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Bibb Medical Center Announces New Leadership to Guide Future Growth

BY SAVANNAH LOGAN
REPORTER

Bibb Medical Center is entering a new chapter with the announcement of key leadership appointments aimed at strengthening care, expanding services, and continuing its longstanding commitment to the community.

Effective April 1, 2026, Heather Desmond has been named Chief Executive Officer. A Bibb County native, Desmond brings both professional expertise and a deep personal connection to the community she now serves in this new capacity. With a Master of Health Care Administration and a Bachelor of Science in Commerce and Business Administration, she steps into the role with more than two decades of experience at Bibb Medical Center.

Desmond began her career with the organization in 2005 and most recently served as Chief Financial Officer. Throughout her tenure, she has played a vital role in strengthening financial stability, supporting long-term planning, and helping position the hospital for sustainable growth. Her leadership is rooted in collaboration, innovation, and a strong focus on patient-centered care.

"It is an honor to step into this role and work alongside such a dedicated group of professionals," Desmond shared in a BMC release. "I look forward to building on the hospital's strong foundation, expanding services, and continuing to meet the healthcare needs of Bibb County and the surrounding areas."

Supporting this transition, Camille Gibson will serve as Hospital Administrator, overseeing daily operations and working closely with both clinical and administrative teams. With a background as a registered nurse and extensive leadership experience, Gibson brings a balanced perspective that prioritizes both patient care and operational efficiency.

Additionally, Kandace Shoults will serve as Nursing Home Administrator. A Licensed Nursing Home Administrator and Certified Registered Nurse Practitioner, Shoults combines clinical expertise with strong leadership, ensuring residents receive compassionate, high-quality care in a supportive environment.

With this leadership team in place, Bibb Medical Center continues to build on its legacy as a trusted healthcare provider, remaining focused on improving the health and well-being of the community it proudly serves.

The Calm Behind the Call: Honoring Bibb County's 911 Dispatchers

BY SAVANNAH LOGAN
REPORTER

In moments of crisis, when fear is high and seconds matter, there is a steady voice on the other end of the line guiding the way. This week, as National Public Safety Telecommunications Week is recognized across the country, the Bibb County Commission is taking time to honor the dedicated team at Bibb County E-911 for the vital role they play in keeping the community safe.

While first responders are often the ones seen arriving on scene, it is the dispatchers who set everything in motion. They are the first point of contact in emergencies — answering calls, gathering critical information, and ensuring that fire, law enforcement, and rescue teams are sent exactly where they are needed, without delay. Their work requires calm under pressure, quick thinking, and an ability to provide reassurance in some of the most stressful moments a person may experience.

Every call is different. Some are urgent, some are chaotic, and many come from individuals who don't know what to do next. Dispatchers step into that uncertainty with professionalism and care, offering clear instructions, steady guidance, and a sense of control when it's needed most. They are, in many ways, the unseen lifeline connecting the community to help.

The Bibb County Commission expressed its appreciation for the E-911 staff, recognizing the countless hours, the emotional weight, and the unwavering dedication that comes with the job. Their service often goes unnoticed, but its impact is felt every single day.

As the community pauses to reflect this week, it serves as a reminder that behind every emergency response is a voice that answered the call first — and that voice matters more than most people ever realize.

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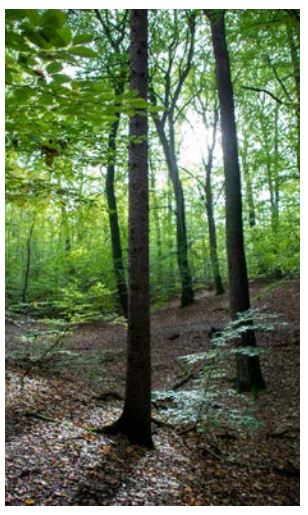
NEWS

Alabama's National Forests Mark Start of 2026 Recreation Season



(Montgomery, Ala., April 8, 2026) — The recreation season for 2026 has officially begun on Alabama's four national forests.

