

# Centreville Press

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## Bibb County Reminds Residents of Community Storm Shelter Locations During Tornado Season



BY SAVANNAH LOGAN  
REPORTER

Sunscreen and flip flops on Saturday, hunkering down in your “safe place” at your home or local shelter on Sunday, and leaving your water dripping for a late freeze on Monday – nothing like spring in Alabama!

This severe weather season, county officials are reminding residents that several community storm shelters are available throughout Bibb County for those who need a safe place during dangerous storms. Having a plan in place ahead of time can make a critical difference when severe weather strikes, and knowing the nearest shelter location can help families respond quickly if tornado warnings are issued.

Storm shelters are located in several communities across the county to provide accessible protection during severe weather events. These shelters serve as designated

safe spaces designed to withstand extreme conditions and offer residents a secure place to go when tornado threats arise.

Available community storm shelter locations include the Brent Senior Center at 10445 Highway 5 in Brent, the Cedar Grove Volunteer Fire Department at 13503 North Scottsville Road in West Blocton, and the Eoline Fire Department at 6480 Highway 82 in Eoline.

Additional shelters are located at Randolph Elementary School at 7259 County Road 36 in Randolph and West Blocton Elementary School at 828 Cahaba River Road in West Blocton. Residents in the northern part of the county can also seek shelter at Woodstock Elementary School at 19456 Eastern Valley Road in Woodstock.

Other designated shelter sites include the Career Academy at 17191 Alabama Highway 5 in West

Blocton, the Brierfield Community Shelter at 35 Brickyard Pass in Brierfield, the Harrisburg Community Shelter at 341 Old Pike Road in Brent, the Camp Branch Community Shelter at 2575 Camp Branch Road in West Blocton, and the Pondville Community Shelter at 416 Friendship Road in Brent.

Residents in and around Centreville can also utilize the Centreville Storm Shelter, located at 1130 Montgomery Highway.

Residents are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the shelter closest to their home and to monitor weather alerts closely during severe weather conditions. Preparing ahead of time and knowing where to go can help keep families safe when storms move through the area.

Stay weather aware and monitor James Spann’s outfit accordingly, folks!

## Digital Reading Comes to Woodstock: Libby Now Available Through the Woodstock Community Library

BY SAVANNAH LOGAN  
REPORTER

Community members now have a new way to enjoy books anytime and anywhere – whether it be driving in your car, taking a walk, washing your dishes, or cutting your grass, or even just enjoying the evening on your porch. The Woodstock Community Library has announced the arrival of the popular reading app Libby, giving library members free access to thousands of digital books and audiobooks.

On behalf of Jeff Dodson and the Woodstock Town Council, the library shared that as of March 2nd, community members can borrow ebooks and audiobooks through Libby, which is powered by OverDrive and the Camellia Net Consortium. The service allows readers to browse a large digital catalog and borrow titles directly from their phone, tablet, or computer.

Getting started is simple. All that’s re-

quired is a free library membership and a personal identification number (PIN). Those who are not yet members can sign up by visiting the library with a valid Alabama driver’s license showing an address within the library’s service area. Library staff say the process is quick, easy, and completely free.

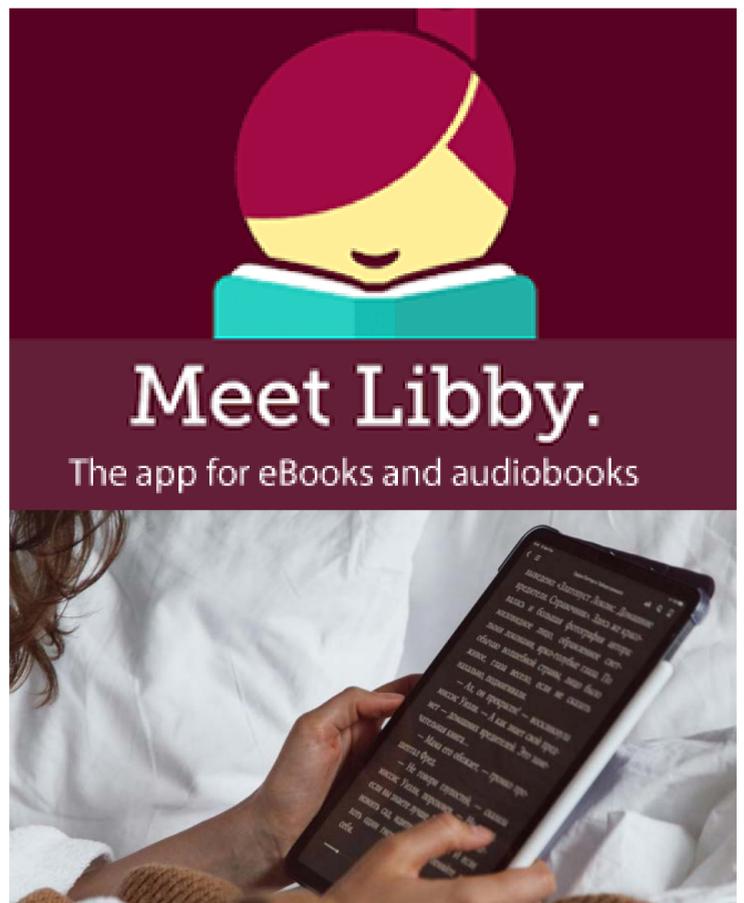
Residents also have the option to begin the process online by completing an application through the library’s catalog system. Once the application is submitted, membership will be activated when the applicant visits the library in person with their Alabama driver’s license. Current members who need assistance setting up a PIN can contact the library by email for help.

