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Bears hosts Parsons tonight – *Daily Mountain Eagle*

The Best Online Community Colleges of 2018 – *Best Colleges.com*

Second-half surge leads Parsons past Bevill State – *Daily Mountain Eagle*

C3 and BSCC Fayette campus to host ‘State of the Region’ – *Times Record*

Polk speaks at Bevill baseball banquet – *Times Record*

Annual Groundhog Shadow Day set for Friday – *Daily Mountain Eagle*

Lions edge Bears – *Daily Mountain Eagle*

Entrance sign installed at Walker County Airport – *Daily Mountain Eagle*

More than 500 students participate in annual Groundhog Job Shadow Day – *Daily Mountain Eagle*

Exhibit features rich history of Walker County – *Daily Mountain Eagle*

Carbon Hill’s McGough signs with Bevill State – *Daily Mountain Eagle*

Bucs offense too much for Bevill State in 100-86 loss – *Daily Mountain Eagle*

Approaching 25th season of Read Alabama! Named among Alabama Bicentennial events

– *Daily Mountain Eagle*

Bucs offense too much for Bevill State in 100-86 loss – *Daily Mountain Eagle*

Rees Scholarship awards $74,000 to HVACR techs – *Daily Mountain Eagle*

Local economic development alliance touts incentives and infrastructure at annual meeting

– *Times Record*

Maddox speaks to youth leadership group – *Times Record*

The Jewels of Jasper – *PowerGrams*

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*The BSCC News Digest is a sampling of news articles and information regarding Bevill State Community College that appears in local media. If there is an article that you see that is not listed, please send to Andrew Brasfield at andrew.brasfield@bscc.edu*
Looking Back Part II

2017 in Review

By DEAN MADDOX
Staff Writer

We continue our review of stories from 2017 with headlines from July - December. Events from the first six months of the year were reviewed in last week’s edition of The Times-Record.

July

David Mosher was denied parole for the 2002 murder of Fayette conservation officer Jimmy Hutto.

The Fayette Area Community Development Corporation announced plans to raise approximately $3 million to restore the former Turner Hotel.

The Fayette County Commission renewed its contract with Waste Management.

Gathon and Odessa Moore celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary.

The City of Fayette received a “fair” evaluation from the Economic Development Academy at the University of Alabama.

The body of a missing Fayette County man, Robert Lane Kemp, was found after an extensive search of a Marion County recreation area where he was last seen fishing.

The play “Cheaper by the Dozen” was performed at the Fayette Civic Center.

August

The Michael and Jennifer McLain Band from Nashville, Tenn. performed at “Tunes on Temple.”

James Sanders resigned as Fayette County Emergency Management Agency (EMA) director.

Bevill State Community College interim president Kim Ennis outlined the college’s strategic plan during a Fayette Area Chamber of Commerce luncheon.

• See REVIEW, Page 2
School began on Aug. 9 at all Fayette County grade schools.

The Berry Town Council appointed Phillip Taylor as interim police chief following the resignation of Chief Gerald DeDeaux.

Women's volleyball returned to the Fayette Campus of Bevill State Community College after a six-year absence.

A special primary election for one of Alabama's U.S. Senate seats was held on Aug. 15.

An eclipse that reached approximately 90 percent totality in Fayette occurred on Aug. 21. The Times-Record celebrated its 40th anniversary on Aug. 24.

The FCHS band added a “color guard” section for the 2017 football season.

Fayette Elementary School teacher Michelle Porter was arrested on drug charges.

High school football games began at Hubbertville, Berry and Fayette.

A tornado caused damage to areas within the county on Aug. 31.

A former Fayette County police officer, Gary Farrior, was arrested and charged with two counts of sexual abuse.

The 48th annual Fayette Arts Festival was held on Sept. 9 at Guthrie Smith Park.

Wayne Edwin Tucker of Glen Allen was indicted on two felony counts of sexual abuse.

Berry won its homecoming football game against Brilliant, 41-14.

The Fayette County Fair was held at the multipurpose complex.

The Fayette City Council presented a $428,462.51 check to Fayette Medical Center from the city's yearly hospital sales tax proceeds.

November

Fayette and Hubbertville qualified for the Alabama High School Athletic Association's high school football playoffs.

The Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) held an open house at its new facility in Fayette Nov. 6.

The Fayette County Commission held a ceremonial ground-breaking for the proposed new jail.

Shane Hughes became the new chairman of the Fayette County Commission.

The commission hired WAR Construction of Tuscaloosa as the construction manager for the new jail.

Programs throughout the county honored area veterans for Veterans' Day.

The Kirkley Foundation held a “Blessings 2 U” event at the Fayette Civic Center.

Hubbertville students Kendall Dunavant, Kristen Lowery and Carson Silas visited Washington D.C.

Fayette Medical Center Long-Term Care residents held an “Iron Bowl” pep rally.

Don Waldon was approved as an unpaid assistant to help County Administrator John Gorge receive cancer treatments.

The Town of Glen Allen held a Christmas tree lighting ceremony.

December

Dick Anderson was honored for his coaching legacy at Brewer State/Bevill.

Demolition of the former Fayette Square Shopping Center began.

UMS-Wright defeated the Fayette Tigers 21-7 in the Class 4A football championship game, played in the snow at Bryant-Denny Stadium in Tuscaloosa.

The Fayette County Commission voted to join other counties and municipalities in an opioid lawsuit.

Democrat Doug Jones defeated Republican Roy Moore to win a U.S. Senate seat, although Moore received the most votes in Fayette County.

The Kirkland, Bluff and Wayside communities donated $3,615 to the Fayette County Joey Day organization.

The play, “A Mayberry Christmas, All is Well,” presented three performances at the Fayette Civic Center.

The fifth annual Berry Christmas Dinner, organized by Michael and Jessica Earl, served numerous meals to people in the area.

The Fayette County Board of Education approved the purchase of 1,048 Chromebooks for Fayette County students in grades four through 12.
NTN and MCBE partnership - The Marion County Board of Education (MCBE), NTN-Bower and Bevill State Community College (BSCC) have come together to create an opportunity for qualifying high-school juniors to train at BSCC and be placed in a job at NTN by the time of their high school graduation.

The program is called the NTN Career Pathways Academy.

The goal of this collaboration is to expose high-school students to job opportunities in industry settings through a unique approach. The academy will expose participants to career options, industry-relevant training and a possible job offer from NTN Bower upon graduation.

The program will allow students to earn dual enrollment credit, while preparing them for a job with a local industry. The program also aims to provide NTN with a ready-made pool of candidates for job placement.
Boll Weevils get set for conference play

The Enterprise State Community College Boll Weevils (5-6) basketball team will head into conference play next week as rival Lurleen B. Wallace Community College comes to town, but before that ESCC hosts high-scoring Bevill State.

ESCC has been off since a Dec. 12 loss to Gulf Coast State and the time off is giving a banged up Boll Weevils a chance to recover and adjust.

“We’re working on making a lot of adjustments on the offensive side,” ESCC coach Jermaine Williams said. “We’re going to try some new things with a couple of guys out with injuries.”

Williams said he expects to have those players back by the Jan. 13 matchup with CACC-Monroeville on the road, but will work to get better at scoring even without those players. The Boll Weevils have struggled on offense this season but defensively have been one of the top teams in the state.

“Defensively we’re doing really well, but we have to be more consistent on offense,” Williams said. “We’re going to be focused on offense for the next several practices as we get ready for Bevill State.”

Bevill State is averaging more than 73 points per game and has scored more than 90 points twice this season, so the Boll Weevils will likely have to up their scoring to pick up their sixth win of the season.

“Bevill State is a good shooting team and they play a lot of guards,” Williams said. “We’re going to have to work on our rebounding to beat them, to limit their second-chance shots, and we have to keep up with them on the offensive end.”

ESCC hosts Bevill State Thursday night at 7:30 p.m.

After facing off with Bevill State, ESCC begins the conference portion of its schedule with LBW coming to town on Jan. 9 at 7:30 p.m.
Bevill State falls short in road loss to Enterprise State

From Staff Reports

ENTERPRISE — Bevill State wasn’t able to overcome a barrage of 3-pointers by Enterprise State in a 80-76 road loss to the Boll Weevils on Thursday.

The Bears fell behind by as many as 13 points with five minutes to go, but Bevill State was unable to get closer than four points down the stretch.

Playing in his first game of the season, Dalon Evans had a big night offensively for the Bears, scoring 22 points.

Enterprise State led 41-38 at the half. Evans knocked down a pair of shots to pull the Bears to within one point at 43-42. The Boll Weevils pushed their lead back to seven points, but Wanya King connected on three 3-pointers to keep the Bears within striking distance.

Kenton Petties, who returned to the lineup following a finger injury, knocked down a 3-pointer to cut the Enterprise State lead to a point at 55-54 with 13 minutes remaining.

That’s as close as the Bears would get.

Later in the second half, another 3-pointer by King cut the Boll Weevils’ lead to 61-57. From there, Enterprise went on a 17-8 run, pushing the lead to 78-65 with 4:53 remaining.

King finished with 19 points for Bevill State (5-7), Petties added 11, Stephen Campbell had nine points, Marcus Reese, also playing in his first game, had six points and Chris Freeman added five.

Next up for the Bears is a home game against Arkansas State Mid-South at 3 p.m. Saturday.
Back on the rise

by KYLE PARMLEY
January 22, 2018

Spain Park seniors, from left to right, Jarrod Kennington, Tyler Greer and John Kennington are aiming to lead the Jags back to the postseason for the second straight year.

The Spain Park High School baseball team took a big step in the right direction last spring.

After winning the Class 6A state championship in 2014, the Jags had not qualified for the playoffs in the first two years of 7A’s existence. But in 2017, they got back over the hump and finished second with a 4-2 record in Area 6. Their only two losses came at the hands of eventual quarterfinalist Oak Mountain.

“We knew that Oak Mountain was going to be a very experienced team and a veteran team, and I felt like we played them really well twice,” Spain Park coach Will Smith said.

The Jags took on Grissom in the first round of the playoffs. Grissom took care of Spain Park with a two-game sweep, but the Jags made both games extremely interesting.

The first game of the series was a back-and-forth affair that Spain Park lost, 9-7. Grissom jumped out to a huge lead in the second game, but the Jags scored six runs over the final two innings and had a chance to tie or win. Grissom held on to win the game, 8-7, and the series, but Smith felt like the team accomplished a goal by getting back to the postseason.

Spain Park...
While the Jags only return one starter from last year’s squad, which featured 12 seniors, Smith said the returners learned several valuable lessons from last year’s run.

“How you have to raise your level of play,” he said. “We talk about having four phases to the season: preseason, season before area play, area, then the playoffs. You’ve really got to raise your level for every transition of those four phases.”

Smith said teams that “peak at the right time” and navigate those transitions the smoothest have the best chance of playoff success. His way of ensuring that for the Jags is by playing a difficult schedule each spring. That’s not hard to do as a Class 7A team in the Birmingham area.

“We kind of take pride in playing a tough schedule, because you’ve got to see who can get it done under fire,” he said.

From last year’s team, three are now playing college baseball. Shortstop Jacob Rich is now at Snead State. Pitchers Will Battersby (UAB) and Spencer Graham (Bevill State) leave Spain Park with a large void to fill on the mound.

“There’s a lot of question marks everywhere, specifically on the mound,” Smith said. “That’s the first hole that we’ve got to fill because we don’t have the experienced guys that we had last year.”

On the mound, Tyler Greer — one of eight seniors this year — will get a shot to carry the Jags pitching staff. Second baseman Lane Willis returns as the team’s only starter. John and Jarrod Kennington are twins that should bolster the lineup as well. John Kennington catches, while Jarrod Kennington is an outfielder and contributes on the mound as well.

Noah Burns, Sam Dozier and Cooper White are other players that Smith mentioned as guys that will look to lock down spots in the lineup. Even though several of the seniors don’t have significant varsity experience, this year represents their chance to produce.

“Most of the 7A schools, a lot of kids don’t play until they’re seniors,” Smith said.

The Jags open their season Feb. 19 with a doubleheader at Thompson, against the Warriors and Auburn.
Bevill hosts Arkansas Mid-South today

The Bevill State Bears basketball team returns home for a game against Arkansas State Mid-South at 3 p.m. today at Glen Clem Gymnasium.

