

SEPTEMBER  
OCTOBER  
2019

# PG POWERGRAMS

## *Hooked on Ozark*

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**PAIR PERFECT  
MATCH FOR  
ENERGIZERS**

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**WESTERN APSO  
ASSISTS FAMILY**

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**Alabama  
Power**



Renew Our Rivers volunteers patrol the shoreline of the Coosa River next to Gaston Steam Plant during a cleanup. Photo by Jay Parker. See story on page 26.

SEPTEMBER -  
OCTOBER • 2019

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#### ON THE COVER

Hunter Hart, 9, enjoys fishing with his mom, Keisha, at Lisenby Lake in Ozark, baiting his hook with worms in hopes of landing a nice shellcracker. Photo by Phil Free. See story on page 27.



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# Going above and beyond for safety,

When exceptional circumstances arise, extraordinary people take action.

That was the case for four Alabama Power employees celebrated in July. They received the Presidential Award of Honor from CEO **Mark Crosswhite**, who praised the group for their selfless acts.

"It is our privilege to honor these men for their brave actions that exemplify the highest ideals of our company," Crosswhite said. "Among our values are Safety First and Total Commitment. We put the needs of those we serve at the center of all we do. These employees exemplify how we all have the power to put safety first."

## LINEMAN TO THE RESCUE

On a chilly winter morning, Centreville Distribution Specialist **Jeff Bradley** went above and beyond the call of duty. After he completed a trouble call in Moundville on Jan. 24, Bradley noticed an odd situation: an elderly woman sitting in a ditch.

"I kind of paused for a moment and the lady threw up her hand like she was waving at me," Bradley said. "She'd slid down the bank, about 5 or 6 feet."

He asked whether she was hurt. Bradley placed his arm under hers and pulled the woman up the embankment. He

asked if she was all right. She insisted she was fine. Bradley offered to carry her home, but she thought she could walk. With the first step, she grimaced in pain.

"I got her back to her house, got her back to the steps up to the door and I noticed a wheelchair ramp," Bradley recalled. "I said, 'Ma'am, let's go up the wheelchair ramp.'"

She declined, so he allowed her to walk up the steps.

"She was more concerned about me," he said. "She said, 'You need to get back to your job. You've got more things than me to be concerned about.'" But Bradley refused to leave the woman unattended.

"Ma'am, you're hurt," he told her. "Let me get you in the house. If all else fails, let's call your family."

Bradley opened the door and helped her inside. Seeing a coffee cup waiting, he offered to refill it.

"I finally got her seated and could tell she was in some more pain," Bradley said.

The woman insisted she was all right and refused to call her family or an ambulance.

Bradley said, "If I don't do anything else, I'm going to leave you my phone number. Throughout the day, you can call me if you need me."

He later learned the woman was taken by ambulance to a



Daniel



Nix

Portraits by Phil Free

# four receive the Presidential Award

hospital and was treated for a bruised hip. She called to tell Bradley how she was doing.

"The family called and thanked me for my kindness," Bradley said. "I look for these opportunities. That was a very rewarding day for me. It's very heart-touching still, to know that you're able and have opportunities to help someone else. I'm thankful for that."

## HYDRO LEADER PULLS MAN FROM LAKE

**Keith Daniel** seemingly has the perfect job, working and living on Weiss Lake. His position put him on the spot to save someone March 22. He was working in his yard in late afternoon.

"I was raking and saw a boat out on the water, with a guy fishing about 100 yards from shore," said the Weiss Hydro Plant superintendent. "I didn't think anything about it. He was just trolling by my house."

After several minutes, Daniel looked back at the lake. No one was in the boat. Daniel walked about two lots from his house, looking for the fisherman. He saw a man in the water, holding onto the trolling motor.

With winds blowing up to 20 mph, the lake was choppy.

"I hollered at him to ask if he needed help. He'd fallen out of the boat," Daniel said. He ran home and drug his small paddleboat down the embankment to the water.

"I'll be there as quick as I can," Daniel yelled to the man. With the wind blowing against him, Daniel paddled as fast as he could.

"I finally got to him, but he was giving out at the time," Daniel said. "He couldn't do anything but just hold on - he didn't want to let go of the trolling motor. I couldn't get him in my little paddleboat because he was in the water."

Knowing that he needed to get the fisherman out of the chilly water and onto the bank, Daniel instructed him to hold on. He paddled furiously while holding onto the other boat with one hand.

"It was tough with the way the wind was blowing, his boat was farther out on the lake," Daniel said. "I finally got him to the bank. He was so exhausted he just had to rest for a few minutes before he could even stand up."

When the man finally recovered, they made introductions and Daniel learned he was from out of state. Daniel offered to get some dry clothes, but the man put on a large coat he'd had in the boat.

"He said he was fine, he could make it to where his brother was waiting at a boat ramp 1 or 2 miles away. He thanked me and wanted to pay me for pulling him out of the water," Daniel said, with a chuckle. "He said, 'You probably saved my life.'"



Crosswhite with Madison



Madison



Bradley

## FROM QUIET SUNDAY TO RESCUE MISSION

**Bobby Madison** devotes his Sundays to church and family.

One day last winter, he made an exception. Madison and his wife were building a new home, and the contractor called early in the morning, wanting to install carpet. With the contractor needing materials at 10 a.m., Madison agreed to pick up the carpet.

"We live on a street with only one house above me, and it's kind of uphill," said Madison, Business Practices specialist - Birmingham Division. "As I was going in, I saw a neighbor's car go down the street and stop at the middle of the hill. An elderly lady who used to be my middle school principal lives there, and I thought she was just stopping because she forgot something."

Madison continued carrying the carpeting inside. About 30 minutes later, he saw the car was still there. As he approached, Madison yelled, "Hey, hey!" With no response, he looked down and saw a ravine. A woman lay there, under a heavy tree branch. Madison took off running for her.

"It was really cold and rainy, one of those days when it was in the low 30s," he said. "She was laying there for at least 30 to 40 minutes in the freezing cold. By the time I got to her, she was shaking and shivering."

"That was a spot where no one would have come other than me, and it just happened to be a Sunday morning that I was there," he said. "I'm never there at that time, so I think God kind of placed me there to make sure she was OK."

When Madison reached his neighbor, she was shaking, unable to move and couldn't feel anything. She had tried to move the branch from the road, and fell with the branch ending up on top of her.

"I braced myself and pulled her out," he said. "She was still shaking and shivering, so I called an ambulance. She had a broken hip and wouldn't have been able to move. She had hip surgery two weeks later."

Madison won a forever friend that day.

"She stops by two or three times a week and tells me I'm her guardian angel and I saved her life," he said.



**Bradley, Nix, Crosswhite, Daniel, Madison**

## FINDING DESTINY ON THE WAY TO WORK

For 28 years, **Anthony Nix** has voted in national elections in the afternoon following work. But on Nov. 6, 2018, he and his wife, Francine, voted around 7 a.m. to avoid a line of incoming thunderstorms. Nix's work route took him to State Highway 25 between Centreville and Montevallo.

While driving in Centreville, Nix noticed a truck following closely. He was concerned because the driver seemed impatient and ready to pass. Suddenly, in his peripheral vision, Nix saw a toddler running about 1 foot off the road.

"I slammed on my brakes to avoid hitting the child," he said. "Then the traffic stopped, and the truck went around and blocked the other direction of traffic."

Without room to park at the shoulder of the road, Nix quickly stopped his car. He ran to pick up the boy, who was standing between two driveways. There were houses nearby, but no one came to collect the toddler. Nix tried to get the youngster to talk, without success.

When asked where he lived, the toddler pointed at both houses. Nix called the police.

"They met us out there about two hours later," Nix said. "We stayed out there on the side of the highway with the child until the authorities arrived."

For those two hours, no one came looking for the child or called his name.

"I was kind of leery about going up to the house and saying, 'Hey, is this your child?' Nix said. "In this day and time that we live in, I was just grateful for the Lord having me in the right place at the right time."

A Department of Human Resources worker arrived to care for the child.

"For whatever reason, the Lord had me vote that morning," said Nix, Safety Specialist - Corporate Headquarters. "It meant more to me than just voting. It meant possibly helping save someone's life."

In the past 34 years, more than 190 employees have received the company's top safety award. Nominations are submitted by executive management and approved by the Central Safety Committee.

by Donna Cope





Wanda Bradley, Jeff Bradley, Stephanie Smelley and Andrew Bradley.



Courtney, Brayden, 6, Bryson, 2, and Bobby Madison.



Keith Daniel with Holly and Daniel Oswell.



Ashley Reeds, Sharon Reeds, Francine Nix, Anthony Nix Sr., Ebony Nix and Dr. Anthony Nix Jr.

Event photos by Nik Layman

# ROYS ADD 'JUST-RIGHT' TOUCHES TO SOUTHERN ENERGIZERS AUCTIONS

From the time they met at Holtville High School in Slapout, **Bobby and Lynelle Roy** have been a team.

For the past 60 years, the Roys have worked together in all they do, enjoying a happy family life and helping their community. Such is the case with the annual Southern Division Energizers auction, where the close-knit couple provide an array of food and home items.

"Bobby and Lynelle are over the top for volunteering, making stuff," said Southern Energizers President **Marvin Salter**.

Adding homespun goodness and creative flair, the Roys have contributed to the auction's success for more than eight

years.

"We made \$4,000 with our auction in June, and a lot of that has to do with Bobby and Lynelle and everything they bring," said Salter, a Southern Energizer for five years. "Our members are creative."

The couple likes to give handmade items. Bobby built five bluebird houses and eight carpenter-bee catchers. Knowing that auctiongoers seek homemade treats, the couple made 42 bags of chocolate-covered pecans and fried 105 bags of pork skins, in barbecue, salt and vinegar, and spicy varieties. Lynelle topped off their giving with 15 bags of trail mix.

## MAKING DELICIOUS TREATS IS LABOR OF LOVE

The couple does a little bartering to be able to provide the chocolate-covered pecans: "My sister has six or seven pecan trees at Holtville," Bobby said. "I give her stuff out of my garden each summer, and she lets me and Lynelle pick pecans."

The Roys take sacks of nuts to Verbena Pecan Co. to remove the shells. But there's still plenty of work – Bobby and Lynelle remove any remaining hulls and hard pieces. They roast the pecans in butter, then Bobby melts milk chocolate for the coating.



Lynelle and Bobby Roy cook pigskins.



PHOTOS BY PHIL FREE

The Roys provide homemade treats for Southern fundraisers.



Wheelbarrows are popular with Auburn fans.

“It takes 6 to 8 hours of roasting and making to do this,” he said. “We make pecans in ¾-pound bags. We’ll fry up a bunch of pork skins every year, and they sell good.

“This is fun for us. We love to

make stuff,” said Bobby, who has built and donated planters, benches and wheelbarrows decorated for Alabama and Auburn fans.

“My wife found a little milk stool with a burlap seat that someone had set out on the side of the road. We wove a leather covering with 2-inch strips and put the new seat on it,” he said. “I ain’t bragging: It was gorgeous.”

The “fancified” footrest brought \$90.

Energizers Coordinator **Don Franklin** said the couple stay

busy and are well known for giving to the Southern Energizers auctions that support local charities.

“They don’t let anything slow them down,” said Franklin, who has known Bobby for years.

“We feel the need to work hard and give money to these charities because it’s going to help someone,” Lynelle said. “We really love Project Lifesavers, and the Energizers push that a lot. We’ve got to keep it going. It’s in Bobby’s heart to give – he’s a very giving person.”



Bobby Roy builds birdhouses in his garage.

## BEST FRIENDS IN LIFE AND MARRIAGE

The Roys have been a team since high school. For then-16-year-old Bobby, it was love at first sight. He was drinking from the school water fountain when he spied Lynelle.

“The first time I saw her, my heart flipped upside down,” Bobby said about his wife. “We were in typing class together,

and that’s when I met her. I said, “That girl likes this old country boy.”

After attending the Alabama State Fair, they were always together. The Roys married on Christmas Eve 60 years ago. Lynelle is involved in whatever Bobby does, and that includes serving the community.

“I enjoy it – whatever he’s into, I’m into,” she said. “If he’s involved in Energizers, I’m right

there with him. I’ve got lots of friends in the Energizers.

“We’re together constantly, and we enjoy each other’s company,” she said. “I can’t imagine life without him. He told me once, ‘I want you to be my shadow.’” Her husband wouldn’t have it any other way.

“I love her so much,” Bobby said. “She is my bestest friend.”

## STAY STRONG AND PERSEVERE

Bobby is known for being a go-getter, and has a tenacious spirit. That’s how he won a job at Alabama Power more than 50 years ago.

In 1963, Bobby was about 30 years old and working at a car parts business on Madison and Bibb streets in Montgomery. He was a family man, and made \$1.65 an hour.

Every day during his lunch hour, he’d walk about eight blocks to the Alabama Power Crew Headquarters on Dexter Avenue and inquire about a job. He’d spend a few minutes talking with E.K. Wilson. This continued for two years.