After installing the Libby app, users simply locate their library, sign in with their card information, and begin browsing the collection. Borrowed titles appear on the user’s digital shelf and can even download automatically when

connected to Wi-Fi, making it possible to read or listen offline. As an avid Libby user myself, I would also like to note for the speedreaders out there that the speed at which you listen can also be adjusted, up to 2x speed. If you have ever wanted Little House on the Prairie to sound like it was read to you by an excited prairie dog itself, now is your time, folks. The sky is the limit.

The Woodstock Community Library is open Monday and Wednesday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Tuesday and Thursday from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m., and Friday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. The library is located at 28577 Highway 5 in Woodstock.

Community members will also have an opportunity to celebrate the library’s continued growth during the Playground and Library Ribbon Cutting and Grand Opening alongside the Wildflower Wellness Walk, scheduled for Saturday, March 28 from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. The



Meet Libby.  
The app for eBooks and audiobooks

event will highlight new resources and spaces designed to serve families and readers across the community.

With the addition of Libby, the Woodstock Community Library is expanding access to literature and learning

— bringing thousands of books to readers with just the tap of a screen.



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# NEWS

## West Blocton Police Chief Hicks Completes University Training



"On behalf of the University Partnership for Alabama Continuing Education, and the Alabama Association of Chiefs of Police, I take great pleasure in announcing that Chief Leonard "Pete" Hicks has completed 240 hours of training in the Certified Law Enforcement Executive Program. This is the highest level of achievement that is awarded through this program," said Kaleb Littlejohn, Director of the Center for Best Practices in Law Enforcement at Jacksonville State University and UP ACE Partner. Chief Hicks is among

an elite group of chiefs in the state who have successfully completed the four-level program developed by the Alabama Association of Chiefs of Police and supported by the Alabama Peace Officers' Standards and Training Commission. This honor is a real credit to Chief Hicks and the West Blocton Police Department.

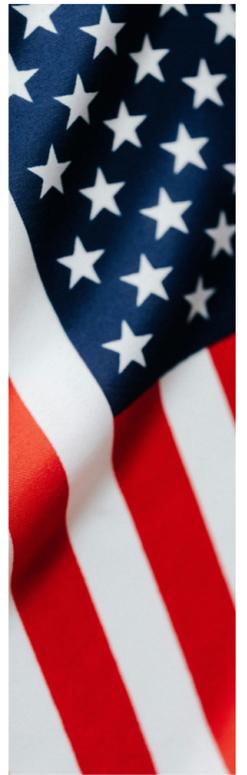
Chief Hicks received this certification and recognition at the annual Association of Chiefs of Police Conference in Montgomery, Alabama on February 19, 2026.

Examples of courses included in the pro-

gram are:

Understanding and Developing Your Leadership Style; Police Leadership: Managing for the Future; Ethics and Integrity; Police Organizational Structure: Managing for Effectiveness; Strategic Planning and Personnel Management.

The UP ACE Partnership is made up of Jacksonville State University, The University of North Alabama and Troy University Dothan. Its purpose is to make continuing education programs available for agencies and associations across the state.



## Bibb County Education Retiree's Association



The Bibb County Education Retiree's Association had their March meeting at the Brent/ Centreville Library. Entertainment was provided by a few of the cast from the Bibb County Children's Theatre recent production of the Wizard of Oz. Mr. Kevin Cotner, Superintendent of the Bibb County Board of Education provided the program and shared updates from the school system. The service project was putting together supplies for first year teacher's mentoring program. In attendance were Kevin Cotner, Superintendent Bibb County Schools, Addison Gray, Caroline Jones and Cara Knight- Bibb Co. Children's Theatre, Phyllis Johnson, Donna Cook, Fran Kornegay, Kelley Davis- Bibb County Children's Theatre Director, Avis Huey, Elaine Jones, Mary Beth Sansing and Vickie Brown.

## Boys & Girls Clubs of West Alabama Celebrates Statewide Honors at Area Council



Tuscaloosa, Ala. — The Alabama Alliance of Boys & Girls Clubs hosted its annual Alabama Area Council in Montgomery last week, bringing together leaders, youth, and community partners from across the state to celebrate excellence in Club programming and leadership. Boys & Girls Clubs of West Alabama (BGCWA) proudly brought home several major recognitions, highlighting the organization's impact and the strength of its youth and leadership.

Abriyah White, BGCWA's 2026 Youth of the Year, was named second runner-up in the statewide Youth of the Year competition. White's achievement reflects her out-

standing leadership, academic success, and commitment to service, qualities that have made her a standout representative for West Alabama.

In addition to youth honors, BGCWA President & CEO Kim Turner was named Alabama's CEO of the Year, a statewide recognition of her visionary leadership, dedication to youth development, and commitment to expanding opportunities for young people across the region.

BGCWA also received recognition for Lemonade Day Tuscaloosa, which was honored as an exemplary academic success program. The initiative teaches finan-

cial literacy, goal-setting, and entrepreneurship, empowering young people with real-world skills that support long-term success.

"These recognitions reflect the heart of our mission to help young people reach their full potential," said Turner. "We are incredibly proud of Abriyah, our staff, and our community partners who make this work possible every day."

The Alabama Area Council brings together Boys & Girls Clubs from across the state to share best practices, celebrate achievements, and strengthen the network of support for Alabama youth.