The Forest Service invites outdoor enthusiasts to welcome spring with a visit to the Bankhead, Conecuh, Talladega or Tuskegee national forests. Whether you enjoy hiking, fishing, biking, horseback riding, swimming, picnicking, target shooting or camping, these forests offer a wide range of options. Contact a Forest Service office to help plan your trip—and remember to recreate responsibly.

According to Alabama's Forest Supervisor Linwood Butler, this is a wonderful time of the year to experience what national forests have to offer through recreation activities.

"Recreation provides the chance to make connections, build relationships, and foster long-term care and stewardship of our natural resources," said Butler. "The Forest Service continues to invest in initiatives to ensure Alabama's recreation sites are accessible, safe and enjoyable."

The Forest Service manages 28 campgrounds and more than 430 miles of trails across Alabama's national forests. There is plenty to explore, and spring is a great time to do so.

"It is a great opportunity for families to get out and enjoy nature," said Cameron Seals, recreation program manager for the National Forests in Alabama. "Always plan ahead, know the rules and think about safety to get the best recreation experience."

For more information about recreation opportunities, maps, discount passes, directions and fees, visit our National Forests in Alabama website and follow our Facebook page.

32 Alabama Schools to Be Recognized at CLAS Awards Ceremony

BY CANDACE JOHNSON
REPORTER

The Council for Leaders in Alabama Schools will recognize dozens of schools for excellence in education during its upcoming awards ceremony on April 27 from 11:30 a.m. to 1:40 p.m. It will take place at the Montgomery Marriott Prattville Hotel & Conference Center at Capitol Hill. The ceremony will honor 32 schools across the state as CLAS Schools of Distinction. From that group, eight schools will be selected as CLAS Banner Schools.

The CLAS Banner School Award recognizes schools with outstanding programs that serve as models for others across Alabama.

While no schools from Bibb County were selected this year, several nearby schools in Tuscaloosa were recognized as CLAS Schools of Distinction, highlighting strong academic programs in the region. Each recognized school will receive a banner to display, signifying its achievement and commitment to educational excellence.

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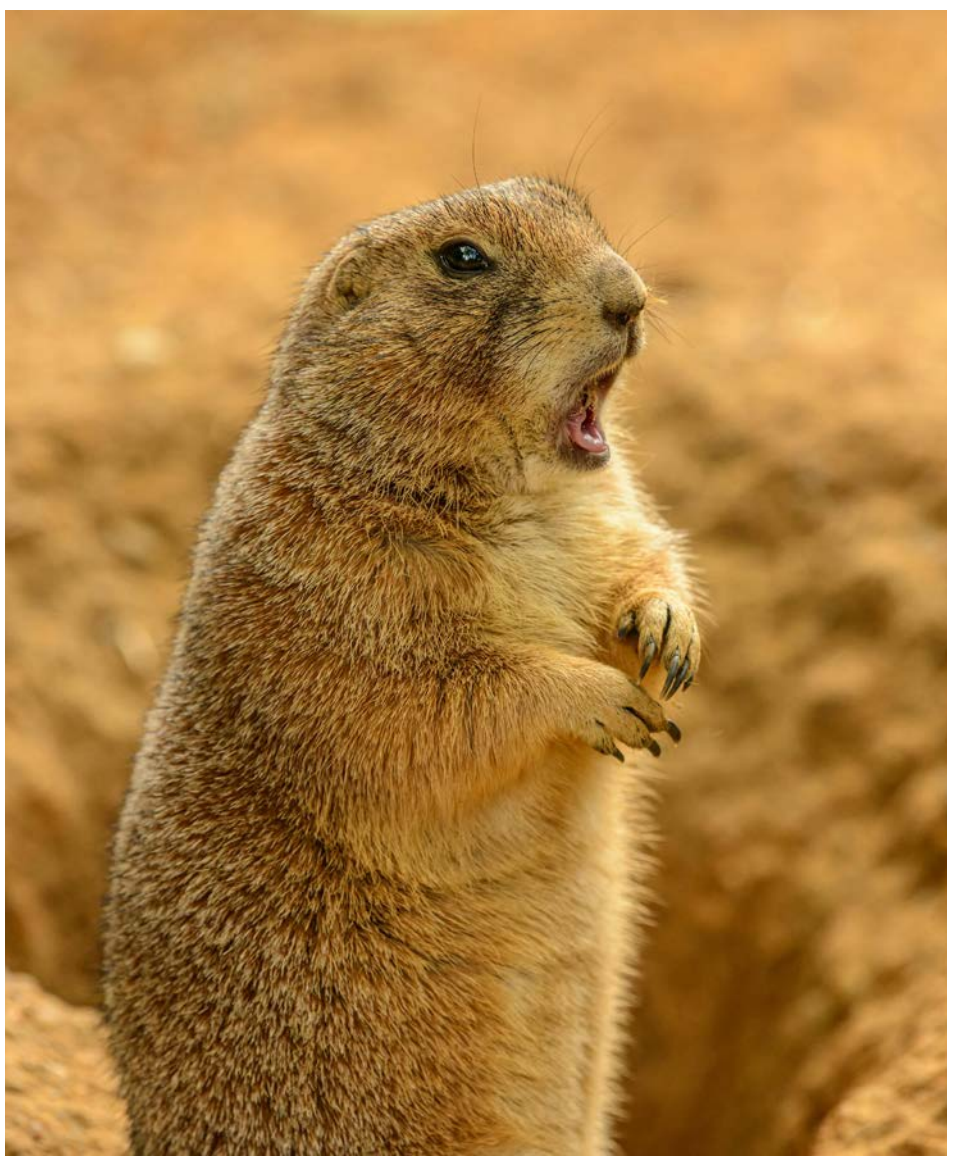