“Monday through Friday, I’d ask for a job,” Bobby said. “I bothered E.K. by coming to him every day. He finally told Mr. Beasley, ‘I want you to hire him. He’s been aggravating me.’”

After two years, Bobby was hired as an apprentice. “Every time I’d run into Mr. Wilson, he’d start dying laughing,” Bobby said. “I’d say, ‘You remember me, don’t you?’” Bobby was thrilled to get the job.

“E.K. gave me the break of my life,” Bobby said. “When

Alabama Power Company hired me, I thought I'd died and gone to heaven. I loved Mr. E.K. The rest is history."

Bobby worked for the Underground Department in Montgomery when he retired 20 years ago. Not long after, Lynelle retired after a 41-year career in banking, leaving as branch supervisor at Regions Bank in Prattville, where she managed about 20 tellers.

The couple's sons followed their father's footsteps to Alabama Power. **Greg Roy** and **Jeff Roy** are local operations linemen at Wetumpka Crew Headquarters. Greg's daughter, **Amber Hamilton**, is a Marketing specialist in Southern Division and his son, **Stephen Roy**, is a Concerns Program coordinator at Plant Farley in Dothan.

## GIVING TO RECEIVE

Bobby said he and his wife enjoy everything they do, "giving away and helping others."

Sometimes Lynelle thinks her husband has met his limit. Their granddaughter, Shelby, recently visited them at home, and watched Bobby frying pork skins.

"Our granddaughter said, 'Please stop, Papa! You're doing too much,'" Lynelle said, laughing.

This summer, the couple shared vegetables from their nearly 2-acre garden with neighbors and friends from Frazer United Methodist Church in Montgomery. Bobby tilled the soil, and tended the garden with Lynelle. The Roys grew corn, cucumbers, okra, peas, rutabagas, squash, tomatoes and turnips. After the harvest, they spent several days cleaning and canning vegetables and making salsa.

"Bobby wants to be able to give it away to anyone who wants it," Lynelle said. "We say, 'Come by, and we'll give it to you.'

"Bobby promised the Lord, 'If you make it rain, I'll share it,'" she said. "God has blessed us so much with our two boys and their families. We're happy and have a great life."

By Donna Cope

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## Supporting their communities

For the past several years, Southern Energizers have donated to many charitable groups in Montgomery and beyond. The chapter has about 130 members. At the December meeting, members nominate 501(c)(3) organizations to assist, with board members annually choosing four.

Receiving \$2,000 each in 2018:

- Montgomery Area Food Bank, which donates to underserved families in two-thirds of Alabama counties.
- PASS – Provides drug testing.
- Pilots for Christ – Provides free air transport to Alabamians requiring medical treatment.
- Project Lifesaver International – Supplies free GPS bracelets to people with Alzheimer's or autism to find them if they are lost. This is a statewide Energizers fundraising effort.





APSO volunteers worked on new home for Vickie Edwards.

# Family hit hard by Tuscaloosa tornado gets new home with Western employees' help

by Donna Cope

After a great loss, blessings have come to Tuscaloosa resident Vickie Edwards and her family, thanks to Western Division employees. On April 27, 2011, a deadly EF4 tornado struck Edwards' home, bringing unimaginable sorrow: She lost her daughter and granddaughter, the life she'd known and everything she owned. In the years following, Edwards and her husband, Sam, were "locked at a standstill."

That is, until Edwards shared her story with Corporate Real Estate Specialist **Donna O'Connor** and Market Specialist **Kelly Atchley**. One evening in 2017, while working late at the Western Division Office in Tuscaloosa, the women began talking with Edwards, a contract maintenance worker.



Tornado damage from April 27, 2011.

## 'Day of infamy' never far from mind

Atchley saw that Edwards was visibly upset.

"I'd come in and talk, and that's how I met Donna and Kelly," Edwards said. "One night I happened to mention I was looking for a place to live. We had lived in rental houses for many years and needed to move."

Edwards poured out her story about Tuscaloosa's notorious day of storms. In 2011, she and her family lived in the Rosedale neighborhood in Tuscaloosa. That day, her husband was traveling home from working in Ohio.

Edwards recalled, "The skies were so blue but there were no birds chirping. The kids had played awhile, and all of a sudden it started to rain."

The tornado was predicted to travel up Interstate Highway 59, but it instead headed toward Rosedale.

"My daughter looked out the window and saw a big black cloud coming," Edwards said. "It was a roaring sound." She and her 21-year-old daughter, Arielle, and two granddaughters, Aneyah and Makayla, ran for the safety of the bathroom.

"You could see the walls shaking and the nails coming out of the walls," said Edwards, whose family hid in the tub as she leaned on the sink. "The walls peeled back like a can opener. The tub was gone, and

the wind took me and I went up in the air, praying to God. I was praying real loud."

"It felt like someone had embraced me and I felt like, 'Be still,'" she said.

Suddenly Edwards fell an estimated 18 feet to the ground, breaking her elbow and leg and scraping her body. Her youngest granddaughter, Aneyah, fell in front of her.

"She was 3 years old at the time, and she was crying," Edwards said. "I crawled to her. She noticed her mother laying in a ditch."

In shock, Edwards didn't realize her daughter was badly hurt. Arielle's head was bleeding and she had a puncture wound in her leg. Within 20 minutes, an ambulance arrived for Arielle. A man later loaded Edwards in his truck and took her to DCH Regional Medical Center. Her granddaughter Makayla was later found dead, laying on a couch in the center of the road, without visible injuries.

"The strength of the tornado took her breath away," Edwards said. "She looked asleep, as though someone had placed her there."

Two days later, Edwards located her daughter and Aneyah at DCH. Arielle was one floor down in the ICU, with a severe gash and fracture to the skull and a collapsed lung. Arielle developed necrotizing fasciitis in her head wound, and doctors performed several surgeries to remove infected tissue. She died

The Edwards family moved into their Tuscaloosa house in June.



on June 1, 2011.

Edwards has a large scar on her arm and sustained nerve damage from the fall. She continues to have problems with her left leg.

"It's always a void there," Edward said. "My heart is missing pieces. I have memories all the time."

## Helping in time of need

O'Connor and Atchley were upset by Edwards' situation, since she had to move immediately from a rental home.

"Vickie, have you ever heard of Habitat?" O'Connor said. "You have a story, and you need to tell it."

O'Connor and Atchley helped Edwards fill out an application to Habitat for Humanity - Tuscaloosa. In the meantime, O'Connor reached out to the Habitat board about Edwards.

"It was over a year before I heard from Habitat," Edwards said. "The letter came saying I was approved."

With help from Western Division employees, Sam and Vickie Edwards achieved the required 350 hours of "sweat equity" to obtain their home, said Ellen Potts, executive director of Habitat for Humanity - Tuscaloosa. The couple's home was the 30th house on Juanita Drive completed by Habitat volunteers.



Adam Tipps, left, and Kelly Atchley caulking house.

Since the 2011 tornadoes, Habitat Tuscaloosa has completed 80 homes.

"When people apply, consider a wide variety of factors," said Potts, who has worked with Habitat since 1997. "We got the wonderful recommendation from Donna O'Connor. The Edwards worked very, very hard for their home. They've been delightful partners."

The house is built according to Fortified Silver Construction codes, which Potts said adds peace of mind for homeowners. The Alabama Power Foundation, Wells Fargo Foundation and the



Aneyah Edwards snaps a shot of O'Connor, Sam and Vickie Edwards, and Atchley.



Local media showed up to film the June 28 home dedication.

Tuscaloosa Bar Association helped fund the construction.

“From the top down, this house is built to withstand 155 mile per hour winds,” Potts said. “We build a high-quality house. The roofing system is sealed to prevent water damage. We added a tornado-safe room that meets FEMA standards, to make the house even safer.”

Members of the Western Division Chapter of the Alabama Power Service Organization (APSO) added sweat equity to the Edwards’ home. O’Connor and Atchley co-chaired Habitat workday projects in which Western employees worked from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. APSO volunteers spent more than 200 hours building and painting the house.

Western APSO members’ last Saturday of work – June 1 – was bittersweet. It was Sam’s birthday, but also the anniversary of Arielle’s death.

O’Connor and Atchley coordinated with High Socks for Hope, a charitable group in Tuscaloosa, to provide furniture. After the June 28 home dedication, Western APSO volunteers picked up a couch, recliners, a mattress and box springs from the nonprofit and delivered the items to the Edwards family.

“I’m very happy and very blessed and so appreciative of Alabama Power Company,” said

Edwards, who now works for ARC to help disabled people. “It’s been a long journey, but it was worth the wait.

“Our house is very beautiful,” she said, smiling. “We picked out the open-floor plan we wanted. It’s very nice for me and my family. I’ve got this nice porch I can’t wait to fix up, and I am so grateful.”

As Edwards continues to share her story, she has become emotionally stronger.

“I’m raising my granddaughter, and she looks just like my daughter,” Edwards said.

The way Atchley sees it, she and O’Connor were destined to talk with Edwards.

“We’re here to serve and help people,” said Atchley, a Western APSO member for 20 years. “You just never know what people are going through. I felt God put her here for us to help. Look where she’s at now – it was all God’s plan.”

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# Thousands across Alabama assisted by ABC Trust Fund

“For Alabama Power, it’s not about the bottom line. They give back.”

That quote from Deanna Murphy, executive director of the Via Health, Fitness and Enrichment Center in Mobile, summarizes the company’s intent when it started the Alabama Business Charitable Trust in 1992.

The ABC Trust is designed to meet the energy needs of struggling Alabamians disadvantaged because of losing a job, having a disability or other crises. Help comes in the form of Emergency Energy and Cooling Programs that help pay energy bills. Home Forward grants weatherize homes and make them energy-efficient. Efficiency Forward grants provide weatherization and energy-efficiency measures to nonprofits with a health or human services emphasis.

All of this is accomplished as the ABC Trust works through 22 community action agencies and the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs. Last year, the trust doled out 106 grants totaling \$1.1 million and serving more than 3,600 families. The trust has given more than \$30 million to 100,000 households since 1992.

In Murphy’s case, she was elated about two Efficiency Forward grants totaling \$20,000 that brought new lighting to the gymnasium, fitness center and main hall of the 42,000-square-foot Via Senior Center. The multipurpose building is an exercise and socializing magnet for older adults, serving 20,000 members and users each year through 80 health, fitness and enrichment programs.

But lighting problems had put a damper on activities at the popular gym. Traditional bulbs burned out at least once a year. Replacing them cost \$500 each for the 16 fixtures, since a hydraulic lift platform had to be rented to reach the high ceiling.

The Via center didn’t have the money to regularly replace the bulbs; hence, the lights had gone out entirely over one of three gym courts used for the popular pickleball, involving a whiffle ball and paddle that Murphy calls “pingpong on steroids.”

Poor lighting in other areas of the gym made it hard for seniors to see while playing basketball, badminton, volleyball or other activities, including during tournaments.

“We’re a nonprofit and we just didn’t have the money to keep replacing the bulbs,” Murphy said,

which caused more problems than on the pickleball court.

“We rent our gymnasium to generate income to help fund our center, and we lost rentals due to poor lighting,” she said. Some members quit coming because of dim lighting.

Enter the ABC Trust, which provided \$9,998 in 2018 for long-lasting LED lights in the gym, and \$10,000 this past February for lighting in the fitness room and main hallway.

“Our pickleballers are singing, shouting and hugging you,” Murphy said about Alabama Power. In the spacious hallway, the new lights “provide a much more warm, fuzzy feeling that’s bright and cheerful, and a much-added safety value to our seniors.

“We’re already seeing savings on our electric bill from both projects,” she said.

Melvin Justice of the east-central Alabama town of Piedmont talks in glowing terms about the Home Forward grant. He and wife, Patty, both disabled and with no income, had little heat in winter due to a faulty furnace and outside air-cooling unit.

“We were using space heaters a majority of the time,” which caused uneven heating and their power bill to skyrocket, he said.

Justice said the furnace was original to the house, built in the 1970s. He replaced the cooling unit in the 1980s.

“Our house was cold in winter and hot during summer and wasn’t very well-insulated,” he said.

The Justices were beneficiaries of a new heat pump and weatherization project totaling \$9,000 through a partnership between the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs and the Trust.

“There wasn’t a whole lot of insulation in the attic,” Justice said. “But they put a whole lot up there. And it’s helped.”

Power bills ranging from \$400 to \$500 in the winter, and \$200 to \$300 in the summer, now run less than \$160 a month for the Justices.

“We really appreciated it,” he said. “It meant a whole lot because this house needed a lot of work done on it.”

By Gilbert Nicholson

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SAFETY

# HURRICANE IVAN

**STORM IN 2004 CAUSED RECORD OUTAGES**  
Tim Tavel had many significant, unique issues to deal with during  
Hurricane Ivan 15 years ago.

**T**avel then and now manages out-of-town line crews contracted by Alabama Power to help restore electricity after major storms. And what a storm Ivan was – a Category 3 hurricane causing 825,000 outages, the most in company history.