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## SPECIAL REPORT

# The Roller Coaster at the Pump

*Why gasoline prices in America swing so dramatically*

BY MIKE HOBSON

REPORTER

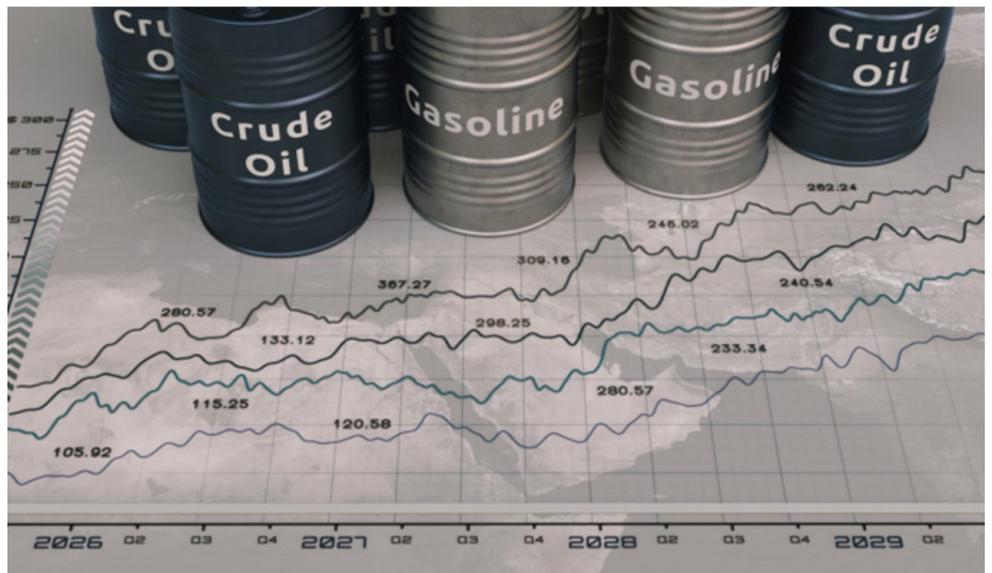
mike.hobson@centrevillepress.com

Few economic signals are as visible to the American public as the price of gasoline. Unlike the price of bread or electricity, gasoline prices are posted in giant numerals on roadside signs in every community. The result is that when the price rises or falls sharply, the change becomes an immediate political and economic story.

Over the past five years Americans have experienced some of the most dramatic

gasoline price swings in decades. Prices plunged during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, surged to record levels in 2022 after geopolitical disruptions, moderated in 2023–2025, and then rose again during renewed tensions in the Persian Gulf in 2026. These fluctuations reflect a complex interaction of global oil markets, domestic production, refining capacity, and geopolitical risk.

Understanding the volatility requires answering several key questions.



### 1. What caused the wide gasoline price swings over the last five years?

Several factors have driven gasoline price volatility since 2020.

**Pandemic collapse and rebound**  
In 2020, worldwide travel collapsed during COVID-19 lockdowns. Demand for fuel plummeted, causing oil prices to fall dramatically and pushing gasoline prices down as well. When economic activity resumed in 2021 and 2022, demand rebounded faster than production capacity, sending prices sharply upward.

**Global supply disruptions**

Major geopolitical events also affect oil markets. For example, tensions or conflict in the Middle East can trigger rapid increases in oil prices. In early 2026, for instance, escalation involving Iran pushed crude oil prices above \$100 per barrel, contributing to a sudden rise in gasoline prices across the United States.

**Seasonal demand and regulations**

Gasoline prices also

follow seasonal patterns. Refiners switch to a more expensive summer fuel blend to meet environmental standards, while travel demand peaks during summer vacation months. Both factors tend to push prices higher each spring.

**Refining and distribution constraints**

Unlike crude oil, gasoline cannot easily be shipped globally without refining. If a refinery shuts down or experiences maintenance problems,

local gasoline prices can spike even when crude oil prices remain stable.

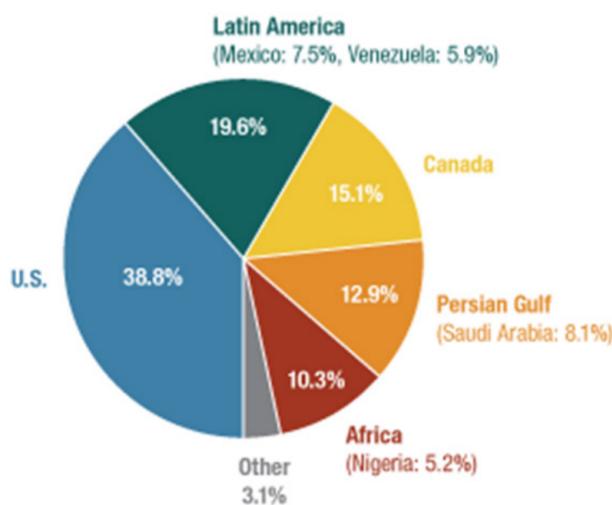
**Financial markets**

Oil is traded globally on commodity exchanges. Expectations about future supply disruptions—sometimes triggered by political events or speculation—can move prices within hours.

The key point is that gasoline prices reflect a global commodity market, not just domestic supply conditions.



### 2. How much OPEC or Persian Gulf oil does the United States import?



Contrary to common belief, the United States imports relatively little oil directly from the Persian Gulf today.

