Alabama CURRENTS

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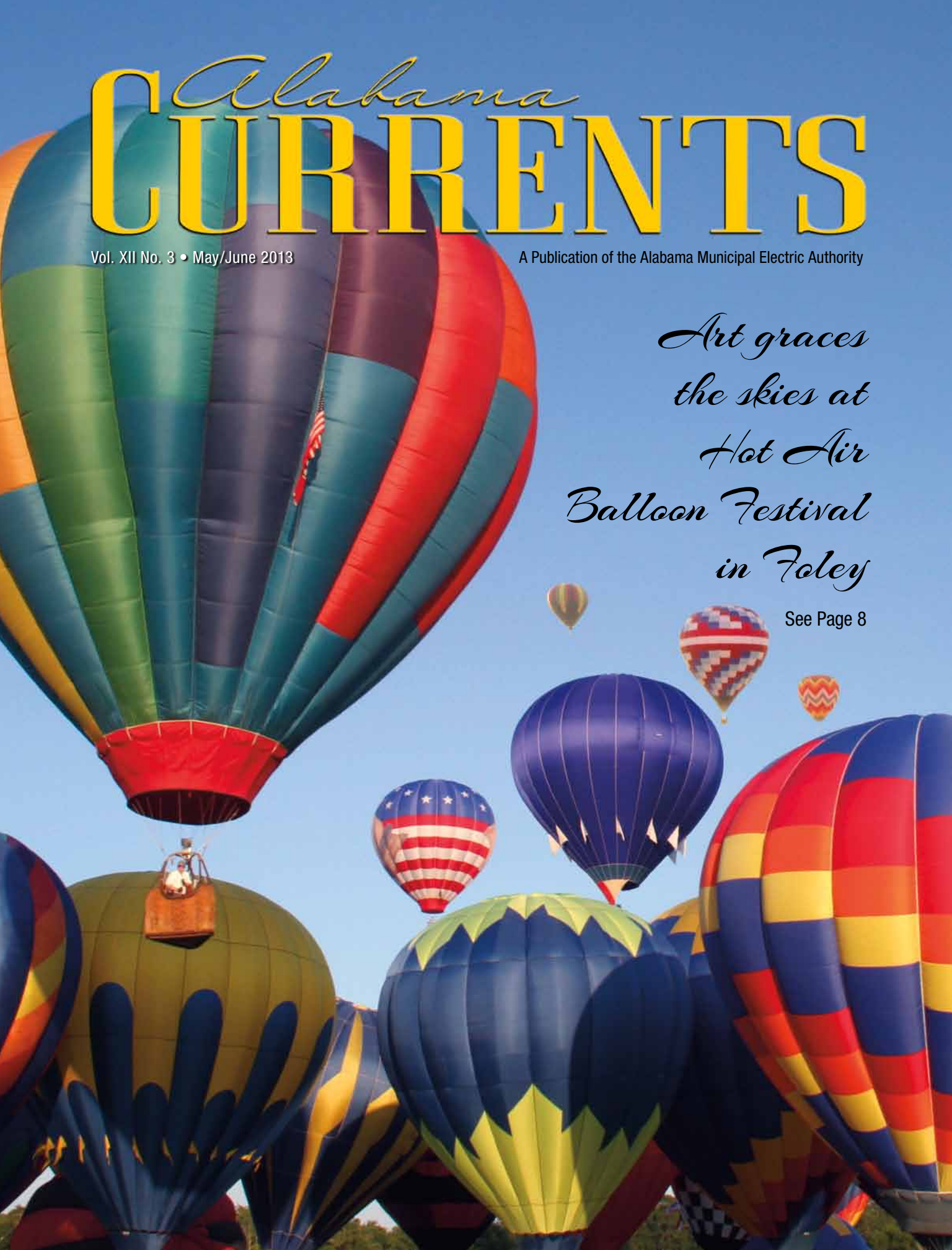

Art graces the skies at Hot Air Balloon Festival in Foley

See Page 8

From the Editor

Drum roll please. And the winners are…

Yes, it's that time of year again when the Alabama Municipal Electric Authority (AMEA) and its 11 Members announce the winners of the AMEA Scholarship Program. It's a very special time of year for us and our Members as we continue to make smart investments in the leaders of tomorrow. AMEA and its Members are helping enrich the lives of students throughout the state and we are proud to do our part as a good corporate citizen.

This year, 33 high school seniors will enroll in a four-year university or two-year college through the AMEA Scholarship Program. Scholarships, totaling approximately $82,500, will be awarded in this year's program.

Education is one key to economic development. Education and economic development are so intertwined; the success of one depends on the success of the other. The more educated a potential workforce is, the more attractive it is to potential employers. A more educated workforce can also expect higher pay levels, which helps to stimulate overall economic activity. Besides the direct economic benefits, there are indirect benefits such as an improvement in public health, and a better understanding among the public and its leaders of how to effectively and efficiently utilize resources.

An important part of Alabama's economic development efforts and success depends on having an educated workforce and access to continued education and training. More education means more jobs that make more money. That's a formula our state continues to strive for.

Today's jobs require people with more skill and more education. The job you could get 30 years ago with only a high school diploma for your academic efforts now requires some kind of postsecondary education.

The business community has a vested interest in lending support to the education of its community and we are proud to be a part of that support.

We congratulate this year's scholarship winners and wish them the very best in their future endeavors!

Lisa Miller

AMEA Manager of Communications and Marketing

AMEA and its Members announce 2013 scholarship winners

Thirty-three (33) high school seniors will be enrolling in a four-year university or two-year college this year with help from the Alabama Municipal Electric Authority (AMEA) and its 11 Members through the 2013 AMEA Scholarship Program.

AMEA has provided scholarship assistance since 1992.

Approximately $82,500 will be awarded in this year's program. AMEA received 153 scholarship applications in the 2013 program.

To be eligible for the AMEA scholarship or technical school scholarship, a student's family must receive electric service from a Member's electric utility and the student must attend an Alabama college or university.

"We are very pleased with the response to this year's program and we congratulate the winners," said Pamela Poole, AMEA Scholarship Program Coordinator. "Through such initiatives as the AMEA Scholarship Program, AMEA and its Members are helping enrich the lives of students throughout the state, and the benefits of this program will have a long, lasting effect."

Ms. Poole said AMEA will begin marketing the scholarship program to schools within its Member cities and also on the AMEA web site, www.amea.com, Scholarship Program, this fall.

Continued on Page 7

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MISSION STATEMENT

AMEA's mission is to provide for our Member communities a reliable and economical source of electric power, enabling them to preserve and enhance the benefits of municipal utility ownership for their citizens and the electric customers they serve. We strive to offer services that our Members need and can adapt to provide the best value for their communities and customers.

Alabama CURRENTS

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On the Cover

Celebrate the 9th Annual Gulf Coast Hot Air Balloon Festival during Father's Day weekend, June 14 and 15. The festival welcomes more than 45 hot air balloonists from across the country to the Foley Sports Complex, 18507 U.S. Highway 98 West, Foley.

This year's event features a special shape hot air balloon, "Smokey Bear", a giant replication of the beloved Smokey the Bear traveling from Albuquerque, NM.

Weather permitting; balloons fly early mornings and late evenings along with the festivals colorful nightly balloon glows. Daytime has something for every member of the family including the highly popular Disc-Connected K9's World Famous Frisbee Dogs, a free Kid's Fun Zone, arts and crafts, live music and great food.