“I had only been on the job six months when Ivan hit and had never worked a storm in that role,” Tavel recalled. “I was very green and scared to death. Here we were looking at a major hurricane to hit our service territory and I was expected to bring in thousands of outside resources to restore power.”

The 2004 hurricane season began June 1. It was one of the latest starts on record, with the first named storm popping up July 31. Three major hurricanes and a tropical storm – including Ivan – hit Florida: Charley, a Category 4 storm, made landfall 100 miles south of Tampa Aug. 13, the day after Tropical Storm Bonnie came ashore in the Panhandle near Apalachicola. Hurricanes Frances and Jean made landfall 52 days apart at the same location 50 miles north of West Palm Beach.

Ivan roared in around Gulf Shores in the wee hours of Thursday, Sept. 16, packing 128 mph winds. It made a beeline through southwest Alabama north to Selma, then curved slightly northeast to hit Birmingham, still packing a punch with 40 mph winds.

Ivan was described in an Alabama Power news release as “a natural disaster of historical proportions.” It stayed a hurricane 150 miles inland,

downgraded to a tropical storm at Uniontown in Perry County 12 hours after landfall at Gulf Shores.

It spawned a near-record 52-foot wave in the Gulf of Mexico at a buoy 60 miles south of Dauphin Island and brought a storm surge 10-15 feet high and 10 inches of rain along the Alabama coast. The 6-9 inches of rain Ivan dumped on Birmingham was the most in a single day in 100 years.

From the time it started as a tropical depression Sept. 2, Ivan gained Category 5 strength three times. After exiting the Mid-Atlantic states, it looped back around in the Gulf and reformed, finally fading as a tropical depression along the Louisiana coast eight days after making landfall at Gulf Shores.

“I remember driving in the morning after Ivan had made landfall, not knowing what to expect and worried about my wife and kids that I had left to ride out the storm by themselves,” Tavel said. “We ended up having three big oak trees down in our backyard.”

He remembers the wind was so fierce at Corporate Headquarters it blew rain under the windows of a 10th floor conference room near the Storm Center. Tavel, meanwhile, wasn't the only greenhorn on deck.

“We had not experienced a statewide major hurricane event since Hurricane Opal in 1995,” recalled **Steve Kirkham**, general manager of Power Delivery for Mobile Division, who in 2004 was Western Division Distribution support manager.

Plywood window covering showed homeowners were tired of hurricanes.





Hurricane Ivan caused major damages across Alabama in September 2004.

“Many of the newer engineers at the time had not worked a major storm restoration effort like this.”

But the company adjusted on the fly. **Herschel Hale**, Tavel’s predecessor, was called in as a contractor to help Tavel coordinate contractors. It proved a daunting task.

Many electric utilities that normally would have rushed to help Alabama Power were already helping Florida Power & Light navigate the damage from Bonnie, Charley and Frances.

“I remember **Don Boyd** (retired Storm Center director) on the Southeastern Electric Exchange calls navigating through some very intense conversations trying to get Florida to release some companies to come help us,” Tavel said. “If it were not for the respect Don had throughout the industry and his masterful negotiating skills, it would have been days before we could have gotten the help we needed.”

More than 4,000 outside linemen from 27 states were brought in.

For all its bluster, damage (\$18 billion) and death (67 died in the Caribbean; 25 in the United States; none in Alabama), Ivan was the catalyst for a sea change in the way Alabama Power did business. Then-CEO **Charles McCrary** made a bold prediction: Power would be restored to 99 percent of customers in eight days. Nearly 60 percent of the company’s customers had no electricity after Ivan struck.

“At that time, we never made promises like that,”

McCrary told Powergrams when he retired in 2014, “but I knew we could do it and the customers needed to know what to expect. It set a precedent and was a real turning point.”

And the employees kept McCrary’s promise. Ivan was also a turning point in the relationship between Alabama Power management and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers. Lineman **Bobby Turnbloom** died near Lay Dam when ejected from a bucket truck as he worked to restore power. It kickstarted the company’s now-renowned strong relationship with the union.

“When we lost Bobby Turnbloom, that tragedy brought us together and the dialogue was opened,” said **Casey Shelton**, business manager, IBEW System Council U-19, speaking in the same 2014 Powergrams article. “Charles had the foresight to understand that if we could just learn to communicate, we would see we all want the same thing, and that’s a safe and fair working environment for employees. What he’s done at Alabama Power in terms of that relationship is legendary throughout the industry.”

Another change was discontinuing use of the Saffir-Simpson scale, which measures intensity of sustained winds to predict the extent of hurricane damage. The company changed to the Hurricane Severity Index (HSI) for restoration planning after Ivan.

“HSI uses equations that incorporate the intensity of the winds and the size of the area covered by

the winds," Kirkham said. "It attempts to demonstrate two hurricanes of similar intensity may have different destructive capability due to variances in size – that a less intense, but very large hurricane may in fact be more destructive than a smaller, more intense hurricane."

Despite the gravity of dealing with Ivan's impact, there were memorable distractions and inconveniences for employees managing the recovery.

"One of the things I didn't expect to see was all the news stations set up in the conference room next to the Storm Center, with their cameras pointed at us," Tavel said. "You never knew when they were filming and when they weren't. I would get a phone call from my wife or one of my friends saying, 'I see you on TV.' That was nerve-wracking, knowing you could be on TV at any time."

"I recall having to miss the Auburn-LSU football game because we were working and didn't even have an opportunity to watch it on television," Kirkham said. "Someone told me late Saturday afternoon that Auburn had won a thrilling 10-9 last-second victory."

By Gilbert Nicholson

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In 2004, APC crews, with help from other companies, restored all power in eight days.



# Foundation honors standout students with college funding

By Carla Davis

The Alabama Power Foundation presented \$2,500 scholarships to 20 students to attend college, or a trade or technical school. It's the 28th consecutive year for the scholarship program.

The scholarships are awarded to children of active, retired or deceased employees, and are renewable for up to three years. The students must be high school seniors or post-secondary undergraduates to be eligible for a scholarship. The recipients are selected by an independent company based on academic achievement, participation in extracurricular activities, leadership and service in the community.

"We are proud to have a hand in helping these students realize their dreams," said **Myla Calhoun**, president of the foundation. "We know the value of a good education and the diverse opportunities it offers. That's why we provide many avenues aimed at helping today's students become successful."

Since 1991, the foundation has awarded more than \$4 million in scholarships, setting more than 1,200 students on the path toward their future careers.

The 2019 scholarship winners, the school they attended and their Alabama Power parent or guardian are:

- Kayla Billups, University of West Alabama, **Sandra Crayton**, Tuscaloosa Crew Headquarters.
- Isabella Blake, Prattville High School, **John Blake**, Montgomery Office.
- Jeslyn Blankenship, University of South Alabama, **Kimberly Blankenship**, Corporate Headquarters.
- Bruce Brand, Elmore County High School, **Bruce Brand**, Jordan Dam.
- John Downey, Jacksonville State University, **Darren Downey**, Gadsden Steam Plant.
- Makaela Etheridge, University of South Alabama, **David Etheridge**, Greene County Steam Plant.
- Ariell Fain, Mississippi State University, **Kaleb Fain**, Brewton Office.
- Bailey Files, Mortimer High School, **Steven Files**, Gadsden Steam Plant.
- Graham Land, Leeds High School, **Heather Land**, Corporate Headquarters.
- Taylor Latham, Martin Methodist College, **Jason Latham**, Corporate Headquarters - Alabama Control Center.
- Christopher Lovoy, Pelham High School, **Angela Lovoy**, Corporate Headquarters.
- Anna McGilvary, West Blocton High School, **Lisa Farley**, Jasper Office.
- Nichole McNeill, Sylacauga High School, **Scotty McNeill**, Yates Dam and Martin Hydro.
- Tatum Owens, University of West Alabama, **Valerie Owens**, Demopolis Office.
- Hayden Owings, Sylacauga High School, **Greg Owings**, Gaston Steam Plant.
- Kamryn Pigg, Tulane University, **Dena Pigg**, Bayou La Batre Office.
- Cameron Smith, Jemison High School, **Brandon Smith**, General Services Complex.
- Madison Suttles, Pinson Valley High School, **James Suttles**, Gardendale Office.
- Camden Zackery, Wetumpka High School, **Latasha Kendrick**, Montgomery Office.
- Sean Dean, Cleburne County High School, **Helen Dean**, Heflin Office.

Presidential Scholar  
Spencer King

# GODSENT SCHOLARSHIP

JASPER STUDENT NAMED PRESIDENTIAL AWARD WINNER

BY CARLA DAVIS · PHOTOS BY NIK LAYMAN

It's often the oldest child who is the high achiever. But Spencer King, the youngest of five brothers, is the exception to the rule.

"Spencer has always been quiet and reserved but very determined," said his mom, Jennifer. "When he was in kindergarten, Spencer was the kid who would cry if he made a 99 instead of 100 on his papers. That has been built into him. He has always wanted to do well and succeed. Whatever he chooses to do, he sticks with it, puts the work in and usually succeeds."

That determination and drive have paid off for Spencer, whose dream of studying pharmacy at Auburn University is coming true. His parents were worried that sending him to a large four-year college would be out of the question, especially in light of the ongoing battle his dad, Plant Gorgas retired Security Officer **Bob King**, is fighting against Parkinson's Disease.

But those doors are now wide open. Spencer is the winner of the Alabama Power Foundation's 2019 Presidential Scholar award, which covers

tuition and fees for a university in Alabama. The scholarship is presented annually to an outstanding high school senior whose parent is an Alabama Power employee or retiree. It is based on academic achievement, standardized test scores, participation in extracurricular activities, leadership and financial need.



King family joined Crosswhite at luncheon head table.



**Spencer King's father, Bob, congratulates Presidential Scholar at luncheon.**

"This scholarship is a godsend for Spencer and our family," said Bob, who retired in 2018 after six years at Alabama Power. "It's a dream come true. I will promise you, and he will promise you, that it won't be wasted."

A graduate of Jasper High School, Spencer wrapped up his senior year with many honors and achievements. He has a 4.3 GPA, scored 31 on the ACT and, out of 800 students, ranked in the top 10% of the students academically. He was a member of the National Honor Society, Mu Alpha Theta Math Honor Society and Beta Club.

But his best memories revolve around playing alto saxophone in the school's marching, jazz and concert bands, Spencer said. He began learning to play saxophone in middle school as a way to break the monotony of his regular classes, but now it holds a special meaning.

"When he passed away, my grandfather set aside money for his grandkids to use to fuel their passion," Spencer said. "He always wanted to make sure we had something that was special and unique to us. I used the money to buy a professional alto saxophone. And ever since then, I have been passionate about playing the sax because it connects me to him."

Playing in the band was almost like a "full-time job," Spencer said. In addition to practice after school and taking part in band competitions on weekends, he was on the field with his sax during halftime at every Friday night football game during his four years at

Jasper High School.

Spencer used his music to give back to the community. Through the band, he marched in Jasper's Christmas and Veterans Day parades and played for community fundraisers like Kiwanis Club pancake breakfasts.

After marching season each year, Spencer and other band members helped organize and staff the local Special Olympics.

"That was definitely a good experience," Spencer said. "Helping those kids who don't always have every single person's support really means a lot."

Spencer also keeps busy outside the band room. He has a part-time job doing yardwork and maintenance at the Adam Bishop Center in Jasper, a facility for children with emotional and behavioral issues. In his free time, he loves to read and play football with



**Crosswhite presented King a trophy.**



Spencer King joined family members following the 2019 Presidential Scholar award ceremonies in Birmingham.



Above, 2016 Presidential Scholar Kendall Lambert, and, left, Crosswhite, with Spencer King.

friends in a local park.

Jasper High School Principal Jonathan Allen lauded Spencer as one of a kind.

“Honestly, having a student like Spencer represent our school and our community is an honor,” Allen said. “He’s a well-rounded student and is liked by his peers. Administrators pray for students like Spencer. We are so proud to see his future unfold.”

Alabama Power CEO **Mark Crosswhite** presented the scholarship to Spencer at a luncheon. Spencer’s name will be listed with past winners on a plaque in the Corporate Headquarters atrium.

“As I learned about all the hard work you’ve done in school, the extracurricular activities you’ve been involved in and the importance you place on helping others, it was clear you are deserving of this honor,” Crosswhite said. “We’re proud of you and your

many accomplishments, and we want you to know that you will always be part of our Alabama Power family.”

Spencer received his own engraved plaque and gifts, including a mini-refrigerator for his dorm room, luggage and a phone charger.

“This scholarship means a bigger and brighter future for me,” Spencer said. “We would have had to pay for school out of pocket. But getting this award helps pay for full tuition and then some, and that’s a great blessing to have.”



# APC efforts help build soccer field, walking trail at Selma Y

By Bria Bailey and Price Everett

Several organizations, including Alabama Power, worked in Selma to build a new soccer field and walking trail at the YMCA of Selma-Dallas County.

Previously, YMCA members played soccer off-site, which made scheduling difficult and required transporting players. The new field is right outside the Y back door and surrounded by the walking trail.

