



Alabama CURRENTS

AMEA **35**
Years
POWER THAT WORKS FOR YOU SINCE 1981

A Publication of the Alabama Municipal Electric Authority • July/August 2016

**2017 AMEA Scholarship Program
kicks off in August**

See Page 2

FROM THE EDITOR

Scholarships provide pathway for students to become prepared in the workforce

Scholarships are a critical tool in helping students obtain the training and preparation needed for the jobs of tomorrow. Alabama's economic competitiveness is dependent upon the availability and quality of a skilled workforce across a variety of fields and industries. Providing pathways for students to prepare themselves for careers is a critically important step in ensuring a healthy economy for our state.



Alabama has always ranked high in economic competitiveness. That kind of news is important to those of us calling Alabama our home, and it brings a certain responsibility to you and me personally, as well as the business community.

When industries look for a site to locate their businesses, a checklist typically includes items such as workforce availability, housing, utilities and transportation. High on the list is an educated, well-prepared workforce.

The business community has a vested interest in lending support to the education of its community, and the Alabama Municipal Electric Authority (AMEA) and its 11 Members are committed as well.

We have found a little help can have a big impact over time. Through such initiatives as the AMEA Scholarship Program, AMEA and its Members are helping enrich the lives of students throughout the state, and the benefits of this program will have a long, lasting effect.

Since 1992, AMEA and its Members have provided over \$2 million in scholarships to graduating high school seniors who receive their electric service from AMEA Members, including Alexander City, Dothan, Fairhope, LaFayette, Lanett, Luverne, Opelika, Piedmont, Riviera Utilities (Foley), Sylacauga and Tuskegee.

To be eligible for an AMEA scholarship, a student's family must receive electric service from a Member's electric utility. Granted only to graduating high school seniors, the student must attend a four-year college/university, community college, and/or vocational school within the state of Alabama.

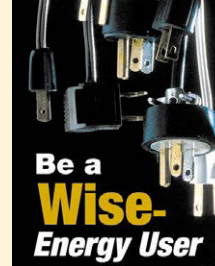
Starting with the 2017 program, AMEA and its 11 Member cities will make available 44, \$2,500 scholarships.

Starting in August, we encourage students who qualify, to visit the AMEA web site, www.amea.com, Scholarship Program, and download a scholarship application. Applications will also be sent to all schools in AMEA Member cities in August. Application deadline for the 2017 program is **Monday, Feb. 13, 2017**.

We take our role as a good corporate citizen seriously. That's why we, along with our Members, support education initiatives that contribute to making our state economically competitive. Together, we can all help the next generation of leaders by giving them the support and experiences they need today to make sound decisions in the future.

Lisa Miller

AMEA Manager of Communications and Marketing



Stay cool with summer energy-saving tips at home

Summer and the high temperatures it brings increase electrical loads. Keep cool this summer and save energy costs by following these simple tips around the house.

Summer cooling tips

- Turn off unnecessary lights. Much of the energy from a light bulb is heat.
- Replace incandescent bulbs with compact fluorescent light (CFL) and light-emitting diode (LED) bulbs.
- Make sure furniture or drapes do not block your registers for supply and return air.
- Wear thin, loosely-fitting clothes and you may not have to keep room temperatures as cool.
- Keep the sun out of your house. Close blinds, shades or curtains during the hottest part of the day.
- On mild days, open windows for natural ventilation and turn the air conditioning off.
- Use portable or ceiling fans. Run ceiling fans counterclockwise. Even mild air movement of 1 MPH can make you feel 3 to 4 degrees cooler.
- Apply sun-control or other reflective films on south-facing windows.

Cooking

- Cook on your outdoor grill. The indoor stove or oven can raise your kitchen's temperature as much as 5 to 10 degrees. Use a microwave oven instead of a conventional oven to save money and keep your kitchen cooler.
- Move a spare refrigerator out of the garage to an insulated basement or spare room. You'll save money because the unit won't have to work as hard to keep food cold.

Household chores

- Do heat- and moisture-producing jobs such as cooking, cleaning, ironing and laundry during the cooler early morning and evening hours.
- Air-dry dishes instead of using your dishwasher's heat drying cycle.
- Avoid unnecessary trips in and out of the house, especially on very hot days. Heat and humidity come in each time you open the door.

For more energy-efficiency tips, visit www.amea.com, Energy Efficiency.

Alabama Currents
is a Publication of the
Alabama Municipal Electric Authority

P.O. Box 5220
Montgomery, Alabama 36103-5220

804 South Perry Street
Montgomery, Alabama 36104

www.amea.com

Fred D. Clark, Jr.
President & Chief Executive Officer

Board of Directors

Chairman	Don McClellan
Vice Chairman	Gary Fuller
Secretary/Treasurer	Tim Kant
Dale Baker	Louis Davidson
Tom DeBell	Albert Kirkland
Kyle McCoy	Morris Tate
Harold Washington	Lee Young

Alabama Currents

Volume XV, No. 4
July/August 2016

Editor
Lisa Miller

Designed by
Walker 360

Printed by
Walker 360

www.walker360.com

**Customers: Address changes should
be handled through
your local utility office.**

Alabama Currents is published
six times per year by the
Alabama Municipal Electric Authority (AMEA),
and is mailed to
the retail electric customers
of AMEA Member cities.

MISSION STATEMENT

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

Alabama CURRENTS

Inside This Issue

4 Governor Bentley awards grants to help low-income residents cut energy costs

News From AMEA Members

- | | |
|----------------------------|---------------------|
| 7 Alexander City | 11 Fairhope |
| 8 Lanett | 12 LaFayette |
| 9 Riviera Utilities | 13 Piedmont |
| 10 Sylacauga | 14 Opelika |
| 11 Dothan | |

Features

- | | |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| 2 From The Editor | 5 Doug Rye |
| 2 Be an Wise-Energy User | 6 Kille' D. McKinney |
| 4 In My Opinion | 15 Places To Go & Things To Do |

On the Cover

The 2017 AMEA Scholarship Program will kick off in August. Be on the lookout for scholarship applications at schools within AMEA Member cities and on the AMEA web site, www.amea.com, Scholarship Program. **Application deadline is Monday, Feb. 13, 2017.**



AMEA celebrates 35 years of service and innovation



2016 marks the Alabama Municipal Electric Authority's (AMEA) 35 years of service and innovation to its 11 Members. Over the past 35 years, AMEA has been a low-cost power supplier for its Members and has also provided value-added services, including distribution support services, regulatory compliance and territorial support, economic and community development support programs and a scholarship program, just to name a few.

AMEA's 35-year history has also proven that the organization is an innovator in exploring electric generation options to improve generation costs.

One way AMEA explored such options was our involvement and partnership on a first-of-its-kind fuel cell project in 2000. AMEA, along with Southern Company, FuelCell Energy and Mercedes-Benz U.S. International Inc., joined in a historic partnership to field test an environmentally-responsible power generation technology as part of the process to bring a clean energy option to its marketplace.

The intent of the Alabama Direct FuelCell Demonstration Project was to drive a growing interest in fuel cell technology as a demand for cleaner, more efficient power generation increases in the U.S. In 2001, due to this partnership, a 250 kW fuel cell power plant, utilizing Direct FuelCells was sited at the Mercedes-Benz production facility in Vance, near Tuscaloosa.