Bevill State (5-7) opened 2018 with an 80-76 road loss to Enterprise State on Thursday. Despite the loss, the game saw the season debut of both Dalon Evans and Marcus Reese — who were ineligible in the first half of the season — as well as the return of Dora’s Kenton Petties, who played in just three games before sustaining a finger injury.

Evans was the Bears’ leading scorer against Enterprise, scoring 22 points. Wanya King, who leads the team in scoring at 14.1 points per game, had 19 points.
Charity makes Christmas happen for 203 children

119 Households received bagged groceries

By SCOTT JOHNSON
Staff Writer

GUIN — The City of Guin bonded together for the 29th time with the local Santa’s Workshop charity organization to make Christmas happen for hundreds of children this year.

On Friday, Dec. 22, Santa’s Workshop distributed gifts for 203 children of 82 families from Guin’s armory building, while local athletes delivered bags of groceries throughout the city to the homes of 37 elderly individuals.

“We did very well this year,” Santa’s Workshop Chairperson Terri Dennis reported enthusiastically. “We had lots of donations and did not struggle like we have in previous years.”

Dennis said that in the past, she has found herself crossing her fingers and praying while preparing for the distribution, hoping that there are enough funds to cover each child’s needs. However, this year did not pose the same challenges.

Guin’s Fourth of July Firecracker 5K race’s increasing popularity has benefited the December holiday distribution, Dennis said, which raised $13,000 for the organization this year.

Santa’s Workshop is a not-for-profit organization whose purpose is to help Guin families that qualify with clothes and toys for the children and groceries for the family at Christmas.

Food is also provided to elderly people who live on minimal incomes, have extra expenses and have difficulty buying food.

“This is such as community-involved event,” Dennis said, noting volunteer involvement from the City of Guin, local churches, schools and athletic programs.

In terms of volunteers, Dennis said that the drive was run with the help of the non-profit’s 12 active board members about 25 Marion County High School (MCHS) Beta Club members, 10 Bevill State Community College - Hamilton Campus Student Ambassadors, 25 athletes and about 15 local adults and youth—a total volunteer base of roughly 87.

Dennis said that Guin’s local schools set a goal to collect 10,000 pairs of socks to be distributed this year, while the MCHS Beta Club and local churches were involved with making sure everything is ready to give out.

“Thank you to all of those who helped make this happen,” Dennis said.

Dennis said that on giveout day, when groceries are delivered by student athletes and parents pick up gifts and food from the armory, is her favorite part of the entire operation.

For the holiday operation, each child 6 and up is budgeted at about $100, while infants are set at $75. If each of the benefiting 203 Guin children received an average amount of just $85, more than about $17,200, conservatively, was given to underprivileged children in gifts.

With each family, Dennis says that Santa’s Workshop aims to give five bags of groceries, underwear, socks, a new outfit and two toys. If at least four bags of groceries were distributed to each benefiting family, then at least 476 bags of donated groceries helped fill the pantries of 119 Guin homes on Dec. 22.

Dennis said that the groceries included canned goods and staples, such as milk and bread.

“We know that things can get tight during the holidays and many elderly have relatives coming to visit them,” Dennis noted. “This is a way that we help these families out.”

Santa’s elves

Guin officials and local volunteers put on their pointy ears to help Santa deliver Christmas this year. Shown sifting through isles of donated presents and groceries are (from left) David Adkins, Guin councilman Mineo Lindsey, First Baptist Church of Guin Youth Minister Zane Miles and Guin Parks and Recreation Director Keith Rhudy.
7th annual event to be held at Bevill’s Fayette campus on Jan. 25

By SCOTT JOHNSON
Staff Writer

GU-WIN - Those interested in future economic development in the region are invited to attend the sixth annual State of the Region meeting hosted by C3 of Northwest Alabama.

The open event will be held on Thursday, Jan. 25, at Bevill State Community College - Fayette Campus’ Earl McDonald Auditorium with registration to begin at 8 a.m. and the program to run from 9 to 11:30 a.m., with an intermission at 10:30.

The organization serves the three-county area of Marion, Fayette and Lamar counties as a centrally-operated entity to recruit new industry to the area while assisting local existing industry with efforts to expand and create new jobs.

Guest speakers for the event will include Economic Development Association of Alabama Executive Director Jim Searcy who will address “Growing Our Statewide Economy” and Chattanooga Electric Power Board Fiber Network and New Products Vice President Katie Espeseth.

Espeseth will share the story of Chattanooga’s economic growth that was spurred through their high-speed broadband network that was activated in 2010.

The project is very similar to the new freedom FIBER project now underway by Tombigbee Electric Cooperative throughout Hamilton and Winfield.

In addition to the official speakers, Thornell will provide those in attendance with the previous year’s activities for the organization while also sharing information regarding C3’s strategic plan for both the coming year and beyond.

Nearing the end of the two-and-a-half hour meeting, Thornell will present the organization’s highest honor: The Champion Award, which is given to recognize the individual who has contributed the greatest to economic growth and progress within the three-county area.

Previous winners include Tombigbee Electric Cooperative General Manager Steve Foshee, former Sen. Roger Bedford and C3 founders Bill Arkinson (Marion County), William Oswalt (Fayette County) and Johnny Rogers (Lamar County).

Bedford was honored with the inaugural award in 2014. In 2015, the three founders were praised for their work behind the scenes to create the C3 plan and Foshee was honored in 2016 for his efforts in promoting the group and being a voice for regional recruitment, job training and growth.

Industry of the Year awards will also be presented to those selected by the board for 2017.

Last year’s recipients included Sitel (Marion County), Fayette Fabrication (Fayette County) and Weyerhauser of Millport (Lamar County) was the overall winner, as the company was cited with a $165 million investment in its facilities in 2016.

Outgoing board president Phillip Harrod of Winfield will be recognized for his service as the gavel is passed to incoming president Harry Unger, Chief Executive Officer for Custom Automated Services in Fayette.

Those interested in attending the free event are encouraged to RSVP with C3 of Northwest Alabama Executive Administrative Assistant Katie Hallman by email at khallman3@northwestalabama.edu or by calling the C3 Gu-win office 468-3213.
Slow start costs Bears in loss to Greyhounds

By JOHNATHAN BENTLEY
Eagle Sports Editor

Bevill State fell behind by double digits in the opening minutes and was never able to catch Arkansas State Mid-South as the Greyhounds earned a 70-63 win at Glen Clem Gymnasium on Saturday.

The Bears didn't go down without a fight, getting as close as four points in the closing minutes before Arkansas State Mid-South finally sealed the game at the free throw line in the final 22 seconds.

"We missed shots and had a turnover outbreak. We dug ourselves a hole," Bevill State coach Tommy Suits said. "Somebody made one 3-pointer and that knocked the lid off, then we got on a roll."

"The last 30 minutes is the best we played. This gives us something to build on, something to get excited about going into conference."

SEE BEARS, A7
The Bears cut the gap to six, 29-23, after 3-pointers from Collin Woods, King and Evans. The Greyhounds closed the half with a 5-0 spurt for a 34-23 halftime lead.

Arkansas State Mid-South led by as many as 15 points in the second half, taking a 59-44 lead with 9:30 left, but the Bears wouldn’t go away.

Evans made the score 67-63 with two free throws at the 1:15 mark, but the Bears were unable to get any closer.

Evans led the Bears with 23 points, King had 17 and Earnest Medlock put in eight.

Suitts said the addition of Evans, who sat out the first half of the season, and Petties, who missed the bulk of the first half of the season due to injury, has bolstered his roster.

“Getting Kenton back from his broke hand gives us so much leadership and defensive ability,” Suitts said. “Dalon Evans is just an exceptional basketball player. He’s good in any league, anywhere. If we just keep going, we’ll be all right.”
Students at Bevill State Community College (BSCC) will soon have the opportunity to learn app development skills using Apple Swift technology.

This fall BSCC will offer courses in Swift, a programming language by Apple, that will give students the necessary tools to build apps for iOS, Mac, Apple TV and Apple Watch.

Common apps built with Swift include Lyft, LinkedIn, Airbnb and Eventbrite.

The curriculum offered by Apple is called App Development with Swift, which is a full-year course designed to teach app design. Only six community college systems in the nation, including the Alabama Community College System, have been chosen to offer the new Apple curriculum, giving Bevill State students an advantage in the growing computer programming industry.

A press release from Bevill State notes over 5,000 computer programming jobs are expected to be available in Alabama within the next 10 years, making the new educational opportunity through Apple particularly beneficial.

“Bevill State Community College is excited to offer this new career path to individuals in

See DEVELOPMENT, A5
Development

From A1

our service area,” BSCC Interim President Dr. Kim Ennis said. “This is a unique educational opportunity, and as this market grows our region will be well equipped to meet the workforce needs of this industry.”

Sen. Greg Reed, R-Jasper, has vowed to continue advocating for innovative programs to be offered to students in Alabama.

“This is a tremendous opportunity for young people in Walker County and across west Alabama,” Reed said. “Startups and established businesses alike need software developers to build everything from sales software platforms to inventory management systems. Apple is obviously one of the premier companies in the world. Taking a class from Apple on apps and software, using the Swift language, is almost like taking a football leadership class from Nick Saban. You’re learning from the best.”

Bevill State’s first Apple Swift lab will be located on the Sumiton campus, and the Alabama Community College System is funding a portion of the lab development. Reed has also offered financial support for the lab.

“Bevill State continues to be an innovative leader in education, and I am proud to be an ambassador for the college in my role as a state legislator in Montgomery,” Reed said.

More information on the Apple Swift lab program can be found at www.programmingalabama.com.

Ennis added, “We are fortunate that our leaders, such as Sen. Greg Reed, see the importance and value in these innovative programs. Their support is vital to moving Alabama forward in workforce development.”
A new president will lead Chattahoochee Valley Community College, starting next month.

At the Alabama Community College System Board of Trustees meeting Wednesday, Chancellor Jimmy Baker announced as CVCC’s next president the selection of Jacqueline Screws, the dean of student affairs and the Sparks Campus for Wallace Community College-Dothan. She will begin her tenure at CVCC Feb. 1, according to the news release.

Screws will become the sixth permanent president in the 44-year history of the college, which opened in January 1974. Ralph Savage was the first CVCC president, followed by James Owen (1980-93), Richard Federinko (1993-2002), Laurel Blackwell (2003-10) and Glen Cannon (2011-14).

Cannon left CVCC to become president of Gwinnett Technical College. Valerie Richardson served as CVCC’s interim president until Mark Ellard became interim president in September 2015.

Ellard was executive vice president at Bevill State Community College in Sumiton, where he also was interim president, before he took responsibility for CVCC. Asked what Ellard’s job will be when Screws becomes CVCC’s president, ACCS communications and marketing administrator Rachel Adams told the Ledger-Enquirer in an email Thursday that Ellard “will be responsible for a number of special projects across the Alabama Community College System.”

Screws has more than three decades of experience in education administration and student affairs, including 17 years in her current role.

“Ms. Screws is a leader who is dedicated to the success of her students and Chattahoochee Valley Community College,” Baker said in a news release. “This is a very exciting time for CVCC and the community.”
“Ms. Screws’ career has been dedicated to the success of her students, and Chattahoochee Valley will be well-served by her experience,” Baker said in the ACCS news release. “Her proven track record of overseeing a community college campus and her familiarity with the unique needs of two-year colleges and their students make her a tremendous asset to CVCC.”

Screws said in the news release, “I’ve seen first-hand what an incredible impact Alabama’s community colleges can have on students and communities, and I’m excited to continue that mission at Chattahoochee Valley. It is an honor to be selected to serve in this capacity, and I look forward to joining the Pirate Family.”

Screws was dean of student services for Sparks Technical College before it merged with Wallace Community College-Dothan in 1999. Her community involvement includes serving on boards for the United Way of Barbour County, the Eufaula Barbour County Chamber of Commerce, the Boys and Girls Club of Lake Eufaula and the Career/Technical Advisory Council for the Eufaula City School System.

The news release doesn’t list the degrees she has earned or the institutions she attended.
Movers & Shapers, February 2018
Spotlight on Marion, Fayette & Lamar counties

Margie Gray Ballard
Ballard is a broker and co-owner of Ballard Construction and Real Estate in Winfield. She and her husband, Phillip, opened the office in 1983 and have since developed subdivisions and sold numerous properties in Marion, Fayette and surrounding counties. She has been a member of the national, state and local associations of Realtors for 38 years and a member of the Walker Board of Realtors and MLS. Ballard received her GRI designation in 1988. She is a past member of the Walker board of directors where she served for 10 years chairing numerous committees. She is a long-time member of the Winfield Chamber of Commerce and now serves on the board. She is active with University of Alabama Patient Advisory Council in Tuscaloosa and C3 Economic Development Alliance of Marion, Fayette and Lamar counties.