"The YMCA soccer fields have provided the community with a wonderful resource and positions us better to serve our community," said YMCA CEO Leonard Speed. "It's been received very positively."

A grant from the United Way of Selma & Dallas County helped fund the field, while Alabama Power helped sponsor the walking trail. The expansions took several years of planning and fundraising to become a reality.

"Hundreds, if not thousands, of children have grown up in Selma playing soccer at the YMCA," said Ann Murray, former CEO who oversaw much of the planning for the project. "However, 30 years ago, my boys were always playing at outlying locations, never close to the Y. So, having this new field onsite at the YMCA is a dream come true. Finally, children in Selma can play for the Y at the Y."

The walking trail starts at the playground and runs behind the building near the new field. Six laps of the trail equal 1 mile.

"The trail was a great project to support," said Alabama Power's Government & Community Relations Manager **Aubrey Cartor**. "The YMCA is an integral part of the community. It is pretty much the anchor for recreation, health and fitness in Selma. Adding the walking trail and soccer field really put the YMCA in good shape to meet the needs of the community."

While the YMCA offers plenty of activities for kids to do inside, including swimming, basketball and exercise, the new field and trail allowed the Y to expand its outdoor programs.

"There was a huge community need for young people to be able to have a soccer field," said Chief Volunteer Officer Juanda Maxwell. "There's a need

in the community because we have so many young people without a lot to do. We have a lot of challenges in our community, and many of these young people might never get the exposure to these sports, like soccer, without this field and the YMCA.

Statistics show that where there's art, sports and activities, that will expand children's minds."

Speed said the new outdoor space has provided a safe place to play and helped bring together children from different backgrounds. It also improves health.

"Having this access provides opportunity for children to play and combat a sedentary lifestyle," Speed said. "Beyond soccer, we've had other events utilizing the fields, including our first community Easter egg hunt this past spring."

The YMCA staff applauded the efforts of Alabama Power, the United Way and other sponsors for bringing the project to life. Pepsi Selma and the Alabama Beverage Association helped finish the work, while the Selma Rotary Club pitched in with bleachers.

"The more partners you can bring in, the better and the quicker your goals of serving the community can be achieved," Maxwell said. "Without Alabama Power Company, we would not have been able to have the soccer field and do what we've been able to do. It is a challenge when you're from a small community with few resources. We thank Alabama Power for their support."

For more information, visit [ymcaofselma.org](http://ymcaofselma.org).



# 1999-2019

WASHINGTON COUNTY COGEN CELEBRATES TWO DECADES

by Gilbert Nicholson



A triple play in baseball is rare and sure to be replayed on ESPN.

While they won't make SportsCenter highlights, just as rare are the triple-qualified journeymen who work at the Washington County Cogeneration power plant 40 miles north of Mobile – the first in Alabama Power history to be qualified simultaneously as mechanics, electrical and instrumentation employees and plant operators.

That exclusive milestone is being recognized in 2019 as the plant celebrates its 20-year anniversary.

"We're responsible for all aspects of the plant," said **Jim Eubanks**, one of the original journeymen when

the cogen plant opened in 1999 who is still on the job. "I enjoy being able to do all three classifications and being able to work outside the control room. We are a small group and great team of people that work really well together."

Another milestone is the unusual nature of the plant – a "combined-cycle" facility using both steam and natural gas to make electricity for all customers, and steam exclusively for Olin Corp., an international leader in the production of chemicals and one of Southern Company's largest customers. The Alabama Power plant is onsite at Olin.

Olin's \$700 million factory was built in 1952 on



Melanie Robins, Bolerjack with cogen anniversary cake.

the banks of the Tombigbee River, just west of U.S. Highway 43 in southwest Washington County. It employs 300 people and uses the chlor-alkali process to make bleach, chlorine, hydrochloric acid, hydrogen and caustic soda for a variety of industrial uses, including the pulp and paper industry, textiles, vinyl, food processing, soap and cleaning products.

“Good neighbors are a treasure beyond measure,” said Olin Plant Manager Ken Corley. “With aligned cultures and core principles of safety, reliability and exceptional customer service, Olin deeply appreciates and values our strong collaboration with Alabama Power.”

The history of the cogen plant dates back to the mid-1990s, when Alabama Power’s Marketing department thought outside the box to offer steam to several major industrial customers, one of which was Olin. Many chemical-making industries use high-pressure steam for internal functions.

The APC cogen unit was designed by Southern Company Services Engineering and built by Southern Company construction. It was the first combined-cycle plant in Southern’s retail fleet. In the plant, natural gas ignites burners that compress air, turning turbine blades of one generator. Exhaust flows through the heat recovery steam generator, producing steam that

Photos by Mike Kittrell



Washington County Cogeneration Plant employees in 2019.

turns another generator. Some steam is siphoned off and sent to Olin for its industrial processes.

The cogen plant employs 26 workers, including 14 journeymen, an Operations and Maintenance manager, operations team leader, instrumentation and control specialist, chemical technician, engineer; power generation analyst, and six shared employees.

“Through the years, the staff has dealt with everything from alligators to hurricanes,” said **Danny Bolerjack**, manager of Operations and Maintenance.

“The unit has demonstrated high reliability as personnel focus on the main purpose of the plant: providing steam to one of Southern Company’s biggest industrial customers.”

Alabama Power has two other cogeneration plants, in Theodore and Lowndes County west of Montgomery.



# Alabama Power's Renew Our Rivers named Water Conservationist of the Year

By Justin Averette

Alabama Power's Renew Our Rivers campaign has earned one of the state's most prestigious environmental conservation awards.

The Alabama Wildlife Federation (AWF) honored Renew Our Rivers Aug. 9 as the Water Conservationist of the Year during the group's annual Governor's Conservation Achievement Awards ceremony.

For more than 40 years, AWF has presented the awards to people and organizations that work to conserve the state's wildlife and other natural resources.

The Water Conservationist of the Year award recognizes work in water resources conservation. Efforts focused on protection and improvement of water quality are especially important.

Renew Our Rivers began in the spring of 2000 with one Alabama Power employee's vision to clean a stretch of the Coosa River near the company's generating plant in Gadsden. Since then, more than 117,000 volunteers have joined the effort and collected more than 15.5 million pounds of trash and debris from waterways across the Southeast.

"I experienced the positive impact of the Renew Our Rivers program firsthand during my time as executive director of the Freshwater Land Trust," said Wendy Jackson, executive vice president of the Washington, D.C.-based Land Trust Alliance.

Jackson nominated Renew Our Rivers for the award. "This program truly benefits the rivers while inspiring people and communities to care. I understand the prestigious nature of the conservationist award, and I believe Renew Our Rivers exemplifies great dedication to conservation."

More than 30 cleanups are taking place in 2019, the program's 20th year.

"Renew Our Rivers, now celebrating 20 years, has become known nationally as a conservation leader in waterway cleanup," said Thomas Harris, president of Alabama Black Belt Adventures. Harris also nominated Renew Our Rivers for the award. "The natural instinct to conserve and preserve water resources spurred this initiative and grew each year with the help of neighboring community partners, volunteers and organizations."

In 2018 alone, 4,000 volunteers removed more than 268,000 pounds of trash from Alabama lakes, rivers and shorelines.

"The commitment to Renew Our Rivers continues to grow," said **Susan Comensky**, Alabama Power vice president of Environmental Affairs. "We couldn't do this without the wonderful partnerships we have made along the way. The campaign's continued success is a testament to our partners and their passion for protecting our state's precious natural resources."

In addition to the Water Conservationist of the Year award, recent Alabama Power retiree **Steve Krotzer** was honored as the Fisheries Conservationist of the Year. Krotzer worked 37 years with Alabama Power, collaborating on numerous

projects with state and federal biologists. This included work on assessing fish communities; discovering the most viable population of the threatened trispot darter; and assisting with data collection and water quality improvements for the Tulotoma snail, which contributed to the first federal "downlisting" of an aquatic snail, from endangered to the less-dire, threatened category. He also worked as the principal biologist on a landmark project to restore flows to a bypassed section of the Coosa River downstream of Weiss Lake.

"Steve's fisheries career spans nearly 40 years. In that time, he has made significant contributions to the conservation, research and education of Alabama's fisheries resources," said **Jason Carlee**, Alabama Power

Environmental Affairs supervisor. Carlee nominated Krotzer for the award. "In addition to his tremendous contributions to fisheries research and conservation throughout Alabama, Steve has served as a mentor for numerous other biologists and naturalists."

For a list of all the honorees and more details about the ceremony, visit [alabamawildlife.org/governors-conservation-achievement-awards/](http://alabamawildlife.org/governors-conservation-achievement-awards/).



Krotzer



Photo by Wynter Byrd

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## DALE COUNTY SEAT FEATURES ARTS, HISTORY, RECREATION

Fans in the bleachers of Eagle Stadium stand at attention, hats off and hands over hearts, singing along to the national anthem before breaking into applause as it ends and “Centerfield” plays to open an all-star baseball tournament.

Despite heat hovering in the mid-90s, it’s breezy under the awning of the stadium built in 1946 on the field where a decade earlier Dizzy Dean and the World Champion St. Louis Cardinals played an exhibition game. In 1962, Ozark briefly had a minor league affiliate of the Los Angeles Dodgers but in the years since, Eagle Stadium has been home to younger players.



# THE WIZARDRY *of* OZARK

BY CHUCK CHANDLER

PHOTOGRAPHY by PHIL FREE

AERIAL PHOTOS by JAY PARKER

"No pets, profanity, slurs, artificial noise makers allowed inside ... thank you," reads a sign above the stadium entrance.

Smaller signs throughout this town of 14,000 people note that "Ozark is a litter-free city." Along Broad Street and other primary avenues, many houses have American flags hanging on porches and some have Old Glory flying from tall flagpoles. A recent survey said Ozark is Alabama's most patriotic city.

Incorporated on Oct. 27, 1870, Ozark was settled mostly by farmers who bought former American Indian land from the federal government. Fifteen years earlier, the postmaster named the town for Native Americans from Arkansas and Missouri. After the Dale County Courthouse in Newton burned in 1869, voters chose Ozark as the new county seat and many Newton businesses moved about 10 miles north to Ozark.

*continued*



Buildings sprang up around the new courthouse, many of them still standing today in a 10-block area of restored storefronts under metal canopies that extend around the entire square, offering shade and benches for shoppers visiting the more than 40 local businesses.

Three barber shops still have old-fashioned red, white and blue poles outside their entrances. Barefield's has been providing men's clothing on the square since 1985. There's The Flower Shop, several hair salons and restaurants like Blue Agave, Fannie's and Hoppergrass. On one corner is the Dowling Museum & Ann Rudd Art Center.

On another corner is Lillimaggs Butts & Beverages, which encompasses three 1900-era buildings. White-clothed tables await diners in the central section amid exposed red brick walls and black iron columns. The adjoining section has a winding wooden bar and tables alongside framed photos of previous businesses at the location. Flags representing each military service hang on one wall.

Army veteran Jason Thomas works on Apache helicopters at Fort Rucker during the day, then tackles his side job with wife, Stephanie, each evening Wednesday through Sunday. In March, they opened Lillimaggs, named after their daughters, hoping to provide something different for people in their hometown and from the nearby Army post.

"There's not any place in Ozark that serves seafood, oysters, barbecue, steaks and the variety of fresh, homemade food we do," he says. "We wanted a place you could bring your kids, listen to music, have a great meal and fun. We don't put up with rowdy folks."

On yet another corner of the square, Mark Blankenship and several volunteers are painting, sawing, lifting and nailing lumber to form the stage of a community amphitheater. The land was donated by families who owned three two-story buildings destroyed by an F2 tornado in 1984. Blankenship worked at Farley Nuclear



Lillimaggs restaurant opened recently in three restored buildings.

Plant for 20 years before starting a construction business and being elected seven years ago to the Dale County Commission, which he now chairs. He is the epitome of a working politician, also directing the amphitheater project for the Performing Arts Council (PAC).

Using a \$25,000 grant from the Wiregrass Resource Conservation and Development Council, volunteers like Carroll High School masonry teacher Greg Cobb and his students have built the amphitheater stage and storage area from the ground up. "The PAC director is busy lining up future events," Blankenship says. "It's going to be a fixture of our downtown."

Above The Herbal Toad are wrought iron balconies extending from lofts, which are also on the second floors of other downtown businesses. Patrons of Milky Moo's enjoy sandwiches and homemade ice cream in the corner shop beneath the Lofts on Main Street.

On the edges of the old town square are First United Methodist Church, Ozark Primitive Baptist and Ozark Presbyterian. The nearby Ozark Carillon and Tower erected in 1973 honors military and civilians from Fort Rucker and salutes the 60 soldiers from Dale County who died in World War I, the 56 who made the ultimate sacrifice for their country in World War II and all who've been killed in other battles. A separate monument stands in honor and remembrance of the victims of 9/11.