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LOCAL & GOVERNMENT

Centreville News

By Brenda Hubbard

The BCHS Class of 1961 had their annual monthly breakfast on Friday, April 3, 2026; enjoyed by all.

BCHS Class of 1969 had a really great time at their get together on Friday, April 3, 2026 at El Comal in Centreville. They were joined by Class of 1967, Patricia Bamberg Hubbard and 1968 member Jerry Pow. It was special having them with us. Thanks to Allen Wyatt for starting this one. All reporting having a great time, looking forward to the net get together.

Among those having birthdays in April, we send out birthday wishes to them; Kimberly Lynn Johnson, Chris Snyder, April Weaver, Tanya McLemore, Deloris Kornegay, Tony Stewart, Larry Speights, Tammy Hallman and Frank Barton.

A speedy recovery goes out to Jim Perry who recently underwent knee surgery.

Joining Larry and Vicki Speights on Saturday before Easter, April 4, 2026 were their children and grandchildren, Jim and Laura Blumenfeld and Lilly, Stacie Brewer, Phoenix and Johah. All enjoyed the food, the games including a sack race that was a lot of fun and the Easter Egg Hunt. Leaving for home after the day looking forward to the next get together.

Charlotte Lovelady West joined Perry party of five for the Easter weekend. Paul cooked dinner on Saturday night and breakfast Easter morning.

Call your news in at (205) 316-1181. Take care and God bless.

West Eoline News

By Jane Hannah

EASTER - Thanks to Lisa, Del, Trevor & Trey Deason for hosting our family gathering. Wayne Deason's - Garner - Fondren - Caddis Crew numbered 27, Geneva Mullins bunch was 9, Jo Kitchen & company totalled 3, Jane Hannah had 5, Barbara's bunch was 6 and C H had 4; total 54. He is Risen!

Stacey Thompson cooked a delicious Easter lunch for her family. Enjoying the food and fellowship were Fred Boothe, Dezi Franklin, Destiny Mikayla, Wes Register, & Jim Kirkendall. The completed screened in porch was an enjoyable place to relax.

Thanks Lou & Tracey Holladay for housing my plants all winter and returning them.

Ruth Deason, Jane Hannah, Jo Kitchen, Stacey & Chad Thompson, & Jim Kirkendall always enjoy the good food, efficient and friendly service by Danny Samoya at Juan's.