Mark Brown
Brown is a State Farm insurance agent in Fayette. He also worked as an auto claims adjuster for the company. He is board president of the Arc of Fayette, Lamar & Marengo counties, helping to better the lives of those with intellectual and developmental disabilities in the community and is a board member of the Northwest Alabama Economic Development Alliance. He is a past president and active board member of the Fayette Area Chamber of Commerce and has coached park and recreation sports for many years.

Chris Carothers
Carothers is president, chief operations officer and vice chairman of the board of The Citizens Bank of Winfield. Earlier, he worked at AmSouth Bank. He attended Brewer State Community College and is a graduate of the University of North Alabama, with additional banking credentials. He enrolled in the Reserve Officers Training Corps while attending UNA, becoming a commissioned officer in 1991 and serving with the Army Reserves and the Alabama Army National Guard. He is a member of the Winfield City Schools Board of Education. He is treasurer of Winfield Community Christmas and chairman of the Winfield Park Board.
Don Cole

Cole is a retired Air Force officer who returned to his hometown of Millport after serving as senior national security policy officer at the State Department, where he served as executive secretary of the U.S. Delegation on Nuclear Security and Dismantlement. He is the founding director of the Center for International Peace and Justice at Lipscomb University and has served on the Secretary of State’s Religion and Foreign Policy Working Group. He is a board member and former chair of the Northwest Alabama Economic Development Alliance, a board member of the Inter-American Restoration Corp. and the South Lamar Chamber of Commerce and treasurer of South Lamar Rescue Squad.

Allen Dunavant

Dunavant has served as mayor of Glen Allen since 2004. He attended Brewer State Junior College, where he obtained an associate’s degree in elementary education. He has completed training as a basic certified municipal official and as an advanced certified municipal official from the Alabama League of Municipalities. He is chairman of the West Alabama Regional Commission and past chairman of the West Alabama Mayor’s Association. Dunavant served 20 years in the U.S. Navy, obtaining the rank of Chief Petty Officer as an enlisted man, retiring in 2002. He is a veteran of Operation Desert Shield/Operation Desert Storm, as well as a survivor of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attack on the Pentagon. He is active in the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 5406 and is a founding member of the Hubbertville Community Foundation and the Hubbertville Band Foundation.

Kim Ennis

Ennis is interim president of Bevill State Community College, which has campuses in Fayette, Hamilton, Jasper and Sumiton and an educational center in Carrolton. Ennis previously served as interim president in 2015. She also has served as the executive vice president at Bevill State since July 2016. Ennis is a graduate of Walker College and Birmingham-Southern College, with a master’s from the University of Alabama at Birmingham and a Ph.D. from UAB/University of Alabama. She is a graduate of the Mississippi Community College Fellowship Program and Leadership Walker County. Ennis has been an active member in the Alabama Deans of Student Affairs Association and served as the association president for 2009-2010. Ennis is a member and former board chairman of the Chamber of Commerce of Walker County.

Phillip Harrod

Harrod has been COO and part owner of a specialty construction firm since 2004. He also has worked in healthcare financial management and for IBM. He has served on the board for the Community Development Foundation of Marion County since 2003 and is chairman of the Northwest Alabama Economic Development Alliance.

Tracy Kelly

Kelly is manager of the Fayette, Sulligent and Winfield business offices of Alabama Power Co. She currently serves on the board of the Winfield Chamber of Commerce and the Fayette Area Community Development Corp. She is a graduate of the University of Alabama with an MBA from Samford University.
Barbara Reeves

Reeves is a retired banker, having been city president of First National Bank of Sulligent for 17 years. She has served on the WAEDA and C3 boards for approximately 20 years and serves on the Sulligent Public Library Board. Other areas of service to her community include coordinating the Sulligent Arts and Crafts Day for 12 years. She graduated from the banking school at the University of South Alabama.

Beth Roberts

A longtime resident of Winfield, Roberts is a graduate of Winfield City High School. She attended Brewer State Junior College, which is now Bevill State Community College, and graduated from Mississippi State University. She has a master’s degree from the University of Alabama. She is director of campus services for the Hamilton and Fayette campuses of Bevill State. Roberts also serves on the Chamber of Commerce Board for Hamilton.

Dannielle Roberts

Roberts is a financial representative with Modern Woodmen of America. Through her fraternal partnership with Modern Woodmen, she has helped raise money for local schools, rescue squads, fire departments, senior centers, community improvement projects, as well as organizing a backpack program to feed children in her community. She is a member of Business Networking International and the Sulligent Chamber of Commerce.

J. Brent Thompson

Thompson is a graduate of the University of Alabama and Birmingham School of Law. For more than 20 years, Thompson practiced law, and he is now president, general legal counsel and board member to First National Bank, a community bank in his hometown of Hamilton. Thompson is also active with the Shriners, Zamora Temple and Masons, and serves as a member of the Industrial Development Board to the City of Hamilton.
LAWSON STATE 86, BEVILL STATE 79, OT

Lawson outlasts Bears in overtime

From Staff Reports

Bevill State got off to a hot start Tuesday night in their Alabama Community College Conference opener against Lawson State, but it didn’t last.

The Cougars battled back from a nine-point halftime deficit to force overtime and knock off the Bears 86-79 in Birmingham.

Bevill State’s Dalon Evans and Wanya King combined for 41 points in the loss.

The Bears held a 46-37 lead at the half, but Lawson State (7-9, 1-0) outscored Bevill State 36-27 in the second half. The teams were notched at 73-73 at the end of regulation. The Cougars held Bevill State to just six points in the extra period.

For the Bears (5-9, 0-1), Evans had 21 points, King had 20 and Earnest Medlock added 13. Bevill State hosts Marion Military Institute on Saturday, looking to snap a 3-game skid.
Students at Curry, Oakman recognized for FAFSA completion

Posted Friday, January 12, 2018

BY NICOLE SMITH, DAILY MOUNTAIN EAGLE

Two Walker County schools are being recognized for an increasing number of seniors completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) to seek a postsecondary education.

Alabama Possible, a statewide nonprofit that removes barriers to prosperity, announced this week that Curry High and Oakman High schools have received the organization’s first-presented Best Hustle Award for increasing FAFSA completion by at least 10 percent from Oct. 1 to Dec. 1, 2017.

The schools are currently participating in Alabama Possible’s Cash for College program, which encourages students to apply for financial aid to attend college. By completing the FAFSA, students have an opportunity to receive grants, loans and work-study opportunities.

Curry High School Principal Rod Aaron said he credits the school’s college scholarship specialist Deb White in helping to encourage students to seek financial aid opportunities for postsecondary education.

“She has multiple dates and times to have parents come to the school, and she sends parents information on a regular basis to keep them informed,” Aaron said. “Bevill State (Community College) also works very closely with our school to provide personnel to help with the process. Mrs. White is never satisfied with just getting by and works many hours and through many obstacles to help our students gain an advantage. It is always rewarding to have someone at your school recognized for going above and beyond the expectations that have been set forth.”

Patrick Gann, Oakman High School’s principal, said encouraging students to explore resources available to them has been key to increasing FAFSA completion at the school. “Our counselor, Dana Gray, and faculty work extra hard to encourage students and parents to take advantage of these opportunities,” Gann said. “Most of the time, it’s spending time with the seniors and their parent to help them apply and educating them on the various opportunities that are available. This can range from traditional four-year opportunities or technical related fields.”

The Cash for College program is offered at more than 300 schools in Alabama, which has resulted in close to 10,000 FAFSA applications being submitted from those schools. The Daily Mountain Eagle announced in December that Cordova High School graduate Sara Bright, with Cash for College, will be training Walker College Foundation scholars to work with students in county schools to complete the FAFSA.

The scholars, who are enrolled at Bevill State, are set to begin working with high school seniors in the coming weeks.

“We’ll work with students and families to help them complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid. It’s completely free, and we do this because nine out of 10 kids who complete the financial aid application go to school,” Bright told the Eagle. “Also, because of the work we’ve been doing, Alabama is ranked ninth most improved for FAFSA completion in 2016-17.”

Executive Director of Alabama Possible Kristina Scott said, “High school seniors need to complete the form as early as possible so they can access the money they need for college. We are thrilled to see so many Cash for College schools promoting early FAFSA completion, and we congratulate them for earning a Best Hustle Award.”

For more information about the FAFSA, go to www.fafsa.ed.gov.
PREP SOFTBALL: Cold Springs' Sanders signs with Bevill State

By Jake Winfrey  Jan 13, 2018  (0)

Cold Springs' Drew Sanders, front and center, signs a scholarship to attend and play softball at Bevill State Community College on Friday. Shown joining up from left to right are parents, Wally and Kim. Also pictured (from left to right) is Bevill State coach Angiepace Brown and Cold Springs coach Patrick West. The signing ceremony was held in the school's library.

Contributed

For Drew Sanders, the choice couldn't have been more clear.

The Cold Springs senior — joined by family, friends, coaches and teammates inside the high school library — cemented her collegiate intentions on Friday afternoon, putting pen to paper on a softball scholarship to Bevill State Community College.

The Lady Bears compete in the Alabama Community College Conference (ACCC) as a Division I member of the National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA). Bevill State brought athletics back to campus in 2017 after a lengthy cancelation of all programs that began following the 2010-11 academic year.

Sanders, however, doesn't mind starting from scratch.

"Since it's new and starting up, the people playing in the first few years will have a big part in how we do and the reputation we have. It'll take us a little bit to build up, but we can give us a good name. I'm excited that I'm going to Bevill State. There is a lot of stress is off my shoulders."

Sanders was tremendous for the Lady Eagles last season, amassing a 13-7 record and 2.07 ERA with 125 strikeouts in the circle. She also racked up a .415 batting average, four home runs and 32 RBIs at the plate to go along nine stolen bases.

Still, there's room to get better ... just ask Drew.

"I've got to work harder and push myself more, because the competition will be tougher," Sanders said.

Cold Springs coach Patrick West is anxious to see just how much his star can improve.

"She'll be our No. 1 this year, and that's a good place to challenge herself," he said. "I know she's looking forward to it."

© Jake Winfrey can be reached at 256-734-2131, ext. 138 or at jwinfrey@cullmantimes.com
MARION MILITARY 70, BEVILL STATE 60

Bears drop home game to Marion

By W. BRIAN HALE
Eagle Sports Writer

Down two of their top playmakers due to injury, the Bevill State Bears were able to keep Saturday afternoon’s North Division showdown within striking distance, but ultimately fell to the Marion Military Institute (MMI) Tigers 70-60 at Glen Clem Gymnasium.

With sophomore Kenton Petties and freshman Chris Freeman out with potentially season-ending injuries, Bevill turned to Dalon Evans, who led the Bears with 21 points and eight rebounds. Josh Juddine fol-

SEE BEARS, B2
followed with 17 points, while Wanya King scored 12 points.

The Tigers led through most of the first half, but the Bears were able to take a brief three-point lead on a shot from Juddine, 16-13. MMI closed out the remainder of the half outscoring Bevill 14-7 to maintain control, 27-23.

MMI stayed ahead of Bevill by 10 points through most of the second half, but good offensive and defensive play by the Bears and a three-point basket by King with five minutes left in the game cut the Tigers’ lead to six, 59-53.

The Tigers quickly responded with a 5-0 run to re-establish a double-digit lead, then outscored the Bears 8-7 to close the contest for the 70-60 win.

Bevill State (5-10, 0-2) travels to Wadley on Tuesday to face the Southern Union Bison in another ACCC North Division showdown.
Marion County High School’s Beta Club and Bevill State Community College’s ambassadors gathered together on the morning of December 21, 2017 to bag food for people and families in the community who couldn’t afford their own. Each student from the MCHS Beta Club chose a few families to bag food for, while the BSCC students sacked for the elderly. Each family received essential food items such as canned vegetables, bread, peanut butter, and boxed meals. They also received toilet paper and paper towels. The Betas are always honored to help out in the annual outpouring of support for our community.