Just down Broad Street is the Dowling-Steagall House built around 1870 and added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1996. The huge two-story, tall-columned wood home topped by a portico was the first mansion in Ozark. Twin copper lion statues guard the front porch entrance originally owned by the man who organized Ozark's waterworks, ran a hardware store and was president of the First National Bank. The house became the town's first hospital when it was bought by Dr. Malcolm Grace but it was closed 10 years later when he died in 1933.

Ozark's most famous politician, U.S. Rep. Henry Steagall, owned the Dowling House for 10 years, too, until his death in Washington, D.C., in 1943, after serving 28 years in Congress. He was co-author of the act that brought banking reforms and created the Federal Deposit Insurance Corp. Steagall also co-authored the 1937 law that created the U.S. Housing Authority.

Dowling and other prominent Ozark leaders are buried in a cemetery beside the Claybank Church that was added to the National Register during the nation's bicentennial in 1976. First built in 1829, it was replaced by the current building in 1852 as a school, nondenominational church



Barefield's a fixture on the square for 34 years.



**Dowling-Steagall House was also Ozark's first hospital.**

and voting place, then in 1980 restored to its pioneer condition by descendants of the builders. The small, rough-hewn lumber building, which sits on split-log pedestals, has simple pews still used by visitors on special occasions.

While some people picnic beneath pine trees on the grounds of the first church, Ozark has no shortage of parks. The town has few equals in public recreation, with facilities spread citywide, emanating from the 16,000-square-foot Ozark Civic Center that seats 3,600. Next door in the former Emma Flowers School is the new 501-seat Flowers Center for Performing Arts, which fronts Eagle Stadium. Behind the civic center is the Perry Recreation Center founded in 1938, and the Ozark-Dale County Senior Center.

Just down Peacock Parkway is Steagall Park with picnic pavilions, a playground, splashpad, Kidzone, lighted softball and baseball fields, eight tennis courts and a basketball court, which are all lighted. Across one street is Fuqua Park, home to the youth football and baseball fields; across another street is Hodnett Nature Trail. Just down from the Alabama Power Office, Oben Everett Park has lighted basketball courts, a playground and covered pavilion.

The old town charm and happenings are most likely lost on travelers along U.S. 231, which is a major thoroughfare traveled through the years by people headed to Panama City Beach and other Florida Panhandle vacation spots. That four-lane highway is home to much of modern Ozark, lined by national chain hotels, restaurants and businesses.



**Steagall Park includes a popular Kidzone.**

Vacationers may recognize the half-buried pink VW in front of Our Place Diner, which opens at 6 a.m., closes at 11 p.m. and is known for "Alabama's Best Burger." Most passersby are familiar with the jet and helicopter mounted in front of the Alabama Aviation College and Ozark Airport - Blackwell Field.

Since Fort Rucker opened 77 years ago, Ozark has supported Army aviation through skilled workers at the post and local factories, such as Bell Helicopter. Many residents are active or retired military, or contractors at Fort Rucker. The Bell facility in Ozark employs 170 people for helicopter maintenance and refurbishing but could add another 100 workers if the Navy chooses Bell's 407 GXi as its next training copter. Bell officials said in April the helicopter will be built in Ozark if the Navy contract is signed.

## BRAUER AEROSPACE

It's a wonder Mike Brauer hasn't sprouted wings or a rotor. He grew up rebuilding airplanes with his dad, a design engineer who worked for Cessna and at Fort Rucker. The son graduated from Aviation College in Ozark, then got an aerospace manufacturing degree from Troy State University.

As the younger Brauer talks to a visitor, there are six airplane frames stacked to his right, a World War II plane frame behind him and on his left, a German Fokker VIII World War I fighter plane with twin machine guns. Those are hobbies he will return to, he says, if he ever finds the time.

Behind his desk at Brauer Aerospace, the company he started with a \$400 loan in 1983, Brauer has new contract orders stacked several inches high that will take his workers through 2022. At his back are blueprints and U.S. patents that have kept Brauer and his employees busy and profitable



**Brauer checks world-famous helicopter skid shoes.**

since he decided to create a better version of the helicopter skid shoes his dad designed. He knew copters frequently — and dangerously — wear through their long, thin landing limb bottoms, so he combined tungsten and other "secret ingredients" into a thin pad that can be easily clamped onto worn-out skid shoes.

Brauer initially couldn't afford to advertise but Rotor & Wing magazine, the gold standard industry publication,

gave him a small free ad and he was soon contacted by oil company executives who used helicopters to fly workers back and forth to oil rigs. Brauer's invention took off after the Navy awarded him a \$140,000 contract and followed up with a second substantial order. In a few short years, Brauer Aerospace had outgrown the original 60-by-80-foot building and was getting orders for military copters from more than 90 countries.

"I've added on six times, I think," he says walking through the center of the factory, which is next door to the Alabama Power Crew Headquarters. "We've grown quite a bit through the years."

Brauer, 58, and his 20-30 local employees now retrofit all of the Airbus Lakota training helicopters at Fort Rucker. He starts naming the foreign government contracts — Canada, Germany, Italy, Israel, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Japan — when someone suggests it would be almost as easy to name the countries Brauer doesn't sell skid shoes. He also has steady business with law enforcement agencies in every state.

Brauer Aerospace sells its skid shoes for half the price of what new landing skids cost, and the Brauer skids last 125 times as long. They've sold more than 23,000 pairs of the 26-pound clamp-ons.

"We're the largest manufacturer of skid shoes in the country," Brauer says as he looks at a helicopter skid with a foot-long split down the middle sent from Europe. "We feel like we have the best shoe in the world."

## THE SOUTHERN STAR

The United Kingdom has the monarchy; Ozark has the Adams Family.

Since 1867, the Adams have edited and published what today is Alabama's oldest family owned newspaper: The Southern Star. Founder Joseph A. Adams moved the weekly from Newton to Ozark in 1870. Joseph H. Adams took over in 1887, John Q. Adams in 1907, Jesse B. Adams in 1925, a second John Q. Adams in 1930 and Joseph H. Adams, or simply "Joe" as his byline states, became editor in 1957.

Joe Adams, 86, in August began his 63rd year as editor, officially becoming the longest serving of his family. His dad was listed as editor on the masthead from 1930 to 1992 but was only active until 1983. The surviving scion has been editor and publisher for a half-century.

The Southern Star hasn't been an all-male operation. Adams notes that his grandmother came to the rescue of



Star Editor and Publisher Adams.



The Southern Star is state's oldest family owned paper.

his short-handed dad in the 1950s, agreeing to help her son "get the paper out" until it was fully staffed again, but ended up becoming a vital cog in the machine for 44 years.

"Her last 12 years at the Star were my first 12 years," Adams says of the namesake of the Vivian B. Adams School that has helped people with intellectual disabilities since 1971. "She did it all, from bookkeeping to reporting ... a little of everything at the paper."

Two metal plates are bolted to the Star building Adams bought in 1977, both plaques given by readers. One was dedicated in 1932 for the newspaper's "worthy and uninterrupted service to Ozark and Dale County." The second was presented in 1967 to commemorate the Star's century of "outstanding leadership ... and dedication to the principles of freedom and democracy."

An Alabama Tourism Department historic marker credits Jesse Adams and Congressman Steagall for prompting the federal government in the mid-1930s to purchase 35,000 acres in Dale County, then persuading the War Department in 1941 to use that land as the nucleus of the 64,000-acre infantry training post that would become Fort Rucker.

Editorials Joe Adams wrote during his tenure helped push voters to approve taxes that have been important to his community. The first, in 1961, was the passage by 37 votes of a 3-mill property tax earmarked for the Dale Medical Center, which had no public assistance. The tax now brings in more than \$1 million annually. The second, in 1972, was for the sale and taxation of alcohol, which was legal in most of the surrounding counties. The measure had failed in 1937 and 1963, but passed by 437 votes on the third try, and has since brought more than \$3 million to the Adams School.

"I don't know if those would have happened without strong editorial support," says Adams.

The Southern Star is facing the same tough times that newspapers across the nation are enduring. At 75 cents per issue, or \$29.43 for a year, it would seem a bargain for the 3,000 current subscribers of the weekly. Yet, Adams and his two employees can't garner the income of a decade ago, much less of 50 years earlier when the newspaper had its own printing press.

"Unfortunately, we are way down in advertising income and subscriptions," says Adams, who is recuperating

from congestive heart failure. “I didn’t think social media — Facebook, Twitter and the others — would take such a toll on newspapers, but it has.”

Adams takes satisfaction in being the senior editor among Alabama newspapers, in running “by far the oldest business in Dale County” and in his 16 years of prior active military and Army National Guard service.

“I guess I’m the only editor and publisher in the state who is also a retired military officer,” he says.

## HOLMAN HOUSE

Joe Adams couldn’t have known it as a youngster, but his grandparents’ house would become one of the most heralded in America. He was Jesse DaCosta Holman’s first grandchild to roam the huge halls of Ozark’s most amazing abode.

Alabama Architectural Historian Robert Gamble says there is “no more impressive a home to be found ... in terms of size and quality” in a regional triangle bounded by Mobile, Montgomery and Tallahassee, Florida. Saving the house led to the formation of the Ozark Heritage Association (OHA), which since 2013 has raised money to preserve the 24,000-square-foot Greek Revival structure.

Built 107 years ago by local African American craftsmen Arthur and Luther Boykin, the Holman House was added in 1982 to the National Register of Historic Places. The Boykins built other significant houses on Broad Street and were known throughout the Wiregrass. Boykin granddaughter Paulette Love is today on the board of the nonprofit protecting the Holman House.



The Holman House is widely praised for many architectural features.





John Runkle returned to Ozark six years ago after 25 years in Washington, D.C., and now volunteers at the 21-room mansion that has many of its original fixtures, such as chandeliers and push-button light controls. He spent most of his career near America's most acclaimed buildings, yet marvels at the construction details and special features inside, outside and on the 2.58-acre Holman lot.

As workers replace a large fountain on the west side of the house, Runkle heads up the front porch stairs between the four massive white Corinthian columns that support an ornate triangular portico. He walks beneath the big balcony resting on the front doorway.

The wide central hallway with 14-foot-tall beamed ceilings is a popular feature for weddings and civic events that help fund upkeep and improvements. It has five hidden pocket doors and ends at a stairway anchored by a pair of small columns topped by brass fixtures. On the stairway landing are three stained-glass painted windows.

The first-floor library has a green tile fireplace with copper squares on either side sculpted to represent a horse and a mule, which was the original business that fueled Holman's wealth. He added to his fortune with a Buick dealership and the Ozark Cotton Mills. Both rooms facing Broad Street have semicircular windows over casement

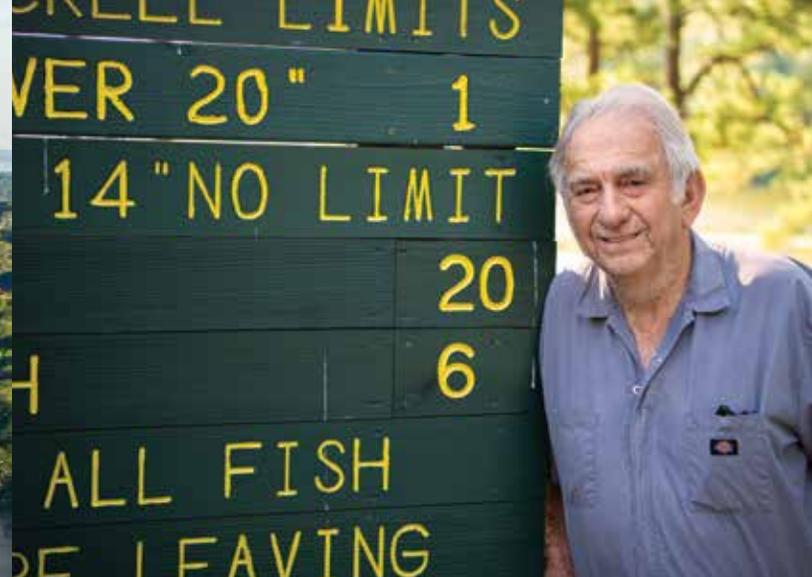
windows that open to the large white tile porch. Most of the rooms have unique windows, distinctive fireplace mantels and walls that curve at top to the ceilings.

The dining room is noted for its beveled and stained-glass windows, hand-painted artwork and original wallpaper. A five-fixture glass chandelier was found in the basement during renovations, then restored and placed above the original family dining table. The chandelier matches 10 stand-alone fixtures that hang around it from the ceiling. The kitchen, butler's pantry and adjacent areas behind the dining room have been updated with commercial equipment for rental affairs.

"All of the craftsmanship in this house is amazing," says Runkle, noting that an Auburn University expert said the architecture is unsurpassed in the Southeast.

Twenty-two steps up the divided stairway to the second floor lead to a massive hallway identical to downstairs, though 12-foot-high, but that once was partitioned off for a young couple when Fort Rucker urged Ozark families to take in soldier families because of a shortage of housing on the post. The right side rooms have been turned into a bridal suite for weddings. The other side is now dominated by the Val McGee Military History Museum, in honor of the local veteran who authored "The Origins of Fort Rucker."