The Gulf Coast Hot Air Balloon Festival is a free event presented by Tanger Outlets. For more information, see Page 8, or visit www.gulfcoastballoonfestival.com.

(Photos by David Horton)

In My Opinion

I have just returned from a Washington legislative conference held by the American Public Power Association. The Alabama Municipal Electric Authority (AMEA) participates with Electric Cities of Alabama in congressional visits to focus on issues which impact the electric rates our customers ultimately pay for electric service.

During our visits, one area of focus was the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) requirements on coal-fired generation plants and the future expectations on greenhouse gas emissions, as well as EPA's desire to eliminate coal, our most abundant resource, from electric generation. EPA's actions have had a significant impact on electric costs to you, the consumer, over the past 10 years and will continue to do so in the future.

For this reason, it is important that consumers work to build efficiencies in their own energy usage. That's why AMEA continues to promote energy efficiency and weatherization initiatives for your home as the quickest way to positively impact your electric costs. Energy efficiency involves conserving energy use, avoiding waste and working smarter. It just makes sense

AMEA and its 11 Members encourage consumers to be "wise energy users" during these challenging times in our industry. Energy is more than numbers on a utility bill; it is the foundation of everything we do. All of us use energy every day — for transportation, cooking, heating and cooling rooms, manufacturing, lighting, and entertainment. We rely on energy to make our lives comfortable, productive and enjoyable. To maintain our quality of life, we must use our energy resources wisely.

The choices we make about how we use energy — turning machines off when we're not using them or choosing to buy energy-efficient appliances — impact our environment and our lives. There are many things we can do to use less energy and use it more wisely. Here are some examples:

Energy Depot®: Customers of AMEA Member cities have an online resource for energy efficiency right at their fingertips, called Energy Depot®. Energy Depot is a one-stop shop of online resources and tools to help you better understand and manage your home energy use and costs. Energy Depot allows you to analyze your energy bill and how energy is used in your home.

Unlike most other energy analysis tools, Energy Depot uses your actual bill and breaks out how energy is used within your home. The profile also gives you specific suggestions on how you can improve energy efficiency and use.

For more information on Energy Depot, visit www.amea.com, Hometown Connections, Energy Depot, and use the drop-down menu to select your city/utility.

Heating and cooling. Heating and cooling systems use more energy than any other systems in our homes. Typically, 42 percent of an average family's energy bills are spent to keep homes at a comfortable temperature.

You can save energy and money by installing insulation, maintaining and upgrading the equipment, and practicing energy-efficient behaviors. A two-degree adjustment to your thermostat setting (lower in winter, higher in summer) can lower heating bills by four percent and prevent 500 pounds of carbon dioxide from entering the atmosphere each year. Programmable thermostats can automatically control temperature for time of day and season.

Insulation and weatherization. AMEA Member cities encourage you to reduce heating and cooling needs by investing in insulation and weatherization products. Warm air leaking into your home in summer and out of your home in winter can waste a lot of energy. Insulation wraps your house in a nice warm blanket, but air can still leak in or out through small cracks. Often the effect of small leaks is the same as keeping a door wide open. One of the easiest money-saving measures you can do is caulk, seal, and weather-strips all the cracks to the outside. You can save 10 percent or more on your energy bill by stopping the air leaks in your home.

Doors and windows. About one-third of a typical home's heat loss occurs through the doors and windows. Energy-efficient doors are insulated and seal tightly to prevent air from leaking through or around them. If your doors are in good shape and you don't want to replace them, make sure they seal tightly and have door sweeps at the bottom to prevent air leaks. Installing insulated storm doors provides an additional barrier to leaking air.

Most homes have many more windows than doors. Replacing older windows with new energy-efficient ones can reduce air leaks and utility bills. The best windows shut tightly and are constructed of two or more pieces of glass separated by a gas that does not conduct heat well.

If you cannot replace older windows, there are several things you can do to make them more energy efficient. First, caulk any cracks around the windows and make sure they seal tightly. Add storm windows or sheets of clear plastic to the outside to create additional air barriers. You can also hang insulated drapes on the inside — during the winter, open them on sunny days and close them at night. During the summer, close them during the day to keep out the sun.

Appliances. Appliances account for about 20 percent of a typical household's energy use, with refrigerators, clothes washers and dryers at the top of the list. When shopping for new appliances, you should think of two price tags. The first one is the purchase price. The

second price tag is the cost of operating the appliance during its lifetime. You'll be paying that second price tag on your utility bill every month for the next 10 to 20 years, depending on the appliance. Many energy-efficient appliances cost more to buy, but save money in lower energy costs. Over the life of an appliance, an energy-efficient model is always a better deal.

When you shop for a new appliance, look for the ENERGY STAR label — your assurance that the product saves energy. ENERGY STAR appliances have been identified by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and Department of Energy as the most energy-efficient products in their classes. If the average American were to equip his/her home only with products that have the ENERGY STAR label, he/she would cut his/her energy bills, as well as greenhouse gas emissions, by about 30 percent.

Lighting. As a nation, we spend about one-quarter of our electricity on lighting, at a cost of more than $37 billion annually. Much of this energy is wasted using inefficient incandescent light bulbs. Only 10 percent of the energy used by an incandescent bulb produces light; the rest is given off as heat.

If you replace 25 percent of your light bulbs with fluorescents, you can save about 50 percent on your lighting bill. Compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs) provide the same amount of light and no longer flicker or buzz. CFLs cost more to buy, but they save money in the long run because they use only one-quarter the energy of incandescent bulbs and last 8-12 times longer. Each CFL you install can save you $30 to $60 over the bulb's life.

Water heating. Water heating is the third largest energy expense in your home. It typically accounts for about 14 percent of your utility bill. Heated water is used for showers, baths, laundry, dishwashing and general cleaning. There are four ways to cut your water heating bills — use less hot water, turn down the thermostat on your water heater, insulate your water heater and pipes, and buy a new, more efficient water heater.

Other ways to conserve hot water include taking showers instead of baths; taking shorter showers, fixing leaks in faucets and pipes, and using the lowest temperature wash and rinse settings on clothes washers.

Intensifying our efforts in energy efficiency and weatherization gives you, the consumer, the tools you can use to offset potential increases in your electric bill.

You have the power to control your energy bill. By consuming electricity wisely in your home and/or business, you can become part of the solution to cope with higher energy costs.

Fred D. Clark, Jr.
AMEA President & CEO

May is National Electrical Safety Month

May is National Electrical Safety Month and the Electrical Safety Foundation International (ESFI) is spearheading its annual effort to raise awareness about potential home electrical hazards and the importance of electrical safety. This year's campaign theme is "Electrical Safety for All Ages," which takes a multigenerational approach to electrical safety by encouraging families to work together to identify and correct potential home fire hazards.

While electrical hazards threaten the public at large, our youngest and oldest populations are exceptionally vulnerable. Nearly seven children a day are treated in emergency rooms for electric shock or burns caused by tampering with a wall outlet and one-third of people who are killed by home electrical fires are over the age of 65.

A basic understanding of your electrical system can help you prevent electrical hazards. Whether you are a homeowner or a renter, electrical safety should be a top priority in your home. Awareness of electrical hazards is the key to reducing the staggering number of electrically-related home fires, injuries and deaths that occur every year.