Stacey Thompson started celebrating her birthday April 11 cruising the Warrior River "Pontoon" style with her "squeezy", Chad. They were packing the boat, getting ready to roll before four a. m.. Fred Boothe & Jim Kirkendall enjoyed the river with them. Jackie McMurry and Samira Massey were also enjoying the river in Jackie's boat.

Jane Hannah, Jim Kirkendall, Jackie McMurry, Samira & Ken Massey enjoyed Pizza, and games Friday evening. Betty & Mike Beam joined in later. It was a fun evening.

I now have a great great grandchild. Emerson was born March 19 to Shelby Robinson. They are currently living with me, along with Ronnie, LaShelle & Kaydi. The house is wild and full of love and people. Gotta make a 5th generation photo.

I drove to Albertville April 11th to celebrate granddaughters Harper and Haven's birthdays. The children enjoyed yard games and refreshments while us older ones looked on. It was a blessing to see grandsons Jeremy & Jonathan, their wives Blakely & Bianca and great grands Maddox, Haven & Harper. It was also a treat to see Connie & Joe Hunt, Irene & David Kilpatrick.

BIRTHDAYS: Belated BEST WISHES TO: Jeff Rylee, Condy Fowler, Meagan Vessels,Trey Deason, Tammy Webb, Jayme Dickerson, Barbara Suttle, Coleman Cottingham, Stacey Thompson, Judy Ohme, Barbara Cottingham, Carol Shoults. HAPPY BIRTHDAY this week to Trevor Deason, Tracie Dickerson, Natalie Dockler, Deborea Feaster, Max Latham, Jeff James, Doug Scott, Sandy Deadon, William Deason, next week to Joe Barton, Tish Hathoway, Blakely Hannah, Vance Ohne, Harper Rae Hannah.

CONGRATULATIONS 2026 Graduate Tyler Carter, and my great granddaughter Alyssa Roper from Hayden.

ANNIVERSARY BEST WISHES Jeremy & Kayla Watkins 4-20, Paula & Courtney Ervin 5-2.

Call or text your news to 478-396-2513. God Bless you.

Spring Cleaning Season Arrives in West Blocton (Yes, It's That Time Again)

BY SAVANNA LOGAN
REPORTER

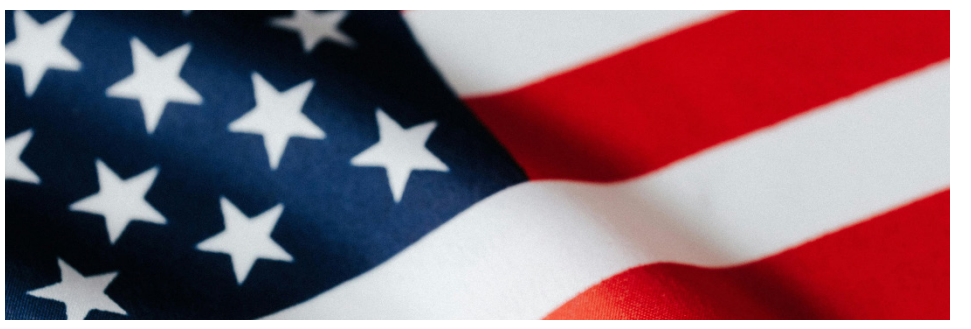
Like clockwork, spring has rolled back around – and with it comes that annual realization that maybe, just maybe, it's time to deal with the things we've been politely ignoring all winter. Or since last year. (I'm not here to judge.)

The Town of West Blocton is encouraging residents to take part in a little spring cleaning, and to make things easier, a temporary community dumpster has been placed at the corner of Magnolia Street and Camelia Lane, next to Cahaba Medical Center. In other words, there is now a perfectly acceptable place for that "I'll get to it eventually" pile.

Along with the seasonal motivation comes a friendly reminder that town ordinances are still very much a thing. Under Ordinance No. 2021-08-01, properties should be kept clear of litter, trash, and debris. That means no dumping wherever feels convenient, no leaving old furniture or appliances outside to "become one with nature," and no collecting inoperable vehicles like they're part of a long-term project that never quite begins.

