

# Alabama CURRENTS

Vol. XII No. 6 • November/December 2013

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## Holiday magic in Lanett



See Page 3

## Veterans Day: A time of reflection and remembrance

Through the many changes during our nation's history, some things remain constant: America's dedication to democracy and the commitment of the men and women who defend it by putting their lives on the line for the ideals we hold dear.



As we reflect upon another Veterans Day, we remember those who sacrificed so much for our great country. Our military heroes left the comfort of family and friends and often put themselves into harm's way to protect and preserve our way of life.

This Veterans Day, Nov. 11, let us remember the sacrifices of our service members and their families.

The programs on Veterans Day will focus on a specific time: the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month. That was the time and date that the armistice ending World War I (1914-1918) went into effect.

The special day, made a national holiday in 1938, was known as Armistice Day until June 1954. Then, President Eisenhower signed into law an act changing the day to Veterans Day.

Later, Veterans Day had a brief flirtation with the traditional government holiday rotation, which placed four national holidays on a Monday to encourage three-day weekends. The first Veterans Day under that schedule was Oct. 25, 1971.

To say this didn't take is something of an understatement. The overwhelming majority of state legislatures, all major veterans' service organizations and a majority of the American people wanted the observance returned to Nov. 11, regardless of the day of the week on which it fell.

That law was signed by President Ford in 1975, and the Nov. 11 observance returned in 1978. This not only preserves the historic significance of the day, but it also re-establishes the tie to World War I and links it to Veterans Days in other nations.

The real significance of the day, however, comes less from an act of Congress than with ordinary citizens remembering the sacrifices of men and women, most of whom also were ordinary citizens, serving when their country called.

Nothing we can do will ever fully return the favor to those who have given so much for America. But we must do all we can to honor them. All Americans share in the responsibility of caring for our veterans who have defended our freedom.

Fewer causes are so imperative or so noble. This Vet-

erans Day, we remember the service of our brave men and women in uniform. We thank them for their sacrifice and for their service. May we always remember.

**Special Note:** In 2009, I was honored to be chosen as a volunteer guardian for the third flight of the River Region Honor Flight to Washington, D.C. Honor Flight is the non-profit organization that takes World War II veterans free of charge to visit the war's memorial in Washington, D.C. The program was conceived by Earl Morse, a physician assistant and retired Air Force captain, to honor veterans he had taken care of for over 27 years. Morse realized that most of the veterans he served might never have an opportunity to visit the memorial since most are not financially or physically able to make a several day journey to the nation's Capitol on their own.

Dedicated in May 2004, the World War II Memorial is anchored by eagles and surrounded by wreaths and has 4,000 gold stars, each one representing every 100 Americans who died in the war.



I want to thank Mr. Ray Watson and Mr. Howard Wilkins (pictured, left to right, at the World War II Memorial in Washington, D.C.), both of Montgomery, for their service to our nation. I continue to remember them, and the men and women of today, as a group of enduring heroes committed to providing us with enduring freedom. God bless America and the men and women who continue to serve her.

*Lisa Miller*

AMEA Manager of Communications and Marketi

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#### MISSION STATEMENT

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

# Alabama CURRENTS

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## On the Cover



Since 2010, the City of Lanett has sponsored the "Meet Santa and Sparky Day." It has become a cherished holiday tradition in Lanett. Lanett City Schools, Springwood School (K-5) and Lanett Head Start participate in the day. As schoolchildren tell Santa what they want for Christmas, they also have their picture taken with Ole Saint Nick and Sparky.

This year, the "Meet Santa and Sparky Day" will be on Tuesday, Dec. 17 from 9 until 11 a.m. (EST) at Lanett City Hall.

Shown at the first City of Lanett "Meet Santa and Sparky Day" in 2010 are (seated) Mayor Oscar Crawley, Santa, and Zach Bryant (Mayor Crawley's grandson). Shown on the back row are (L to R): Jerry Thrower, Jackie Mason, Allison Jones, Sheila Taylor, Jennie Gunnells, Sharon Brooks, Shirley Hughley, Deborah Daniel and April Parrish.

Other holiday activities will include the City of Lanett Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony, which will be held Monday, Dec. 2 at 6 p.m. (EST) in downtown Lanett. Family members of a deceased citizen who made a difference in the City of Lanett will flip the switch on the official tree to start the holiday season.