Electricity plays an essential role in how your home operates. Whether watching TV, powering heating and cooling systems, or charging a cell phone, we rely on our home's electrical system to provide us with power when and where we need it.

The current economic downturn has inspired more homeowners to tackle do-it-yourself projects than ever before. Faced with declining home values and aging properties, homeowners may choose not to pay for the services of a licensed electrician.

However, most do not have the training or experience needed to safely perform home electrical work, increasing the risk of immediate injuries and electrocutions and potentially introducing new dangers into the home. Working with electricity requires thorough planning and extreme care, and cutting corners can be a costly mistake.

ESFI strongly recommends hiring a qualified, licensed electrician to perform any electrical work in your home. However, if you do decide to do-it-yourself, consider the following important safety tips before undertaking any home electrical project:

- Make an effort to learn about your home electrical system so that you can safely navigate and maintain it.
- Never attempt a project that is beyond your skill level. Knowing when to call a professional may help prevent electrical fires, injuries, and fatalities.
- Always turn off the power to the circuit that you plan to work on by switching off the circuit breaker in the main service panel.
- Be sure to unplug any lamp or appliance before working on it.
- Test the wires before you touch them to make sure that the power has been turned off.
- Never touch plumbing or gas pipes when performing a do-it-yourself electrical project.

For more electrical safety information, visit www.esfi.org. You can also find useful electrical safety resources at www.amea.com, Publications & News, Safety Resources.

How About a New House?

I am very much aware that most of you who read this column have no plans whatsoever to build a new house. However, most of you are aware that interest rates for new house construction have been near record lows for some time now. And in many areas, there has been a significant increase in the number of new houses being built. Personally, I think that it is a good time to consider building that American dream house. Through the years, I have been associated with a fairly large number of families that could afford to move into a new house simply because the savings on the maintenance and utility bills, between the old and the new house, could help make the new house payment.

In my last column, I mentioned some of the things that I had learned from building a new house for our family about 30 years ago. Well, just about every year, we learn more and better ways to make our houses more energy efficient. I want to use the rest of this column to give you my current list of energy-efficiency recommendations for a new house being built in Alabama.

Floor Construction

1. If the floor is a concrete slab and in the northern 1/3 of the state, insulate the perimeter of the slab with 1" of rigid foam.
2. If the floor is a crawlspace and there is never any standing water under the house, encapsulate and seal the crawlspace. If the house is in the northern 1/3 of the state, you might add some insulation for better comfort.

Walls

1. Insulate the exterior walls with a minimum of 3 ½" of damp spray cellulose or foam.
2. Caulk all penetrations in the building envelope that the insulation could not seal.
3. Use wood or vinyl windows that have a U-factor of .30 or less and have a Solar Heat Gain Coefficient {SHGC} rating of .25 or less as evidenced by a sticker on the window which shows testing by the National Fenestration Rating Council {NRFC}. There are now triple glazed windows that are totally feasible with a U-factor rating of .20 and a SHGC rating of .23 which are super energy efficient.

Roof and Ceiling

1. If the house has a regular attic, use radiant barrier roof sheathing such as TechShield® and install R-45 cellulose or foam for ceiling insulation.
   OR
2. Totally encapsulate the attic with foam. Actually in this case, you no longer have an attic. You just have a big space overhead that looks like an attic. This total space is now inside the building envelope.

Heating and Cooling

1. Be certain that the heating and cooling system is property sized and ductwork is designed for each particular house and room by using a Manual J type program. Do not estimate or guess.
2. Use metal for ducts and seal all joints with duct mastic.
3. Install the most energy-efficient geothermal or air to air heat pump system that is feasible for particular house.

Water Heater

Use either a Rheem Marathon™ or a unit like the GE GeoSpring™ Hybrid for the water heater.

Appliances and Lighting

Basically use appliances that meet ENERGY STAR guidelines and do your homework about lighting. Look closely at LED (light-emitting diode) fixtures which are becoming more cost effective and are super energy efficient.

I know that I did not give you a lot of details about these recommendations. That was on purpose because I was not trying to teach you about why you should do any one thing, but rather hoping that everyone would realize just how few things it takes to have an energy-efficient house. Building an energy-efficient house is not difficult to do, but it is sometimes difficult to get people to do it.

Please understand that these recommendations are just my opinion based on years of experience. Some may not agree with me. Others may want more information. And some may have a better idea. Whatever it may be, if it has to do with energy efficiency, you may call me and I will happy to talk to you. See you in July when it is hot.

Doug Rye, an Arkansas architect, is known as the 'King of Caulk and Talk' and 'America's Energy Expert'. Doug has helped thousands of homeowners save money on their utility bills. He hosts the popular "Home Remedies" radio talk program, which has been on the air for over 20 years and has aired in 19 states. He has conducted energy-saving seminars in almost every state, and averages over 100 per year. Have a question for Doug? Contact him at (501) 653-7931 or www.dougrye.com.

AMEA and its Members announce 2013 scholarship winners

continued from page 2

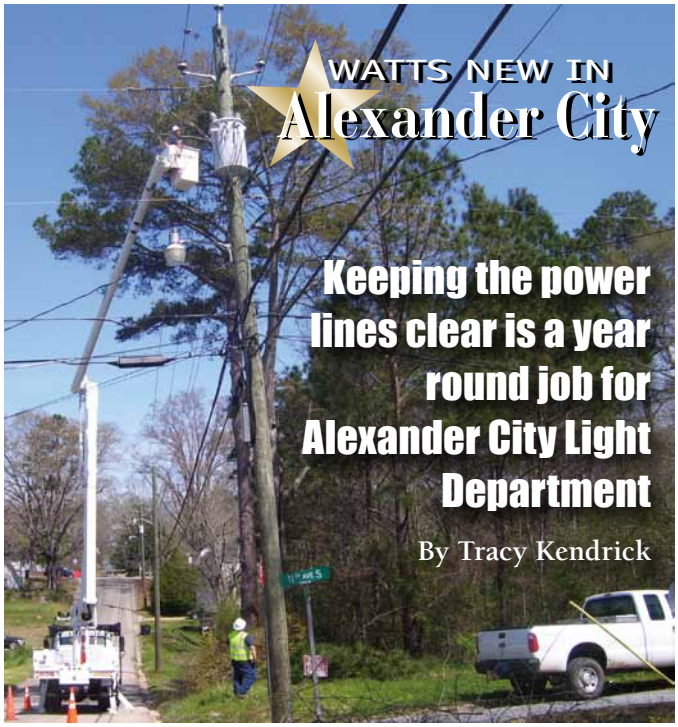
This year's winners are:

2013 AMEA Scholarship

Kelly M. Harris, Benjamin Russell High School, Alexander City
Logan R. Palmer, Benjamin Russell High School, Alexander City
Anna L. Price, Benjamin Russell High School, Alexander City
Nathaniel T. Boley, Houston Academy, Dothan
John H. Morris, Providence Christian School, Dothan
Andie L. Stokes, Northview High School, Dothan
Rachel J. Breslin, Fairhope High School, Fairhope
Katherine E. Lewis, Fairhope High School, Fairhope
Madilyn E. Tomaso, Fairhope High School, Fairhope
Griffin A. Fisk, Daphne High School, Riviera Utilities
Austin E. Jones, Spanish Fort High School, Riviera Utilities
Travion D. Smith, LaFayette High School, LaFayette
Jadalyn P. Story, LaFayette High School, LaFayette
Evan D. Culpepper, Lanett High School, Lanett
Meagan L. Self, Springwood School, Lanett
Morgan T. Baines, Luverne High School, Luverne
Alicia R. Davis, Luverne High School, Luverne
Virginia P. Flowers, Crenshaw Christian Academy, Luverne
Michael W. Bizilia, Opelika High School, Opelika
Katherine J. Parr, Opelika High School, Opelika
Miranda L. Casey, Spring Garden High School, Piedmont
FranShay K.T. Garrett, Piedmont High School, Piedmont
Mary K. Cantrell, Sylacauga High School, Sylacauga Utilities Board
Melissa Huynh, Sylacauga High School, Sylacauga Utilities Board
David T. Hickman, Coosa Valley Academy, Sylacauga Utilities Board
Quanisha B. Blackmon, Booker T. Washington High School, Utilities Board of Tuskegee
Leonard M. Hall, Booker T. Washington High School, Utilities Board of Tuskegee
Marquess H. James, Booker T. Washington High School, Utilities Board of Tuskegee

2013 AMEA Technical School Scholarship

Matthew C. Collins, Spanish Fort High School, Riviera Utilities
Kelsey S. Trammell, LaFayette High School, LaFayette
Princess D. Hill, Lanett High School, Lanett
Gabriel N. Batiste, Opelika High School, Opelika
Patrick T. Raney, Piedmont High School, Piedmont



Keeping the power lines clear is a year round job for Alexander City Light Department

By Tracy Kendrick

In the spring and summer, we notice things growing and blooming all around. New growth on trees and bushes is everywhere. While this time of year brings us out to notice these things, keeping the power lines clear is a year round job. The Alexander City Light Department rotates throughout the city clearing under our lines as well as emergencies.

The Light Department has two tree trimmers. Steve Caldwell and Blake Self joined the department in August 2012. Both came to the department with many years of experience. They have a combined 40 years of experience trimming trees.

Caldwell and Self are valuable assets to the department. They work hard every day trimming and ridding the power lines of dead trees. They rotate to different areas around the city where the greatest need is at the time. Often, they are pulled off of trimming to cut dead trees that may be a danger to the lines. They also help out other city departments when the need arises.

When you are out admiring the new blooms, take a moment to check for any limbs or trees that might be growing near the power lines. Spring, summer, fall or winter, Caldwell and Self will be out trimming.

To report any limbs or trees which might be endangering power lines, please call the department at (256) 409-2080.

TO REPORT AN OUTAGE IN ALEXANDER CITY:
Day Time (256) 409-2080,
After Hours/Holidays – Call Police Dept. (256) 234-3421
Please do not call 911

WATTS NEW AT
Riviera Utilities

9th Annual Gulf Coast Hot Air Balloon Festival set for Father's Day weekend

By David Horton, Riviera Utilities, and Kristen Roberson, South Baldwin Chamber of Commerce

The 9th Annual Gulf Coast Hot Air Balloon Festival, presented by Tanger Outlets, welcomes more than 45 hot air balloonists from across the country on Father's Day weekend, June 14 and 15, to the Foley Sports Complex, 18507 U.S. Highway 98 West in Foley.

Enjoy the floating works of art as they grace the skies of South Baldwin County for Saturday morning competition flights beginning at 6 a.m. You can even get up close and personal as the hot air balloons light up the evening skies at the nightly balloon glows, held Friday and Saturday nights, between 7 and 9 p.m.

"Bringing your family to the festival is a great way to reconnect, slow down, enjoy each other and build long lasting memories," said Russ Moore, 2013 Festival Chair. "Every year, thousands of families can be seen with blankets spread out or lawn chairs side by side, enjoying each other's company as they take in the sights and sounds of the festival. Kids explore all parts of the festival from the free Kid's Fun Zone activities to petting alligators or climbing a rock wall. The family-friendly festival is a great place for families to spend a carefree, relaxing weekend."

The balloons are not visible during mid-day due to wind conditions, but there are many other fun activities for all ages. Festival goers can enjoy the free, fun entertainment featuring something for every member of your family.

Spread out your blanket, grab an ice cold drink and enjoy a variety of live music daily, from country to rock and roll. Exciting live musical performances will feature acts like *The Tip Tops*, Friday, 8:30 p.m.

"The World Famous Disc Connected K-9 Frisbee Dog Show is back again this year by popular demand," Moore said. "Be sure to catch one of the many shows by the World Famous Disc Connected K-9 Frisbee Dog Show, a group of highly trained canine dogs rescued from animal shelters. Toss after toss you will be amazed as man's best friend defies gravity catching their prized flying saucers. Year after year, this high flying group of canines truly amazes the crowds with their stunts and tricks. Best of all is the story that is retold during the show. All of the dogs participating in the show are actually rescued and rehabilitated from shelters around the U.S. It is a very inspirational story for all of you pet lovers!"

Pet a baby alligator, dance like a butterfly to fun kid's tunes, paint your face like a tiger, or try a little family-friendly game of limbo. The free Kid's Fun Zone offers hours of fun for any age from 2 until 7 p.m. on Friday and 8 a.m. until 7 p.m. on Saturday.

Grab an ice cream cone or snack on popcorn as you stroll through our Arts & Crafts Village and Retail Marketplace featuring local crafters, artisans, and retailers. View daily demonstrations from crafters and chefs, find a one of kind piece of art, or grab a souvenir. Vendors open from 2-8 p.m. on Friday and 8 a.m.–8 p.m. on Saturday.

Tanger Outlets will hold their Kick off and Glow event at 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, June 13. The event features a balloon glow, children's entertainment and opportunities to win prizes from the stores of Tanger Outlets. Tune up your vocal cords and participant in the Gulf Coast Rising Stars Talent Competition set to take place on Friday and Saturday at Tanger Outlets. Singers compete for a chance to win cash as well as the opportunity to perform on the main stage at the festival. Entry forms can be downloaded on the festival website or picked up at both Tanger Outlets Guest Services locations.

Avoid festival traffic by riding the free shuttle busses from Tanger Outlets. Festival onsite parking is available for $5 per vehicle, per day. Onsite parking passes may be purchased for Friday or Saturday allowing for unlimited access each day of the festival.

For a complete schedule of events, shuttle routes and to see photos and videos of the event, visit www.gulfcoastballoonfestival.com, find us on Facebook or call (251) 943-3291.

A lot of people get up close and personal with the balloons.

WATTS NEW IN

Fairhope

Fairhope upgrades to LED lights for exteriors, parks and pier

By D. Fran Morley

LED lights can be used in traditional overhead pole lighting, such as the fixture shown in the close-up, or in more decorative lighting like the ones pictured here that light up a Fairhope parking lot.

After three years of field testing LED (light-emitting diode) lights in various applications, Scott Sligh, electric superintendent for the City of Fairhope, is confident LED is the light of the future and is here to stay.

"We've been installing some here and there — on the exterior of some city buildings, in a few parking lots — and what we've learned is that there are many pros to using these rather than incandescent or fluorescent lights and many of the claims that manufacturers claimed at the outset are true.

"First is maintenance. LED lights last much longer," Sligh said. "There are some that we installed three years ago that we've not had to change in all that time. Traditional technology lights may require maintenance every couple of years. Second, the LED lights also use much less electricity for the same comparative output of light, roughly one-third, in some cases and depending on what the application is. In some observations, the lights might not seem as bright, but the light spreads out more uniformly, which makes it more usable and many find this to be very aesthetic."