Our efforts to improve your energy future have also included the construction of a natural gas-fired peaking generation plant, the AMEA-Sylacauga Plant. The plant, which recently celebrated 12 years of operation, was collectively built by AMEA and its 11 Members, and became operational in 2004.

AMEA is also exploring the area of solar power. The AMEA Board of Directors approved a 50-KW solar demonstration project to be constructed adjacent to the AMEA headquarters in Montgomery. Our staff, along with AMEA Members, continues to explore and research best practices in community solar parks in partnership with AMEA's 11 Member cities.

Throughout our 35-year history, the Members of AMEA have proceeded in steady and deliberate fashion to create a lasting foundation for success. AMEA will continue to be technically adept, well-informed and driven by Member and customer needs. The next 35 years will be built on the strong foundation developed over the last three decades, just as our Members intended when they first joined together in 1981.

Whether we are exploring alternative electric generation options, promoting energy efficiency and weatherization initiatives, advocating for fairness in the halls of Congress, investing in the future leaders of tomorrow through scholarships, or trying to limit cost impacts of stringent EPA regulations, know that we are doing all we can to hold down your electricity costs.

It is a time of change for our industry. Different customer expectations, emerging technology and increasing regulatory burdens are just a few of today's challenges that the AMEA membership is taking on together.

Fortunately, history demonstrates that by innovatively using joint action, we can respond to the challenges in cost-effective, customer-focused ways as indicated by our initiatives.



Fred Clark

AMEA President & CEO

Governor Bentley awards grants to help low-income residents cut energy costs

Some low-income and elderly Alabama residents who need help reducing their utility bills will get assistance from \$950,000 in grants awarded by Gov. Robert Bentley recently.



The grants are supporting Alabama's Weatherization Assistance Program which provides funds to improve the energy efficiency and safety of qualifying homes. Priority is given to those with disabilities, the elderly and low-income households with children.

"Energy bills can be difficult for Alabamians with limited income and resources," Bentley said. "By making improvements to the energy efficiency of homes, this program helps lower utility bills for our residents who are most in need. I am pleased to award these grants to agencies that will help our citizens."

An energy audit is conducted of each home that qualifies for weatherization assistance to determine the most cost-efficient measures. Common improvements include installing extra insulation in the attic, walls and floor; sealing air leaks around doors and windows; repairs or tune-ups for air conditioning and heating units; and replacing incandescent light bulbs with high-efficiency compact fluorescents. In addition to lowering energy bills, the improvements can reduce the risk of fire and other hazards.

The Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs administers the program from funds made available by the U.S. Department of Energy.

Bentley awarded the grants to 16 community agencies across the state that manage the program at the local level and receive applications from individuals who wish to be considered for assistance.

Continued on page 6



48 years helping people Part 2

In the last column, I wrote about how blessed I am to have been given a 48-year opportunity to help folks have a more comfortable house and lower utility bills. That includes 25 years of radio, many TV appearances, over 2,500 seminars, many thousands of person-to-person conversations, both live and by phone, and 14 years of writing columns for several periodicals, such as *Alabama Currents*.

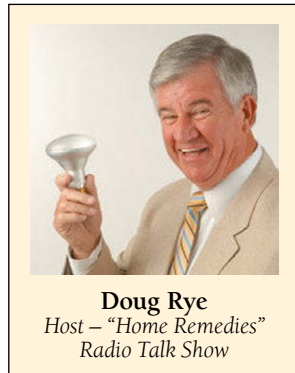
I know exactly what is meant by the famous quote, “Find a job that you love, and you will never have to work a day in your life”. I honestly believe that helping people of all ethnic groups and income levels learn about energy efficiency is God’s mission in life for me.

Of course, there have been many that have helped make the mission successful. Every Saturday morning for the past 25 years, my precious wife of 49 years, has sent me away to the radio studio with a, “Have a good show and be careful”. Yes, I am both blessed and thankful.

When I first went to work as an architect for the federal government, my goal was to help as many families as possible have affordable housing. During that process, one of my mentors told me, “Nothing remains the same, so you must learn how to roll with the punches.” I didn’t know exactly what he meant, but I quickly learned that it was true. In fact, there were constant changes. Bosses changed. Regulations changed. Programs changed. Even the names of some agencies changed.

But I have noticed through all these years that some things, like these listed, have not changed.

1. Many thousands of families and towns still need affordable housing.
2. Utility costs are still a part of affordability.
3. The things that cause utility bills to be high are still the same.



4. It is easier for one to complain about the utility bills than it is to take action and make changes that will make the bills lower.

When you get right down to it, there are only a few things on the average house that have much effect on the utility bills. Let me list most of them:

1. Lack of sufficient insulation in the walls and/or the ceiling.
2. Undesired air infiltration or as we call it, house breathing.
3. Ductwork that is improperly designed, improperly installed, or is leaking heating and cooling to the attic. Remember that most systems have return air filter grills that are about half the size needed for proper performance.
4. Existing windows that are energy inefficient.
5. Energy inefficient appliances such as heating and cooling systems, freezers, water heaters, and lighting fixtures.

With this in mind, all you need is a good list of feasible items to solve the energy problems. This is where things have changed. There are more tools available now than ever before that will take the guesswork out of trying to figure out what is feasible for any given house. We call it a total energy audit using a blower door, an infrared camera, and visual inspection to know exactly where you need to invest your money for lower utility bills.

How do you get a total energy audit? You can ask your utility provider for names or you can go to the phone book or.....what else has changed? The way that most now get their information is from social media. Simply use your smart phone, laptop, or home computer to find a company that has the experience, training and other qualifications to help you.

A total energy audit usually costs less than \$500, but it very well might be one of the best investments you will ever make.

If you need help, I would be honored to help you. Just call me as I start my 49th year helping folks just like you.

Doug Rye, an Arkansas architect, is known as the ‘King of Caulk and Talk’ and ‘America’s Energy Expert.’ Doug has helped thousands of homeowners save money on their power bills. He hosts the popular “Home Remedies” radio talk program, which has been on the air for 15 years in 14 states. Doug speaks annually at American Institute of Architects meetings to hundreds of other architects on energy efficiency. He conducts over 150 energy-saving seminars per year all across the U.S. Have a question for Doug? Contact him at (501) 653-7931 or www.dougye.com.

Medicare is here to stay

Medicare went into effect 50 years ago on July 1, 1966. Earlier that same year, Medicare workers went door to door trying to get seniors to sign up. Medicare was not the cornerstone then that it is today and people did not know whether it was going to work for the long haul.

Now, a half century later, Medicare remains one of the most popular government programs in the nation.

We can't see the future, but one thing's for sure: Medicare is here to stay. Medicare provides health insurance to more than 50 million Americans. Forty-two million are people age 65 and older and the other 8 million are younger and have disabilities.

Most people first become eligible for Medicare at age 65.

The four parts of Medicare are parts A, B, C, and D.

Part A (Hospital Insurance) helps cover inpatient hospital care, skilled nursing care, hospice care, and home health care. Most people get Medicare Part A premium-free since it is earned by working and paying Social Security taxes.

Part B (Medical Insurance) helps cover services from doctors and other outpatient health care providers, outpatient care, home health care, durable medical equipment, and some preventive services. Most people pay a monthly premium for Part B. In 2016, the premium for most people is \$121.80. Some high-income individuals pay more than the standard premium. Your Medicare Part B premium also can be higher if you do not enroll when you are first eligible, also known as your initial enrollment period. There also is a Medicare Part B deductible of \$166 in 2016.

