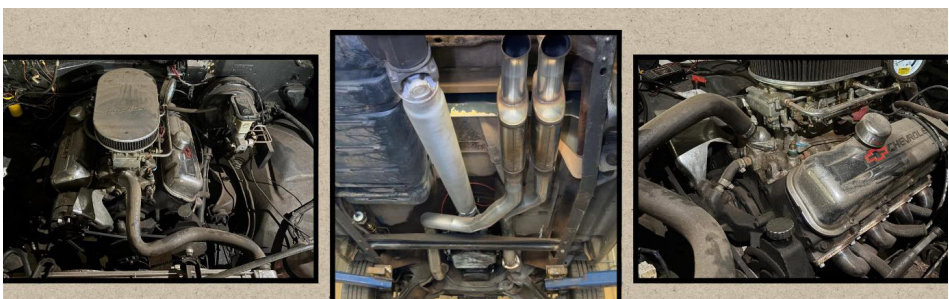
Centreville Main Street Launches Truck Raffle to Support 2026 Revitalization Projects

BY SAVANNAH LOGAN
REPORTER

Centreville Main Street has launched an exciting new raffle, offering residents the chance to win a '93 Chevy C1500 while supporting local revitalization efforts. The truck, featuring a 502 BBC engine, twin 750 carb, 400 TH, short-wheel base, and step-side body, was generously gifted to Centreville Main Street just ahead of the Cahaba Auto Fest Car & Motorcycle Show. Now, it's being raffled off to help fund the organization's 2026 improvement projects, including façade upgrades, small-business support, beautification initiatives, and long-term efforts to strengthen the heart of the county

seat. Only 250 tickets will be sold, making the chances of winning especially strong, and interest is already building quickly. Tickets are \$50 each, and the drawing will take place during Centreville's New Year's Celebration on December 27th. While ticket holders are encouraged to attend, presence is not required to win. More details about the December 27th celebration will be shared in the coming weeks. Tickets can be purchased by stopping by the Main Street office at 1100 Walnut Street, visiting G&H Building Supply or NAPA/English Auto & Truck Repair, calling 205-901-3864, or contacting any Centreville Main Street Board Member.

Board members include Jeff McGee, Ashton Cottingham, Stephanie Kemmer, Watson Fondren, Seth Young, Katie Crumpler, Woodham Kemmer, Crystal McMeekin, Karen Berklew, Mayor Barry Cooner, and Katie Cheslock. The truck is in good, running condition, and anyone with questions is encouraged to reach out directly to the Main Street team. Every ticket purchased directly supports meaningful projects that enhance the look, feel, and economic vitality of downtown Centreville — making this raffle not just a chance to win a standout classic truck, but an opportunity to invest in the community's future.



CENTREVILLE MAIN STREET Truck Raffle

Enter for a Chance to Win a
'93 CHEVY C1500
502 BBC ENGINE, TWIN 750 CARB,
400 TH, SWB, STEP SIDE



Tickets can be purchased by contacting us at:
centrevillemainstreet@gmail.com | 205-901-3864
OR reach out to your favorite CMS Board Member!

BMC HEALTH AND WELLNESS CORNER

CANDY CANE LANE

Community Tree Lighting Ceremony!
Join us on **Thursday, December 4th**
from **5:30pm-7:30pm** for a cozy evening
of holiday cheer! Enjoy food trucks, live
music, caroling, and festive fun leading
up to the *official tree lighting at 6:30pm*
Bring your family, bundle up, and help us
kick off the season in the sweetest way!

WINTER STRESS & IMMUNE SUPPORT

December can bring a whirlwind of holiday plans, cooler weather, and extra stress on our bodies. This week, take a moment to support both your mental and physical health:

- **Stay Active:** Even a 10-15 minute walk can boost your mood and immune system.
- **Prioritize Sleep:** Aim for 7-8 hours to help your body fight seasonal illnesses.
- **Eat for Immunity:** Add foods rich in vitamin C, zinc, and antioxidants like citrus, berries, leafy greens, and nuts.
- **Take a Breather:** Deep breathing, stretching, or a quiet moment with a warm drink can lower stress levels in minutes.

A little daily care now can help you stay healthy, energized, and ready to enjoy the season!

PROVIDER SPOTLIGHT: ANDREW LEE, CRNP



Andrew's story with Bibb Medical Center began over 20 years ago during his very first nursing clinicals in 2002. Inspired in second grade after watching a flight nurse land a helicopter on his school playground, he followed that calling into a career that includes 16 years as a flight nurse, leadership roles in trauma care, and two master's degrees, including his NP from UAB. Now, he's come full circle, returning to serve the community that helped shape his career. As we open our newly renovated ER, Andrew looks forward to providing high-quality, compassionate care to the citizens of Bibb County and beyond.

COLLEGE CLASSES AT BIBB MEDICAL CENTER!

Shelton State Community College is offering Spring 2026 courses right here at Bibb Medical Center, with student support services including advising, tutoring, and meetings with SSCC representatives.

Available Courses:

- BIO 103 – *Online with virtual student hours*
- ENG 101-BC1 – *Mondays & Wednesdays, 3:40pm-5:00pm*
- MTH 099-B50 – *Mondays & Wednesdays, 7:00pm-7:55pm*
- MTH 100-B50 & MTH 100C-B50 – *Mondays & Wednesdays, 5:30pm-6:50pm*

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

BMC WELLNESS CENTER



Men's Basketball League Registration NOW OPEN!

Visit the Front Desk or bmcwellness.com/adultleagues

\$250 per team, due in full at sign-up, with a 6-team limit and all players required to be 21 or older. Rosters are capped at 10 players, and no pickup players will be allowed this season.



Youth Spring Tumbling Registration NOW OPEN!

Visit the Front Desk or bmcwellness.com/tumbling

Use code **BMCTUMBLE** at registration to receive a sibling discount. Our new semester with Rebecca Fondren begins in January!

This holiday season, we're launching Play It Forward to help provide sponsorships for kids who need financial support to join our youth sports programs.



Each ornament on our facility tree represents a program you can choose to support, not an individual child. Donations can be made at the Front Desk.

PLAY IT FORWARD

BMC WELLNESS CENTER

Your support helps create healthier, more active futures for kids in our community by opening doors to programs that build confidence, teamwork, and lifelong wellness.