-Ashleigh Bell
Jasper Main Street flourishes in 2017

Officials: A promising year ahead for downtown district

Posted Wednesday, January 17, 2018

BY NICOLE SMITH, DAILY MOUNTAIN EAGLE

Jasper Main Street (JMS) had a successful year in 2017, and the new year is promising new businesses and a fresh look to the downtown district.

A new case of support organized by Jasper Main Street details the significance of the economic impact felt downtown since the inception of JMS on June 1, 2015. According to the report, over $1 million has been invested in building rehab and construction and nearly $4 million in real estate sales. Just over $126,000 has been awarded in grants and 17 businesses have been expanded, relocated or held grand openings in downtown. Seventy-eight jobs have also been created and one loft apartment is now occupied, with others available for renovation.

Thirteen business opened their doors for the first time or relocated to downtown Jasper in 2017, including Twisted Barley Brewing Company, Johnny Brusco’s New York Style Pizza, Shmic & Boo’s Boo’tiful Treasures, The Sugar Shack, The Sly Fox, The Massage Den, Gracie’s BBQ, the State Farm Insurance branch of Gina Scruggs, Jasper Northwest RealtySouth, Joseph Carter Realty, Gibson Girl Boutique, Sycamore Grove and Tallulah Brewing Company.

Many events were held in the downtown district last year as well. Jasper Eats served to showcase dining options downtown; the Tallulah 1-mile fun run, 5K and half marathon brought hundreds of runners to Jasper; and a number of other community gatherings brought people to the streets of downtown.

JMS held a successful banner campaign to place banners of area veterans downtown, and for every banner purchased, an American flag was also placed along Highway 78 in Jasper. The Daily Mountain Eagle reported at the time that Scott Crump Toyota, Jasper Main Street, Remax Elite and Honda & Hyundai of Jasper provided monetary support for the banner/flag collaboration.

The year ended with the district’s streetscape commencing, which will add 56 trees to downtown and include a remodel of sidewalks.

Jasper Main Street, the City of Jasper and Friends of Downtown Jasper have collaborated on the project, made possible by grants from Cawaco RC&D, Alabama Power and individual donors.

The streetscape will continue over the next few months.

Members of the Jasper Main Street Board of Directors attended the Main Street Alabama awards banquet in August 2017, and brought home many awards for their work in Jasper.

The remodel of Lavish Boutique and Lavish Coffee Bar was awarded Excellence in Architectural Design, and the Excellence in Business Development award was presented to Jasper’s Pinnacle Bank for their Restoring Downtown Jasper campaign. Staycation in Downtown Jasper, Walker County Lake and the Bankhead House & Heritage Center won for Excellence in Downtown Marketing, The Walker Area Community Foundation was the winner of Excellence in Private and Public Partnerships and Abbie Drummond was presented the Alabama Community Award for her lead gift for phase one of downtown Jasper’s streetscape plan.

Jasper Main Street Executive Director Mike Putman served on the Main Street Alabama Board of Directors in 2017, and Walker Area Community Foundation President Paul Kennedy will serve on the board this year. Kennedy is a board member with JMS.

Putman said area leaders also made certain in 2017 that the Jasper Main Street mission will live on for years to come.

“Jasper Main Street flourishes in 2017. This is a renaissance of downtown Jasper,” Putman said. “It’s a lifestyle.”

In 2018, Jasper Main Street hopes to begin a wayfinding signage project, design a downtown map and brochure, and create a gateway sign through a partnership with the Kiwanis Club of Jasper. Putman said they also want to help Bevill State Community College’s new entrepreneur program thrive, which could benefit the economic climate downtown.

Rock N Roll Sushi is the first restaurant in 2018 to announce its intention to open in downtown Jasper at 323 19th Street West this March, and Shades Valley Dermatology will open next month at 1600 5th Avenue South.

“Economic vitality is what we need downtown,” Putman said, also recognizing the importance of aesthetic improvements, such as the streetscape. “All those things lead to commerce.”

He added, “Downtown revitalization is not a diet, it’s a lifestyle. There’s not a beginning and an end. There’s only a beginning.”
The Walker Baptist Medical Center Volunteer Auxiliary recently presented $500 scholarships to two Bevill State Community College nursing students to help the students purchase items they need for their careers. Shown are, back row, from left, Auxiliary member Joeva Briggs and hospital CEO Bob Phillips; and front row, from left, auxiliary members Melza McElrath, Charlie Lou Berryhill and Joanne Stephenson; scholarship recipients Anna Nicholson and Darian Thompson; auxiliary members Pat Ferrell and Doris Pumphrey; and associate administrator Suzanne Pugh.
Bears hosts Parsons tonight

Bevill State head basketball coach Tommy Suits talks to his players during a game against Arkansas State Mid-South earlier this month at Glen Clem Gymnasium. The Bears will host the Snead State Parsons tonight at 7 p.m. in the Clem Gymnasium in a ACCC North Division matchup.
Technology and the internet have made higher education more accessible than ever, with ever-increasing numbers of colleges and universities offering digital learning. In fact, according to Babson Survey Research Group, 70% of education leaders say that online learning will be a critical factor in their institutions' long-term growth.

An associate degree online is a great place to start your academic journey, even if your ultimate goal is to get a bachelor's or master's degree. These programs are usually much more affordable than the typical four-year school, and they also offer the flexibility you need to take classes and complete assignments on your own schedule.

Thanks to credit transfer agreements, high-quality instruction, and the efficiency that comes with online learning, it's no surprise that it has become such an attractive option for students across the country and around the world.

The Best Community Colleges Online
BSCC serves seven counties in northwestern Alabama with its focus on career, technical, and health science programs. About 3,800 students attend classes at the school’s four campuses in Alabama and online. Individual courses can be taken fully online or in hybrid format, and the school administers two fully online associate degrees.

The 64-credit AAS in management and entrepreneurship includes coursework in legalities, small business management, microeconomics, entrepreneurial finance, and customer service. Students can earn the online degree incrementally by enrolling in stackable certificate programs in business essentials, entrepreneurship, accounting, and retail management. The 65-68 credit AAS in office administration and technology can also be earned fully online; its general education and business technology credits transfer to four-year institutions.
Dalon Evans (2) led Bevill State with 15 points in Thursday’s 81-57 home loss to Snead State. The Parsons closed the game with a 31-12 run to earn the conference victory. With the loss, the Bears fell to 0-3 in ACCC play. Bevill State plays at Gadsden State on Monday.

**SNEAD STATE 81, BEVILL STATE 57**

**Second-half surge leads Parsons past Bevill State**

By W. BRIAN HALE
Eagle Sports Writer

The Bevill State Bears held Snead State to a four-point lead at the half, but the Parsons pulled away with a strong offensive and defensive performance in the second half to clinch a 81-57 victory on Thursday night at Glen Clem Gymnasium.

Dalon Evans led Bevill with 15 points, while Josh Juddine followed with 10 points. Omar Bartholomew scored 10 points with eight rebounds and a blocked shot.

After the Bears scored the first basket of the game, the Parsons went on a 14-0 run — only to see Bevill counter with nine unanswered points. The remainder of the first period saw similar results — with Snead mounting uncontested scoring runs, only to be matched by Bevill moments later.

Two free throw baskets by Bartholomew closed-out the first period, with the Parsons up 37-33 at the break.

SEE BEVILL, B2
C3 and BSCC Fayette campus to host ‘State of the Region’

By SCOTT JOHNSON
Journal Record/Staff Writer

GU-WIN - Those interested in future economic development in the region are invited to attend the sixth annual State of the Region meeting hosted by C3 of Northwest Alabama.

The open event will be held on Thursday, Jan. 25, at Bevill State Community College - Fayette Campus’ Earl McDonald Auditorium with registration to begin at 8 a.m. and the program to run from 9 to 11:30 a.m., with an intermission at 10:30.

The organization serves the three-county area of Marion, Fayette and Lamar counties as a centrally-operated entity to recruit new industry to the area while assisting local existing industry with efforts to expand and create new jobs.

Guest speakers for the event will include Economic Development Association of Alabama Executive Director Jim Searcy who will address “Growing Our Statewide Economy” and Chattanooga Electric Power Board Fiber Network and New Products Vice President Katie Espe-seth.

Epeseth will share the story of Chattanooga’s economic growth that was spurred through their high-speed broadband network that was activated in 2010.

The project is very similar to the new freedom FIBER project now underway by Tombigbee Electric Cooperative throughout Hamilton and Winfield.

In addition to the official speakers, C3 President David Thornell will provide those in attendance with the previous year’s activities for the organization while also sharing information regarding C3’s strategic plan for both the coming year and beyond.

Nearing the end of the two-and-a-half hour meeting, Thornell will present the organization’s highest honor: The Champion Award, which is given to recognize the individual who has contributed the greatest to economic growth and progress within the three-county area.

Previous winners include Tombigbee Electric Cooperative General Manager Steve Foshee, former Sen. Roger Bedford and C3 founders Bill Arkinson (Marion County), William Oswalt (Fayette County) and Johnny Rogers (Lamar County).

Bedford was honored with the inaugural award in 2014. In 2015, the three founders were praised for their work behind the scenes to create the C3 plan and Foshee was honored in 2016 for his efforts in promoting the group and being a voice for regional recruitment, job training and growth.

Industry of the Year awards will also be presented to those selected by the board for 2017.

Last year’s recipients included Sitel (Marion County), Fayette Fabrication (Fayette County) and Weyer-hauser of Millport (Lamar County) was the overall winner, as the company was cited with a $165 million investment in its facilities in 2016.

Outgoing board president Phillip Harrod of Winfield will be recognized for his service as the gavel is passed to incoming president Harry Unger, Chief Executive Officer for Custom Automated Services in Fayette.

Those interested in attending the free event are encouraged to RSVP with C3 of Northwest Alabama Executive Administrative Assistant Katie Hallman by email at khallman3@northwestalabama.edu or by calling the C3 Gu-win office 468-3213.

PHOTO BY MICHAEL E. PALMER

Midway through the second period, the Bears battled-back from a 10-point deficit to draw within five points, 50-45, before the Parsons took solid control. Snead outscored Bevill 31-12 to close the contest and gain the 81-57 win.

With the loss, Bevill moves falls 0-3 in ACCC North Division play and 5-11 overall.

The Bears resume North Division competition on Monday when they travel to Gadsden State. On Thursday, Bevill hosts the Wallace State Lions at Clem Gymnasium.
Polk speaks at Bevill baseball banquet

By DEAN MADDOX
T-R Staff Writer

Ron Polk, legendary former baseball coach at Mississippi State University, was the guest speaker at the Bevill State Community College “First Pitch” Baseball Banquet on Jan. 18.

Polk coached 29 seasons at Mississippi State, winning 1,139 games at the school. His 1,373 wins as a head coach rank ninth all-time among all NCAA Division 1 coaches. Polk is also one of only three coaches who have taken three different schools to the College World Series.

His love for baseball continued after his retirement as a head coach. Polk currently is entering his 10th season as a volunteer coach for the UAB baseball team.

Polk said that he is glad to see Bevill reinstating its baseball program. He said the program will be successful if the players are dedicated and committed.

Polk said that there are more distractions for young people today than at any other time in history. He said cell phones, bad movies, social media, and peer pressure can lead to students being unsuccessful. Polk encouraged students to spend less time on distractions and more time focused on things that will improve their lives.

“Lots of kids struggle because they don’t have a positive influence from parents, teachers, coaches and friends,” Polk said. “What you do these next few years will mostly determine what you will be for the rest of your lives.”

Polk said that all of the major league baseball teams have training academies in the Dominican Republic and Haiti. He said that players from these two countries are some of the best baseball players in the world.

Polk said children from the Dominican Republic and Haiti love baseball. He said the countries are poor and impoverished, but the children have no distractions. He said that despite a lack of equipment and decent baseball fields, these youngsters are so dedicated that they overcome their obstacles and become outstanding baseball players.

“Remember, the less distractions you have, the more successful you will be on this great planet Earth,” Polk said.

• See POLK, Page 2
Continued from Page 1

Bevill State is reinstating its baseball program this spring after a seven-year absence. Former Bevill baseball coach Joey May will once again be the head coach of the Bears, and said that he is anxiously awaiting the renewal of the program. "We'll be young, but we have a lot of talent," he said. "We're excited about this opportunity for the school and the community."