Only about 8–9% of U.S. petroleum imports originate from Persian Gulf countries, a dramatic decline from decades past.

This change reflects the American shale oil boom that began in the late 2000s. Hydraulic fracturing and horizontal drilling expanded domestic production, making the United

States the world's largest oil producer.

OPEC's share of U.S. imports has also declined sharply. In the late 1970s, OPEC supplied about 85% of imported oil to the United States. Today the majority of imports come from North America.

Despite this reduced dependence, global oil prices remain interconnected. Even if the U.S. imports little Middle Eastern oil directly, disruptions there still affect the worldwide price of crude.

### 3. Why can a Persian Gulf disruption trigger U.S. price spikes within 24 hours?

This phenomenon surprises many consumers.

If only a small portion of U.S. oil comes from the Persian Gulf, why do conflicts there immediately raise prices at American gas stations?

The answer lies in the global nature of oil markets.

Oil is traded internationally in a single interconnected market. Events affecting supply anywhere influence the worldwide benchmark prices—

primarily Brent and West Texas Intermediate (WTI). Once those benchmark prices rise, refineries and wholesalers in the United States pay more for crude oil regardless of its origin.

A critical geograph-

ic choke point is the Strait of Hormuz, through which about 20% of the world's oil supply passes. When shipping through this channel is threatened or interrupted, global supply expectations change instantly.

Because oil futures markets operate around the clock, prices can adjust almost immediately after such news breaks. Retail gasoline prices then follow rapidly because stations must replenish inventory at higher

wholesale prices.

In short, American gasoline prices are determined by the world oil price, not just domestic supply.

### 4. How much crude oil does the United States import and from where?

The United States remains both a major importer and exporter of petroleum.

The country imports several million barrels of crude oil per day, but the sources are heavily concentrated in nearby countries.

The leading suppliers include:

Source country	Share of U.S. crude imports
Canada	~60%
Mexico	~10%
Saudi Arabia	~7%
Iraq	~4%
Colombia	~4%

Overall, imports account for a relatively small share of total U.S. energy supply—about 17% in 2024, the lowest level in nearly forty years.

Several factors explain why the U.S. still imports oil despite producing large quantities domestically:

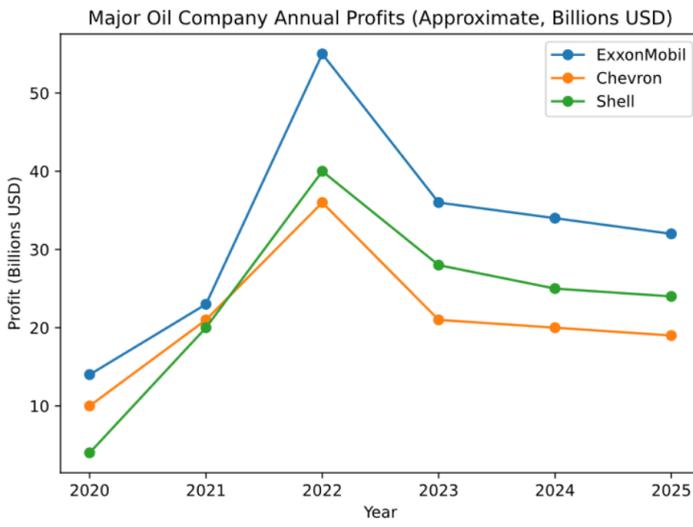
1. Refinery configuration: Many U.S. refineries are optimized for heavier crude oils that come from Canada or Latin America.
2. Regional logistics: It can sometimes be cheaper for coastal refineries to import oil than to transport domestic crude from inland shale fields.
3. Trade economics: The United States also exports large amounts of crude and refined petroleum products, creating a two-way trade.



# SPECIAL REPORT

...continued from page 3

## 5. What have major oil companies earned during this period?



The past five years have been extremely profitable for major oil companies.

Following the pandemic downturn in 2020, profits surged as oil prices rebounded. Companies such as ExxonMobil, Chevron, Shell, and BP reported some of the largest earnings in their history during 2022–2023.

Industry profits fluctuate with oil prices. When crude oil approaches or exceeds \$100 per barrel, energy companies typically generate large margins. When oil prices fall below \$60, profits decline sharply.

For example:

- Several major oil companies posted record annual profits in 2022, driven by high global oil prices.
- Earnings moderated in 2023–2025 as oil prices stabilized.

- Renewed geopolitical tensions in 2026 have again pushed prices upward.

Supporters of the industry argue these profits reflect the enormous capital investments required to explore and produce oil. Critics contend the profits demonstrate the market power of large oil firms during supply disruptions.

Regardless of perspective, the financial performance of oil companies closely tracks global oil prices.

It remains to be seen what effect the current war in Iran will do for/ to earnings for the major oil companies in 2026. Price increases at the pump have been dramatically higher in the last week in the U.S.

## 6. Visualizing the gasoline price cycle

### Approximate U.S. average gasoline prices (2020-2026)

Year	Average price per gallon
2020	~\$2.17
2021	~\$3.01
2022	~\$3.96
2023	~\$3.53
2024	~\$3.50
2025	~\$3.10
2026 forecast	~\$2.97

Forecasts suggest the national average could fall below \$3 per gallon in 2026 if geopolitical disruptions remain limited.

In Bibb County, Alabama prices reached \$3.49 per gallon at the pump in the last 5 days.