The OHA has used \$105,000 in Wiregrass Resource



Lisenby Lake holds big bass, bream, catfish; at top right, Overton has welcomed guests for 19 years.



Conservation and Development grants the past two years to make major improvements to the Holman House. The organization continues seeking paying memberships and contributions.

### ED LISENBY LAKE

Before dawn most every day, Jim Overton takes his place front and center between crickets, minnows, night crawlers and just about anything else someone could need to fish at Lisenby Lake. He sells snacks, rents batteries, anchors, paddles, motors, life vests and the whole boat package for \$30. He takes pictures of the big bass, shellcrackers and catfish that people lug back to the clubhouse to weigh.

"There's been some 8- to 10-pound catfish caught out there recently, some real big bass," says Overton, who's been at the lake 19 years since he retired from General Telephone & Electronics. "There's real enjoyment working out here. It's not a job, it's a blessing."

The 96-acre lake was built by the state in 1958 and is now operated by the city of Ozark. It reaches 26-foot-deep in the center but many people choose to cast a line from several fingers of land extending into the lake or along the scattered piers jutting out into the water.

On a hot summer morning, cars are parked near the shore where the drivers have set lawn chairs. These

fishermen hope to break the Lisenby records: largemouth bass of 14.88 pounds; channel catfish at 30 pounds; shellcracker of 4.2 pounds; and bluegill at 2.69 pounds.

Some visitors have come to picnic at the many concrete tables in the 390-acre park; others are tossing food to friendly ducks wandering through the pine trees. A 3.1-mile path that is part of the Alabama Birding Trails entices others to walk or jog around the lake (pets on a leash are welcomed). An archery park at the lake entrance hillside is next to a new mountain bike trail.

"It's beautiful here, just a great place to be," says Laith Fontenot, an Ozark native who's been supervisor at Lisenby for two years.

On a wall over Fontenot's head is a mounted 11-pound bass that was caught by a fisherman standing on the rock peninsula directly behind the lake office. He says a potentially bigger bass was recently caught that was 21 inches long but weighed in at 10 pounds after laying its eggs. Fontenot says three men made three excursions to Lisenby and caught 120 pounds of catfish, never reeling in more than six or seven on a single visit.

"Trying to get the word out, get more than our everyday customers to come here, is our challenge," Fontenot says. "If people see Lisenby Lake, they'll be awed like I am every morning when I come to work."

## CARROLL HIGH SCHOOL

The days of the “three R’s” are long gone at Carroll High School. While reading, writing and arithmetic will always be fundamental, students in Ozark begin focusing on their future starting in the ninth grade.

Since its new campus opened in 2013, Carroll High has been home to six “career academies” that prepare the 700 students for specific skills that will enhance their college or career endeavors. The school is among the first in Alabama to follow this path, employing traditional educators alongside former industry-experienced personnel.

Students start out in the Freshman Academy, getting required basic courses out of the way before choosing either the Alabama Power Business Academy, the Arts Academy, the Human Services Academy, the Industrial Technology Academy, the Medical Science Academy or the STEM Academy. Alabama Power employees, for example, will speak to students during the school year, giving advice to supplement courses such as business applications or Microsoft Office. Twice each year students attend a luncheon for business etiquette lessons.

Mike Stough left the business world in Memphis, Tennessee, 15 years ago to follow in the footsteps of his parents, both educators in his hometown of Opelika. He was assistant principal at Carroll for four years before becoming Career Center director in 2015.

“I decided I wanted to make a difference,” Stough says of his career change as he walks through the wide halls that double as 593-person-capacity storm shelters that can withstand 200 mph winds when the steel storm doors and windows are closed.

Each academy is a simulated workplace. Students wear uniforms that match their future career interests. They clock in and work in an organizational structure with student managers. Their punctuality and absences are reflected in their “paycheck.” The Medical Academy has a mock hospital with patient manikins, blood pressure instruments, IVs and other professional equipment.

The Arts Academy has a full television studio where



Carroll High School is home to Alabama Power Business Academy, among others.



Eagle Stadium opened in 1946.

students deliver a 7-minute broadcast to all classrooms each morning highlighting school happenings, as well as local and national news. Cosmetology students in the Human Services Academy work in a salon on campus that provides haircuts to paying customers.

At the end of each semester, junior and senior students interview with local businesses that hire them and provide feedback to Stough and academy teachers. Students can switch to another academy if their interests change.

About 100 Carroll High School students also will graduate with a head start on a possible military career. Retired Army Col. Milton Shipman leads the training.

“We have the best Junior ROTC program I’ve ever seen,” Stough says. “We have moved up into the top 5% of programs in the nation.”

Banners hanging near an expansive trophy case note that Carroll High was named by A+ College Ready a School of Excellence in 2016-17 and a School of Distinction in 2017-18. Alongside those banners is the Advanced Placement Wall of Fame, a long list of students who’ve earned college credits before graduating from high school.

“We’re trying to put our kids to work and in college, or both,” Stough says. “We don’t want them graduating and having to wait tables. We want them to have a higher income at something they enjoy doing.”

## ALABAMA POWER OFFICE

Ozark Business Office Supervisor **Julie Davis**, a Wiregrass native, was named this year as one of the state’s “Movers & Shapers” by Business Alabama magazine.

Davis has a passion to see young people succeed, serving on the board of directors for the Boys & Girls Club of Southeast Alabama and the Dale County Youth Leadership Program. She is a volunteer for Southeast WOW and was the founding committee’s logistics chairman for the event that helps 6,000 students across 16 counties in Alabama, Georgia and Florida. Davis is also a founding member of the Power of Youth-Wiregrass Leadership Forum.

She is on the board of directors for the Ozark-Dale County Economic Development Corp., and is secretary for Ozark Rotary.

Davis has served for over a decade as producer/director of the Hillcrest Baptist Church television production team. She is an active member of the Alabama Power Service Organization and on the Wiregrass United Way Funds



Eagle Stadium hosts frequent baseball tournaments; was home to minor league team.

Distribution Committee.

Away from work, Davis and her husband, Phil, enjoy spending time at the farm, the beach and with their five grandchildren.

Customer Service Representative **Ann-Michele Tyson** began her career with Alabama Power in the Ashford Business Office in 2007. She grew up in Eufaula and moved to St. Augustine, Florida, where she graduated from Flagler College with a bachelor's degree in Broadcast Communications. She lives in Dothan with husband, Brian, and their 1-year-old daughter, Paisley. Her grandfather was an Alabama Power employee and her father, **Frank Straughn**, retired from the company in 2017 after 50 years.

Customer Service Representative **Darius Brown** has worked for Alabama Power since 2012. He began his career in the Ozark Office as merchandise salesperson, and has worked as a CSR in the Slocomb, Enterprise and Ozark offices. He is an active APSO member and on the Southeast Division Safety Committee. For three years he has participated in the Safe-T-Opolis program as a LifeLiner.

"I enjoy spending time at the school and teaching the kids about power line and electricity safety," Brown says.

He spends the majority of his free time with wife, Terra, and their kids, Kell and Macen. Brown is heavily involved in youth sports, serving as director of the Headland Youth Athletic Association and co-director/head coach for the AAU basketball Dothan Gymrats.

Customer Service Representative **Rolanda Jones**



Brown, Tyson, Jones and Davis at APC Ozark Business Office.

transferred from the Slocomb Office to Ozark in 2015. She is vice president and Ozark/Enterprise area chairperson of the Southeast/Farley Chapter of APSO, having served as president in 2012.

A member of the Southeast Regional Planning Commission, Jones is on the Elba City Council, Elba Water and Electric Board, and Elba Planning and Zoning Committee.

She graduated from Troy State University in 1999 with a bachelor's degree in Psychology/Human Services. Her favorite hobbies are reading and restoring old furniture.



Six years after Gov. George C. Wallace made his infamous stand in the schoolhouse door to keep blacks from attending the University of Alabama, Wilbur Jackson received a scholarship to play football with the all-white Crimson Tide.

Nearly a half-century later, Jackson downplays his role in history, preferring to point out the good things that came from his breaking the color barrier. He made lifelong friends in Tuscaloosa and still admires Pat Dye, the former UA assistant coach who recruited him despite Jackson having played just 14 games in high school. And Jackson still reveres Alabama's legendary head coach.

"He taught me life-altering lessons," Jackson says. "There will never be another one like him. Some may win more games, some may win more titles, but they'll never be better than coach ('Bear') Bryant."

Jackson admits he "almost quit a lot of times" after arriving on the college campus. He had gotten a taste of things to come when the all-black D.A. Smith High School in Ozark was closed and the students transferred to the majority-white Carroll High School.

"It wasn't that bad because all the kids I'd been with from the first grade on went with me to Carroll. There was a comfort level," says the 67-year-old Jackson, relaxing in his home in Ozark.

At D.A. Smith, Jackson played basketball from the eighth grade through the year the school closed. He played baseball two years but gave up the sport after breaking a leg. He was enticed into football his junior year, playing mostly running back. During a game, quarterback George Williams suggested to the coach that his speedy friend get a shot at wide receiver.

"Coach said just run long and, George, you throw it to him," Jackson says. "It turned out to be a touchdown. Ever since then, George says 'I made you,' every time I see him."

Dye recruited the Wiregrass for the Tide. He had signed Ellis Beck and Dexter Wood from Carroll High in 1968, so he was familiar with coach Tom

McLendon. The Eagles' coach, an Auburn alumnus, showed Dye film of Jackson from the 1969 preseason jamboree. The Tide eventually signed Jackson as a wide receiver. Despite switching to running back at Alabama, Jackson would continue wearing the jersey number 80 throughout his career.

"Years later, I asked coach McLendon, 'Why did you suggest to coach Dye that I go to Alabama,'" says Jackson, who was a pallbearer for his high school mentor. "He said, 'I just thought it would be better for you.'"

During the 1960s, Auburn was averaging six

wins per season, while Alabama was averaging nine wins each year and was named national champion three times. Jackson had thought little about either program, since neither had ever had a black player. But Dye met Jackson after Carroll played Montgomery's Lee High School to open the 1969 season. Dye began phoning Jackson frequently and received updates about each game performance from The Southern Star editor Joe Adams. Jackson would visit Tuscaloosa twice before signing. He talked to Bryant for the first time on Sept. 27 after the Tide beat Southern Miss 63-14.

Jackson says the reluctance of college football coaches in the South to recruit black players 50 years ago "was just the times. Old habits died hard." He says

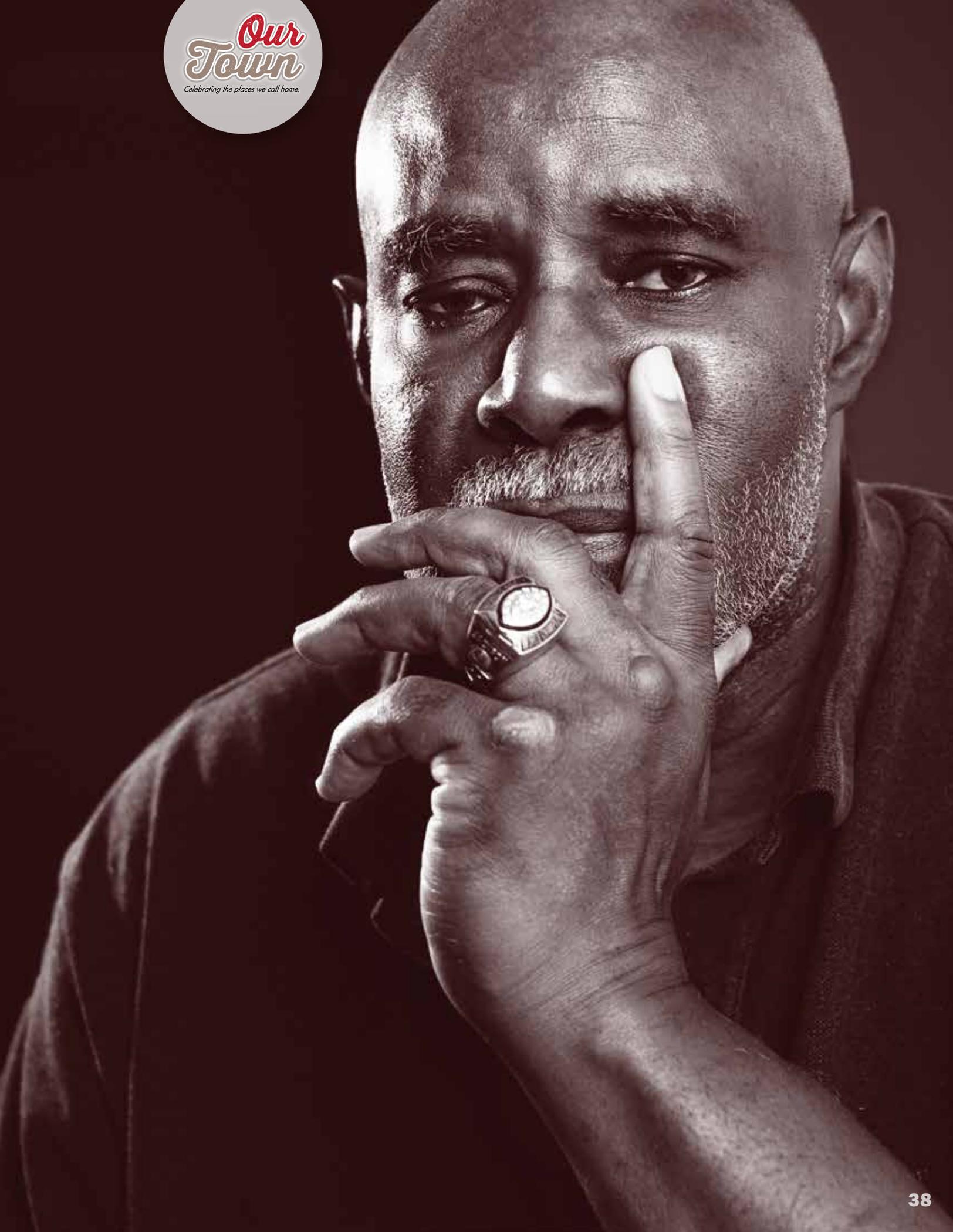
Bryant was among "a few good men and women who had the courage" to integrate.