Athletic Director Max Weaver said that Bevill is committed to its sports programs. He said the school wants its athletes to have the best possible experience, both academically and athletically.

The 2018 Bevill baseball team is composed of 23 freshmen and two sophomores. Brandon Rickman, a freshman from Fayette County High School, is the only Fayette County player on the roster. Rickman will pitch and also play in the infield for the Bears.

Bevill will play a 57-game regular season that includes many double-header games. The Bears will open the season at 1:30 p.m. on Sunday, Jan. 28 in Fayette against Stillman College.

Following a three-day baseball tournament in Panama City, Fla., the Bears will host its own Bevill State Community College Tournament on Feb. 9-11. Season tickets for the Bears' home games are $75 and can be purchased at Bevill State Community College.

Pictured from left are Bevill baseball players: Carson Lindsey, Kennedy; Jeff White, Carrollton; Brandon Rickman, Fayette; Cody Mordecai, Millport; Spencer Graham, Birmingham; and head coach Joey May.
By Nicole Smith
DAILY MOUNTAIN EAGLE

Groundhog Job Shadow Day this Friday will give over 550 students from across the county an up close look at a variety of career fields.

The annual event allows 10th-graders from Sumiton Christian School and Jasper City and Walker County schools to visit dozens of participating businesses in Walker County, where representatives demonstrate daily operations and answer questions about particular career fields. Students will visit over 60 businesses and locations this year to learn about a variety of careers, including nursing, mechanics, teaching, veterinary medicine, culinary arts, banking, accounting, farming and more.

Job Shadow Day is sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce of Walker County each year, and Chamber President Linda Lewis said the program continues to be a valuable opportunity for students to learn more about career fields of their interest. Counselors at participating schools survey students to learn what their top career choices are, and 10th-graders are then placed accordingly to their responses.

"All 10th-grade students have the opportunity to explore the world of work through a job shadow experience," Lewis said.

Students will be bused to the Jasper Civic Center Friday and then sent to participating businesses in Walker County, where they will spend nearly three hours at their assigned locations.

Career Coach Shawna McCullar, who works with students in the Walker County and Jasper City school systems, has helped to organize job shadow day for the past four years, and Lewis said McCullar has been a valuable asset to the program. "I can't thank Shawna McCullar enough. She is phenomenal," Lewis said. "She and Chris McCullar (director, Walker County Center of Technology) do

See SHADOW, A5
an outstanding job in organizing the bus routes and where students need to go.”

McCullar said her other job duties include working with ninth-graders to develop their four-year plans. She also helps juniors create their resumes and assists seniors to submit job applications, apply for scholarships and complete FAFSA’s for financial aid to attend college.

She said students have been complimentary of their job shadow experiences, adding that the opportunity either inspires students to pursue a certain career or learn if a particular field is not the proper fit.

“As I’ve been in junior classes this year speaking to juniors for feedback about how it went last year for them, I got tons of positive feedback,” McCullar said. “We’re exposing them to these career options, rather than them staying in the classroom.”

Partners in the job shadow day include the Walker County Center of Technology, Jasper City Schools, Walker County Schools, Sumiton Christian School, Bevill State Community College and the business community.

Lewis said in addition to Chamber partners, she is thankful to Milo’s Hamburgers for providing a $1,000 grant for this year’s event.
Lions edge Bears

Late run lifts Wallace State

By W. BRIAN HALE
Eagle Sports Writer

The Bevill State Bears mounted a furious second-half comeback against Wallace State, but the Lions made key plays down the stretch to clinch a 64-58 victory on Thursday night at Glen Clem Gymnasium. Daily Evans scored 22 points with six rebounds and three blocked shots to lead the Bears, while Stephen Campbell had 12 points.

Wanya King added 11 points with six rebounds.

The two teams traded the lead eight times through the first half of the opening period before the Lions turned on the offense with the game tied at 16-16. Wallace State outscored Bevill 23-12 to close out the half on top, 39-28.

The Bears responded with a rally, opening the second period on an 11-0 run — tying the contest with a Peyton Woods basket, 39-39.

Following an exchange of plays, Bevill got its first lead of the second half on a three-point shot by Campbell, 46-43.

The Bears held the scoring advantage, with six minutes left in the game, 50-48, before the Lions finished the game on 15-8 run to seal 64-58 win. Bevill (6-12, 1-4) travels to Wadley on Saturday to face the Southern Union Bison at 3 p.m.

The Bears' next home game will be on Monday night against Shelby State.
A new sign has been installed at the entrance of the Walker County Airport. The project was spearheaded by one of the teams from Leadership Walker County’s 2016-2017 class.

Entrance sign installed at Walker County Airport

By JENNIFER COHRON
Daily Mountain Eagle

The new entrance sign at the Walker County Airport is the work of local career tech students. The sign, which shows a plane flying above a tree line, was created by high school students in Ted Alexander’s precision machining class at Bevill State Community College’s Incubator and painted by students in Anthony Myrick’s collision repair program at the Walker County Center of Technology.

Alabama Power and the city of Jasper provided funding for the sign, which was installed in November by Harbin’s Outdoors.

The project was spearheaded by one of the teams from Leadership Walker County’s 2016-2017 class.

“The main goal of Leadership Walker County is to bring people together to accomplish great things that we could not do on our own,” said team member Susan Chandler.

Last year’s participants focused their attention on improvements for Walker County Airport. In May, the teams presented a range of plans to the Walker County Commission that included hosting special events to increase visibility for the airport and adding a playground area.

Members of Team Orange — Chandler, Patrick Bolack, Peter Cosmiano, Steven Dozier and Lauren Vance — illustrated the need for new signs directing visitors to the airport.

See SIGN, A5
Sign

They suggested creating an entrance sign, which the airport was lacking, and replacing highways signs that had faded.

Senate Majority Leader Greg Reed, R-Jasper, assisted the team in having a new sign installed on Highway 78, and county engineer Mike Short oversaw the replacement and installation of signs on county roads near the airport.

Alexander is submitting his students’ work on the entrance sign in a competition sponsored by SkillsUSA, a national membership association serving students who are preparing for careers in trade, technical and skilled service occupations.

SkillsUSA also promotes community service projects.

“These students have made a great impact on our community by using their precision machining skills to cut the new sign,” Chandler said.
More than 500 students participate in annual Groundhog Job Shadow Day

By NICOLE SMITH
Daily Mountain Eagle

More than 500 sophomores from Walker County and Jasper City schools, as well as Sumiton Christian School, visited some 60 county businesses Friday as part of Groundhog Job Shadow Day, sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce of Walker County.

For years students have participated in the program that allows them to shadow employees who work in a career of their interest.

Students who may want to pursue a career in engineering visited Alabama Power’s Gorgas Plant Friday and had the opportunity to tour the Gorgas campus.

Erica York, an engineer at Alabama Power Plant in Gorgas, gave a 30-minute presentation to students to explain how chemical energy goes through a process to be converted into electrical energy. She also talked to students about her educational journey and encouraged students to think about a number.

Alabama Power Employment Development Coordinator Angela Creel, center, spoke to students at Alabama Power’s Gorgas Plant on Groundhog Job Shadow Day Friday.

See JOB SHADOW, A5
of factors when deciding which career path to choose, including pay, how challenging they want their job to be and whether they want to be a leader or follower.

On any given day, roughly 280 work at the Gorgas plant, along with 450 contractors.

Angela Creel, an employment development coordinator for Alabama Power, also spoke to students and encouraged them to make smart choices, such as not drinking and doing drugs. She told students all of their employees must pass a drug test, which is mandated by companies around the country. She said students wouldn’t want to make bad decisions to impact their career path.

Forty-five minutes away in Jasper, Sgt. Chuck Henderson was showing a large group of students around the Jasper Police Department to help them learn about the department’s daily operations. He also taught students about various equipment the police department uses to maintain safety.

During one presentation, Henderson explained how bullet proof vests are designed, and students also got to see some weapons and a police drone up close.

Other businesses and organizations that hosted students Friday include Bevill State Community College, G&G Steel, Carl Cannon Chevrolet Buick GMC Cadillac, Scott Crump Toyota, First Bank of Jasper, Jasper’s First Baptist Church, Jasper Lumber Company, Haynes Downard, Honda of Jasper, Sumiton Animal Clinic, TriGreen Equipment, Wade Farms, Walker Baptist Medical Center and many more.

Chamber President Linda Lewis said they were afraid there would be fewer students attend this year’s job shadow day because of the flu epidemic, but she said they were surprised to have a room full of hundreds of students Friday.

“It has been a great day. The program just gets better every year,” Lewis said.

Career Coach Shawna McCullar, who helps organize the program, said the would like to thank the chamber and everyone who supported this year’s job shadow day, including participating schools, businesses, counselors and administrators.

“The biggest thanks goes to these businesses and leaders who opened their doors and hearts to give these students this meaningful experience,” McCullar said.

Partners in the job shadow day include the Walker County Center of Technology, Jasper City Schools, Walker County Schools, Sumiton Christian School, Bevill State Community College and the business community.

Representatives of Milo’s Hamburgers visited the chamber on Friday to present a $1,000 check in support of Groundhog Job Shadow Day for Walker County students.
Exhibit features rich history of Walker County

The Walker County, Alabama Bicentennial Traveling Exhibit features history from many towns and cities across Walker County.

DAILY MOUNTAIN EAGLE - NICOLE SMITH

BY NICOLE SMITH, DAILY MOUNTAIN EAGLE

The Walker County, Alabama Bicentennial Traveling Exhibit to highlight the many cities and towns in Walker County is now on display at the Jasper Civic Center and will eventually be displayed across the county.

The exhibit is part of the Alabama 200 celebration to recognize the state's 200th birthday in 2017, 2018 and 2019.

A committee of 14 Walker County leaders has worked over the past several months to make the exhibit a reality, and it was their desire to find a way to highlight the rich history of Walker County.

After Walker Area Community Foundation Director Pam Fikes wrote a grant for the exhibit — which was awarded by the Alabama Bicentennial Commission in the amount of $5,000 — Walker College Foundation Executive Director Holly Trawick designed the exhibit, which features banners to tell about many of the municipalities in Walker County through a series of old photographs and informative text. “It’s postcards and photos of people and places that aren’t here anymore,” Trawick said.

Fikes added, “It’s also from a time the towns were all independently active, productive and successful. A lot of people don’t realize the towns used to be thriving.”

Trawick said historian Pat Morrison provided the majority of images and information for the project, along with fellow historians Rodger Starnes and Rick Watson. Mayors and city clerks from each town also helped provide information for the project.

Other Alabama 200 events will occur through 2018 and 2019 in Walker County, including the 25th season of Read Alabama next month in Jasper, a display of the Wade Hall Traveling Post Card Exhibit in April 2019 and a Making Alabama Traveling Exhibit at the Bankhead House in October 2019. The Bankhead House is also recognized as part of the Alabama 200 celebration. More details about each event will be provided later in the Daily Mountain Eagle.
Chamber of Commerce of Walker County President Linda Lewis said she is appreciative of the committee that organized the Walker County exhibit, including Trawick for designing the display and Fikes for securing a grant to make it a reality.

Paul Davis of Quality Graphics printed the banners displayed in the exhibit. A miniature of the exhibit is also available and will eventually be on display in the town of Kansas.

“I think this is an exciting time, and I think all the municipalities in our county will be excited to showcase this in our communities,” Lewis said.

The exhibit will be at the Jasper Civic Center on 19th Street E. through February and at other locations as follows: March, City of Sumiton; April, Town of Parrish; May, City of Dora; June, Town of Nauvoo; July, Town of Sipsey; August, City of Cordova; September, City of Carbon Hill; October, Town of Oakman; November, Town of Eldridge; and December, Jasper Public Library.

Specific locations for the display will be announced at a future date. In 2019, the display will spend the year at the Townley Community Center.

Each city and town will also be presented with postcards to give visitors at the exhibit, and postcards will feature the history of each municipality, specifically. The postcards will list area attractions and things to do in the town or city as well.

“I hope people get excited about it,” Trawick said.

Members of the Walker County Bicentennial Planning Committee include Walker College Foundation Executive Director Holly Trawick, Chamber of Commerce of Walker County President Linda Lewis, East Walker Chamber of Commerce’s Chee-Vee Whitfield, Walker Area Community Foundation’s Pam Fikes, Mimi Hudson of the Bankhead House and Heritage Center, Tana Collins of Bevill State Community College, Walker County Arts Alliance President Pam Callahan, Jasper Main Street Executive Director Mike Putman, Kathy Chambless of the City of Jasper, Cheryl Ganey (formerly with the Walker County Commission), Pick Deason of the Walker County Genealogical Society and historians Pat Morrison, Rodger Starnes and Rick Watson.