Part C (Medicare Advantage) allows you to choose to receive all of your health care services through a provider organization. This plan includes all benefits and services covered under Part A and Part B, usually includes Medicare prescription drug coverage, and may include extra benefits and services at an extra cost. You must have Part A and Part B to enroll in Part C. Monthly premiums vary depending on your state, private insurer, and whether you select a health maintenance organization or a preferred provider organization.

Part D (Medicare prescription drug coverage) helps cover the cost of prescription drugs. Many people pay a premium for Part D. However, people with low income and resources may qualify for extra help from Social Security to pay the premium and deductible. To see if you qualify for extra help, visit www.socialsecurity.gov/prescriptionhelp.

Will you be age 65 soon? Even if you decide not to retire, you should consider applying for Medicare. You can apply in less than 10 minutes using our online Medicare application. Do it today at www.socialsecurity.gov/medicareonly.

To learn more about applying for Medicare when you plan to delay retirement, read our publication, *Applying For Medicare Only — Before You Decide*, available at www.socialsecurity.gov/pubs.



Kylle' D. McKinney
Public Affairs Specialist
Social Security Administration

Governor Bentley awards grants to help low-income residents cut energy costs

Continued from page 4

Below is a list of each grant, the recipient agency, counties served and the agency telephone number:

- \$42,923 to Central Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission (Lee, Macon and Russell) (334) 262-4300
- \$25,607 to Community Action Committee Inc. of Chambers-Tallapoosa-Coosa (Chambers, Coosa and Tallapoosa) (256) 825-4287
- \$60,755 to Community Action Agency of Central Alabama (Autauga, Chilton, Dallas, Elmore, Perry and Shelby) (334) 567-4361
- \$17,279 to Alabama Council on Human Relations Inc. (Lee) (334) 821-8336
- \$25,745 to Community Action of Etowah County (Etowah) (256) 546-9271
- \$52,045 to Community Action Partnership of Huntsville-Madison and Limestone Counties (Madison and Limestone) (256) 851-9800
- \$113,065 to Jefferson County Committee for Economic Opportunity (Jefferson) (205) 327-7500
- \$86,939 to Mobile Community Action Inc. (Choctaw, Mobile and Washington) (251) 457-5700
- \$51,768 to Montgomery County Commission (Montgomery) (334) 832-1210
- \$61,025 to Community Action Partnership of North Alabama Inc. (Cullman, Lawrence, Marion, Morgan, Walker and Winston) (256) 734-5170
- \$69,293 to Community Action Agency of Northeast Alabama Inc. (Blount, Cherokee, DeKalb, Jackson, Marshall and St. Clair) (256) 638-4430
- \$34,577 to Community Action Agency of Northwest Alabama Inc. (Colbert, Franklin and Lauderdale) (256) 766-4330
- \$102,793 to Organized Community Action Program Inc. (Barbour, Bullock, Butler, Coffee, Covington, Crenshaw, Dale, Geneva, Henry, Houston, Lowndes and Pike) (334) 566-1712
- \$68,770 to Community Action Agency of South Alabama (Baldwin, Clarke, Conecuh, Escambia, Marengo, Monroe and Wilcox) (251) 626-2646
- \$60,236 to Community Action Agency of Talladega, Clay, Randolph, Calhoun and Cleburne (Calhoun, Clay, Cleburne, Randolph and Talladega) (256) 362-6611
- \$77,180 to Community Service Programs of West Alabama Inc. (Bibb, Fayette, Greene, Hale, Lamar, Pickens, Sumter and Tuscaloosa) (205) 752-5429



Alexander City Chamber hosts 4th Annual Sun Festival this month

By Kim Dunn

The Alexander City Chamber of Commerce will kick off the 4th Annual Sun Festival on Saturday, July 23 with the Miss Sun Festival Pageant and Glow in the Dark 5K. The eight-day festival will wrap-up on the following Saturday, July 30. While many of the favorite events will return, the festival will also see the addition of many new activities throughout the week.

Family Day at the lake will move to Sunday, July 24, when Wind Creek State Park will waive entry fees for the afternoon and Sun Festival will host an array of events throughout the day. Family Day at the Lake favorites such as Hook 'Em at Sun Festival and Oh the Places You'll Canoe will continue. We will also be adding additional activities such as Raising the Sail, Beach Volleyball Tournament, Canoe Race Me, Paddleboard Race and a Mini Triathlon. The day will wrap-up with a Block Party featuring a live band and Doggin' It at the Lake hot dog eating contest. This afternoon will certainly be a great way to start the ball rolling for a very exciting week in Alexander City and the Lake Martin area.

Sun Festival Faith Night will introduce the week-end concert series on Thursday, July 28. Radney Funeral Home will host Celebrate the Son Southern Gospel concert featuring Gold City Quartet at the Benjamin Russell High School Auditorium starting at 7 p.m. Their name is synonymous with setting the standard for male quartets since their inception in 1980. Many have tried to pattern their style and sound, but there's only one Gold City. Theirs is a stellar career with numerous number one songs, fan and industry awards, and prestigious honors. Yet this Gadsden, AL, based group remains down-to-earth, grounded in their Southern roots, and committed to continuing their mission of delivering power-packed four-part harmonies and singing songs that are meaningful, entertaining, inspiring and uplifting. For anyone more interested in praise and worship music, we invite you to pack the picnic basket and cooler along with your blankets and lawn chairs for Praise in the Park. National recording artist, Matt Papa, will headline

this event in Strand Park in downtown Alexander City starting at 8 p.m. He is a delightful combination of gifted musician and songwriter, loving husband, father of three girls, and inquisitive theologian. And with all those roles and attributes, he remains ever-focused on a singular goal: help people see the beauty and glory of Jesus. While there is no cover charge for either of these events, we do request that everyone bring one non-perishable food item to be donated to our local food banks. Concessions will also be available at Praise in the Park.

The live entertainment will continue on Friday, July 29 in downtown Alexander City with Band Battle at Strand Park where five bands will battle it out for the opportunity to open for Jana Kramer on Saturday night. The first band will take the stage at 7 p.m. Each group will have the opportunity to perform for the audience as well as music industry professionals. The audience will even have an opportunity to cast their votes for their favorites at the end of the night. Concessions will be available Friday night as well.

The entire week will culminate with a day full of fun on Saturday, July 30. The morning will start with Main-Street Farmers' Market, Car Show and Motorcycle Ride all in downtown Alexander City. At noon, the focus will shift to the Charles E. Bailey Sportplex with the Summer Tailgate Party and BBQ Cook-Off, featuring a corn-hole tournament. The gates will open at 6 p.m. for the Jana Kramer Concert and Fireworks Show. The winner from Friday's Band Battle will perform at 7 p.m., followed by Jana Kramer with the fireworks show lighting up the sky as soon as she finishes her performance.

Wristbands for the entire afternoon of activities are only \$20. You can find the full schedule of events for the week at www.alexandercitychamber.com. Mark your calendars now because this is going to be a week in Alexander City that you do not want to miss.

Kim Dun is the Director of Marketing & Special Events for the Alexander City Chamber of Commerce.