There's also the matter of weeds and grass. Ordinance No. 2021-1002 requires property owners to keep growth under control, generally under 12 inches, because while wild and free might sound poetic, it tends to invite pests, create fire hazards, and make things look a little more abandoned than intended.

At its core, spring cleaning isn't just about appearances. It's about keeping the community safe, functional, and somewhere people are proud to call home. So take a little time, tidy things up, and if you've got extra to toss, the dumpster is ready and waiting.



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Community Trust & Transparency
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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
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EDITORIALS & OPINIONS

New First District Republican Congressional District Open This Year

Inside the Statehouse
By Steve Flowers

April 15, 2026:

This will be a great political year, with some fantastic, interesting, and close contests. However, there will be only one hotly contested open congressional seat this year in the Heart of Dixie. The other six incumbent congressmen will coast to reelection, either unopposed or with token opposition.

This is not unusual in today's national politics. It is next to impossible to defeat an incumbent congressperson. The winning percentage for sitting congressmen is 95%. The Russian Communist Politburo does not have that high a reelectability rate.

The new First District Congressional Seat is open and provides for a competitive battle. This recently configured district is a Republican seat. It was drawn by intrusive Federal Judges, who declared that one man, one vote, and all voters are created equally does not apply to Republican voters. They ruled that a black Democratic vote is more important than a white Republican vote. The Federal Judges corralled all the white Republicans into a district, which is irrational for having a concerted voice in Washington. They usurped the majority Republican Legislature's power, and placed the Republicans in Mobile and Baldwin Counties in with the Wiregrass Republicans. These two regions have nothing in common, especially when it comes to Federal needs. However, this is what these folks have for the time being.

The seat is open because the winner of the seat two years ago, Barry Moore, is running for our open U.S. Senate seat. Moore defeated Jerry Carl two years ago in a close race. Jerry Carl, a two-term former congressman from the Mobile/Baldwin area is pitted against State Representative Rhett Marques. It will be a battle between Mobile/Baldwin Republicans and the Wiregrass Republicans. Moore, who is from the Wiregrass, energized Wiregrass voters to turn out to vote for him better than Carl did with his Baldwin home region voters. It will be interesting to see if Marques can replicate Moore's success in the Wiregrass. Fort Rucker and agriculture are vitally important to this region.

Shomari Figures won the newly, federally drawn majority/minority Democratic Second District two years ago. He will be easily reelected to a second two-year term this year. He has taken to Congress like a duck to water and done an excellent job. When you look at his resume and life experience, you could expect this success. Shomari was born to iconic Democratic legislative legends. His father, Michael Figures, was President Pro Tem of the Alabama State Senate. His mother, Vivian Figures, took the mantle and has been one of the longest serving and most effective State Senators in Mobile history. He is striving to work across the aisle. He garnered a seat on the Republican laden Agriculture Committee.

Our senior Democratic Congresswoman Terri Sewell has become a very powerful member of Congress. She has been in her Democratic seat for 15 years. She is in the leadership in the U.S. House Democratic Caucus. If the Democrats take control of the U.S. House in this Fall's national elections, she will be in the catbird seat when it comes to Alabama's Congressional power in Washington.

It is not a possibility but a probability that the Democrats will take the majority control of the U.S. House in November. Historically, when the sitting President is of one party, and his party has prevailed with a slim majority in his Presidential election, the minority party wins significant seats and flips to the majority in the House. This elective precedent has never failed to occur. In addition, the current Republican majority is razor thin. It is expected that the majority party in the House will be Democratic. Terri Sewell will be powerful. If the Republicans buck the trend, we have a group of very powerful congressmen who will continue in the House leadership.

Representative Robert Aderholt has represented the Fourth District with honor and distinction for 30 years. He is on course to be Alabama's longest serving and most powerful Congressman in history. He currently chairs the House Appropriations Committee.

Representative Mike Rogers has represented the Third District for 23 years. He chairs the very important Armed Services Committee.