For more about the Alabama 200 celebrations, visit www.alabama200.org.
Carbon Hill’s Makindle McGough signed a letter-of-intent with Bevill State-Sumiton on Wednesday. She will play softball at the school. Present at the signing were, seated from left, Shane, Makindle and Robin McGough, back row, Carbon Hill assistant principal Adam Aldridge and Bevill State-Sumiton softball coach Angel Brown. McGough was an honorable mention All-State third baseman last year. She hit .360 last season with seven home runs and 51 RBIs.
Bucs offense too much for Bevill State in 100-86 loss

BY W. BRIAN HALE, EAGLE SPORTS WRITER

Dalon Evans scored 39 points and recorded seven rebounds for the Bevill State Bears in Monday night’s 100-86 loss to the Shelton State Bucs at Glen Clem Gymnasium.

Wanya King had 20 points and five steals for the Bears, with Josh Juddine scoring eight points.

The Bucs led by a 15-point midway through the first period, 28-13, before the Bears began to close the scoring gap. Evans hit two free-throws to close-out at 25-15 run by Bevill to cut Shelton’s lead to five, 43-38.

Shelton responded with an 11-2 run to end the first half up by 14, 54-40.

The Bucs never allowed the Bears to get within 14 points of the lead in the second half — with each team scoring 46 points en route to the 100-86 Shelton victory.

Bevill State (7-13, 2-5) steps out of North Division play on Thursday night when it hosts Chattahoochee Valley at 7 p.m.

Bevill State 91, Southern Union 84

The Bears recorded their second North Division win on Saturday against the Southern Union Bison, 91-84, in Wadley.

Wanya King led Bevill with 23 points, while Josh Juddine scored 20 points.
Approaching 25th season of Read Alabama! named among Alabama Bicentennial events

By NICOLE SMITH
Daily Mountain Eagle

Read Alabama! The Tradition Continues is celebrating its 25th season with four historical authors sharing their works in February and March.

This year’s authors were chosen by the Alabama Bicentennial Committee, and the 25th season of Read Alabama has been designated as an Alabama 200 event to highlight the state’s history in celebration of its 200th birthday.

Jay Lamar, executive director of the Alabama Bicentennial Commission, said she is happy to have a group of authors together for Read Alabama that will share their own unique tellings of Alabama history.

“The speakers this year will focus on our people, places and stories, which is also what we want the bicentennial to be about,” Lamar said. “Of course, it is especially wonderful to be partnering this year, when Read Alabama celebrates its 25th anniversary. It has played a vital role in the culture and community of Jasper and Walker County, and we are humbled and honored to be able to celebrate together.”

The 25th season of Read Alabama will begin with graphic designer Laura Murray on Feb. 6, as she shares her first historical coloring book, “Amazing Alabama: A Coloring Book Journey Through Our 67 Counties.”

The coloring book features historical landmarks from all Alabama counties, and it is suitable for adults and children roughly 9 and up.

Murray lives in Auburn, and she will be featured in Sunday’s edition of the Daily Mountain Eagle.

Two weeks later on Feb. 20, historian John Sledge will share his book at Read Ala-

See READ, A5
bama, “These Rugged Days: Alabama in the Civil War.”

Through a series of records, newspapers, memoirs, photographs and more, Sledge tells of Alabama’s experience during the war. Sledge has also authored “Cities of Silence: A Guide to Mobile’s Historic Cemeteries and The Mobile River.”

Sledge lives in Fairhope, Ala., and works as a senior architectural historian for the Mobile Historic Development Commission.

Ed Bridges will be the third visiting author to Read Alabama on March 6, to share his book, “Alabama: The Making of an American State.”

Bridges’ book uses maps, artifacts, art, archival photographs and other illustrations to tell Alabama’s history. Many items illustrated in the book have never been published before.

Since retiring as director of the Alabama Department of Archives and History, Bridges has been volunteering with the Alabama Bicentennial Commission.

Poet Jeanie Thompson will conclude the 2018 season of Read Alabama on March 20, with her book, “The Myth of Water: Poems from the Life of Helen Keller.”

The book features 34 poems written in the voice of Keller, based on Keller’s life with a disability and her many travels and experiences. “The Myth of Water” also has excerpts from Keller’s own writing.

Thompson has authored numerous books of poetry, and she is a teacher at Spalding University. She’s also the founding director of the Alabama Writers’ Forum.

Admission to Read Alabama is free. Refreshments will begin for each session at 3:30 p.m., followed by the main program at 4 p.m. All sessions will be held on the Bevill State Community College (BSCC)-Jasper campus in Mathews Lecture Hall of the Wade Math and Science Building.

“Bevill State Community College is proud to be a part of Read Alabama, especially during this 25th anniversary and the Alabama Bicentennial,” BSCC Director of Public Relations Tana Collins said. “The program is always a wonderful resource and opportunity for the community.”

A variety of postcards from the Chamber of Commerce of Walker County that feature various county landmarks will be presented at each

Those who attend all four sessions of Read Alabama this year will receive all items pictured, including Walker County postcards and a county coloring book, provided by the Chamber of Commerce of Walker County.

Read Alabama session, and visitors of the last session on March 20, will also receive a county coloring book from the Chamber. Those who attend all sessions will receive all of the postcards and the coloring book.

The postcards will feature historical locations such as Lewis Smith Lake, the Alabama Mining Museum and First United Methodist Church.

Walker College Foundation Executive Director Holly Trawick said she hopes to see many people attend this year’s Read Alabama sessions, which give everyone an opportunity to learn more about the state of Alabama.

“I’m so excited to celebrate the 25th season of Read Alabama and to tie it in to Alabama’s 200th anniversary,” Trawick said. “We have some very unique authors who have fascinating takes on Alabama history.”

Read Alabama 2018 is hosted by BSCC and made possible through support from the Walker College Foundation, Alabama Power Company, The Chamber of Commerce of Walker County, Jasper Main Street, Walker County Arts Alliance, The Literacy Council of Walker County and the Alabama Bicentennial Committee.

Each author will sign books before and after each program, and books will be available for purchase.
BEVILL STATE BASKETBALL

Bucs offense too much for Bevill State in 100-86 loss

By W. BRIAN HALE
Eagle Sports Writer

Dalon Evans scored 39 points and recorded seven rebounds for the Bevill State Bears in Monday night’s 100-86 loss to the Shelton State Bucs at Glen Clem Gymnasium.

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Bevill State basketball coach Tommy Suitts’ team fell to 2-5 in conference play with a 100-86 loss to Shelton State on Monday.
Rees Scholarship awards $74,000 to HVACR techs

Arlington, Va. — The Clifford H. "Ted" Rees, Jr. Scholarship Foundation, a 501(c)(3) charitable foundation of the Air-Conditioning, Heating, and Refrigeration Institute (AHRI), and the Air Conditioning Contractors of America (ACCA), today announced scholarship awards totaling $74,000 to 40 students, including one military veteran program recipient studying to become technicians in the HVACR and water heating industry.

“We are pleased to award scholarships to those qualified and dedicated students and veterans, and we hope to eventually welcome them into the industry,” said AHRI President and CEO Stephen Yurek. “Each year, the Foundation provides aid to an increasing number of recipients, helping to promote careers in the industry and fill good-paying jobs that cannot be outsourced.”

“Developing quality workers is a critical initiative that everyone in our industry is working together to accomplish,” said ACCA President and CEO Paul T. Stalknecht. “We are proud to partner with the Rees Scholarship Foundation and AHRI to give these hard-working students and veterans scholarships to help them continue their education, which will develop into a strong workforce for our industry’s future.”

HVACR and Water Heating Technician Program Recipients:
- Adam Randolph, Bevill State Community College, Sumiton, AL
- Adrian Behr, Green Country Technology Center, Okmulgee, OK
- Angel Gonzalez, Browning Technical School, Anaheim, CA
- Austin Romine, Bevill State Community College, Sumiton, AL
- Binh Le, Georgia Piedmont Technical College, Clarkston, GA
- Bradley Wheat, Bevill State Community College, Sumiton, AL
- Christian Castillo, Tyler Junior College West Campus, Tyler, TX
- Christopher Lewis, Grand Rapids Community College, Grand Rapids, MI
- Cory Edney, Intercoast College, Fairfield, CA
- Cory Mullins, Santa Barbara Business College, Ventura, CA
- Dwoodson Fuller, Green Country Technology Center, Okmulgee, OK
- Emily Johnson, Hennepin Technical College, Eden Prairie, MN
- Erasmo Soto, Intercoast College, San Diego, CA
- George Helman, Leonardi HVAC Training Center, Denver, CO
- Howard Raleigh, Browning Technical School, Anaheim, CA
- Hunter Johnson, Bevill State Community College, Sumiton, AL
- James Pera, Bevill State Community College, Sumiton, AL
- Jeffrey Headrick, Tyler Junior College, Tyler, TX
- Jesse Garcia Olivias, Tulsa Tech Center, Tulsa, OK
- Joce Mielnikowski, Intercoast College, Sacramento, CA
- Juan Godinez, Perry Technical Institute, Yakima, WA
- Luis Cervantes, Lone Star College, Houston, TX
- Michael Derby, Penn College of Technology, Williamsport, PA
- Myra Sullivan, Bevill State Community College, Hamilton, AL
- Nadene de Lajudie, Browning Technical School, Anaheim, CA
- Nathan Lavalleie, Pennsylvania College of Technology, Williamsport, PA
- Obed Cordova, Front Range Community College, Loveland, CO
- Philip Fernandez, South Central Louisiana Technical College, Reserve, LA
- Pistoni Quach, Browning Technical School, Anaheim, CA
- Rex Allbritton Jr., Green Country Technical Institute, Okmulgee, OK
- Ruben Carreon, Tyler Junior College, Tyler, TX
- Ryan Calahan, Southeastern Community College, Milford, NE
- Rylan Jettin, Missouri State Technical College, Linn, MO
- Scott Husak, MIAT College of Technology, Canton, MI
- Sam Snovd, Electrical Training Center Inc., Copleague, NY
- Timothy Singer, Delta College, University Center, MI
- Trent Steffens, Missouri State Technical College, Linn, MO
- Will Madison, Shelton State Community College, Tuscaloosa, AL
- Zachary Hutto, Green Country Technical Center, Okmulgee, OK

Veterans Program Recipients:
- Glenn Coady, Des Moines Area Community College, Ankeny, IA

Since the Rees Scholarship Foundation was founded in 2003, it has awarded more than $700,000 in scholarships to more than 400 deserving students and instructors.
Local economic development alliance touts incentives and infrastructure at annual meeting

By DEAN MADDOX
T-R Staff Writer

The Northwest Alabama (formerly C3) Economic Development Alliance held its seventh annual meeting on Jan. 25 on the campus of Bevill State Community College in Fayette.

The Northwest Alabama Economic Development Alliance covers Fayette, Marion and Lamar counties, and is an organization dedicated to strengthening the communities that it serves through economic and community development projects. The alliance constantly strives to recruit new industry and also assists existing industries in an effort to create better jobs and more economic opportunities for its residents.

Jim Searcy, executive director of the Economic Development Association of Alabama, said that economic development is not as glamorous as some people might think. He said a lot of hard work goes into recruiting new industries, including creating the economic environment and incentives needed to lure companies to an area.

Searcy said Alabama has been very successful in recent years recruiting major industries to the state. “The auto industries, especially Mercedes, validated Alabama as an economic player,” Searcy said. “Once Mercedes was secured, other companies began to take a serious look at the state.”

Searcy said that Honda, Hyundai and most recently the newly-announced Toyota/Mazda plant have made Alabama one of the leading automobile manufacturers in the United States. He said that all of these companies have needed, and will continue to need, parts and material suppliers. Searcy said that economic alliances have got to be prepared to take advantage of these opportunities.

The number one factor needed to attract new industry is a trained and willing workforce, Searcy said. He added that this area has an abundance of skilled and experienced factory workers that could easily transition into a new industry.