The cost of LED lights is coming down, Sligh said. "There's been competition among a couple of different light technologies, like back when Beta and VHS were competing for the videotape market, and competition is always good. I think LED is winning out and we're going to continue to see prices come down some."

Sligh said the technology is not well suited to replace ball field lights with LED yet, but as other lights around town need upgrading, Fairhope Electric crews are upgrading to new fixtures with LED lights.

"Two projects for this spring and early summer include the bluff parks and the pier. The lights will be dark-sky friendly, meaning the light won't cast upward, but instead be all directed downward, and that will be noticeable. I think the pier is going to look fantastic when the new lighting is finished."

WATTS NEW IN

Piedmont

Piedmont Benevolence Center offers variety of services to the community

By Ben Singleton

The Piedmont Benevolence Center offers many services to the residents of Piedmont. The Benevolence Center is a 501-C3 non-profit charitable organization that was established in February 2010.

The center offers citizens assistance on utility bills and prescription bills. They also provide a food distribution on the third Saturday of each month. Furniture, appliances and clothes are also available to residents in need. The Benevolence Center has a thrift store and all proceeds go back to help the center.

One of the Benevolence Center's biggest programs each year, called Stars of Christmas, provides Christmas for needy children and families in the area. The program helps over 225 individuals annually.

Not only does the Benevolence Center help those in need daily, but it also helps people in times of disaster. The center partners with the American Red Cross and can serve as a shelter. The building is setup to house up to 25 people. The building is also equipped with a generator.

The Benevolence Center serves as the only recycling location in Piedmont. The program was started a few months ago and it recycles aluminum, plastic and paper. The center encourages every resident to participate in this program because it not only helps the environment but the Benevolence Center as well.

A wide range of classes are also available at the center. Budget and finance, nutrition, sewing, and couponing are some of the classes they offer. They are currently working to offer a resume' writing class. They also assist in job referrals for local businesses. A personal staffing company comes once a month and assists residents in filling out job applications. The Benevolence Center has a bulletin board for companies to post available jobs.

The Benevolence Center is operated mainly by volunteers. Over 100 volunteers with over 500 volunteer hours a month help make the center a success.

"The Benevolence Center could not be what it is today without our volunteers," said Center Director Heather Lamey.

Piedmont Benevolence Center

WATTS NEW IN
Lanett

City of Lanett honors police heroes

By Jennie Gunnells

The City of Lanett is blessed with heroes in the Police Department. Sgt. Ariel Kerry was honored for bravery with the Lifesaver Medal at the March 4 Lanett City Council Meeting. Sgt. Kerry was honored his lifesaving skills when he jumped into the Chattahoochee River on Jan. 31 to save a suspect who could not swim. Also during the council meeting, Police Chief Angie Spates presented Kerry with a Certificate of Commendation.

On Jan. 31, Sgt. Kerry observed the suspect/offender walking in the middle of the road. Lanett Police Officers pulled out behind him. The offender was still walking in the middle of the road. Officers motioned for him to stop and the suspect kept going. Officers began pursuing the suspect down South 2nd Avenue and the chase ended at the Lanett Mill Parking lot. The suspect jumped the fence going to the Treatment Plant area following the fence line along the river. Sgt. observed the suspect attempting to swim and going under at least twice. Sgt. Kerry then realized that the suspect could not swim. Sgt. Kerry explained that the suspect had stepped in a drop off area of the river. Sgt. Kerry then went in the Chattahoochee River and grabbed the offender's arm and pulled him to shore.

The offender was transported to Lanett Police Department and was cleared by the EMS Department. The offender was given dry clothes. A crack pipe was recovered in the offender's right front pants pocket. The offender also had felony probation violation warrants. The offender was transported to the Chambers County Detention Facility without further incident.

Lanett Police Lt. Lewis Hill pins Sgt. Ariel Kerry with the Lifesaver Medal as Police Chief Angie Spates looks on.

During the council meeting, Lt. Lewis Hill pinned Sgt. Kerry with the Lifesaver Medal.

Lt. Hill received the Medal of Honor for saving a brother officer's life. The Medal of Honor is the highest honor bestowed by the Lanett Police Department. Five officers received the award and Hill was one of the police officers honored.

Lt. Hill took the time out of his busy schedule to tell me his personal story of this famous call, which is on YouTube. On Sept. 21, 2008, officers received a double zero call which is the most feared call when you are a police officer. Lt. Hill responded, along with Sheriff Sid Lockhart, as well as Chambers County deputies. Several officers from Chambers County and of City of Lanett Police Department were trying to get in position to retrieve the downed deputy, Shannon Rollins, who had been wounded and his legs were paralyzed. Deputy Rollins was lying on his back in the middle of the yard and the offender could have shot him again at any time. Since Deputy Rollins' legs were paralyzed and he was unable to move, Lt. Hill, Sheriff Lockhart and the other officers used a patrol car for cover as they started toward Deputy Rollins. Deputy Tony Eason and Lt. Hill grabbed Deputy Rollins and pulled him into the patrol car. They could not get him all the way into the car and Lt. Hill had to run to the other side of the vehicle and finish pulling him into the vehicle. Lt. Hill had to expose his back to the offender and the offender was still shooting at the officers. As Sheriff Lockhart backed out and headed toward the hospital with Deputy Rollins, the offender began to shoot at the officers and a four-hour standoff began. After four hours, the offender got into a police vehicle and tried to leave. The offender tried to run over several officers and was still shooting out the window at the officers. The offender did not get far as the police vehicle was disabled by gun fire from police and the offender was apprehended just seconds later. The offender received 90 years in prison for this crime.

WATTS NEW IN
Opelika

Opelika will host a special Memorial Day service

By Jan Gunter

During the summer of 1918, long before most of us were born, a battle raged on at the Croix Rouge Farm in France, during World War I. In this bloody battle, the members of the National Guard's 42nd Infantry "Rainbow" Division, and in particular, the men of the 167th Infantry Regiment (an Alabama Army National Guard unit called into federal service during "the war to end all wars"), were up against heavily armed German forces that had machine guns and artillery back up (the US forces there at the farm did not have artillery support). The weather conditions were horrible, and to most, it might have seemed that the American forces didn't stand a chance.

They were proven wrong. While the initial battalion assault on German forces failed, leaving American troops pinned down in the open field, the second initiative was surprisingly successful. The Alabama soldiers scattered themselves across the open field and forged ahead killing many with their rifles, pistols, bayonets and rifle butts.

Shown at the Croix Rouge Farm Memorial Grounds in France is the 10-foot bronze statue, which is an everlasting tribute to the men of the 42nd Infantry Rainbow Division. The statue was sculptured by British artist James Butler.

One hundred sixty three (163) men from the 167th died there that day.

On Monday, May 27, beginning at 10 a.m. at the Veterans Memorial Monument, which stands in front of Opelika's City Hall, located at 204 South 7th Street in downtown Opelika, the City will host its annual Memorial Day services to remember our military heroes of all wars who fought for the freedom of our country; many giving their lives in the effort. As with every year's celebration/memorial service for the past decade, Opelika's theme will be "Let Us Never Forget: Freedom Isn't Free!"