Representative Gary Palmer has done a stellar job of representing the very conservative Sixth District for 11 years.

Representative Dale Strong has only been in his Huntsville based Fifth District for three years but is doing an outstanding job and is well liked by the House GOP leadership, as well as the White House.

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.

Centreville Press

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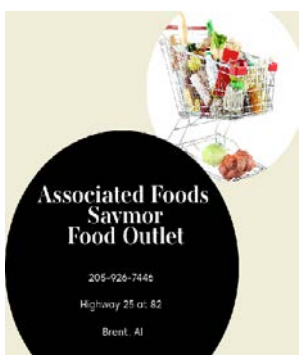

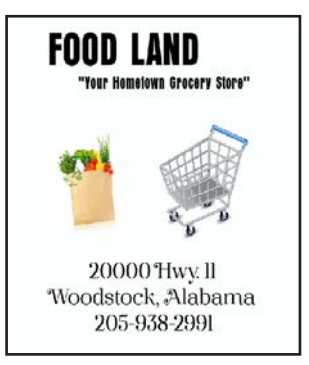

BY SAVANNAH LOGAN

"To God Be The Glory"

Fanny Crosby, one of the most beloved hymn writers of the 19th century, penned "To God Be the Glory" in the early 1870s, even though its journey to widespread recognition was anything but immediate. Crosby, who lost her sight as a child, lived a life marked by deep faith and devotion. Her hymns consistently reflected gratitude for God's provision and a belief that praise is the natural response to His goodness. Even without physical sight, she gave the church enduring words of worship, including the powerful refrain, "Give Him the glory, great things He hath done."

After writing the text, Crosby's frequent collaborator William Howard Doane composed the music and published it in his collection Songs of Devotion. The hymn later found its way into Sacred Songs and Solos, compiled by Ira Sankey, a close associate of Dwight L. Moody. It was during revival campaigns in London that the hymn first gained significant popularity, quickly becoming a favorite among British audiences.

Despite its success overseas, the hymn remained relatively unknown in the United States for decades. That changed in 1952, when Cliff Barrows introduced it during revival meetings led by Billy Graham in Great Britain. The enthusiastic response from congregations led Graham to include it regularly, and when the revivals returned to America, the hymn was embraced with the same passion.

From that point forward, "To God Be the Glory" became a staple of revival worship, reminding generations that no matter the setting or season, the message remains the same: all glory belongs to Him.

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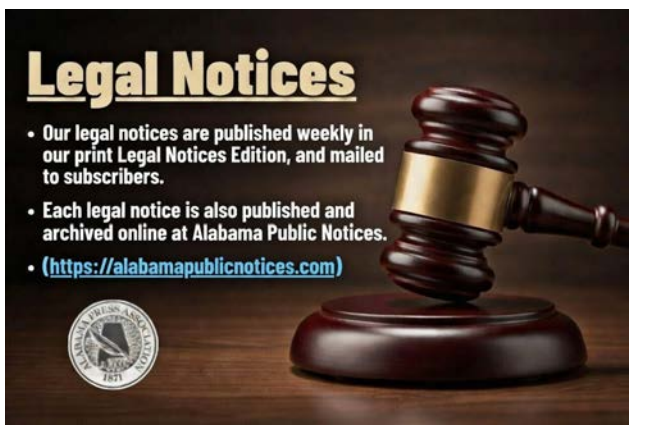