#### Major drivers of pump prices

Typical components of the gasoline price:

Component	Share of pump price
Crude oil cost	~50–60%
Refining	~15–20%
Distribution & marketing	~10–15%
Taxes	~10–15%

Because crude oil accounts for roughly half of the retail price, changes in global oil markets quickly influence gasoline costs.



## Conclusion: The global nature of gasoline prices

The volatility of gasoline prices over the last five years illustrates a simple reality: the American pump is connected to the global energy system.

Even though the United States now produces more oil than any other country and imports far less from the Middle East than in the past, do-

mestic gasoline prices remain sensitive to global events. Political conflict in the Persian Gulf, refinery outages, seasonal demand, and financial speculation can all ripple through international oil markets and reach American drivers within days—or sometimes hours.

The modern oil market is therefore less about

geography than about interconnected supply chains and global pricing mechanisms. Until transportation moves away from petroleum as its dominant fuel, the price displayed on gas station signs will continue to reflect events occurring far beyond America's borders.



# LOCAL & GOVERNMENT

## Centreville News

By Brenda Hubbard

The BCHS Class of 1961 met on Friday, March 6, 2026 for their monthly breakfast. Always reporting a good time.

Anniversary wishes go out to Eric and Stacy Averette who recently celebrated their 39th wedding anniversary. We wish this couple many more years of happiness together.

Sympathy goes out to the family of Dean Nelson, age 95, who passed away on March 1, 2026. Services were held on March 5, 2026. Dean will be missed by her family and friends.

Charlotte Lovelady West recently on Friday had a wonderful 3 ½ hour lunch at The Oak Tavern at RTJ Golf Resort in Prattville with college friends Joyce Murphy of Greenville and Martha Graham of Birmingham. The food was scrumptious, key lime pie was dessert; perfect day with incredible friends.

We wish to extend sincere sympathy to the family of Sammy Ray Steele, age 79, of Centreville who passed away on March 3, 2026 at Bibb Medi-

cal Center. Graveside service was held on Tuesday, March 10, 2026 at 11:30 a.m. at Haysop Baptist Church Cemetery. Ray will be missed greatly by his family and friends.

Don't forget Relay for Life of Bibb County will be held on Saturday, May 2, 2026 at Heritage Park, Brent, AL. For more information contact Ryan Thompson.

Wayne and Susan Bush celebrated their wedding anniversary recently. We send out anniversary wishes to them.

Birthday wishes to several that have birthdays in March; Kelly Fondren, Lori Johnston, Kerry Young, Larry Griffin, Hall Eady, Compton Suttle and Rick Miller.

Arts on the Cahaba will be held in downtown Centreville on Saturday, April 4, 2026 from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m. Join us for local artists, handmade vendors, live music, food trucks and family fun.

If you have news call it in, 205.316.1181.

Take care & God bless.

## Brierfield Ironworks to Host Easter Egg Hunt and Flea Market

BY CANACE JOHNSON REPORTER

Brierfield Ironworks Historical State Park is welcoming the spring season with an Easter Egg Hunt and Flea Market on April 4 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. The egg hunt will begin at 11 a.m., giving children the chance to search for hidden eggs filled with toys. One special prize will be awarded to the participant who

finds the egg containing a Peeps Bunny. Additional activities include a free photo booth, petting zoo, bouncy house and more. Admission is \$10 for ages 13 and older, \$5 for seniors and military, and free for children. The event offers a fun and festive way for families to celebrate the season together.



## Shane Trail to Emcee Bibb County Miss Relay For Life Pageant



Relay For Life of Bibb County is so excited to announce Shane Trail will be the emcee for our Miss Relay For Life Pageant Saturday April 11 10am at Cahaba Christian Academy.

Shane Trail is a photographer and reporter for WBRC 6 News. Before coming to Birmingham, Shane spent two years as a photojournalist in Sioux Falls, SD. He joined WBRC in June of 2023, covering the stories of central Alabama both independently and in support of his colleagues.

Miss Relay for Life of

Bibb County is open to all ages with no residential restrictions.

Contestants raising \$100 or more will receive a HOPE CLUB T-shirt

The Contestant raising the MOST donations will receive a special crown and will be named Miss Sponsorship Queen.

If you would like more information on Miss Relay For Life you can follow Relay For Life of Bibb County's Facebook page or you may contact the Event Lead Ryan Thompson 205 2254287



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#### Supporting Teachers & Staff

- Respect educators as professionals
- Focus on mentoring, retention of teachers, and clear expectations

#### Accountability & Growth

- Use data to improve instruction, not punish schools
- Emphasize growth and continuous improvement

#### Safe, Supportive Schools

- Strong counseling and mental health services
- Partnerships with families and community organizations

#### Community Trust & Transparency

- Open communication with parents and fiscal responsibility
- Local decisions rooted in Bibb County values

The Republican Primary Election will be held on May 19, 2026. Please consider voting for Lane Lightsey for Bibb County Superintendent of Education.

**Paid for by Friends of Lane Lightsey**  
 438 Moody Rd, Centreville, AL 35042



## Fast, Convenient Care Close to Home: Walk-In Clinic at BMC

BY SAVANNA LOGAN REPORTER

When illness or injury happens unexpectedly, having access to timely care close to home can make all the difference. At Bibb Medical Center, patients have the convenience of both a Walk-In Urgent Care Clinic and a fully equipped Emergency Department under one roof, ensuring that the right level of care is always within reach — without the drive to Tuscaloosa or Birmingham.