This years' service will feature special guest speaker Rod Frazer of Montgomery. He will remember – and honor – the brave soldiers of Alabama's 167th Infantry Regiment who fought so gallantly at Croix Rouge Farm, France. He will speak of how Alabama's 167th saved that area from enemy forces; and, he will present the City of Opelika with a commemorative picture of the special 10-foot bronze statue which was sculptured by British artist James Butler, and placed at the Croix Rouge Farm Memorial grounds in France as an everlasting tribute to the men of the "42nd Infantry Rainbow Division". (It was unveiled and dedicated on Nov. 12, 2011 with Mayor Gary Fuller; City Council President Eddie Smith; Maj. General Perry G. Smith, the Adjutant General of Alabama; and Lt. Col. Larry Norred, 167th Infantry Battalion Commander, among others, in attendance.)

The statue depicts an American soldier carrying a dead comrade from the battlefield and helps promote the memory of Alabama's soldiers' valiant deeds on that fateful day in 1918. A book written about that bloody battle will be presented to the Lewis Cooper Jr. Memorial Library.

The public is cordially invited to join the City of Opelika as we celebrate this very special Memorial Day service. And, we ask that if you are a family member of one of those brave soldiers who fought with Alabama's 167th Infantry Regiment, and can be at the services, to please contact Jan Gunter, Community Relations Specialist for the City of Opelika. We'd like to give a special Certificate of Appreciation to you on behalf of your ancestor. You can reach her by calling her office, (334) 705-5136, or emailing her at jgunter@ci.opelika.al.us.

Following the Memorial Day services, the Museum of East Alabama will be open and serve refreshments so that folks can view the extraordinary memorabilia of Opelika's history, including our soldiers through the years.

Opelika truly is a community that is rich in heritage.

Special Note: The combat unit received its nickname "Rainbow Division" when its first Chief of Staff, then-Colonel Douglas MacArthur, described the makeup of the 26 National Guard units within the division as "stretching across America like a rainbow."

Hundreds of new jobs coming to Alabama as Commercial Jet opens aviation services facility in Dothan

By Cassandra Milton

On April 5, Dothan Mayor Mike Schmitz was joined by Governor Robert Bentley, House Speaker Mike Hubbard, Alabama Department of Commerce Secretary Greg Canfield, and area community leaders in Dothan to announce that Commercial Jet will invest $12 million to open a new 400,000 square-foot facility at Dothan Regional Airport. The opening of the new facility will more than triple Commercial Jet's capacity to provide freighter conversion and MRO (maintenance, repair and overhaul) services.

According to a synopsis that was prepared by Sorrells Business College at Troy University, the economic impact of Commercial Jet's relocation to the Dothan Regional Airport will result in 500 new jobs that will be created by the company and another 1,500 jobs in the community that will also be created. There will be a $21 million initial investment in the facility and total wages will exceed $74 million a year, which will result in almost $2 million per year in annual sales tax collections. After 10 years of operation, Commercial Jet will have paid $740 million in wages and contributed almost $23 million in sales and property taxes.

Commercial Jet's new maintenance facility includes multiple hangars, back shops, stores and offices, with extensive apron space for aircraft parking and servicing.

"Our new facility will broaden our ability to deliver high-quality integrated aviation services to commercial airlines and aircraft owners and operators," said David M. Sandri, company president. John Schildroth, vice president and general manager for the Dothan facility, said Commercial Jet plans to hire several hundred trained and experienced aircraft technicians in the local market within the next few years.

"I am proud that the State of Alabama could play a key role in providing hundreds of new jobs for the people of Dothan and the Wiregrass area," Governor Bentley said. "We know that Alabama is the ideal location for the aerospace and aviation industries. This announcement further strengthens our emerging role as an aerospace leader in the Southeast. Nothing is more important to me than creating new jobs, and we will continue our work to recruit companies and help them succeed."

The company said state officials and local civic and business leaders have given staunch support to Commercial Jet's expansion plans.

"This was all made possible through their efforts," said Sandri, citing Governor Bentley, Speaker Hubbard, Alabama House Representative Paul Lee, Secretary of Commerce Greg Canfield, Dothan Mayor Mike Schmitz, the Dale County Commission, the Houston County Commission, the Ozark-Dale County Economic Development Corporation, the Dothan Houston Airport Authority, the Dothan Chamber of Commerce and others.

Sanitary sewer line cleaning within the City of Dothan

By Jamie Quattlebaum

The City of Dothan provides sewer service to approximately 26,800 customers. Operation and maintenance activities for the City's wastewater collections system is a significant task and is the responsibility of Dothan Utilities, which is a department of the City of Dothan. The wastewater collection system is comprised of 480 miles of sanitary sewer line, 9,384 sanitary sewer manholes, and 50 sanitary sewer pumping stations.

In order to meet the needs of customers in a quick and efficient manner, Dothan Utilities categorizes sewer line cleaning into several functional categories. Cleaning is performed daily to check new construction pipe, restore service, support the overflow forensics program and maintain capacity. With regard to cleaning Dothan's sanitary sewer lines, Dothan Utilities utilizes two (2) Vactor combination truck units and one (1) Vac-con four wheel drive jetter truck.

The latest addition to Dothan Utilities' sanitary sewer cleaning fleet is a 2012 Vactor 2100 Plus Truck. This combination truck is capable of providing wash water at 80 gpm (gallons per minute) at 2500 psi (pounds per square inch) with the use of a single piston direct drive hydraulic water pump mounted on the truck and is equipped with 600 feet of 1 inch vacuum hose to remove debris from sanitary sewer lines. The combination truck is used for removing debris from sanitary sewer manholes, pumping stations and sanitary sewer lines. The combination truck has the ability to vacuum at depths of 30 feet and is capable of holding 15 yards of removed debris. For added safety, the unit is equipped with an Intelliview system to electronically monitor, troubleshoot and perform safety checks. This feature monitors temperature, flow, pressure and system diagnostics for the truck.

(L to R): Josh Hughes and Reggie Ford are shown with the 2012 Vactor 2100 Plus Truck, which is the latest addition to Dothan Utilities' sanitary sewer cleaning fleet.

WATTS NEW AT
Utilities Board of Tuskegee

How CSX spells J-O-B-S in Macon County

By Karin Hopkins

Macon County scored a home run, slam dunk and touchdown all at once with a recent economic development announcement. Beck's Turf Farm located off Interstate 85 in Macon County is the first recipient in the State of Alabama to receive CSX Select Site designation.

"There simply are not enough words to express how positive this is for us. It opens the door to economic vitality, jobs and prosperity," said Mark Ennis, who recently left the Utilities Board of Tuskegee (UBT), but is still Chairman of the Macon County Economic Development Authority (MCEDA), the organization that successfully pursued CSX.

"This is a place where we can put industries and this is what Macon County needs," said Governor Robert Bentley, who attended the ceremonial ribbon cutting held on March 4 at the 277-acre Beck's Turf Farm in Notasulga. As a result of the CSX certification, this land is now poised for industrial or manufacturing development.

Sites identified as Select are deemed highly attractive for major development projects. John Sanford, CSX Regional Development Manager for Alabama, said the capital investment potential for the site could range anywhere from $5 million to $100 million and could create hundreds of jobs.

According to state sources, 2012 was a boom year for Alabama with more than 20,000 jobs announced and total capital investment exceeding $5.4 billion.

"It's a very competitive state in pursuing new economic development projects," said Sanford whose comments confirm a high level of optimism about the Macon County property. "I expect that this certification will place this site in the front of the line for consideration of future projects."