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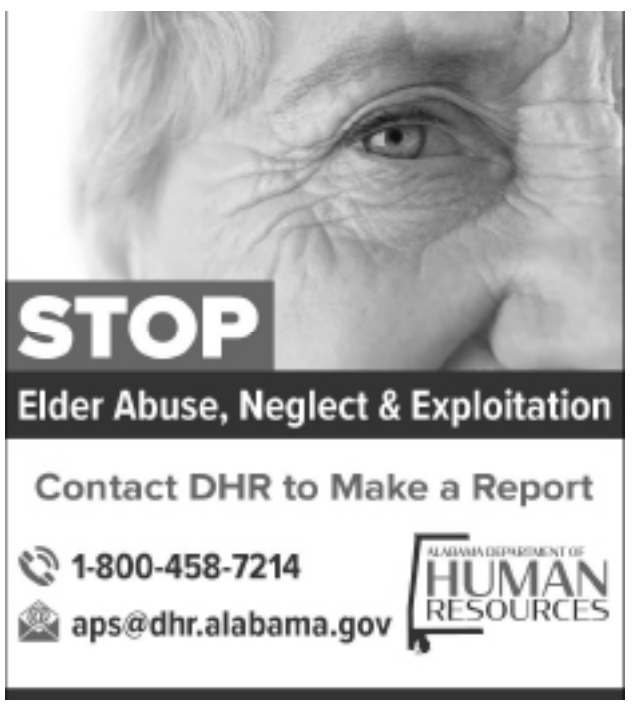

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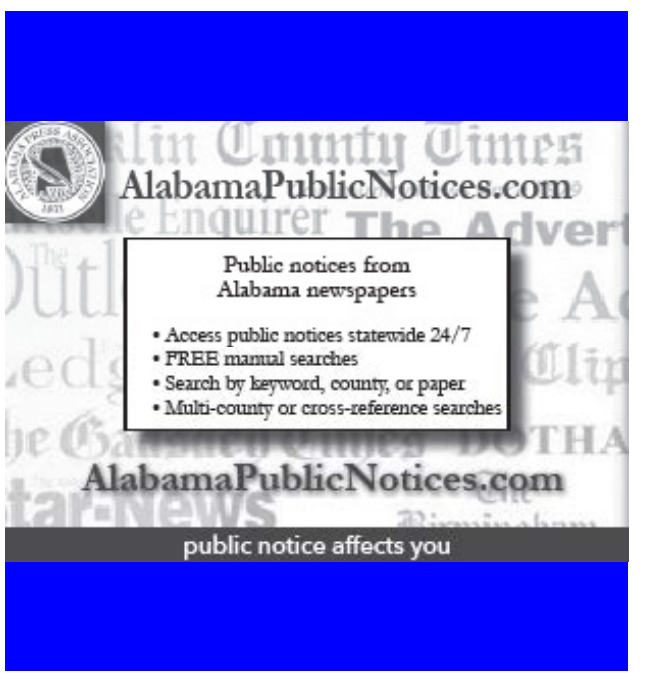

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OTHER NEWS

Improvements Celebrated at Little River State Forest & Claude D. Kelley Recreational Area

Local leaders and state government representatives were in attendance on Tuesday, April 14, for a ribbon cutting to celebrate the new features at Little River State Forest located near Atmore in south Alabama. The event was hosted by the Alabama Forestry Commission.

State Senator Greg Albritton commented, "Little River is all about children. That's why this place exists. Just about everyone here today has wonderful memories of this park from when they were children. Now that it is resurrected, we want to be sure it is here to pass down to future generations."

"Our agency is truly excited about all the recent enhancements at Little River," said State Forester Rick Oates. "After being closed for more than five years, we are proud to see that this beautiful, natural state resource will once again be available for the benefit of the community." In addition to the Governor and Legislature who made the improvements possible, he thanked the sponsors of Tuesday's event which included Alabama Ag Credit, Alabama Farmers Federation, Alabama Forestry Association, Alabama Forestry Foundation, Alabama Power Company, Alabama TREASURE Forest Association, Alabama Trails Foundation, Conecuh Sausage, and Gulf Coast RC&D.

Oates explained how the improvements were made possible. "In May 2022, Alabama voters passed a constitutional amendment authorizing the issuance of $85 million in bonds to support improvements at State Parks and Historical Commission sites. The amendment also authorized that any premium generated from the sale of the bonds would be provided to the Alabama Forestry Commission to make improvements on State Forests. The bonds were sold in November 2022, generating over $6.7 million for the AFC, which we immediately targeted for improvements at Little River, Weogufka, and Geneva State Forests.