The hospital's Walk-In Urgent Care Clinic is designed to treat everyday illnesses and minor injuries when a regular doctor's appointment isn't available. Patients can receive prompt care for a variety of non-life-threatening condi-

tions without needing to schedule an appointment in advance. The clinic serves both adults and pediatric patients, offering families a convenient option when medical needs arise unexpectedly.

Medical staff are available to evaluate and treat a wide range of minor health concerns, providing professional, compassionate care from trusted providers who are part of the local community. Whether it's a seasonal illness, minor injury, or another unexpected health concern, the walk-in clinic offers fast, reliable care for patients of all ages.

If a more serious medical situation arises, the hospital's newly renovated Emergency

Department is located just steps away. As recently announced, the updated Emergency Department features expanded treatment areas, improved patient flow, and modernized facilities designed to deliver efficient and high-quality emergency care. Patients experiencing a true emergency should proceed directly to the Emergency Department entrance located at the rear of the building, where teams are ready to respond when every second matters.

By offering both urgent care and emergency services in one location, Bibb Medical Center helps ensure that residents of Bibb County have access to the care they need — quickly, conveniently, and close to home.

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# EDITORIALS & OPINIONS

## Advocates Revitalize Push for Medicaid Expansion in Alabama

MONTGOMERY, Ala. – More than 50 advocates with the Cover Alabama coalition came to the Alabama State House on Tuesday to urge their lawmakers to expand Medicaid. The advocates highlighted a new analysis from Families USA, a nationwide nonprofit consumer health advocacy and policy organization.

Alabama is losing \$181.6 million in 2026 by covering millions in state health care spending that otherwise could be paid for by the federal government under Medicaid expansion, according to the new Families USA report. Medicaid expansion would generate \$71.8 million in net savings for Alabama this year, the report estimated. And that amount would not include additional revenue from economic activity resulting from expansion.

The report points to numerous potential funding sources that could help the state address our health care crisis. These include increasing the state cigarette tax and closing an income tax loophole that overwhelmingly benefits the wealthiest households.

“Alabama can’t afford not to expand Medicaid,” said Debbie Smith, Alabama Arise’s Cover Alabama campaign director. “The most costly option is doing nothing.”

160,000+ Alabamians are in state’s health coverage gap

Tens of thousands of Alabamians have seen soaring costs this year for Marketplace health coverage under the Affordable Care Act (ACA). These price increases came after Congress failed to renew enhanced Premium Tax Credits (ePTCs) that make plans more affordable. The increases also came on the heels of other significant federal cuts to health care in HR 1, the so-called One Big Beautiful Bill Act.

Many Alabamians have elected to drop health insurance altogether after losing the ePTCs. An estimated 161,000 adults statewide fall into the “coverage gap,” meaning they earn too much to qualify for Alabama Medicaid but not enough to afford private insurance on their own. Expanding Medicaid could ensure coverage for more than 150,000 of these Alabamians. That is roughly equivalent to the combined capacities of Bryant-Denny Stadium in Tuscaloosa and Protective Stadium in Birmingham.

“In states that have expanded Medicaid, we’ve seen a 6% to 9% increase in the workforce. Just because people can make choices to support themselves and their families,” said Mary-Beth Malcarney, Families USA’s senior adviser on Medicaid policy.

Presenters at Tuesday’s event included Smith, Malcarney and Formeeca Tripp, Alabama Arise’s senior regional organizer. Many attendees also described their own health care experiences and explained why they support Medicaid expansion in Alabama.

“No one should have to decide between rent or medicine,” one advocate shared.

## Alabama Is About to Be Hijacked by California and China

*Inside the Statehouse*  
By Steve Flowers

March 18, 2026:

Where I grew up, the term “hijacking” usually referred to the disappearance of a fresh load of moonshine on its way to market. Hijacking occurs when something, or even some process, is taken over without the consent and, at times, even the knowledge of the rightful owner. Hijacking, like classic high-seas piracy, is one of the most direct and forceful means of stealing something from someone.

Well, folks, I’ve recently come to realize you can hijack a whole lot more than moonshine in the South. A bunch of hijackers from California, and even China, have come to recognize our home, the Southeastern United States, as a field ripe for the picking.

Just last year, in the November elections in Georgia, millions of dollars from these hijackers flowed into the Georgia Public Service Commission races. As a result, two incumbent Republican PSC commissioners lost by about 24 points apiece. That is the first time a Democrat has been elected to the PSC in Georgia since 2000. That, my friends, was a good old-fashioned hijacking.

So, who was the hijacker? An operation called the Georgia League of Conservation Voters pumped about \$2.2 million into the Georgia PSC races. They got their money from their mothership, a national group called the League of Conservation Voters. This organization, with funding from liberal groups across the nation, reckoned that just a little of their money in down-ballot races would let them sneak in under the radar and hijack those Georgia elections. They were right. They pulled it off slick as a whistle. And now they are setting up a hijacking in Alabama.

And while it sounds like something from a John Grisham novel, an outfit headquartered in Beijing is a prominent player in the money trail funneling cash through the League of Conservation Voters and right to Alabama.

Conservation Alabama is the local wing of the League of Conservation Voters, and they partner with and help support a liberal environmentalist group called Energy Alabama. These two organizations are carrying the water for the same folks who hijacked the elections in Georgia.

So, how do we stop them?

Last week, the Alabama State Senate took a major step toward derailing these liberal out-of-state hijackers with the passage of SB360 – a bill that passed the Senate with-

out a single dissenting vote 32-0.