Last, but certainly not least, Santa will arrive by fire truck to give out candy to all of the girls and boys of the City of Lanett. Come join us for free hot chocolate, cookies and candy. The Lanett Christian Church will provide free hot chocolate and cookies.

Make plans to spend time this holiday season in the City of Lanett.

*(Photos courtesy of Christy Stanfield)*

## Live life to the fullest



**D**uring this holiday season, we must give thanks for all the blessings of life the good Lord has bestowed upon us, including family, friends and meaningful relationships with others.

At the same time, we look back on 2013 and remember those who are no longer with us.

During 2013, I lost two close friends, Marlin Wade, 66, AMEA's Chief Financial Officer, and Wendell Cauley, 63, AMEA's General Counsel. They were both great people who had contributed greatly to AMEA's success.

The passing of these two men has strengthened a philosophy which I strongly believe: Live life to the fullest every day.

It's easy to talk about the ideals of living a full and complete life, but in order to actually succeed, we must have goals and objectives – not only personal, individual goals and objectives, but also those goals which involve and affect the lives of others around us. The death of these men is a reminder to me that all of us should endeavor to leave our communities in better shape than when we came into them to never lose sight of the “big picture.”

Looking at the “big picture” involves looking closely at the many segments that make up our local communities and looking closely at our own personal involvement in each of those areas. We must periodically ask ourselves what we are contributing to the big picture. That involvement can include your contributions to your church, local schools, youth and senior citizen programs, and your business contributions to the community.

In order to be sure our service to our communities is placed in the right direction, all of the segments that make up our communities must have a long-range plan and a vision for the future. It is hard to get anywhere if we don't know where we are going. In order to make any real improvement in any area of our lives, we must be focused and we must have vision. Only through long-term planning can we have vision or road map for the future. Only through vision can progress be made in the right direction.

What is your vision for your community and your neighbors? What are your long-term goals and objectives for your community? Are they centered around your church, school, community projects for the elderly, economic growth? What are the opportunities offered through your community? How can these opportunities be turned into assets? What are the obstacles in the way of progress and growth for your community? How can these obstacles be turned into advantages for your community?

Finding answers to these and similar questions in our everyday personal lives is called good old common sense. It goes without saying that we could all do with more planning and more common sense. The common sense involved with accomplishment and progress includes four steps: plan purposefully; prepare prayerfully; proceed positively; and pursue persistently.

May your vision for 2014 be placed in a clear and positive direction. I hope your holiday season is filled with joy and those things that matter most like serving our fellow man, as well as leaving our communities in better shape than we found them. Best wishes for a bright 2014.

*Fred D. Clark, Jr.*  
AMEA President & CEO

### High School Seniors: Alabama Municipal Electric Authority (AMEA) Scholarship Program Applications Available!

College scholarship applications are now available to high school seniors graduating in the spring of 2014.

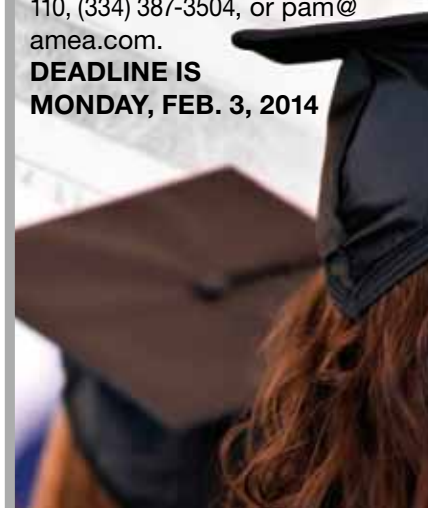
Each year, AMEA and its Members make available 33, \$2,500 scholarships, which include regular and technical school scholarships.

To be eligible for either of AMEA's scholarships, a student's family must receive **electric** service from an AMEA Member city/utility and the student must attend an Alabama college or university.

Applications are currently available from school counselors in the AMEA Member cities of Alexander City, Dothan, Fairhope, Foley (Riviera Utilities), LaFayette, Lanett, Luverne, Opelika, Piedmont, Sylacauga and Tuskegee, or you can go line to the AMEA web site, [www.amea.com](http://www.amea.com), Scholarship Program

For more information on the program, contact your school counselor or Pamela Poole, AMEA's Scholarship Program Coordinator, (800) 239-2632, Ext. 110, (334) 387-3504, or [pam@amea.com](mailto:pam@amea.com).