"A top priority of the bond fund program was to rebuild and reopen the recreation area at Little River State Forest, which was closed to the public in 2020 after a destructive weather event," Oates continued. "Improvements include a new entrance bridge across Little River, installation of 15 full-hookup RV campsites, eight primitive campsites, public water lines, a new septic system, a new fishing pier, and renovations to the existing bathhouse, picnic pavilion, and swimming pier. The recreation area is set to reopen to the public for day and overnight use by early summer 2026!"

Consisting of approximately 2,100 acres of longleaf pine forest and a 25-acre lake, the State Forest also includes Claude D. Kelley Recreational Area which offers a beautiful setting for outdoor adventures including hiking, swimming, fishing, and horseback riding. Along the trails there are plenty of opportunities to view wildlife, and bird watchers find it an exceptional site to observe species of all types.

The property was deeded to the Alabama Forestry Commission in the early 1930s during the Great Depression. Built as a Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) development project, the lake with its dam, levee, and spillway from local stone are a legacy to the workers from Company 1432.

Easily accessible from I-65, the park is located approximately 10 miles north from exit 57, at 580 H. Kyle Road in Atmore. Lat/Long co-ordinates are 31.259798, -87.493780. Information about reservations will be released at a later date.

The BACK PAGE

Dust Off Your Glove: West Blocton's Old Timers Tradition Returns

BY SAVANNAH LOGAN
REPORTER

Some traditions don't need reinventing – they just need a good dusting off and a reminder that they're still worth showing up for. In West Blocton, one of those traditions is stepping back onto the field for a little friendly competition, a lot of laughs, and a plate of fried fish done right.

The West Blocton Old Timers Game and Fish Fry is set to return on May 9, bringing together familiar faces and community spirit in a way only small towns seem to manage so well. The evening will kick off with the "Has Beens" game at 5:00 p.m., followed by the Old Timers taking the field at 6:00 p.m. For those still feeling competitive, or just wanting one more swing, the Home Run Derby will round things out at 7:00 p.m.

Afraid of not playing at the level you used to? Well, no one is expecting the MLB out there. This is all about showing up, enjoying the moment, and maybe surprising yourself with a play or two to show off for the kids and grandkids. So lace up those extra supportive tennis shoes, bring your sense of humor, and go ahead and get some WD-40 for those knees, folks.

Before the games begin, the American Legion will present the colors, setting the tone for an evening rooted in both tradition and community pride.

And then there's the fish fry, which is arguably just as important as the games themselves. Plates will be ready starting at 4:00 p.m., complete with fries and hush puppies, all for $10.

It's simple, it's familiar, and that's exactly why it matters. So come on out and have a laugh while you visit and relive some of the glory days, because this event is sure to be one that's knocked right out of the park.

BMC HEALTH AND WELLNESS CORNER

BMC WELLNESS

Stay connected with everything happening at BMC Wellness Center by opting in to receive updates through text or email, no membership required. Get notifications about registrations, events, facility updates, and more, and choose exactly what you want to receive so you only see what matters to you. Not sure if you are opted in? Log into your member portal or stop by the Front Desk and we will be happy to help.

Diabetes Management Support Group
Next meeting: March 30th, 5:30pm

Living with diabetes can feel overwhelming, but you don't have to do it alone. Join our Diabetes Management Support Group for encouragement, community, and tools to help you feel empowered!

Pinwheel Planting

Join us at BMC Wellness Center for our Pinwheel Planting on **April 6th at 12:00pm** in recognition of Child Abuse Prevention Month, held in partnership with the Central Alabama Child Advocacy Center. This meaningful event brings our community together to raise awareness about the importance of protecting children and strengthening families.

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At Bibb Medical Center, care goes beyond treatment, it's a commitment to our community. Dr. Manu Kaushik emphasizes listening first, building trust, and providing personalized care for every patient. By offering essential services like colorectal screenings close to home, BMC helps remove barriers to care and improve outcomes. Through collaboration, innovation, and a people-first approach, our team is dedicated to making a difference, one patient at a time.

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