The second thing needed for industry recruitment is strong and reliable infrastructure. Searcy said that most people view infrastructure as access to major highways, but he said that infrastructure encompasses much more. Readily available power, water, sewer, gas and internet service factor heavily into decisions made by industries. The business cli-

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business climate of an area is also a major concern for industry, Searcy said. He noted that small towns with involved civic and community leaders sometimes have an advantage in this area because of the bureaucracy that deals with leaders in major metropolitan areas.

Searcy said that industries are also looking for financial incentives that an area can provide. He said the state has worked with local areas to help provide incentives for many businesses, but Searcy said that local areas must also have a plan in place that would help entice an industry to its location.

He said that the Northwest Alabama EDA area is in a very favorable "triangle" area between the Mercedes, Honda and Toyota/Mazda plants. Searcy added that the completion of the I-22 interstate corridor has also enhanced the competitive balance of the area.

Searcy closed his comments by telling the audience: "Focus on your strengths, but look for opportunities to reach beyond."

Katie Espeseth, vice-president of the Chattanooga, Tenn. Electric Power Board (EPB), also spoke at the C3 meeting. She said that during the 1970s and 1980s, Chattanooga was a city that was tired and down-trodden. Walter Cronkite, the legendary anchor of the CBS Evening News, once called Chattanooga, "the dirtiest city in America."

Epeseth said that city leaders began transforming Chattanooga by updating and reviving the landscape of the city. The infrastructure, including streets and highways within the city, was improved and areas that had once been an eyesore for the city became vibrant again.

One of the most dramatic changes occurred in 2008, when the Chattanooga EPB decided to begin the ambitious project of building a fiber-optic "smart grid," Espeseth said. The smart grid brought true high-speed internet for the first time to the residents of the city. It also provided a means of rerouting electricity to customers during outages, restoring power in seconds instead of hours.

Epeseth said that since the massive upgrade in services, Chattanooga has seen a major influx of businesses and tech-savvy companies. She also said that high-speed fiber-optic internet opens up a world of opportunities for students, families and businesses.

"If you have the leadership and vision, you can implement a similar strategy anywhere," she said.

David Thornell, president and CEO of the Northwest Alabama Economic Development Alliance, said that things are definitely improving for the three-county region. He said that unemployment has continued to decrease each year since the alliance was organized, and currently is 3.6 percent in the region.

Thornell said that Tombigbee Communications is currently formulating a plan that will bring high-speed fiber-optic internet to much of the three-county region. He commended that the region is also in a prime location to supply parts to the automakers that are located within a 200-mile radius of the area.

The Alabama Department of Transportation office in Fayette, the Pfifer expansion, Hamilton Homebuilders and Tiffin Motorhomes were a few of the many examples that Thornell listed as being success stories within the region. He said the economic development alliance is working daily to enhance the lives of its residents by providing better economic opportunities.

"Good times are here, but better times are still ahead," Thornell said.

Outgoing Northwest Alabama EDA chairman, Phillip Harrod, presented the annual "Industry of the Year" award to Tiffin Motorhomes. Tiffin began in 1972 in Red Bay and expanded to include a facility in Winfield a few years ago, providing additional much-needed manufacturing jobs to the area.

Ryan Bird, purchasing manager for Tiffin Motorhomes, accepted the award on behalf of the company's employees.

"We have employees who show up every day and work hard," he said. "We're looking forward to expanding and hiring more employees."

Don Waldon, who served as the chief administrator for the Tenn-Tom Waterway Development Authority from 1984 until his retirement in 2005, was awarded the annual "Champion Award" by the alliance. Thornell said that the award was first presented in 2015 and is awarded annually to individuals who have helped economic development efforts in the area.

Waldon, who also served as the first chairman of the economic alliance, said the award was a "big surprise" to him. He asked everyone to continue supporting the organization.

"I am a firm believer of regional economic development," Waldon said.

At the close of the meeting, Fayette business owner Harry Unger took the gavel as the new alliance chairman.

He thanked Thornell for "making it easy for businesses to get answers to questions." Unger also encouraged everyone to stay involved in industrial recruitment.

"We've had great support through the years and we're going to have to continue to have that support to remain successful," Unger said.

In addition to Unger, the remaining members of the Northwest Alabama EDA Board of Directors are: chairman-elect Barbara Reeves, treasurer Anthony Burnett, immediate past chairman Phillip Harrod, Mark Brown, Ron Davis, Andy Johnson, Bill Atkinson, Scott Hunt, Matt LeDuke, Wayne Carruth, Don Cole, Joseph Sparks, Wayne Christian and Wade Nixon.
Maddox speaks to youth leadership group

By DEAN MADDOX
T-R Staff Writer

Tuscaloosa Mayor Walt Maddox was the featured speaker at the West Alabama Youth Leadership Institute meeting, held on Jan. 24 at the Fayette campus of Bevill State Community College.

Maddox has served as mayor of Tuscaloosa since 2015, and he previously served as a Tuscaloosa city councilman and the executive director of personnel for the Tuscaloosa City School System.

“Government and politics mean a lot to you, whether you realize it or not,” Maddox told the group of students. “Government affects every facet of your life and has an influence on your future.”

Maddox said that four principles guide his philosophy for success: vision, implementing your vision, being “in the arena,” and respect for everyone.

He said that having a vision is perhaps best exemplified by Nick Saban arriving in Alabama as the head football coach of the Crimson Tide. He said that Alabama’s football program had been mired in an era of mediocrity for a few years prior to Saban taking the head coaching job.

Maddox said that Saban had a vision for the program, and announced his vision to the public during his first day as the new head coach. Maddox also said that Saban had a “process” to implement his plan.

He said that because of his determination, hard work, vision and process to implement his plan, Saban has become the most successful coach in America. Maddox said that without a vision and a plan to implement that vision, it is hard to be successful in any endeavor.

Maddox also encouraged the students to “be in the arena.” He said that a leader cannot be someone who expects others to blindly follow his lead. He said that a leader inspires others through his personal involvement and participation.

“By truly successful, you must ‘have respect for everyone.’ Maddox said. He told the students they will not always agree with others, but said a leader needs to be able to listen and consider other people’s opinions.

Maddox told the students that to succeed, they have to act. “You might make mistakes, but you will learn from those mistakes and make the necessary corrections.”

He closed his comments by quoting the famous American writer Mark Twain. “The two most important days in your life are the day you are born and the day you find out why.”

Maddox encouraged the students to stay involved, telling them that they are the next generation of leaders in America.

The West Alabama Youth Leadership Institute is comprised of approximately 70 juniors and seniors from the 13 area high schools in Fayette, Marion, Lamar and Pickens counties.

Students representing Berry High School are Ally Bommer, Tori Treadway, Maggie Herren, Nick Holmes, Demond Sweetin, Payton Tucker, Laine Henderson and Karlee Kimbrell. Brianna Hubbert, Kristen Lowery, Trey Porch, Lucas Stidham, Samantha Nicewonger, Isaac Fowler, Austin McCaleb and Carson Silas are members of the youth leadership group from Hubbertville.

Fayette County High School is represented by Adrianna Cousse, Kayte Davidson, Corbin Driver, Ayana Jamison, Karissa Lomery, Kate Vann, Kimala Monroe and Erin Harville.

The institute is a training program “designed to teach leadership and community service skills to high school juniors and seniors. The focus is to provide youth the opportunity to excel in personal enrichment, growth and maturity which will enhance their ability to succeed in future endeavors.”

Following Maddox’s address, the students selected debate topics that would be discussed at future meetings. The debate topics included: the border wall, abortion, Confederate monuments, the death penalty, first amendment rights, gun control, Social Security, pre-existing conditions, federal aid, the minimum wage and student loans.
Rather than meeting at one of the familiar fast food joints, Jasperites are frequently heading downtown to Warehouse’s Nineteen, Los Reyes or Black Rock Bistro, which was lauded by New York magazine as a must-see restaurant in Alabama, and the Alabama Cattlemen’s Association says has “Bama’s Best Burger.”

Toward the weekend, folks often head to one of the new beer establishments: Twisted Barley Brewing Co. or Tallulah Brewing Co. Both are getting rave reviews from locals and outsiders. A few years ago, the sidewalks were empty after 5 p.m. Now it’s hard to find a parking place at 10 p.m. on Thursday, Friday and Saturday. Downtown Jasper is like the old city center so common across America 50 or 100 years ago. There are no parking meters and few traffic lights. Almost every intersection is a four-way stop.

Young’s jewelers, perhaps the oldest continuously operating business in Jasper, has engagement photos of couples in its new front windows. Across the street, teenagers meet inside a renovated two-story building that houses the new First United Methodist Church Youth Center. They play games in the fenced grass lot next door; reminiscent of a time when children’s noses weren’t always planted on iPads.

Many of those kids are learning in the respected city school system, including at the new $35 million Jasper High School that has high-speed wireless technology in its 61 classrooms serving 850 students. Memorial Park Elementary last year became a National Blue Ribbon School.

Other community events, such as fundraising plays like “Steel Magnolias,” are performed in the spacious Jasper Convention Center, which is headquarters for several important local organizations in a town that is an Alabama Community of Excellence and has been a U.S. Tree City since 1988.

The past five years have seen the revival of the Foothills Festival each September, attracting up to 25,000 people for free carnival rides and big-time bands, such as the Spin Doctors last year, on the city square. There is also Art in the Park in May and Dinner in the Park in the fall.

Four years ago, Jasper became the nation’s second city hosting an urban disc golf tournament. The Downtown Throwdown brings standout Frisbee tossers from across the country for two days while the heart of the business district is blocked off from vehicle traffic.

NATATORIUM IMPORTANT ASSET

Memorial Park’s many segments spanning four city blocks are the crown jewels of Jasper’s public facilities, providing adjacent fenced baseball, softball and soccer fields, the George Lindsey Dream Field, Swann Gymnasium, Jasper Senior Center, a handicapped-accessible playground and other popular venues surrounding a pond. The Natatorium is the showpiece of the park dedicated in 1949 to soldiers who made the ultimate sacrifice, including 200 from Jasper in World War II.

Opened in 2003 on the former site of an outdoor pool enjoyed by locals for decades, the Natatorium is a multi-use facility that incorporates the original bathhouse building into a tall structure that houses the seven-lane, 8-foot-deep, 25-yard-long pool.

Thousands of swimmers visit each year to compete, do aerobics, dance, celebrate birthdays or just take a dip in the warm water after the weather turns cold.

Natatorium Director Stacy Smothers wasn’t even a year old when she learned to swim in the old pool. She’s been working at the newer $3 million facility opened, taking her current post a decade ago. It costs about $500,000 a year to maintain and staff the Natatorium and adjoining outdoor pool, paid in part through a $2 daily fee for kids ($3 for adults).

Jasper’s swim team had more than 100 members last summer, many who hope to mirror the success of Chloe Bennett, who learned to swim there at age 7 and became an All-American swimmer at Delta State.

The Natatorium is a special place for special-needs people, with different groups from the region visiting each week for the fun and health benefits.

Murals have been painted to decorate the side of Restoration Hall downtown.
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The annual Jasper Special Olympics, hosting more than 150 athletes from across Alabama, is among the most popular meets in the state. Yet, Smothers says saving lives is the most important mission of the Natatorium. The No. 1 cause of death for children under 14 is drowning. That problem is addressed through swimming classes beginning at 9 months. Smothers saw a similar need in 2015 when she started a program for grownups. More than 60 adults, up to age 84, learned to swim at the Natatorium last year.

Smothers walks around the pool watching Whitney Dyer swimming fast laps. The next lane over, Brenda Arnold is keeping pace. Not long ago, neither woman could swim. Now they swim competitively.

“When I first started, I was terrified of deep water,” says Dyer, an attorney in Corner, located between Birmingham and Jasper. “It became a self-esteem issue. As a child, my family didn’t swim. I didn’t know what a natatorium was. We didn’t have that where I grew up in Tennessee.”

An accomplished athlete and sprinter at Miles College, Dyer “always wanted to swim.” Her three children, ages 11, 8, and 4, learned at the Natatorium, which encouraged Dyer to take the leap. She met Arnold, who started teaching beginning swimmers four years ago after progressing herself from dog-paddling. “The teacher and the student have become one another’s biggest cheerleader.”