**DEADLINE IS  
MONDAY, FEB. 3, 2014**



## 'Tis the season

'Tis the season where football is wrapping up. 'Tis the season where some trees are still beautiful. 'Tis the season to display fall flowers, pumpkins, hay bales, and pilgrims offering Thanksgiving. 'Tis the season known as fall and I love it. And, 'tis also the season when we change the thermostat from cool to heat. And all of that means winter is close at hand and possibly higher utility bills will soon arrive for those whose house is not energy efficient.

I have written this column for several years now, and I know for a fact that many of you have heeded the advice given in these columns. I know so because you have called and told me so.

Making your house more energy efficient is not difficult, and it is actually an *investment*, not a *cost*. For example, let's suppose that your 1,200-square-foot house needs additional attic insulation and you pay \$600 to have it installed. If that added insulation saves you \$240 per year, you will have gotten your \$600 back in two and one-half years and should have at least \$240 every year thereafter. In 10 years, you should have saved about \$2,400 for an investment of \$600. If you had invested that \$600 in a CD at the bank, you would have about \$700 at the end of 10 years. Which do you think is the best investment?

The key is to know what energy-efficient items are feasible in a specific house. A detailed energy audit on the house is the best way to know, but most areas don't have a qualified auditor available. I suggest that you call your local power provider and ask if they know of a reliable auditor in your area. If an auditor is not available, then I am willing to help you. You may, as others have done, call me at (501) 653-7931.

Let me tell you a true energy investment story that took place on Oct. 5. I received a call on my weekly radio program that morning from a gentleman named Ralph who was in Jefferson City, Missouri. The call went like this:

**Doug:** Hi, Ralph. How can we help you today?

**Ralph:** Doug, we appreciate your show and the help that you give to us average folks.

**Doug:** Thanks, it is my pleasure.

**Ralph:** I need the name of a reliable company that handles geothermal systems.

**Doug:** Is that for a new house or an existing house?

**Ralph:** It is for an existing house.

**Doug:** Why do you think that you need a new geothermal unit?

**Ralph:** Well, actually I don't need one right now, but my existing geothermal unit is 19 years old and I understand that they usually last between 20 and 25 years. I just wanted to be ready if my unit went out.



**Doug:** Do you mean to tell me that you have had a geothermal unit for 19 years and it is still working today?

**Ralph:** Yes, and I have never had a service call. I attended one of your seminars in Columbia, Missouri, 20 years ago and you convinced me that I should install geothermal in my new house. You have saved me an absolute fortune.

**Doug:** Ralph, please don't hang up, but the music is playing for our first commercial break. Your experience will help a lot of folks, so please stay with us.

**Ralph:** I will hang on.

*(4 minute break for station advertisers and return music)*

**Doug:** Ralph, are you still there?

**Ralph:** Yes, I'm here.

**Doug:** What you have told us is amazing. You have had the most energy-efficient heating and cooling system available and it has been maintenance free for 19 years and saved you money for 228 months and it is still saving you money every month.

**Ralph:** That is correct. I paid \$5,000 for the 3-ton system in 1994. That was \$3,000 more than a conventional system. That was a lot of money, but my wife and I really wanted to have geothermal.

**Doug:** Ralph, do you have any idea how much money you have saved for that extra \$3,000 investment?

*(And much to my surprise, he knew.)*

**Ralph:** Yes, I have estimated that, and as best I can tell, we have saved about \$7,200 on our utility bills and about \$9,000 by not having to purchase a new conventional system.

**Doug:** So Ralph, you think that you have saved about \$16,200 by investing \$3,000 to have the most energy-efficient heating and cooling system in the world?

**Ralph:** Yes I do.

**Doug:** Well let me ask you a question. Why don't more people do geothermal?

**Ralph:** Well many folks just don't know about it and others just don't know all the advantages of having geothermal.

**Doug:** Ralph, thank you for this call. You were a wise man. Now let's talk to Mike in Ft. Smith, Arkansas.

If you want to ask us a question about energy efficiency, you can call our radio show at (800) 477-1037 on Saturday mornings between 9 and 10 a.m. (CST). We would be honored to talk to you.

Oh yeah, I almost forgot. 'Tis almost the season to be jolly, so Merry Christmas to all and 'Fa – la – la – la – la – la – la – la until 2014.