WATTS NEW IN Lanett

Lanett Fire Department celebrates 60 years of service

By Wayne Clark

One of the City of Lanett's most important departments is having an anniversary this year. The Lanett Fire Department (LFD) began 60 years ago. In August 1956, a fledgling operation started out in a new brick building that had gone up on North Lanier Avenue next to city hall. John Burt was the fire chief, and the department had some trucks that could respond to grass and structure fires within the city limits and in the nearby Valley communities.

Most of the firefighters were volunteers, and there was a unique way of summoning them to a call. Blasts would sound from a large siren positioned on top of city hall. One blast alerted the volunteers to a fire on the south side of town, two blasts to something on the north side, three for help that was needed outside the city limits, four to a fire in the downtown area and six blasts on the siren signaled something very dangerous - a tornado had been spotted in the local area.

A lot has changed over the years. The fire department made the short move a couple of blocks up the street when the city opened a new municipal complex in the late 1980s.

Fire departments were undergoing some significant changes at that time. "Everything changed in the 1980s," says Lanett Fire & EMS Chief Johnny Allen. "We had some private ambulance services that went out of business in Chambers County. The cities of Lanett, Valley and LaFayette agreed to take them over. This changed the whole makeup of local fire departments. We went from just firefighters and a few basic EMTs to having firefighters and paramedics."

The three local cities were pacesetters. "At that time, there was a nationwide trend of fire services trying to get away from EMS," Chief Allen said. "There's been a 180-degree shift since then with more and more fire departments and EMS services being merged."

Most of the emergency calls that now come to Lanett Fire & EMS are on the medical emergency side. With the West Point, East Alabama and Huguley fire departments serving communities that border Lanett, the LFD responds to fire calls within the city limits. It's entirely different when it comes to EMS service. North of town, Lanett covers an area of northeast Chambers County that's close to 150 square miles in size. Lanett EMS also covers areas south of I-85.

"People of the Valley are really fortunate to have some really good fire departments," Chief Allen said. "We have mutual-aid agreements with West Point, East Alabama and Huguley. We have mutual-aid agreements that have worked out extremely well."

The cause of helping people out of bad situations has



The Lanett Fire Department has been serving residents of Lanett and the surrounding area for 60 years. Shown are (L to R) Capt. Kyle Jackson and firefighter/paramedics Kent Wilson, Jacob "Tiny" Lovelace, and Brandon Elliott, and Chief Johnny Allen.

been in Chief Allen's blood for a long time. He's been in firefighting since not long graduating from Lanett High in 1980. One of the biggest fires he's ever had a hand in fighting took place just as he was getting started. It was on New Year's Eve 1982 when a bank building near the Alabama-Georgia state line caught fire.

Back in those days, Lanett had a couple of aging pumper trucks and a pick-up that could fight grass fires. There have been some considerable upgrades in equipment over the years. The pride of the fleet is a 75-foot ladder truck that was acquired in December 2009 at a cost of around \$570,000. U.S. Congressman Mike Rogers was of big help to the city in playing the major role in getting a Homeland Security grant that covered much of the cost.

"That truck can help us handle a large fire at any building in the area if we ever have to do that," Chief Allen said.

The department has two other pumper trucks, one from around 1992 and another one from 2005, and three state-of-the-art ambulances. "The 1992 truck needs to be replaced, and we're looking at doing that next year," Allen said. "Those big trucks don't run a lot but when they do, they are running wide open."

The department has six people on duty each shift. They have 48 hours on duty and 96 hours off. Six part-timers fill in for vacations and sick time.

Basic firefighter training takes 13 weeks and is done through the State Fire College. "We send ours to Opelika, Auburn or Alexander City. They have departments large enough to hold these classes," Chief Allen said.

It takes two years of training to be a paramedic. Locally, such training takes place at Southern Union State Community College (SUSCC). "They have a long-standing program that's well respected," Allen says of SUSCC. "The West Point Fire Department has a very good program, too."

To serve as a paramedic, one has to be state licensed and nationally registered.

Chief Allen likes to talk about the personnel in his department. "We have people here who are very, very good," he

★ WATTS NEW AT Riviera Utilities

Riviera Utilities dedicates new substation in honor of Charles Ebert, Jr.

By Angela Langley

says. "I would put them up against anyone from any department in the state or nation."

Chief Allen has seen lots of improvements over the years. "Equipment, the training and overall professionalism has gotten better over the years," he said. "The EMS part of it has grown a lot of arms. We now have in the local area water rescue, rope rescue and extrication teams. Our call volume has been going up over the years. We're now getting close to 3,000 calls in a year's time with 90 percent of the being EMS-related. We get a lot of calls from the interstate. Sometimes, it seems like it just comes in waves."

The cities of Lanett and Valley each have a lane of I-85, extending from the Georgia state line to near Exit 70 at Cusseta.

Lanett Mayor Kyle McCoy is well pleased with job being done by the city's firefighters and paramedics. "We have one of the best fire and EMS services anywhere," he said. "I'm confident our firefighters and paramedics can perform in emergency situations as well as anyone in the field. Chief Allen is doing a great job in leading that department. The hard work and commitment to excellence on the part of everyone in the department had much to do with our ISO rating improving from a 5 to a 3."

Wayne Clark is the news editor of *The Valley Times-News* in Lanett.

Service is the word that comes to mind when most think about Charles Ebert, Jr. A Foley native involved in as many activities as time allowed, he is remembered for his great contributions to south Baldwin County and most importantly, Riviera Utilities.

Ebert started first grade at Foley Elementary School and graduated from Foley High School in 1943. He would go on to Alabama Polytechnic Institute, Auburn University today, to graduate in 1949 with a degree in Business Administration.

After serving our country during World War II as a Merchant Seaman, he returned to Foley in 1949 to join the family business, Ebert Insurance Agency. Ebert later served in the U.S. Army during the Korean War, too.

After serving in the Korean War, he returned to Foley again in 1952. Three years after returning home, he married a former classmate, Wylene Scott. The father of six, Ebert passed along his values and serving heart to his children.

Ebert became involved in civic affairs in the Foley area in the early 1950s. He was a local school trustee, director of Civil Defense and president of the South Baldwin Chamber of Commerce. He was a member of the Foley Volunteer Fire Department for 48 years and served as the chief in 1976. He was involved with the American Red Cross, Boy Scouts and South Baldwin Heritage Museum. He was instrumental in the creation of the Foley Railroad Museum. He was also a long-time member of the Foley Optimist Club and was named the Paul Harris Fellow by the Foley Rotary Club in 1997. He also served on the Foley City Council for 20 years.

Ebert was appointed to the Riviera Utilities Board of Directors in September 1961, and he would go on to serve Riviera's customers in that capacity for 48 years.

Honoring 48 years of service

The Riviera Utilities Board and management thought that it was only fitting to memorialize a man that contributed so much to the community and the company by dedicating its newest substation on Bender Road in Foley in honor of Charles J. Ebert, Jr.

"Mr. Charlie Ebert, Jr. loved the City of Foley, and he loved serving the people of this community," said Tom DeBell, General Manager, Riviera Utilities. "Charlie's life was about service,



The family of Charles Ebert, Jr. at the substation dedication.