State Senator Billy Beasley is also pleased with the designation and encouraged about the jobs expected to follow. "We've got folks in Macon County who want to go to work, are qualified to go to work, and need to go to work. All we need to do is bring industry to this CSX select railroad site and we can make that happen."

State Representative Pebblin Warren said, "Despite the most recent adversities and hardships we've had to endure in Macon County, we can stand proud and hold our heads high for our accomplishments here today with CSX."

Select properties certified by CSX have lower up-front development costs because the standard land use issues have been addressed, road and rail infrastructure is already in place and everyone values Select Site status.

Greg Canfield, Secretary of the Alabama Department of Commerce, commended the Macon County Economic Development Authority for leading the effort regarding the CSX designation. "Macon County is not waiting on someone to establish its destiny. What you're doing today is establishing your own destiny: your future in economic development."

The announcement was a truly great moment yet bittersweet for Ennis. The emergence of CSX coincided with an ending in another area of his life. Three weeks after the CSX news was shared with the public, he left UBT to begin the next chapter in his career. He says he has a soft spot in his heart for Macon County and will continue to work on economic growth for the community, as long as his contributions are welcome. Considering his legacy, which includes CSX, it's likely many people are glad he is willing to remain on the team.

In March, dignitaries from the local community, State of Alabama and CSX celebrated the CSX Select Site designation awarded to property in Macon County.

Coosa Valley Medical Center front entrance.

Coosa Valley Medical Center receives national award for ICU

By Emily Adams

(Photos courtesy of Coosa Valley Medical Center)

Coosa Valley Medical Center (CVMC) in Sylacauga recently received national recognition for improvements in its Intensive Care Unit (ICU).

The hospital is the recipient of a Beacon Award for Excellence, presented by the American Association for Critical-Care Nurses last December. The award recognizes hospital units that distinguish themselves by improving every facet of patient care through evidence-based practices.

"I'm extremely pleased to be associated with an outstanding group of clinicians that contributed to the CVMC Intensive Care Unit being selected for the Beacon Award," said CVMC Chief Executive Officer Glenn Sisk. "Our physicians, nurses, therapists and entire support team demonstrated outstanding clinical competence through the course of the year and are worthy recipients of this rare recognition. Most importantly, however, our patients and guests, along with the entire community, can have confidence that critical care delivery has been achieved, and will continue to be, at the highest level."

CVMC is a bronze-level recipient, meaning it showed success in developing, deploying and integrating unit-based performance criteria and outcomes. Units are primarily evaluated based on patient outcomes, evidence-based practices, knowledge management and best practices, and leadership structures and systems.

Practices that contributed to CVMC's success include eliminating and preventing ventilator-associated pneumonia and other health care-related infections, encouraging staff participation and decreasing the mortality rate. These improvements did not come without much work and a targeted effort to better ICU services, according CVMC director of critical care and emergency services Quincy Leach.

"A lot of thought from leadership and the ICU team went into the process," Leach said. "It meant not only examining what we were doing well, but also the processes that needed some attention."

One area of focus was to improve insertion and maintenance of centrally placed intravenous catheters, Leach said. After analyzing this and other processes for about a year, the hospital compiled detailed data, staff interviews and leadership comments including input from physicians, staff and patients to send to the AACCN.

CVMC is one of only three hospitals in the state to receive a Beacon Award.

Other recipients were the Cardiovascular ICU at East Alabama Medical Center in Opelika and the Pediatric ICU at Children's Hospital in Birmingham, which both received silver-level distinction for continued learning and effective systems to achieve optimal patient care. The gold level recognizes sustained performance and outcomes.

CVMC Chief Nursing and Operations Officer Amy Price said the Beacon Award is "external validation for the exceptional care delivered not only in our ICU, but on the entire CVMC campus."

"The award recognizes that the quality of patient care is directly tied to the quality of the clinical care team," Price said. "The CVMC medical staff and nursing team work collaboratively on improving patient outcomes, knowing that patient care and safety are the top priority and measuring success by improving patients' outcomes and experiences."

The Beacon Award designation is active for three years. Leach said it is only the beginning of the hospital's continuing efforts to advance.

"I am proud of the work and accomplishments of our ICU staff," he said. "This is not an endpoint on our journey, but instead serves as motivation for us to continue to reach for and maintain excellence."

Emily Adams in a staff writer for The Daily Home newspaper in Sylacauga

The ICU staff at Coosa Valley Medical Center celebrates its Beacon Award for Excellence at an assembly in January. The award recognizes hospital units that have shown improvement in every facet of patient care through evidence-based practices.

Places to Go & Things to Do

Alexander City

May 1, Registration for Red Cross swimming lessons. The first swimming lesson will be June 3. There will be morning and afternoon sessions. Call (256) 329-3736 for more information.

May 4, 7 a.m.-7 p.m., Annual Kiwanis Clay Shoot. Five Star Plantation.

May 4, 11 a.m.-2 p.m., Relay for Life Duck Run 2013. Hosted by Lake Martin Home Health. Charles E. Bailey Sportplex pond. Contact any staff member of Lake Martin Home Health at (256) 397-1440 or (256) 825-7050.

May 10, Relay for Life. Sportplex walking track. You can call The Cancer Center at Russell Medical Center for more information.

May 10, 9 a.m.-12 p.m., Free Senior Celebration Day event. Wind Creek State Park. Lunch and boat rides will be provided. Individuals, couples and groups need to make reservations by May 9. Call (256) 329-2910 or e-mail Senior Activity Supervisor Corley Holt, corley.holt@alexandercityal.gov

May 14, 6-9 p.m., Social Dance Party. Senior Activity Center. $5 entrance fee. For more information about the Alexander City Parks & Recreation 50+ Program, visit www.acpr.me.

May 18, 10 a.m.-2 p.m., Tennessee Militia at Horseshoe Bend National Military Park. Volunteers portray Tennessee Militia circa 1814 with musket and cannon fire demonstrations. Behind the Park Visitor Center. Call (256) 234-7111 for more information.

May 20, 5:30 p.m., Italy Tour trip presentation. Senior Activity Center. For more information about the Alexander City Parks & Recreation 50+ Program, visit www.acpr.me.

May 23, 8:30 a.m., Breakfast Feast event. Senior Activity Center. Bring $2 and a side dish. Bingo to follow at 10 a.m. Bring a $2 wrapped gift to play.

May 26, 6-11 p.m., Memorial Day Concert at The AMP. Lake Martin Amphitheater. Kick-off the summer concert series courtesy of Russell Lands on Lake Martin. Times and performers TBA. www.lmat.org or facebook (Lake Martin Amphitheater).

May 31-June 2, U.S. 80 Connect Yard Sale. Various routes between Alexander City and U.S. Highway 80 in Macon County. Time to clean out the garage and the attic. The Alexander City Chamber of Commerce is hosting first annual U.S. 80 Connect Yard Sale, connecting Alexander City with the World's Widest Yard Sale on U.S. Highway 80 from Cuba, Alabama to Phoenix City, Alabama. Call the Chamber for details, (256) 234-3461.

June 3-7, Kitty Dark Art Camp. Radney Elementary School. This annual week-long art camp is for students going into grades 1 thru 6. Children can learn drama/music, mixed media, mosaics, drawing/painting and creative movement. Sponsored by the Dark Family Partners and Radney Elementary School. Contact (256) 329-9816 or jamiewdark@yahoo.com for information and registration.