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

# Thanksgiving Safety

The kitchen is the heart of the home, especially at Thanksgiving. Kids love to be involved in holiday preparations. Safety in the kitchen is important, especially on Thanksgiving Day when there is a lot of activity and people at home.



## Did you know?

- » Stay in the kitchen when you are cooking on the stovetop so you can keep an eye on the food.
- » Stay in the home when cooking your turkey and check on it frequently.
- » Keep children away from the stove. The stove will be hot and kids should stay 3 feet away.
- » Make sure kids stay away from hot food and liquids. The steam or splash from vegetables, gravy or coffee could cause serious burns.
- » Keep the floor clear so you don't trip over kids, toys, pocketbooks or bags.
- » Keep knives out of the reach of children.
- » Be sure electric cords from an electric knife, coffee maker, plate warmer or mixer are not dangling off the counter within easy reach of a child.
- » Keep matches and utility lighters out of the reach of children — up high in a locked cabinet.
- » Never leave children alone in room with a lit a candle.
- » Make sure your smoke alarms are working. Test them by pushing the test button.



Thanksgiving is the leading day of the year for home fires involving cooking equipment.

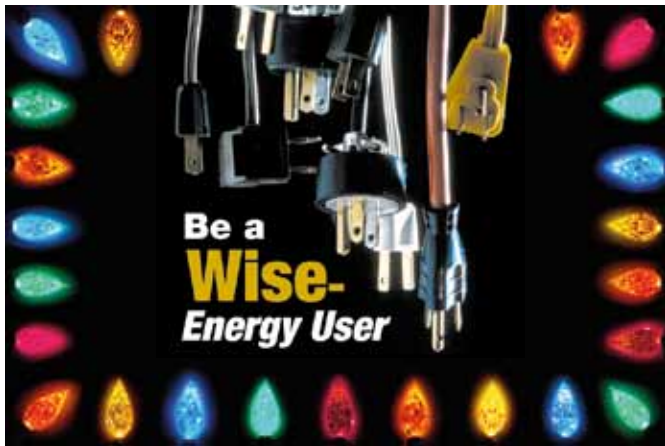
**Have activities** that **keep kids out of the kitchen** during this busy time. Games, puzzles or books can keep them busy. Kids can get involved in Thanksgiving preparations with recipes that can be done **outside** the kitchen.



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[www.nfpa.org/education](http://www.nfpa.org/education)



## Be energy efficient, even during the holidays

Ornaments, holly and stockings are fine for some, but each year you and your neighbors have grand plans for the annual holiday light show spectaculars you hope to create. Thousands of holiday lights and decorations can put a dent in your Christmas budget.

This year, replace your old, unreliable strings of incandescent holiday lights with energy-saving LED decorative lights. Also, consider other ways you can be energy efficient as you decorate and celebrate this season.

### Save With LEDs

Decorate with ENERGY STAR®-qualified, LED lights for your tree and outside light displays, because:

- LEDs are up to 90 percent more energy efficient and last up to 10 times longer than standard light sets.
- LEDs are more durable and shock resistant than conventional light strings – no filaments or glass bulbs to break.
- LEDs create less heat than incandescents and are cool to the touch, reducing the risk of fire, especially when your tree starts to dry out.

LEDs offer long-term cost savings. Yes, they may cost a little more up front, but that additional cost is easily recouped in energy savings and reduced replacement costs.

### Other Holiday Tips

Use timers for light displays. Limit holiday light displays to no more than six evening hours a day. Don't leave lights on all day.

Decorate your home with ENERGY STARS. Look for holiday displays that have the ENERGY STAR label. Use ENERGY STAR appliances for holiday festivities.

Shop for efficiency. Give the gift that keeps giving – buy electronics or appliances that are ENERGY STAR-rated.

Program your holiday warmth. Remember to use your programmable thermostat during the cold weather months, too. Lower the heat when you leave for work, head out for a day of shopping, or snuggle under the covers at night.

Make a New Year's resolution to be energy efficient. Make a list of home improvements that can improve your energy efficiency and save you money in the coming year.

# WATTS NEW IN Alexander City

## *Santa is coming to town*

By Tracy Kendrick



It's the most wonderful time of the year and the busiest! 2013 is coming to an end and bringing the holidays with it. Alexander City has several activities planned to put you in the Christmas spirit. Shopping, Santa and a parade to name a few.