Freshmen athletes didn't play varsity football during Jackson's time at Alabama, so his college career didn't start until 1971, when he was one of two blacks on the team (along with tight end Randy Moore). The Tide went 11-1 his sophomore season, losing the Orange Bowl to Nebraska and missing out on a national championship.

His junior year, Jackson was one of eight blacks on the team that went 10-2, losing the last two games: 17-16 to Auburn in the famous blocked punts affair, and 17-13 to Texas in the Cotton Bowl. In 1973, Jackson was one of 14 blacks playing for Tom

# JACKSON BROKE THROUGH LINE FOR 'THE BEAR,' CRIMSON TIDE

BY CHUCK CHANDLER  
PHOTOS BY PHIL FREE



the Tide team that won 11 straight before losing in the Sugar Bowl to Notre Dame after the Coaches Poll had already declared Alabama the national champion. Jackson says it was the toughest loss of his football career.

"That one hurt," he says. "I didn't get over that until we beat them in the (2012) national championship, 40 years later."

By the season the Tide made up for Jackson's worst memory, black players comprised 70 percent of the University of Alabama's football roster.

Jackson, who still holds the Tide record for yards per carry (7.2), was drafted in the first NFL round by the San Francisco 49ers in 1974. Players made little compared to signing salaries today, but it was new financial territory for the son of a career railroad man.

"We never were rich but we had everything we needed growing up," he says. "When I signed that contract, it was more money than I'd ever seen. Everyone around town started thinking I was loaded. My whole thing became saving as much money as I possibly could."

Jackson played five seasons with the 49ers, but had continuing leg problems that might have originated in the College All-American Game in Texas after his senior year, which kept him from playing in the College All-Star Game in Chicago, he told Adams during a visit to Ozark. His right knee was badly injured three times in the pros, and Jackson says it still aches.

The NFL was a dream scenario for Jackson, playing on the same field with his heroes, looking across the sidelines to see the likes of future Hall of Fame coaches Tom Landry and Hank Stram.

However, Jackson's most fond memories of professional football aren't his



**Jackson runs through Tennessee Vols at Legion Field; holds championship rings from playing days in SEC, NFL.**

on-field performances, but of the times other Crimson Tide alumni took the time to talk. Leroy Jordan, Kenny Stabler, E.J. Junior, Johnny Davis and many others greeted him before and after games.

"They wanted to make themselves known to me. It was all because of the connection to Alabama and coach Bryant," he says. "Those things stick in my mind and will probably be with me forever."

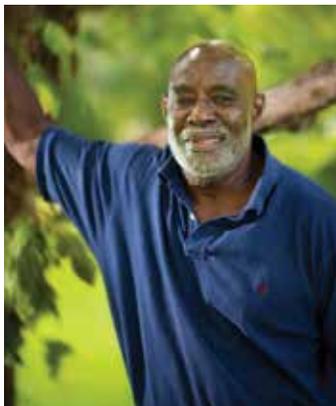
Jackson spent his last three years in the NFL with the Washington Redskins. He closed out his football career in Super Bowl XVII, winning a World Championship ring. However, he played the game with a heavy heart.

"I was getting dressed for practice when (future Hall of Fame coach) Joe Gibbs came up to me and said a bunch of reporters are going to be at your locker," Jackson says. "I said, 'What's wrong?' He said, 'Coach Bryant passed away.'"

Unlike many prominent athletes, Jackson returned to his hometown at the end of his professional career, opening Three Star Cleaning Service. He ran the business for 30 years until his wife, Martha, became ill six years ago. They've been married 39 years and have a daughter, Emily, who lives in Ozark and visits almost every day. Jackson had a heart attack and surgery to implant stents in January but says he's "feeling good for an old man."

Jackson says he never wanted to live anywhere except his hometown, where he and his sisters still look out for the house they grew up in. He was disheartened by life in the big city many years ago and is happy to get back to Ozark, where he's a hero to many people.

"When I was in San Francisco, a guy had passed out on the sidewalk. I was the only person who stopped and helped him; everyone else just walked by," Jackson says. "I'd never seen that. I knew if I was in Ozark, every person would stop and check on him, or me. I knew I needed to go home."



**Jackson enjoys being home in Ozark.**

PG

# Good news from home.



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When **Danny D'Andrea** announced his retirement this summer, nobody thought he would slow down. In fact, Thomasville Mayor Sheldon Day said he already has a list of projects in mind for D'Andrea.

"The way I look at it is Alabama Power may be losing Danny full time, but we are getting him full time," Day said.

D'Andrea, who is serving his third term as president of the Thomasville Chamber of Commerce, said he is up for the challenge. After 45 years at Alabama Power, his Aug. 9 retirement simply marked the start of a new chapter.

Over the years, D'Andrea has had a hand in many significant economic development efforts, which include helping to pave the way for the \$40.5 million Thomasville Regional Medical Center opening in October and the Golden Dragon Copper plant east of town.

D'Andrea has headed logistics for many communitywide events. He played a key role in Clarke County's first Special Olympics in 22 years. Former Republican presidential nominee John McCain's 2008 visit to

town didn't even daunt D'Andrea, who made the job of coordinating the high-profile event look easy.

"Danny is a true leader and team player," Day said. "There have been countless events where he has been in charge of logistics and setup, and they have gone flawlessly. Our goal in Thomasville is to achieve the unachievable. And we've been able to achieve the unachievable because of leaders like Danny."



D'Andrea is a familiar face in Thomasville.

As former manager of Alabama Power's Thomasville, Butler, Jackson and Grove Hill offices, D'Andrea describes himself as a "troubleshooter and problem-solver."

"My specialty is troubleshooting: trying to figure out what is not working and how to fix it," D'Andrea said. "Any problem or any complaint comes to me. I'm a resource for people inside and outside the company. If I can't fix it, I know who can. I put the parties together who can solve the issue and then I step out of the way."

In one instance, D'Andrea found an answer for an issue affecting all of Alabama Power. Until about seven years ago, employees completed their financial

Sarbanes-Oxley (SOX) reports by hand — a tedious process that could take up to six hours. D'Andrea, who taught himself how to use a computer in the 1980s when they were still relatively new, figured out how to generate his reports electronically after-hours and then retrieve, process and file them the next day.

He then convinced company management to allow him to work with IT to bring his electronic process to employees companywide. Now the reports can be

whipped out in about 20 minutes, D'Andrea said.

D'Andrea was always on the move for APC, often pitching in when the office got busy or was shorthanded, said Mobile Division Area Manager **Jill Stork**, who worked with him for five years.

"Danny takes on any role needed to get the job done," she said. "You may find him cashiering one morning, working until midnight that evening to make sure the crews are taken care of, and showing appliances the next day. So many departments rely on him, not just the department he works in."

D'Andrea said working with customers gives him the most satisfaction on the job.

"I love dealing with our customers because I've known some of them, their parents and grandparents," he said. "I treat them like my family. If they don't pay their bills, I fuss at them just like I would my two children."

## D'Andrea's early years at Alabama Power

D'Andrea was originally hired as an engineering aide

# THOMASVILLE TROUBLESHOOTER

## D'ANDREA CAPS 45 YEARS OF PROBLEM-SOLVING IN SOUTH ALABAMA

BY CARLA DAVIS

in the Thomasville Office. Even in those early days, solving problems was his forte.

"When I first came on in 1974, I couldn't do electrical work," D'Andrea said. "But when the electricians, contractors or homeowners had a problem, I would show them how to trace it and how to fix it, and then I would leave. I was a resource."

For the next 18 years, D'Andrea rose through the engineering ranks. He became manager of the Butler Office in 1992 and moved to the Brewton Office three years later. He returned as manager of the Thomasville and Butler offices in 2004.

As in Thomasville, D'Andrea was heavily involved in the Brewton and Butler communities, where he served as chamber president. But some of his best memories involve an annual office Christmas project in Brewton.

"We adopted families who had fallen through the cracks," he said. "I would dress as Santa, and we would go as a caravan to their homes to give them their gifts. Everybody usually cried, but we always had a good time."

Throughout his career, D'Andrea has focused on mentoring new or younger employees. At Stork's request, he postponed his retirement two years ago to train **Cynthia Tatum** in her new role as Customer Service supervisor.

"Danny is very knowledgeable and is willing to share his best practices," Tatum said. "He is a fast talker, and you really have to listen and pay attention. But he's very patient and always remains calm."

Another employee who learned from D'Andrea is Hillcrest Manager **Sharon Murrill**, who worked with him when she joined Alabama Power in 1987.



D'Andrea strings Christmas lights at home year-round.

"When I hired on at the company, I knew nothing at all, especially about distribution," Murrill said. "Danny was always quick to step up and explain the processes. He was a great teacher for new employees like me."

## Christmas all year at the D'Andrea house

For D'Andrea, it's "Christmas 365 days a year." That's because he is always busy working on his pet project: an annual holiday extravaganza. For the past 10 years, D'Andrea's yard, ablaze with more than 28,000 Christmas lights that dance to synchronized music, has become a favorite stop for Thomasville citizens during the holidays.

"I start building my show the first week of November, and then, the lights go hot the day after Thanksgiving and come down New Year's Day," D'Andrea said. "I spend the rest of the year repairing and stringing lights, usually while I'm watching TV. It's my way of dealing with my frustrations."

With his retirement, D'Andrea wants to travel with his wife, Jan, spend more time playing with his grandchildren, 5-year-old Emerson and 7-month-old Easton, and, of course, continue

his work in the community.

"I have thoroughly enjoyed every day of my career," D'Andrea said. "I may have had a rough day here or there, but I've had fun. They say if you love your job, you never work a day in your life."

PG



D'Andrea's 28,000-light display is popular between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day.



## First Education Week focuses on employee development

BY WHITNEY MASSEY

In a rapidly changing business environment, employee development must be a key focus to meet evolving customer needs. Employees are Alabama Power's greatest asset and investing in their development is essential for continued success.

Knowing this, the Council on Culture and Inclusion (CCI) hosted Alabama Power's first Education Week – a weeklong series for employees to enhance skills, increase business acumen and focus on career development. Education Week was developed in direct response to employee feedback in the Voice of the Employee Survey, requesting training opportunities to become better students of the business.

“Providing tools to help employees reach their career goals is an



important way to ensure a workplace environment where everyone is valued,” said **Susan Comensky**, vice president of Environmental Affairs and a member of the CCI Talent & Leadership Development subcommittee. “These programs not only help individual employees grow, they contribute to the overall success of the company.”

In June, more than 65 classes attended by about 1,400 participants were held at Corporate Headquarters, including skill-building workshops, business updates, benefits guidance and health awareness. A mix of internal and external speakers facilitated the sessions. Not only were classes well-attended, but response was





Photos by Wynter Byrd

favorable.

“My favorite part about the Education Week classes was the numerous options available,” said Building Operations Representative **Kellie Johnson**. “Whether it be helping your career or helping your personal life, the instructors provided perspectives that were extremely helpful.”

During the week, the CCI hosted a networking reception at Birmingham restaurant venue The Woolworth, providing an opportunity for employees to build relationships with peers and company leadership.

“I enjoyed being able to put a face with a name and get to know employees from other departments during the event,” Johnson said.



Talent and leadership development is a priority of the CCI. Providing tools and resources that all employees can take advantage of will continue to foster a workplace culture that stimulates learning and growth.

To learn more about the CCI, ask questions or share recommendations, visit [cci.southernco.com/apc](http://cci.southernco.com/apc).



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## FOUNDATION GIFT HELPS BUILD A CLINIC FOR DEAF, BLIND STUDENTS

You could say the health center at the Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind (AIDB) was like an aging baseball player: no longer able to do what was expected or needed as the years took their toll.

But the Alabama Power Foundation stepped up to the plate and hit a home run: A \$500,000 lead gift paved the way to raise \$2 million for construction of a nursing clinic providing more than 30,000 medical services annually to deaf, blind and multidisabled infants, toddlers, children, adults and senior citizens.