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 berry

The annual Jasper Special Olympics, hosting more than 150 athletes from across Alabama, is among the most popular meets in the state. Yet, Smothers says saving lives is the most important mission of the Natatorium. The No. 1 cause of death for children under 14 is drowning. That problem is addressed through swimming classes beginning at 9 months. Smothers saw a similar need in 2015 when she started a program for grownups. More than 60 adults, up to age 84, learned to swim at the Natatorium last year.

Smothers walks around the pool watching Whitney Dyer swimming fast laps. The next lane over, Brenda Arnold is keeping pace. Not long ago, neither woman could swim. Now they swim competitively.

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 BERNARD’S AN INSTITUTION ON THE SQUARE

It’s a walk down memory lane, traversing the narrow aisles of Bernard’s Store for Men, where mementos of simpler days are as prominent as the familiar names on the merchandise labels. Old Stetson hat boxes are stacked near Hart Schaffner & Marx suits; a vintage adding machine rests on the floor alongside Johnston & Murphy shoes; old Coke bottles press against Patagonia pullovers.

The walls of the 121-year-old beautifully restored building are lined with wooden chests, old desks, an ox yoke, a stuffed bobcat and pheasants, while Elvis Presley’s “Peace in the Valley” LP forever is cued to play on a Decca suitcase stereo in the entrance window.

A nattily attired man approaches a boy in his mother’s arms as they await a tuxedo for the dad. “You’re a good-looking guy,” Rusty Richardson says with a broad smile, which elicits the same from the boy. The owner of Bernard’s isn’t giving special treatment to this family: it’s the standard at one of Jasper’s oldest businesses. “People like old-fashioned things,” says Richardson, who bought the business in 1988, not too long after having worked there part-time in his high school years. “Bernard Weinstein believed in top-notch customer service, in carrying top-quality lines and standing behind them. We’re carrying on that tradition.”

Nowadays a man off the street will be greeted with an ice-cold 8-ounce bottle of Coca-Cola, or a cup of coffee, and invited to take his time looking through the jam-packed rows of shirts, socks, slacks, suits and shoes. “Our mission is to make people feel comfortable when they walk in the door,” Richardson says. “I try to remember people’s names, keep a list of their sizes, their kids’ sizes. And we’d love to help them buy something.”

Bernard’s Store for Men has been open nearly 70 years because exceptional service and selection “pays off.” Richardson says. Anything less than the best of each could not be competitive with nationally known clothing or chain stores. Richardson provides free alterations, gift wrapping and delivery. “The other thing is we’re good listeners,” he says. “People just come here and hang out. They vent and I let them, and they know I won’t repeat what they say. We had four or five guys in here this morning, not buying anything, just shooting the bull.”

Richardson has four full-time and three part-time employees. He and Glenda Odum have worked together 43 years. He continues hiring local high school students through the same program that brought him into the business with Weinstein.

The hallway between the tailored clothing and furnishings building and the original Bernard’s is lined with Christmas card photographs of customers’ children sent in through the years, many of those pictured now frequent the store as adults. A framed portrait of Weinstein, tape measure draped around his neck, stands on an end table.

“We’ve been fortunate to stay open, and busy, only because of our loyal customers and repeat business,” Richardson says. “A lot of companies today are online and don’t want to see you eye to eye. That personal contact has made Bernard’s successful.”

 YOROZU NEW LINK TO BEST-SELLING AUTOS

What will a new Honda Ridgeline, Nissan Altima, Acura RDX, Mercedes M Class and Toyota Camry soon have in common? Each could depend on crucial components that were manufactured at the Yorozu Automotive Alabama plant in Jasper.

Since July 2017, Yorozu Automotive Alabama employees have been making steel components at the 283,826-square-foot state-of-the-art facility, which is the Japanese corporation’s second U.S. manufacturing site. Yorozu has long been a major player in the auto parts world but in 2015 was enticed to Jasper, in part, because the town is at the geographical center of 10 car plants in the South. Yorozu specializes in suspension parts also found in the Nissan Maxima, Titan and NV van, and Honda Pilot.

More than 160 employees, out of an anticipated workforce of some 300, already occupy the no-frills, white-walled building where “Safety First” is posted in every room, on each floor and flies alongside the American, Alabama and Yorozu flags out front. There are engineers, hydraulic press operators, painting personnel, assembly and shop workers, maintenance personnel and administrators amid scores of robots, conveyer belts, colossal cranes and computer screens.

“There’s quite a wide range of skills required to make this kind of operation work efficiently,” says Senior Vice President Dan Byrom, “who bought the business in 1988, not too long after transferring with two other executives after he spent 24 years at Yorozu’s first American plant near Murfreesboro in his native Tennessee. “There’s a lot of opportunity for advancement within this company. You may start at the ground-floor level today then, by applying yourself, end up in a management position.”

As Byrom walks a marked path along the concrete factory floor 55 feet beneath the roof, rolls of steel weighing 16,000-36,000 pounds are lifted onto a reel by one of four 20-ton overhead cranes. A 3,500-ton transfer press slams onto the thin, flat metal sheets, repeatedly popping out the beginnings of a rear suspension part. Interchangeable dies fill a large area of the floor, awaiting transfer inside the press for the different car parts produced by Yorozu employees. Each pressed part goes through a series of refinements before becoming the finished products that have earned the parent company its stellar reputation during the past 70 years.

All raw materials come into the south end of the massive building and eventually exit as completed parts.
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All raw materials come into the south end of the massive building and eventually exit as completed
parts for shipping on the north end of the plant. Scores of steel hanging racks are filled with parts and transported by small, flat AGVs (automated guided vehicles) that scurry throughout the plant on computer-programmed routes. The battery-powered AGVs eliminate the use of manned forklifts. An overhead conveyer system moves the parts through the immersion painting section.

Although much of the plant is automated, the human touch is required for many of the important jobs. The facility has two eight-hour shifts five days each week, with most workers off on weekends. Their product will be shipped for final assembly of cars at plants in Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi and Tennessee.

“This plant is currently shipping well over 2 million parts annually and will easily double that as we reach full production,” Bryom says.

BEVILL STATE A BARGAIN FOR LOCAL STUDENTS

Nestled in a hilly, residential area, with a city park and scenic creek leading to its doorstep, Bevill State Community College’s Jasper Campus is easily the equal of the most picturesque schools statewide. From the stately Davis Hall and Murphy Hall at the entrance, to McCutcheon-Fair Hall at the back, the 17 buildings between Indiana and Gamble avenues provide local students an opportunity to further their learning without leaving town.

“It is a gorgeous campus,” says Tara Collins, PR director of the Bevill system’s oldest school. ‘And it saves students a lot of money, costing less than half the price of a four-year institution. A lot of times a student or their parents aren’t quite ready for a four-year college. Bevill State provides a seamless transfer as the price of a four-year institution. A lot of times a student or their parents aren’t quite ready for a four-year college. Bevill State provides a seamless transfer between Indiana and Gamble avenues provide local students an opportunity to further their learning without leaving town.

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Although much of the plant is automated, the human touch is required for many of the important jobs. The factory has two eight-hour shifts five days each week, with most workers off on weekends. Their product will be shipped for final assembly of cars at the universities. “We make sure our students aren’t wasting their time or their money,” Collins says.

Nearly 700 students were on campus last fall, with more than 350 others taking Bevill State’s online courses. Top-performing local high schoolers can begin taking Bevill classes in the 10th grade, allowing some of them to begin college at the sophomore level.

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“Grizz Lee Bear,” chosen through an online voting campaign, the team gained national prominence under Glen Clem, who coached 1,000 games in 37 years before dying at age 59 in 1996. The Bevill gymnasium bears his name, as does the Alabama Junior College Coach of the Year award.

The Bevill baseball team, which won the state championship and finished well in the national junior college tournament in 2001 and 2003, this spring will play for the first time in six years.

“We have a long history of very successful athletics,” Collins says. “Everyone is excited to see that tradition return.”

WORKING TOGETHER FOR THE BETTER

A concerted effort by nonprofit community groups has brought a brighter day for Jasper residents as new businesses open and opportunities abound. The past two years have seen more than 40 downtown renovations totaling $1.2 million, building purchases near $4 million and 17 new businesses creating 80 jobs. Bevill and Jasper industrial parks are home to 15 plants employing more than 500 workers.

These successes derive from the efforts of the Jasper Main Street, Jasper Industrial Board, Chamber of Commerce of Walker County, Walker Area Community Foundation, Walker County Arts Alliance, Walker County Development Authority, local business leaders and elected officials working hand in hand to lift their community.

“I don’t think a lot of communities can tell you that all of their organizations work well together,” says Linda Lewis, who’s been president of the local chamber for 22 years. “I love partnerships and you don’t have such wide-ranging partnerships in a lot of places.”

Ironically, Lewis grew up getting Alabama Power customers’ lights back on. Her father, 87-year-old Energizer Chuck McKellar, in emergencies let his kids answer their home phone when folks called to say they had an outage. As a young girl, Lewis would call the Jasper Crew Headquarters and report the customer names and addresses. She later worked part-time in the Dora Office.

Today, Lewis tackles more and bigger issues, ones affecting the livelihood of her county’s 67,000 people. The chamber’s second consecutive five-year development plan, ‘Forward Walker County,’ is targeting retail growth, workforce readiness, image and community engagement. Part of the plan involves
Tallulah’s Bankhead was internationally known star of stage and screen.

Before there was Madonna, the world knew Tallulah. One-word names weren’t invented in the 1980s. From the 1930s until the 1960s, Tallulah was synonymous with celebrity. The actress was the daughter of one of the most powerful men in America, William Brockman Bankhead, whose death in 1940 brought future-president Harry Truman to his funeral in Jasper.

Tallulah Bankhead lived a lot of life in her 66 years on Earth, and, luckily for her adopted hometown, she lived some of it in Alabama. The husky-voiced, Bamboozan, frequently honored and mimicked actress is still linked to Jasper, where her father’s house is the town’s biggest tourist attraction decades after her deaths. Tallulah is still idolized by some, criticized by others – much as in life – a half-century after her death wrought by drinking, drugs and cigarettes. She is the centerpiece wrought by drinking, drugs and cigarettes. She is the centerpiece of the Bankhead House & Heritage Center. It is the same place where she greeted a reporter nude in the backyard garden. Visitors today can stand where she was married in front of the living room fireplace. Her most famous movie, Alfred Hitchcock’s “Lifeboat,” runs continuously on a TV upstairs.

has been. I think anybody from the Jasper area would agree that it is a great place to live. Merchandise Salesperson, Jonathan Thomas has been in the Jasper Office all 14 years he has been with APC, establishing a reputation as one of the company’s top salesmen. The store frequently finishes second in the state in total sales. Merchandise Salesperson, Lisa Rushing splits her time between the Fayette Office and Jasper.

“We have to compete with national chain stores, but we focus on what we need to do to satisfy our customers,” says Thomas. “We take pride in everything we do. We greet our customers at the door, shake their hands and are honest about our products and prices. We sell service and value. Our customers appreciate knowing that we back up everything we sell.”

JASPER OFFICE SERVES 61,000 CUSTOMERS IN WALKER COUNTY

Jasper Manager, Britton Lightsey was literally born into the Alabama Power family. His late grandfather, Britton’s father, Pete Lightsey, was a crew foreman in Centreville who retired after more than 40 years with the company. Britton’s brother, Trey Lightsey, is an Environmental Affairs supervisor at the General Services Complex. Even Britton’s mother-in-law, Anita Davis, was a long-time customer service representative in the Columbusiana.

And that doesn’t even count my cousins, uncles and other relatives who’ve worked for Alabama Power,” Lightsey says at his desk in the downtown Jasper Office where he’s worked the past year.

The University of Montevallo graduate has worked across the state during his decade with the company since starting in the Montevallo Office in Appliance Sales. He worked about a year each in Calera and Clanton, before moving to Eufaula in the Professional Development Program. Lightsey became a business office supervisor in Montgomery in 2012, the business office manager in Winfield and Hamilton in 2013, then added Fayette and Sylacauga to his plate through 2016. Customer Service Representative, Dana Harbin has been with the company for 20 years, all but six of them in the Jasper Office. CSR, Brandi Porter has been with APC for 11 years, all in Jasper except a short stint in the Tuscaloosa Office.

Working out front in the payment area, Customer Service Rep, Steve Hart has been with the company for 19 years, while his counterpart, Elizabeth Arnold’s first day on the job was Oct. 2, 2017. “I love Jasper,” says Arnold. “It’s my home, always

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New restaurants are getting rave reviews from national publications.