The holiday season will kick off with the annual Holiday Open House on Nov. 17. Local retailers will open their doors from 1 until 4 p.m. This is a great time to purchase new Christmas arrivals and catch a few sales. Refreshments are usually offered as well.

While you are out shopping, bring the kids as Santa Claus arrives in Alexander City. Santa will arrive in time to light the Christmas tree. Bring your camera and get a picture with Santa while you take a break from shopping. Lighting the city tree and Santa's arrival will kick off the Christmas season in Alexander City.

The annual Christmas parade will be held on Dec. 2. Each year, there is a different theme. "Home for the Holidays" is the theme for this year. The Christmas parade is always a highlight of the Christmas season. For more information on the Holiday Open House, Santa visiting, tree lighting, or parade, call the Alexander City Chamber of Commerce, (256) 234-3461.

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

# WATTS NEW AT Utilities Board of Tuskegee

## *UBT Waste Water Treatment project in full force*

By Gerald Long

The Utilities Board of Tuskegee (UBT) is in the process of decommissioning its South Waste Water Treatment Plant and transferring the flow from that plant to its North Waste Water Treatment Plant. The cost of this project will be approximately \$10 million.

The south plant was constructed in the 1970s and discharges into the Calebee Creek. Because of more stringent discharge limits, the south plant cannot, without major upgrades, meet the new limits imposed by the Alabama Department of Environmental Management.

A cost benefit analysis was conducted by UBT engineers to determine whether it would be more cost effective to upgrade the south plant or transfer the flow from the south plant to the north plant. Our analysis showed that abandoning the south plant and transferring the flow to the north plant, which discharges into the Tallapoosa River, is the best option.

The project consists of consolidation of the North and South Waste Water Treatment Plant, South Basin Transfer Pump Station Improvements, and the South Basin Transfer Force Main.

The bid for the consolidation of the North and South Waste Water Treatment Plants was awarded to Associated Mechanical Contractors for approximately \$2.6 million. Work at the South Waste Water Treatment Plant includes modifications to the South Waste Water Finishing Pond, and abandonment of existing facilities at the South Waste Water Treatment Plant. Work at the North Waste Water Treatment Plant includes conversion of two Schreiber aeration basins to fixed grid aeration,

installation of a new blower, construction of a control well and tow bro clarifier, installation of three RAS pumps, and modifications to yard piping and the existing UV system.

The bid for the South Basin Transfer Pump Station Improvements was also awarded to Associated Mechanical Contractors for approximately \$2.7 million. The work to be performed under this contract includes modifications to the South Waste Water Treatment Plant Lift Station, modifications to the Sharpe

Field Lift Station, and the installation of two intermediate lift stations.

The bid for the South Basin Transfer Force Main was awarded to Hilton Cooper Contracting, Inc. for approximately \$2.2 million. The work under this portion of the project includes the installation of 55,000 linear feet of 12-inch diameter ductile iron and PVC force main, and bored and open cut roadway crossings.

The above projects are scheduled to be completed no later than Dec. 31, 2014.





## City of LaFayette on the verge of major infrastructure upgrade

By Chris Busby

The City of LaFayette could be on the verge of a major infrastructure upgrade that includes several paving projects and water line replacements. That's what Mayor Barry Moody and the City Council are hoping as they anxiously await the awarding of several state grants.

"For myself as Mayor and for all of the council, it's been our goal to move the city forward since we took office," Mayor Moody said. "And any grant that we are fortunate enough to receive would just open doors of opportunity that do not exist now. And when we open those doors, there are other doors that seem to open up."

Moody is referring to a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) the city is applying for that, if awarded, could set in motion a major project for LaFayette. The CDBG application is for \$621,265 and its intended use is for water system improvements including new line connections in three areas to create system loops, as well as strategic locations to facilitate flushing and leak identifications. If awarded, it would require a 20 percent match by the city.

The city has also submitted an Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) Central Business District Improvements grant application, which is one that has to be coupled with another grant, and in the city's case, it is the Community Development Block Grant. The city will ask for an additional \$200,000 through the Central Business District Improvement program to use for water system upgrades, and it requires no financial match by the city. If both the CDBG and ARC grants are approved, LaFayette would have as much as \$821,265 for water line improvements.

LaFayette will learn of the funds that will be available for improvements within the next few months, but they have already secured funds for potential paving projects around the historic Chambers County Courthouse and LaFayette City Hall.