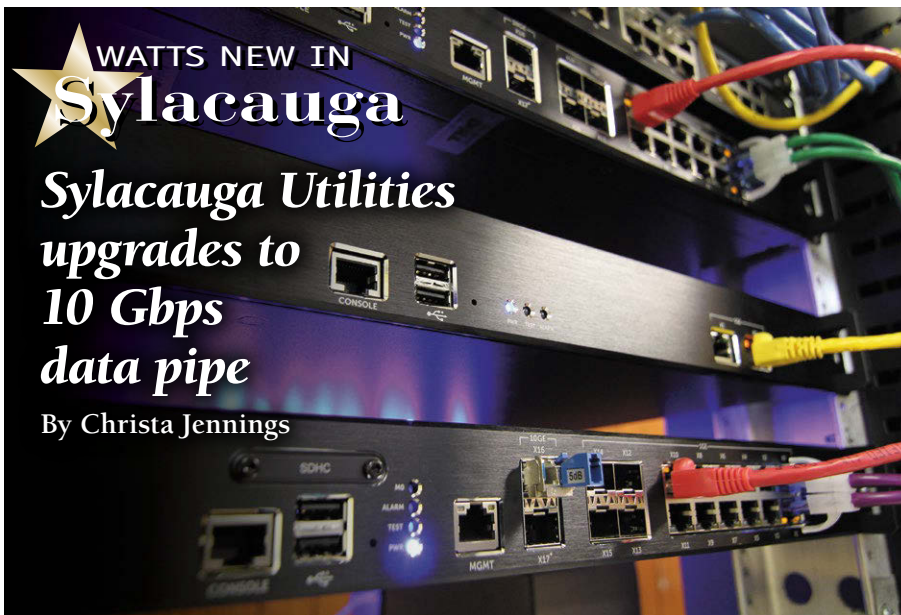


Charles Ebert, Jr.

and the Charles Ebert, Jr. substation will be a permanent marker of his legacy to the City of Foley and surrounding communities."

The new substation was built to provide power for the Foley and Elberta areas, as well as the upcoming industrial park off of the Foley Beach Express, and it will be energized later this year.

Angela Langley is the communication specialist for Riviera Utilities.



WATTS NEW IN
Sylacauga

Sylacauga Utilities upgrades to 10 Gbps data pipe

By Christa Jennings

Sylacauga Utilities is pleased to announce that it went live on June 6 with a 10 Gigabits per second (Gbps) data pipe, which will ensure that Sylacauga can meet the bandwidth requirements of any industry or business well into the foreseeable future.

This data pipe means that customers inside the company's electric service footprint, and even a few areas nearby, can now enjoy Internet speeds up to 1 Gbps. Network Administrator Reay Culp explained that Sylacauga Utilities has moved from a 500 Megabits per second (Mbps) capacity network to a 10 Gbps network, which is a 20,000 percent increase in connectivity to the outside world.

This upgrade makes Sylacauga the second Gigabit city in the state of Alabama, with Opelika being the first. However, Google is in the process of running gigabit fiber in Huntsville, bringing the total to three Gigabit cities in the state. This is big news for Sylacauga, as nationally the city is one of the first 60 cities to offer 1 Gbps service.

"We are installing a 1 Gbps fiber optic connection to each customer that signs up," Culp said. "Each customer

chooses the appropriate bandwidth speed package that fits their budget. This package can easily be modified with a simple program change within our network and does not require a service call to the premise."

Culp said the public demand for Internet bandwidth "increases exponentially" every year. Therefore, he said Sylacauga Utilities has been working for some time to make this increase in bandwidth available to its customers.

"The Utilities Board is always looking ahead to provide value and great service to our customers," he said. "With the demand for bandwidth trending up so dramatically we knew we had to stay ahead of the curve and have been working on this particular upgrade for about six months now."

The Utilities Board also believes having this bandwidth available to businesses might help attract more industry to Sylacauga. Culp explained that this is by far the fastest Internet available in the area, adding that with this product the Sylacauga Utilities Board can easily meet the bandwidth requirements that any industry or business application might demand, thus making the city an even more desirable location for industry.

"We believe that efficient, robust

data communications to the outside world is an advantage to any industry that conducts business or serves customers across the internet," Culp said.

The board recognizes that every business has specific bandwidth needs and budgetary constraints. With that in mind, they have established a variety of affordable speed packages tailored to fit their diverse customer base and their needs.

A small- to medium-sized business, for example, and even most residential customers, can be well-served by the entry-level Internet package of 20 Mbps, unshared with any neighbors, for \$70 per month.

With the acquisition of this new data line product, Culp said the Utilities Board is currently revisiting their existing rate structures to look for ways to increase value to its customers. However, current speed packages offered include 20 Mbps, 50 Mbps, 100 Mbps, and 150 Mbps, with the ability to offer any speed package up to 1 Gbps if needed.

In addition to increased bandwidth and faster speeds, one thing that sets Sylacauga Utilities apart and separates its Internet service from all others is the "dedicated" line.

If a customer has a 20 Mbps package from the Utilities Board and his or her neighbor gets the same service, each customer has their own unrestricted 20 Mbps connection to the outside world.

"Unlike our competition, you don't share your bandwidth with your neighbor," Culp explained. "What that means is that it won't slow down in the evenings when traffic gets heavy."

For more information on this new bandwidth product or to sign up for Internet service, contact the Sylacauga Utilities Board Telecommunications Department at (256) 401-2546.

Christa Jennings is the senior staff reporter at The Coosa County News in Rockford.

WATTS NEW IN Dothan

Dothan Utilities powers Foster Fest

By Mason Shirah

On the third Friday night of every month, the residents of Dothan head downtown to celebrate Foster Fest. Everyone who attends is treated to the sights and sounds of classic cars, live music, food, and a family-friendly atmosphere. The last thing on everyone's mind is how it's all possible. Most of those in attendance don't realize that without Dothan Utilities, Foster Fest wouldn't take place.

Behind the scenes, Dothan Utilities powers this monthly event by supplying its services to this area of downtown. By installing temporary service poles, lighting, and performing routine maintenance, Dothan Utilities' employees ensure that all of the equipment is functioning and ready for Foster Fest each month. The man hours and effort put into the event really shows when that Friday night rolls around. The vendors and food trucks notice this more than anyone since these services allow them to open their market to more customers.

Dan Danford, Electrical Planner, Dothan Utilities, said, "Each month, my friends and I attend this event. It's great to be able to look forward to enjoying and sharing part of my job with my friends. Also, seeing everyone at Foster Fest enjoying themselves brings a sense of accomplishment to me and everyone at Dothan Utilities."

It doesn't seem like much, but without the help of Dothan Utilities, Foster Fest wouldn't be possible. The live music would be solely acoustic, the food truck owners couldn't sell food, and the streets would be dark. The effort put in by the staff at Dothan Utilities allows this family-friendly atmosphere to exist and everyone's stomach to be full.

Mason Shirah is an electrical engineer intern at Dothan Utilities.

WATTS NEW IN Fairhope

Fairhope competes in America in Bloom

By D. Fran Morley

Fairhope is once again competing in the America in Bloom (AIB) competition, but on a whole new level for 2016.

Last year, the city was inducted into America in Bloom's "Circle of Champions", indicating the city had won at least three awards in its population category or awards for outstanding achievement. Out of more

than 200 cities that have taken part in the AIB competitions since 2001, only 15 have been placed in the "Circle of Champions". This year, Fairhope representatives will travel to California to compete against three other "Circle of Champion" cities: Holland, Michigan; Grande Arroyo, California; and Washington, Missouri.