June 7, 6-10:30 p.m., 23rd Annual Jazz Fest. Strand City Park in Alexander City. Friday night's concert in Strand Park and Saturday night's concert at The AMP on Lake Martin. Performers TBA as event nears. www.alexandercitychamber.com, www.alexcityjazzfest.com or www.lmat.org.

June–October, 7-11:30 a.m., MainStreet Alexander City's Farmer's Market. Local growers, craftsmen/craftswomen present their goods. Call ahead for weather-related changes. (256) 329-9227 or www.mainstreetac.org.

June 22, 10 a.m.-2 p.m., Tennessee Militia at Horseshoe Bend National Military Park. Volunteers portray Tennessee Militia circa 1814 with musket and cannon fire demonstrations. Behind the Park Visitor Center. (256) 234-7111.

Dothan

May 4, 10 a.m.-1 p.m., Touch A Truck. Kids will have a chance to see more than 50 vehicles up close. $7 for adults, $5 for kids and free for children 2 and under and for park members. Sponsored by The Joy 94.3 FM. Landmark Park.

May 7, The Life and Work of the Honeybee. Landmark Park. With the help of the Alabama Cooperative Extension System, students will receive a fascinating look into the world of the honeybee. Through three different learning stations we will explore honeybee communication and life cycle, honey production and harvesting, pollination and the hive environment. This program will provide the opportunity to watch a beekeeper work a real hive of bees and taste the freshly gathered honey. $6 per student; teachers/aides free; one chaperone per 10 students free. Extra chaperones pay student fee. Homeschools register through the group coordinator. Program length: 3 hours (9 a.m.-12 p.m.). Suggested grade levels, 2nd-12th. Pre-registered school groups only.

May 10 and 11, A Night at the Park Family Campout. Landmark Park. A unique camping adventure for families featuring geocaching, a night walk through the park, S'mores, star gazing, and camping in tents. Begins at 4:30 p.m. May 10 and concludes at 8 a.m. on May 11. $12 per person for members and $15 per person for non-members. A cookout, S'mores and breakfast are included. Families are responsible for drinks, tents and sleeping bags. Registration is required and can be made by calling the park office at (334) 794-3452 or by emailing dpeters@landmarkpark.com. Sponsored by Eagle Eye Outfitters.

May 12 and June 16, Admission Specials. Landmark Park. Mothers receive free admission in May when accompanied by a child in honor of Mother's Day. Fathers receive free admission when accompanied by a child on June 16.

June 8, 5-8 p.m., Old Fashioned Ice Cream Social. Landmark Park. Celebration of National Dairy Month. Free ice cream, music, a cakewalk and more. Adults, $5; kids, $3; members, free.

Tuesdays in June, Animal Tales. 10 a.m. Interpretive Center Auditorium, Landmark Park. Storytelling program for pre-school age children. Registration required. Free with paid gate admission.

June 13 and 27, 7:30 p.m., Music By Moonlight. Gazebo lawn. Landmark Park. Bring a picnic and enjoy music under the stars. June 13: TBA. June 27: *The Moonlighters*. Free admission

Fridays in June, Animal Adventures. 10 a.m.-12 p.m. Learn about native and exotic animals with guest presenters. Interpretive Center Auditorium, Landmark Park. Ages 5 and up. Registration required. Free with paid gate admission.

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Places to Go & Things to Do *Continued from page 15*

June 30, 9 a.m., Honey Extraction Workshop. Landmark Park. Presented by the Wiregrass Beekeepers and the Alabama Cooperative Extension System. Free with paid gate admission. Guests will have a chance to watch as honey from the 11 hives at the park is extracted and uncapped by hand. Honey will be on sale while supplies last.

Fairhope

May 18, 4-7 p.m., 4th Annual Bald Eagle Bash. Tonsmeire Weeks Bay Resource Center, Weeks Bay Reserve, at the Fish River Bridge on U.S. Highway 98. The event is a fundraiser for the Weeks Bay Foundation, the only nationally accredited land trust in coastal Alabama. The Foundation works to protect the natural resources of coastal Alabama. Enjoy "a taste of Weeks Bay" featuring fresh Gulf shrimp prepared by top local restaurants and live music by Rollin' in the Hay. Tickets are $35 in advance or $40 at the gate. Beverages are included in the price of admission, and free parking is available at the Weeks Bay Reserve Safe Harbor site, with BRATS shuttles providing transportation to the event. For more information or to purchase tickets, go to www.BaldEagleBash.com, or call (251) 990-5004.

Foley

May 11, 41st Annual "Art in the Park." Performing Arts Association. The event will be in Heritage Park, 125 E Laurel Ave, Foley. Call Phone (251) 943-4381, or visit www.foleyartcenter.com for more information.

May 27, Fort Morgan Memorial Day Tribute. Fort Morgan Historic Site, 51 State Hwy 180 W, Gulf Shores. Admission: All scheduled events are included in the regular price of admission unless otherwise noted. Please call (251) 540-5257 or visit www.fortmorgan.org to confirm dates and times of scheduled events. Uniformed living history interpreters honor the ultimate sacrifice made by America's military throughout the nation's history with artillery salutes, small arms demonstrations and special tours during the day.

Opelika

May 11, Auburn-Opelika Airshow. Auburn University Regional Airport
A family filled day of in-air entertainment and on-ground interaction that will wow your senses. Attractions include war bird demonstrations, active military aircraft and vehicles, Touch a Truck Kids Zone, static displays and great food.

Every Wednesday in May, Noon Tunes, 12 p.m. Opelika's Courthouse Square. Celebrate the arrival of summer with a free lunchtime concert. Bring your lunch, a quilt or lawn chair, and relax by the fountain for an hour of musical entertainment.

Every Tuesday night beginning in May, Summer Swing, 7 p.m. Opelika's Municipal Park. Bring the whole family, a blanket or lawn chair and relax on the bank of Rocky Brook Creek for a night of musical entertainment.

Piedmont

May 11, 8 a.m., Piedmont Benevolence Center 2nd Annual 5K Run. Awards will be divided among male and female age groups. Food, door prizes and awards will follow the race. To register or for more information, contact Heather Lamey at (256) 447-2220 or heatherpbc@hotmail.com.

Sylacauga

For the month of May, the Isabel Anderson Comer Museum will feature an exhibition of art work from Sylacauga City Schools. A reception will be held on May 9 from 6:30 until 8 p.m.

May 18, 8 a.m.-12 p.m., Annual Chamber Kids Fishing Derby. Lake Howard. Free to children under 12 years of age. Contact the Chamber of Commerce for more information, (256) 249-0308.

For the month of June, the Isabel Anderson Comer Museum will host an exhibit of mixed media by Talladega artists "Smith & Sorrell". A reception will be held on June 20 from 6:30 until 8 p.m.

Tuskegee

June 29, 10 a.m.-7 p.m., 11th Annual Juneteenth Celebration. Downtown Tuskegee on the city square at the intersection of Martin Luther King Highway and South Main Street. The 2013 Juneteenth Celebration Planning Committee is hosting the celebration that commemorates the ending of chattel slavery in America. Open to the public. Admission is free. There will be entertainment for everyone, special recognition awards, games, music and food. Get involved in the musical competitions for cash prizes and more. Contact Orlando Hale, coordinator, (513) 378-1221 or landohale@hotmail.com, for more information. Exhibitors and vendors are welcome.