This legislation does three things to deal with rising power bills while stopping the influence of California environmental groups in our elections.

First, it freezes rates for Alabama Power for three years. Folks, that is an unprecedented action by our Legislature that gives Alabama families and businesses rate assurance that no one else in the nation has.

Second, it enlarges the Public Service Commission from three commissioners elected statewide to seven commissioners elected by Congressional District. This historic change in the structure of the PSC puts more power in the ballot box and in the hands of the people than has ever existed.

Third, it creates a cabinet level position for a Secretary of Energy that will raise the importance of providing affordable, reliable energy to a new level. But this Secretary will not have ultimate power. The elected commission members can override the Secretary and nothing, absolutely nothing, happens without a vote of the seven elected commissioners.

These California hijackers, with financial backing that goes all the way to China, have crossed the Chattahoochee River. But they will find it a whole lot harder to work their devious plans with seven elected commissioners rather than three. Nevertheless, liberal environmentalists are still going to argue that a three-year rate freeze is a bad thing and that giving the people more control at the ballot box is somehow wrong.

After unanimous passage in the Senate, the House will begin work on the legislation this week. A unified show of strength against these out-of-state pirates will help serve notice that Alabama cannot be hijacked by paid social media trolls and intentional deception.

With only a few days left in the legislative session, let’s hope our House of Representatives will finish the job and send these hijackers packing back to California.

See you next week.

*Steve Flowers is Alabama’s leading political columnist. His weekly column appears in over 60 Alabama newspapers. He served 16 years in the state legislature. Steve may be reached at [steve@steveflowers.us](mailto:steve@steveflowers.us).*



## Centreville Press

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- Savanna Logan.....Reporter
- Candace Johnson .....Reporter

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|--|---|--|

## The Heart of the Hymn

BY SAVANNAH LOGAN

### "Come Thou Fount"

Few hymns capture the beauty of God's grace quite like Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing, a beloved song that continues to inspire believers generations after it was written. The story behind the hymn is just as powerful as the message it proclaims.

Its author, Robert Robinson, was not always known for faith or devotion. As a young boy, Robinson was described as difficult and headstrong. After his father passed away, life became even more challenging for his mother. Hoping to provide structure and responsibility, she sent fourteen-year-old Robert to London in 1749 to begin an apprenticeship.

Unfortunately, the move did not immediately change his behavior. Robinson quickly fell into trouble again and even became a leader among a group of rebellious friends. At seventeen, he and his companions decided to attend a revival meeting – not out of spiritual curiosity, but to mock those attending.

That evening, however, something unexpected happened. The sermon was delivered by the well-known preacher George Whitefield, and Robinson found himself deeply moved

by the message. The words stirred something in his heart and forced him to reconsider the direction of his life.

Nearly three years later, at the age of twenty, Robinson committed his life to Christ and experienced what he described as full forgiveness through the saving grace of Jesus. Soon after, he joined the Methodist movement and felt called to preach. His passion and dedication eventually led to an appointment by John Wesley to serve at a Calvinist Methodist chapel in Norfolk.

In 1758, on the third anniversary of his conversion and in preparation for a Pentecost sermon, Robinson wrote the words to "Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing." What began as the testimony of a once-rebellious young man has since become one of the most cherished hymns of the Christian faith.

Robinson's story is a powerful reminder that God often works in ways we do not expect. The same grace that transformed a rebellious teenager into a faithful servant is still at work today, calling people from every walk of life into a story far greater than they could imagine.



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# OTHER NEWS

## BCCA February 2026 Employees of the Month



**Automotive Technology AM** – Logan Rankin is the employee of the month for Automotive Technology. This is Logan's second semester in the program. He enjoys how realistic the hands-on experience is in the shop. Logan says the program has helped him become more productive and has given him the skills to tune, modify, and repair his own car using the experience he has gained.



**Business Information Technology AM** – Lilly Gamble is the employee of the month for Business Information Technology. This is Lilly's first semester in the program. She enjoys the warm and welcoming environment at Bibb County Career Academy. Lilly says the program has helped her realize her interest in pursuing a future career in graphic design.



**Modern Manufacturing AM** – Brady Dennis is the employee of the month for Modern Manufacturing. This is Brady's third semester in the program. He enjoys using his hands and learning through hands-on projects. Brady says the program has helped him earn an OSHA 10 certification, which will be useful for future jobs.



**Cosmetology AM** – Brianna Mills is the employee of the month for Cosmetology. This is Brianna's third semester in the program. She enjoys the opportunities the program provides. Brianna says the program has taught her in depth knowledge and helped her gain valuable skills for the future.



**Welding AM** – Aiden Miller is the employee of the month for Welding. This is Aiden's first semester in the program. He enjoys learning how to weld and gain hands-on experience. Aiden says the program is teaching him how to prepare for a future job in the welding field.



**Electrical AM** – Eric Reaves is the employee of the month for Electrical. This is Eric's fourth semester in the program. He enjoys the hands-on work and learning how electricity works. Eric says BCCA has helped him decide what he wants to do after graduation, and he plans to attend college or university to continue studying the program he is taking at BCCA.



**Automotive Technology PM** – Jason Bates is the employee of the month for Automotive Technology. This is Jason's second semester in the program. He enjoys the hands-on experience and the opportunity to work with tools. Jason says the program has given him the chance to earn his ASE certifications. After graduation, he plans to go straight to work doing what he has learned at BCCA.