"Last year, Fairhope received multiple awards and a perfect 'five bloom' rating from AIB, which was just surreal," said Jennifer Fidler, director of public works. "We look forward to a good repeat performance this year."

Judges visited Fairhope in early May this year, looking at plantings and a variety of projects that showcase the City's efforts at connectivity, including a multi-modal path for pedestrians and golf carts from South Drive in Rock Creek into downtown, with connections to the Fairhope Pier and all the way to the Grand Hotel in Point Clear.

At the 2015 competition, Fairhope took the overall wining title in the 16,000–20,000 population category, was honored with an outstanding achievement award for the city's efforts in urban forestry, was recognized for the environmentally sensitive project category, and was inducted into the "Circle of Champions".

Competing in America in Bloom is about more than just winning awards for pretty flowers, said Mayor Tim Kant.

"We're always very proud of the beauty of Fairhope and of the hard work our employees do to maintain that, but winning these awards tells us that as a city, we are doing something right," said Kant. "This is about our city and our resi-

dents working together toward a common goal — enjoying the beautiful flowers, of course, but also benefiting from a cleaner environment, celebrating our heritage, and taking pride in our city."

For more information on the America in Bloom program, visit www.americainbloom.org.

D. Fran Morley is a contributing writer for the City of Fairhope



Shown are American in Bloom judges Leslie Pittenger and Jack Clausen with students from Fairhope Intermediate School in their school garden and with volunteers and staff at the Fairhope Museum of History.



Fairhope Mayor Tim Kant and City Public Works Director Jennifer Fidler at the 2015 award symposium accepting the American in Bloom (AIB) award from Laura Kunkle and Jack Clausen of AIB.

WATTS NEW IN LaFayette

LaFayette citizens provide input on new city park

By Chris Busby

In early April of this year, the annual LaFayette Day festival took place on the downtown square in LaFayette. With dozens of vendors lining the streets and events taking place throughout the day, there was one particular display that caught the attention of several residents. The display was the first of what would be several community outreach events designed to seek input for a new city park.

The first step in organizing a new park came several years ago when the city purchased 52 acres of land nestled between the local elementary and middle schools and the Highway 50 bypass. In the years that followed, several ideas were tossed around regarding exactly what to do with the land. Then in 2015, an Auburn University Landscape Architecture class took on the task of developing a city-wide recreation plan as part of their course. At the conclusion of the course, the students presented their designs to city leaders, and from there the decision to locate a park on the 52 acres took a major step forward.

Spurred on by the city being awarded a Land and Water Conservation Fund Grant last year, the LaFayette City Council contracted with Elise Cormier of Smart Landscapes of Atlanta to develop a master plan for the park. The Smart Landscapes-led design team included local business Harmon Engineering and K.A. Oldham Design. Ms. Cormier had served as the professor of the Auburn University class, so her familiarity with LaFayette gave her a head start. When she spoke to citizens at that LaFayette Day display, there was a unique understanding of what the city needed and wanted.

Fast forward several months and the master plan is nearly complete. Along the way, an advisory team, consisting of



This aerial view shows the approximate size and location of the land that will be used for the new LaFayette city park.

residents of all walks of life, from business leaders to students, was created to guide the process and serve as a liaison to the community. Public outreach sessions have been held for residents to voice their hopes and dreams for the park as well as their concerns, and a website was created to gather feedback and update the public on the process. All of these opinions and ideas have been taken into consideration in generating a plan for the park.

"The master plan is a community-based design," Ms. Cormier says. "It has to be representative of what the community wants in order to succeed. The park motto is 'Every Neighborhood, Every Age, Every Ability', and it's going to serve every single member of the LaFayette community."

The master plan will include a layout for the entire 52 acres, and the actual development will take place in several stages, ideally to be completed within three to five years. Preliminary design recommendations for the park include a community event center, an open-air picnic pavilion, a natural resource area around Kelham Creek, a playground, biking and walking trails, multi-use athletic fields, a track, a splash pad, and an outdoor classroom.



This LaFayette family makes suggestions for activities they would like to see in the new LaFayette city park during a community outreach meeting.



Elise Cormier (left) of Smart Landscapes discusses ideas with residents for the new LaFayette city park.

In addition to the master park plan, Smart Landscapes is also developing a walkability study designed to outline routes throughout the city to connect every neighborhood to the city park.

The master plan and walkability study are being presented to the City Council and citizens of LaFayette in an August open house event and from there the city will proceed with phase one plans. In addition to the Land and Water Conservation Fund Grant, the Chambers County Extension Coalition will help fund that first phase, which will encompass approximately five acres of park development and include the playground.

"As city leaders, we've heard the call from residents regarding the need for a new city park here in LaFayette," said Mayor Barry Moody. "The entire council believes this to be a high priority in both improving the quality of life for our existing residents and for attracting new residents to the community. We've spent countless hours working to move this project forward and this master plan is a major step in reaching our ultimate goal, which is to provide a venue for recreation and entertainment for every single resident and visitor in LaFayette."

For more information about the LaFayette City Park and the progress being made, visit the website at www.lafayettecitypark.com. The site will be continuously updated with current project information. The final master plan will also be posted on the site once completed. Residents and interested parties can also reach out to Ms. Cormier at Smart Landscapes, www.smartlandscapes.net, (404) 309 5889, elise@SmartLandscapes.net, or to their city park advisory team with questions about the park.

Chris Busby is the community development manager for the Chambers County Development Authority and a contributing writer for the City of LaFayette.

WATTS NEW IN Piedmont

The history of Piedmont

By Ben Singleton and Gerald Whitton

The area now known as Piedmont is a community that began in the early 1840s, located at the crossroads of two early post roads. Tradition has it that a hollow stump was used by the mailman to deposit and pick up the mail. This point received the official name of "Hollow Stump". Later, a registered post office named "Griffen's Creek" was established by the Postmaster General. Major Jacob Forney Dailey of North Carolina came to Alabama in 1848 and bought land from the Price family. History states that the Prices were believed to be the first landowners here. Major Dailey named the area "Cross Plains".

An official post-office was named "Cross Plains" on Sept. 22, 1851. For a few months, the office was discontinued in 1869. In 1870, the name was changed to "Patona", but on June 7, 1870, the name was changed back to "Cross Plains". The name "Patona" was found to be most undesirable.

On Sept. 31, 1888, Cross Plains changed its name to Piedmont. The name Piedmont, meaning 'Foot of the Mountains', was pleasing to the people who enjoyed being nestled in the foothills of the Appalachian Mountain range surrounded by the scenic beauty of mountains and streams.

The town of Piedmont in the 1890s was essentially an agricultural community. The investors of Piedmont Land & Improvement Company became the outgrowth of the community.

The following represents some of the expansions enjoyed by the citizens of Piedmont: a second newspaper, The Piedmont Inquirer, along with the Piedmont Post, which was began in 1883; the Calhoun Hotel; Piedmont Springs Hotel; Piedmont Furnace; Piedmont Electric Light & Generating Co.; Piedmont Water Works; Southern Shoe Company; The Bank of Piedmont; and the Coosa Manufacturing Company.

On March 1, 1892, Coosa Manufacturing Company opened its doors for business and started with approximately 35 employees. Coosa Manufacturing Company, which later became Standard-Coosa Thatcher Yarn in 1922, grew over the years and was the backbone of our community and served it well for over a century until it closed in 1995.