The AIDB, founded before the Civil War, provides educational and rehabilitation services to 26,000 people around the state. Although there are regional centers in eight Alabama cities, the heart of the AIDB is the historic Talladega campus, including schools for the deaf and blind; the Helen Keller School for deaf and blind children with multiple disabilities; the E.H. Gentry Facility, featuring a post-secondary adult rehabilitation program focused on job training, independent living and assistive technology; and Alabama Industries for the Blind.

A wide range of medical services were provided to AIDB students on the third floor of the 81-year-old Dowling Health and Clinical Services Building. But its age caused multiple problems, said Lynne Hanner, AIDB director of Institutional Advancement.

The elevator held few people and was too small for a stretcher in an emergency. Taking the stairs was not an option for those with multiple disabilities. The building didn't have an awning, causing patients to get wet when entering. The layout of patient rooms, exam areas and nurses' stations made it hard to monitor children. It may not have been totally dysfunctional, but it was not far from it.

The 6,000-square-foot Alabama Power Foundation Nursing Clinic, which opened a year ago, scored big.

"When the new clinic opened at the start of the 2018 school year, it addressed all these accessibility and service issues," Hanner said.

"AIDB is a phenomenal bright spot for the state," said **Myla Calhoun**, president of the Alabama Power Foundation, at the clinic grand opening. "I think that our involvement is an honor for us as much as anything."

The difference between the old and new buildings is remarkable, said Dr. Dee Fuller, AIDB's director of nursing.

"The new design and layout provide a comfortable and cheerful environment for children when they are sick and need to be monitored by the nurse," Fuller said. "We assess injuries, administer meds and offer the tender loving care our students need to feel better as quickly as possible so they can return to their normal schedule. Some students require daily medications and we ensure they are administered properly.

"You could say we practice school nursing in a home environment at AIDB," Fuller continued. "The new Alabama Power Foundation Nursing Clinic is yet another way we emphasize the potential of our students by encouraging good health habits."

The clinic is not the first time the Alabama Power Foundation has helped AIDB, having supported capital projects and program needs since 1990.

"The company's impact is strongly felt in every area of AIDB," Hanner said.

By Gilbert Nicholson

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# Retirees

**James Lee Anderson**  
Plant auxiliary,  
Greene County Steam Plant  
Service: 39 years

**Timothy Gene Blackmon**  
Maintenance technician,  
Corporate Headquarters  
Service: 11 years, nine months

**Michael Edward Bline**  
Distribution specialist, Pell City  
Service: 44 years, eight months

**Bart Edward Blocker**  
Local operations lineman,  
Oneonta  
Service: 40 years, five months

**Raymond Al Buchanan**  
Distribution system operator,  
Mobile Division Operations  
Center  
Service: 37 years, eight months

**Dennis Barry Burkett**  
Cogeneration journeyman,  
Washington County  
Cogeneration Site  
Service: 46 years, 10 months

**Tony Karl Connell**  
Materialman,  
Ozark Crew Headquarters  
Service: 20 years, 11 months

**Jerry Alan Davis**  
Assistant plant control operator,  
Miller Steam Plant  
Service: 42 years, three months

**Timothy Lee Hall**  
Team leader — planning, Gorgas  
Steam Plant  
Service: 41 years, four months

**Nathan Bonford Harper**  
Appliance serviceman, Ozark  
Service: 11 years, 11 months

**Troy Alfred Hutto**  
Team leader, Corporate  
Headquarters  
Service: 45 years

**Terry Lanter**  
Engineer, General Services  
Complex 8 — Fuel/Environmental  
Testing Lab  
Service: 43 years, two months

**Eddie Paul Malone**  
Maintenance technician,  
General Services Complex 2 —  
Facilities Services  
Service: 33 years, 10 months

**Danny Earl Martin**  
Local operations lineman,  
Oak Grove Office  
Service: 44 years, nine months

**Stevie Ronald Mathis**  
Planner, Miller Steam Plant  
Service: 43 years

**Clyde David McCord**  
Local operations lineman,  
Gadsden  
Service: 41 years, six months

**Jennifer Lynne McCray**  
Customer service  
representative, Gadsden  
Service: 30 years, one month

**Guy K. Miller**  
Market specialist,  
Corporate Headquarters  
Service: 20 years, 10 months

**Scott Edwin Miller**  
Local operations lineman,  
Trussville Crew Headquarters  
Service: 40 years, seven months

**Michael Lynn Minor**  
Power supply mechanic,  
Miller Steam Plant  
Service: 47 years, six months

**Andrea Moore**  
Customer care associate,  
Southern Division Office  
Service: 11 years, six months

**Donald E. Morrow**  
Engineer, Gorgas Steam Plant  
Service: 37 years, one month

**Charles Gover Myers**  
Distribution specialist,  
Gardendale Crew Headquarters  
Service: 47 years, nine months

**Keith Steven Parr**  
Crew leader — substation,  
Corporate Headquarters — Power  
Delivery Field Forces  
Service: 40 years, five months

**Keith E. Perrodin**  
Survey technician,  
Corporate Headquarters  
Service: 30 years, 11 months

**Mayo Raughton**  
Customer service  
representative, Roanoke  
Service: 17 years, 11 months

**Earnest Rickey Reece**  
Lead lineman, Reform Crew  
Headquarters  
Service: 44 years, eight months

**Sherry A. Roberts**  
Operations assistant, Mobile  
Division Operations Center  
Service: 32 years, six months

**William Theodore Self**  
Diesel mechanic,  
Gorgas Steam Plant  
Service: 34 years, eight months

**Donna M. Smith**  
Team leader,  
Corporate Headquarters  
Service: 35 years, six months

**Robert Earle Smith**  
Substation specialist,  
Substation Maintenance  
Headquarters — 13th Street  
Service: 46 years, nine months

**Gary Wade Stewart**  
Engineer, Birmingham Division  
Office — Corporate Headquarters  
Service: 39 years, 10 months

**Robert Michael Stewart**  
Power supply mechanic,  
Gorgas Steam Plant  
Service: 41 years

**Cassandra Montez Taylor**  
Training instructor,  
Southern Division Office  
Service: 30 years, one month

**Patricia Vaughn**  
Administrative assistant,  
Mobile Division Office  
Service: 11 years, one month

**James Earl Washington**  
Local operations lineman,  
Tuscaloosa Crew Headquarters  
Service: 46 years, 10 months

**James Robert Worden Jr.**  
Manufacturer liaison,  
Corporate Headquarters  
Service: 44 years, 10 months.

# IN MEMORIAM

**Robbie K. Alexander**, 91, retiree,  
Selma, May 27.

**Larence Blanton**, 89, retiree,  
Gorgas Steam Plant, May 27.

**Marshall F. Boone**, 86, retiree,  
Thurlow Dam May 24.

**Larry W. Browning**, 68, retiree,  
General Services Complex 8 –  
Fuel/Environmental Testing Lab,  
July 5.

**Harmon D. Cambron**, 86, retiree,  
Corporate Headquarters,  
Feb. 4, 2019.

**Gene Clowdus**, 95, retiree,  
Centreville, May 9.

**Billy G. Cooper**, 84, retiree,  
Gaston Steam Plant, July 18.

**Frank T. Dates**, 76, retiree,  
Service Building – 12th Street,  
June 23.

**Terry M. Davis**, 77, retiree,  
Corporate Headquarters,  
June 18.

**Guy B. Edgil**, 78, retiree,  
Corporate Headquarters,  
June 24.

**Roger Terry Frazier Sr.**, 72,  
retiree, Corporate Headquarters  
– Power Delivery Field Forces,  
May 30.

**Betty M. Gillespie**, 80, retiree,  
Birmingham District, July 12.

**Kenneth A. Gravette**, 82, retiree,  
Miller Steam Plant, May 17.

**James D. Holland**, 83, retiree,  
Power Generation Services –  
Hydro Licensing, July 7.

**William J. Hughes**, 82, retiree,  
Gaston Steam Plant, July 9.

**Abdulaun B. Kuan**, 64, retiree,  
Gaston Steam Plant, June 16.

**Earl E. Middleton**, 86, retiree,  
Barry Steam Plant, May 24.

**Betty A. Perry**, 88, retiree,  
General Office, June 24.

**Wayne Phillips**, 81, retiree,  
Logan Martin Dam, July 27.

**Charles W. Pitchford**, 70, retiree,  
Harris Dam, June 10.

**Norman E. Ponder Jr.**, 97, retiree,  
General Office – Corporate Real  
Estate, June 27.

**James D. Runyan**, 92, retiree,  
Gadsden Steam Plant, May 24.

**William C. Sims**, 83, retiree,  
General Services Complex 3 –  
General Garage, May 20.

**Mary S. Smiley**, 87, retiree,  
Corporate Headquarters, June 8.

**Thomas E. Taylor**, 87, retiree,  
Southern Division Office, June 11.

**Herman O. Thrash Jr.**, 85, retiree,  
Corporate Headquarters, June 12.

**Ronald E. Tittle**, 66, retiree,  
Jasper, July 1.

**Archie Turner**, 93, retiree,  
Phenix City, June 10.

**Franky G. Watford**, 84, retiree,  
Farley Nuclear Plant, June 10.

**Junius Wells**, 70, retiree, Gorgas  
Steam Plant, July 11.

**Larry D. Wiggins**, 67, retiree,  
Birmingham Garage, June 17.

**Glenn D. Wilson**, 82, retiree,  
Mobile Division Office, June 3.

# Thumbs Up!

Alabama Power and The Nature Conservancy (TNC) have received a Partners for Environmental Progress (PEP) Environmental Stewardship Award for their work last year on an oyster reef. Alabama Power and TNC teamed to help preserve the reef at Helen Wood Park on Mobile Bay. TNC worked with the Alabama Power Foundation to fund restoring the reef, which fosters oyster settlement, creates fish habitat and provides a stable shoreline.

Children from six elementary, intermediate and high schools, including Jemison, Vestavia Hills, Thorsby and Wilsonville, were hosted by the Alabama Power Service Organization to fish on a 3-acre pond. More than 60 Gaston APSO members, including employees from Local 2077 of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, helped youngsters bait fishing poles and reel in their catches.

A skeet shoot fundraiser for the Gaston Steam Plant chapter of the Alabama Power Service Organization raised \$2,300 to buy four three-wheeled "Amtryke" bikes for special-needs students in Shelby County. The big, specially-designed, adjustable therapeutic tricycles are distributed by the Birmingham chapter of AMBUCS, a nonprofit service organization of business leaders.

Alabama Power received the 2019 Innovation Project Excellence Award at the GE North American User Conference. The company was recognized for its success this year in the deployment of Integrated Distribution and Management System (IDMS) applications focusing on areas such as distribution power flow, fault locating and fault isolation and service restoration. Corporate Headquarters PD Technology Manager **Bill Mintz** accepted the

award on the company's behalf.

Two members of Alabama Power's corporate Toastmasters Club, known as Power Speakers, were recognized for leadership at the district level of the organization. As Division B director for Toastmasters District 77, **Tamara Hall**, Corporate Headquarters Supplier Diversity consultant, led the 17 Birmingham-area clubs under her jurisdiction to President's Distinguished status, the highest recognition that Toastmasters organizations can receive. Additionally, **Gary Speights**, Toastmasters Division B Area director and Corporate Headquarters Energy Management Systems compliance analyst, ended the year with his area receiving President's Distinguished recognition. There are six Birmingham clubs in Speights' area. Power Speakers celebrated its 25th anniversary. About 25 past and present members honored the occasion with a program and meal at Corporate Headquarters in Birmingham. They shared stories about how the club assisted in their professional growth and helped develop their communications and leadership skills.

Two Alabama Power inventors received special recognition for their work. A U.S. patent was awarded to Southern Company Services for its Storm Confirmation, Path Prediction system. Co-invented by System Development and Support Manager **Derl Rhoades** and Team Leader **Brandon Lundy**, both of Corporate Headquarters, the system is a program that uses Automated Metering Infrastructure data to verify that a storm is a tornado and project the path it will follow. Tornadoes have a known radar signature, and the program can analyze the

signature and use that data to project the direction the storm will take.



Miller APSO raised \$18,700 through golf tourney.

The Miller Chapter of the Alabama Power Service Organization raised \$18,700 through its 2019 golf tournament. The event at the Robert Trent Jones Oxmoor Valley Golf Course benefited the chapter's annual Adopt-A-Child Christmas charity. The funds will provide Christmas gifts for more than 300 underprivileged children. There were 258 golfers and 24 volunteers either playing and/or working during the tourney.

**Scott McCaleb** and **Corey Kizzire**, Fayette line crew members, received a note from Matthew Vines of the Alabama State Department of Education thanking them for taking part in career day at Fayette and Lamar County schools. "As we get ready to rock the next school year, I wanted to say thank you for your continued support of our local schools," wrote Vines. He added that McCaleb and Kizzire were professional and communicated well with students. The note was accompanied by a box of cupcakes.





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