**Business Information Technology PM** – Ashley Portillo is the employee of the month for Business Information Technology. This is Ashley's first semester in the program. She enjoys the learning opportunities and the connections she can use in the real world after graduation. Ashley says Bibb County Career Academy has helped her explore different career paths and learn what is expected in the workplace. The program has also helped her gain experience and certifications that will help her stand out in the future.



**Modern Manufacturing PM** – Anderson Gonzalez Tax is the employee of the month for Modern Manufacturing. This is Anderson's fourth semester in the program. He enjoys learning new things and gaining hands-on experience in the shop. Anderson says the program has helped him develop new skills that will benefit him in the future.



**Cosmetology PM** – Lydia Syx is the employee of the month for Cosmetology. This is Lydia's second semester in the program. She enjoys learning new skills in class and gaining hands-on experience. Lydia says the program has allowed her to learn many things that she would not typically get to do in a regular classroom.



**Welding PM** – Dylan Clark is the employee of the month for Welding. This is Dylan's third semester in the program. He enjoys the fun, hands-on experience in the shop. Dylan says the program has given him the opportunity to learn and practice welding. After graduation, he plans to go straight to work doing what he has learned at BCCA.



**Electrical PM** – Pedro Lopez is the employee of the month for Electrical. This is Pedro's second semester in the program. He enjoys learning new skills in class. Pedro says the program has been teaching him the basics of electrical work and helping him gain valuable hands-on experience.

10AM-12PM      12PM-2PM

**Brierfield Ironworks  
Bluegrass Festival  
& Flea Market**

SATURDAY, MARCH 14<sup>TH</sup> // 10AM-2PM



# The BACK PAGE

## Say Hello to the Class of 2039: Bibb County Schools Kindergarten Registration for Fall 2026

BY SAVANNAH LOGAN  
REPORTER

First of all, if you had to sit down after reading “Class of 2039”, you should know that you are not alone. Where does the time go?

Bibb County Schools has announced that Kindergarten Registration for the Fall 2026 school year will take place in April across the district’s elementary schools. This important step marks the beginning of a child’s educational journey and helps establish the strong foundation that supports learning and growth for years to come.

A solid early education plays a critical role in a child’s development. Kindergarten is often where young students first discover a love for learning, begin building social and communication skills, and develop the academic habits that will guide them throughout their school years. By focusing on early literacy, foundational math concepts, and posi-

tive classroom experiences, educators help students gain the confidence and curiosity that lead to long-term success.

Registration will take place Friday, April 3, from 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at each of the district’s elementary schools, including Brent Elementary School, Randolph Elementary School, West Blocton Elementary School, and Woodstock Elementary School.

Parents or guardians are asked to bring their child to the school he or she will attend and to arrive no later than the designated registration time. Children who turn five years old on or before September 1, 2026 are eligible to enroll in kindergarten for the upcoming school year.

Families should bring several documents to complete registration, including a certified copy of the child’s birth certificate or other documentation verifying the child’s date of birth, a certificate of immuni-

zation, and the child’s Social Security card if available. Disclosure of the Social Security number is voluntary; if families choose not to provide it, a temporary identification number will be generated for school records.

If applicable, families should also bring guardianship papers. In addition, parents must provide two proofs of residence, such as property tax records, mortgage documents, property deeds, a lease or rental agreement, a 911 address, a utility bill or receipt, a driver’s license, voter precinct identification, or automobile registration showing the parent’s name and address. Post office boxes cannot be used as proof of residence.

School officials encourage families to take part in registration and begin preparing students for an exciting first step into their educational future. Here’s to the Class of 2039!



### BMC HEALTH AND WELLNESS CORNER

## Swimming Lessons

Spring Break Group Lessons: March 23rd-25th

**Level One** (ages 3-7) is perfect for beginners who are new to the water. We focus on water comfort, floating, moving forward through the water, and learning basic breath control.

**Level Two** (ages 4-8) is great for swimmers who already feel comfortable in the water and can hold their breath without pinching their nose. We build on leg and arm coordination and start moving with minimal support.

**Private Lessons: March & April Dates Available**

Private lessons are a flexible and personalized option designed to match your swimmer’s specific needs and goals. Whether your child is working on overcoming water fears, wants extra help with technique, or you’re an adult looking to learn or improve, private sessions provide one-on-one attention and customized support.



### GET SCREENED!

BMC’s Specialty Clinic is proud to partner with the UAB Division of Gastrointestinal Surgery to provide colorectal and gastrointestinal surgical care close to home. Colorectal cancer screenings are an important step in protecting your health and catching concerns early.

Ask your provider about getting screened at BMC!



## Pickleball Camp

March 14th & March 28th 10:00am-12:00pm

New to pickleball or want to brush up on the basics? BMC Wellness Center’s Pickleball Camp is designed to teach you the rules, skills, and strategies of the game!

All skill levels welcome. No experience required!

## CARING FOR THE WHOLE YOU

March is a time to focus on several important aspects of overall health, including National Nutrition Month, Sleep Awareness Month, and Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month. These observances highlight the many ways daily habits influence our well-being. Proper nutrition fuels the body for energy and focus, quality sleep supports recovery and mental health, and digestive health and cancer screenings play a critical role in prevention and early detection. By understanding how these areas work together, individuals can take meaningful steps toward improving their long-term health and quality of life.

## 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.

**“What Can I Eat?”**  
**Monday, March 30th | 5:30pm**  
**BMC Wellness Center**