The Selma, Rome and Dalton Railroad was the first to serve Cross Plains. In 1881, the Selma, Rome and Dalton Railroad was sold to the East Tennessee, Virginia and Georgia Railroad. This company increased service to Tennessee and Mississippi. In 1894, the Southern Railroad obtained the service and operated for many years. Train cars served Cross Plains and Piedmont for 121 years with both passenger trains containing mail cars and freight trains to transport minerals, iron products, manufactured goods, forestry products and various agriculture commodities to points throughout the nation. The last train left Piedmont on March 1, 1989 at 2:50 p.m. after picking up a carload of lumber at J.O. Bennett Lumber Company to transport to New York.

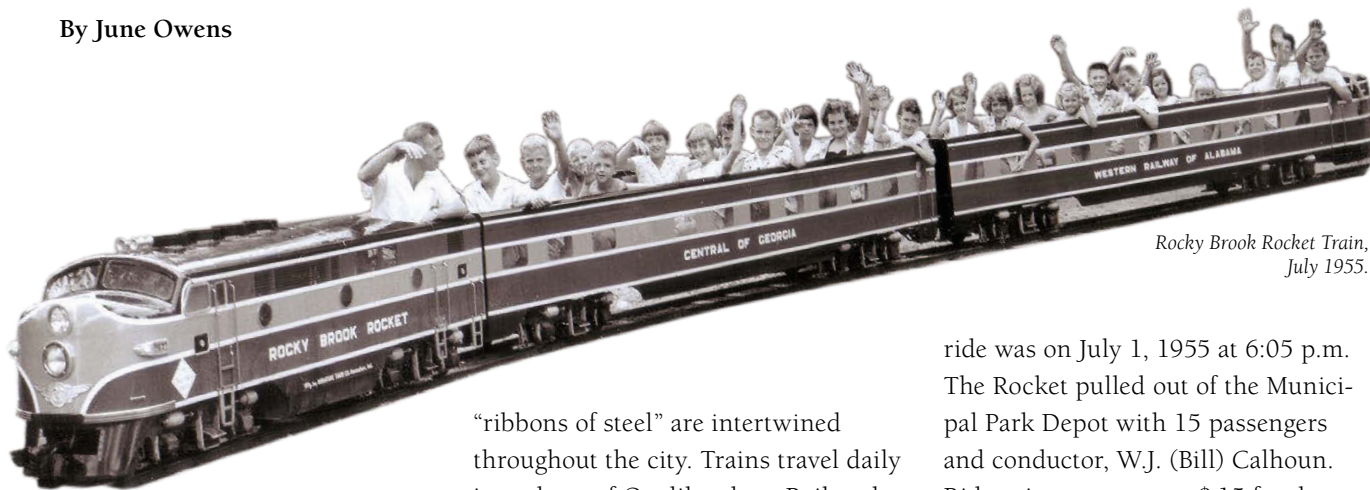
Ben Singleton is Communication Technician for the City of Piedmont. Gerald Whitton, a historian, resides in Piedmont.



To honor the rich history of Piedmont, a picture of the men and women who have served as mayors of Cross Plains and Piedmont is displayed at the Piedmont Municipal Complex building.

Opelika's Rocky Brook Rocket tradition to return soon

By June Owens



Rocky Brook Rocket Train,
July 1955.

Opelika, Alabama has a rich heritage which is cherished and preserved by Opelika residents. This rich heritage embraces being known as a railroad town where

“ribbons of steel” are intertwined throughout the city. Trains travel daily in and out of Opelika along Railroad Avenue, a place where families enjoy outdoor events and activities, including shopping, dining and entertainment.

The Rocky Brook Rocket is another train that captivates the hearts of many in Opelika. This train has been an attraction since 1955, located in Opelika Municipal Park. The idea originated in 1951 as the development of the park began, while the pledge and support for this project came through various Opelika Civic Clubs.

The train was ordered from Chance Manufacturing Company in Wichita, KS. The train was called a “G-16”, the 16 denoted the scale and every detail of the train was a 16 to 1 ratio of the modern diesel locomotive of that time. There was a city-wide contest to name the train, and the proud winner was submitted by a fifth grade student at Northside Elementary, David McGinty.

The history and preservation of this train throughout the years involve so many past and present individuals, civic clubs, business leaders and city leaders, all which have contributed financial support and services.

The first Rocky Brook Rocket train

ride was on July 1, 1955 at 6:05 p.m. The Rocket pulled out of the Municipal Park Depot with 15 passengers and conductor, W.J. (Bill) Calhoun. Ride prices were set at \$.15 for three trips around the park.

The Rocket has undergone two renovations in the past, the 1990s and 2007-2008. In 2015, the Rocket was put away until it could be sent off for a complete renovation. In the fall of 2015, it was shipped for a complete overhaul to RMI Railworks in Oxnard, CA.

Vision has been a common thread that weaves its way throughout Opelika, both past and present history. The tradition of the railroad continues today as Opelika residents anticipate the return of the completely refurbished Rocky Brook Rocket to Opelika Municipal Park, with an expected arrival date of mid to late summer 2016.

Children and adults will soon welcome this icon back to the tracks where rides will once again bring a unique excitement to this familiar family park. We invite you to make your plans to board the Rocky Brook Rocket later this summer. Details for this grand event will be announced on the city web site, www.opelika.org.

June Owens is the Manager of Marketing and Communications for Opelika Power Services.



Matthew Battles of the Opelika Parks and Recreation Department spearheaded the project to completely refurbish the train. (Photos provided by Matthew Battles)



Places to Go & Things to Do

Alexander City

July 14 and Aug. 11, 9 a.m.-3 p.m., Recycle Electronics. Public Works Department behind Darwin Dobbs. Every second Thursday. CE&E Solutions will be accepting electronics for recycling and they are ADEM certified. There is a \$10 fee for TVs. Contact City of Alexander City Public Works at (256) 409-2020 for more information. Sponsored by the City of Alexander City and the Middle Tallapoosa Clean Water Partnership.

July 23-30, 4th Annual Sun Festival. Weeklong event featuring music, fun and entertainment for everyone. For more information, call the Alexander City Chamber of Commerce at (256) 234-3461.

MainStreet Farmer's Market, 7-11 a.m., each Saturday in July and August. Broad Street in downtown Alexander City. Fresh locally grown seasonal produce and fruits from certified growers are available. In addition honey, baked goods, jams, jellies, salsa, USDA pork and beef as well as natural skin products. MainStreet Market is a member of the Alabama Farmer Market Authority.

Dothan

July 1, 9 a.m.-2 p.m., Forest Mysteries. Landmark Park. For ages 9-11. Learn about the forest and the things that live in it while hiking, rolling over logs, and getting up close and personal with live animals. We'll design experiments, make crafts and discover how amazingly strange nature can be. Members, \$70; non-members, \$85.

July 1-22, 10 a.m., Animal Adventures. Interpretive Center Auditorium, Landmark Park. Special one-hour educational program which provides a unique opportunity to learn about our natural world. Children ages 5 and older are encouraged to come with their families to see first-hand the wonder of many native animals. Animal Adventures are free with admission to the park. Admission is \$4 for adults, \$3 for children, and free for park members. Registration is required. Call (334) 794-3452 to register.

July 11-15, 9 a.m.-12 p.m., Discovery Days. Landmark Park. For ages 4-5. From snakes and turtles to sheep and cows, a wide variety of animal life is waiting for you at Landmark Park this summer. Members, \$65; non-members, \$80.

July 11-15 and July 18-22, 9 a.m.-12 p.m., Journey Through Public Art. Wiregrass Museum of Art. Session 1 - Ages 9-12. Session 2 - Ages 6-8, July 18-22. Explore the wonderful world of public art with this brand new camp. Campers will learn about famous public art and artists and create several pieces using the artists' specific techniques. \$85 members / \$95 non-members.

July 11-15, 9 a.m.-2 p.m., Earth Explorers. Landmark Park. For ages 6-8. Ever wonder why the wind blows or why it rains and snows? How do we get energy from the sun? We will unlock these and other burning nature questions as we explore the seasons and how they affect living things in the environment. We will also learn about alternative forms of energy and the impact humans can have on the world around us. Members, \$70; non-members, \$85.

July 16, 10 a.m., Watermelon Tasting. Sample several varieties of heirloom watermelons grown at Landmark Park. Free with paid gate admission.

July 18-22, 9 a.m.-12 p.m., Farm & Forest Fun. Landmark Park. For ages 4-5. Spend the week learning how the living and nonliving elements in nature work hand in hand. Members, \$65; non-members, \$80.

July 25 and 26, 9 a.m.-12 p.m., Art Around the World Mini Camps. Wiregrass Museum of Art. Session 1 - Ages 9-12. Session 2 - Ages 6-8, July 27-28. New campers wanting to give camp a try or returning campers who want more creation time will travel the world as they learn about and create art from several different cultures and countries. \$45 members and non-members.

July 25-27, 9 a.m.-3 p.m., Adventure Days. Landmark Park. For ages 9-11. Each day we will load up in a van and explore exciting local points of interest. We will spend one day at Kolomoki Mounds exploring the history of the Wiregrass area and the native Americans that lived here many years ago. The second day we will enjoy another day learning basic canoeing skills at a local pond with plenty of time for races and swimming. The last day will be spent at Whetstone Falls wading in the creek looking for shark teeth. Members, \$90; non-members, \$105.

July 25-29 9 a.m.-12 p.m., Earth Art. Landmark Park. For ages 6-8. This fun-filled week will be spent enjoying nature and all its beauty. Using natural elements found on our nature trails and farmstead, you will design your own unique work of art. Members, \$65; non-members, \$80.

Fairhope

July 1 and Aug. 5, 6-8 p.m., First Friday Art Walk. First Friday Art Walk is a community art and entertainment event held the first Friday of each month. The event is free and open to the public. Shops and art galleries are open. Stroll the streets of downtown Fairhope and enjoy special activities and live music.

July 2, 9 a.m., Red, White, and Bikes! The Exceptional Foundation will have a kids' bike parade in downtown Fairhope. Registration is at the Fairhoppers Community Park from 8 until 9 a.m.

July 4, Fairhope's Fourth of July Festival and Fireworks. The City of Fairhope will host its annual Fourth of July Concert and Fireworks display again this year on in Henry George Park and the Fairhope Municipal Pier. The Baldwin Pops Band Independence Day Concert will begin at 7:30 p.m. in Henry George Park. A variety of patriotic music will be played before and during the fireworks display. The Fairhope fireworks display will begin at approximately 9 p.m. For more information, please call (251) 929-1466.

Continued on Page 16

Alabama Municipal Electric Authority

804 South Perry Street
Montgomery, Alabama 36104

Presort Std
US Postage
PAID
Montgomery, AL
Permit No. 275

Places to Go & Things to Do

Continued from Page 15

July 7, 3-6 p.m., Fairhope Spring/Summer Outdoor Farmer's Market. The market will be held on Thursday evenings behind the Fairhope Public Library on Bancroft Street in downtown Fairhope. The market will offer fresh Baldwin County produce, fresh cut flowers, local honey, a large variety of plants, baked goods and more. For more information, please call (251) 929-1466.

"Glow in the Park" Summer Movie Series. The City of Fairhope returns with the "Glow in the Park Summer Movie Series," guaranteed to light up your summer nights with three free family movies at Fairhoppers Community Park on the first Thursdays in June, July, and August. Moviegoers are encouraged to bring a blanket or lawn chair and a picnic (no alcohol or glass containers) and relax with the whole family. The movies will begin at 8 p.m.: Thursday, July 7, *Minions*; Thursday, Aug. 4, *Inside Out*. For more information on the Glow in the Park Summer Movie Series, call (251) 929-1466.

July 16, Fairhope Historic Sites Bus Tours. The Fairhope Museum of History will once again be offering bus tours on at 9 a.m., 11a.m., 1 p.m., and 3 p.m. Hosted by Museum Director Donnie Barrett, the tours will cover the western side of town to include the homes of the town founders and other early Colonial Period sites. These tours provide a lot of interesting information and history. Advance tickets will go on sale at the museum on Friday, July 1. The cost is \$20. Please call the museum at (251) 929-1471 for more information.

July 23, 9 a.m., Fourth Annual Pelican Paddle Canoe and Kayak Race. Tonsmeire Weeks Bay Resource Center. Sponsored by Weeks Bay Foundation. There are several competitive categories, including a Stand Up Paddleboard Division and a Junior Division. If you are not interested in competing, there will also be a relaxing Eco-Tour around the marsh edge of Weeks Bay.

Aug. 13, 10 a.m., 8th Annual Fairhope Museum of History Elderberry Festival. At the Fairhope Museum of History. Demonstrations, tastings, a pie-eating contest, music and more throughout the day. The music will once again be from the Kracker Dan Band performing from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. The public is invited to submit their favorite elderberry pies, cakes, breads, jams, jellies and juice as well as other elder-flower creations for the Elderberry Cook-off Contest. The deadline to submit elderberry goodies is 5 p.m. on Friday, Aug. 12. This event is free and open to the public. For further information, contact the museum at (251) 929-1471.

Nov. 10-13, Fairhope Film Festival. For more information, please visit www.fairhopefilmfestival.org.

LaFayette

The Chambers County Museum has been located in the old Central of Georgia Train Depot since 1984. There are many exhibits waiting to entertain visitors. These include the Joe Louis Barrow, Senator Tom Heflin, the old Cusseta Post Office, the Valley Telephone Exchange, a country store, and an antique kitchen exhibit and more. The museum is open for tours by calling one of these three numbers, (334) 864-9866, (334) 864-8666, or (334) 864-5549. Be on the lookout for information on the Christmas Open House!

Sylacauga

Sylacauga Community Playhouse swings back into action this summer with the production of *Tarzan, The Stage Musical*, based on the Disney film with three performances: Friday, July 15, 6:30 p.m.; Saturday, July 16, 6:30 p.m.; and Sunday, July 17, 2 p.m. B. B. Comer High School Auditorium. Cast ranges in ages from 5 to 19. For more information, contact Amy McDonald, amcdonald@tikono.com.

Comer Library Summer Reading Program, 10 a.m. July 11, "Natures Olympians", performer Animal Tales; July 12, Blue Bell's Slam Dunk Stories, "Ninja", Silent, Swift, and Silly (children 3 to 5 years old); July 13, "Music Making Moves", performer Iron Giant Percussion.

In July, the Comer Museum & Arts Center will feature Ali Hval's painting, photography and unique fabric creations. In August, the museum will feature oil paintings by Randy Patton of Birmingham.