The city originally submitted a request to receive ATRIP (Alabama Transportation Rehabilitation and Improvement Program) funds as part of the third and final phase of the statewide road and bridge improvement plan. However, rather than approving the City of LaFayette funds for road improvements, the state allocated Chambers County with a bulk sum in the amount of \$2,375,665 with the instructions to work with their cities to decide what projects would be funded in each.

The request by LaFayette was for the repair and resurfac-

ing of approximately 1.4 miles of Alabama Avenue, which runs through downtown past the courthouse and city hall. The proposed cost of the roadwork would have been approximately \$968,868, of which the city would be responsible for funding a 20 percent match. The initial amount the city was prepared to spend on matching the ATRIP grant was approximately \$193,000, plus the cost for engineering services, which would have been an estimated \$125,000.

After discussing how the funds from ATRIP could be used, LaFayette and the county came to a compromise. The county estimated the cost of repaving, which included grating the road down and addressing a drainage issue, at \$456,000. Of that amount, the county has agreed to provide \$185,000 to help with the work, leaving the city to bear a cost of \$271,000. That's less than the estimate city funding required for the ATRIP match and engineering services.

Also of importance for LaFayette is that there would be no federal regulations to follow if the county did the work, such as moving light poles and mailboxes, which would be required using ATRIP funds.

The fact that there are no time constraints involved in the county's proposal provides another benefit. If they city is awarded the CDBG grant, then water line improvements can be made before the paving begins. There is the possibility that the city doesn't get a CDBG grant this time and has to reapply, which would further delay the repaving. If the city decides to hold off on the Alabama Avenue project because of a delay in water line replacement, they can still use the county services, along with the \$185,000, to address other paving needs in the city.

"There are a lot of things we want to accomplish to improve our city in a number of different areas," Moody added. "Recreation upgrades are something we have looked into and it's something we want. But road and water improvements are something we need right now. If you take a look at these streets and you take a look at the water and the problems, it's very clear that our infrastructure needs updating."

"Aside from the problems with dirty water and leaks, we need to increase lines so we can increase capacity," said City Clerk Louis T. Davidson. "If we have industry that comes in, we need to be able to accommodate them. It's something that will benefit the city in both the short term and for many years to come."

*Chris Busby is a staff writer for The LaFayette Sun.*



WATTS NEW IN  
**Fairhope**



*Fairhope continues  
to support schools*

By D. Fran Morley

**U**nderscoring the importance of quality education for all students in Fairhope, the Fairhope City Council gave all five public schools in the city a boost to the tune of \$350,000 for the 2013 school year. Each school — Fairhope High, Fairhope Middle, Fairhope Intermediate, Fairhope Elementary, and J. Larry Newton — were allotted \$70,000 to be used for digital technology needs.

The donation was made at the recommendation of the City's Education Advisory Committee and is money generated by the city-owned utilities.

"I'm pleased that not only does Fairhope Electric offer our residents dependable service, but we are able to help the schools in this way," said Electric Superintendent Scott Sligh. "The city regularly helps its schools in various in-kind ways, such as helping with minor projects at the campuses and providing and maintaining the sports facilities and fields."

Councilwoman Diana Brewer, who served as liaison between the committee and the schools, said having the city play a greater role in the schools has been "near and dear" to her heart for many years.

"It's something I've worked on for a long time and I'm just proud that we are finally taking that step," she said. "We are glad that Fairhope can take the lead on this and encourage other cities in Baldwin County to offer similar support to their own schools."

The City Council will consider a donation in the same amount for the FY 2014 budget.

"For any city, the education of our young people is most important, and I'm pleased that Fairhope is able to help our schools in this way," said Mayor Tim Kant.

WATTS NEW IN  
**Dothan**



**Dothan featured in  
*Business Alabama* magazine  
for excellence  
in planning with  
citizen participation**

By Cassandra Milton

**T**he City of Dothan's Department of Planning and Development was recently recognized in the September issue of *Business Alabama* magazine. In the "Thoughtful Communities" article, Dothan and three other Alabama cities are described as being in a class by themselves due to their outstanding planning with maximum citizen participation. The other cities featured in the article are Auburn, Guntersville, and Birmingham's Highland Park neighborhood.

Mayor Mike Schmitz and the City Commission are proud of the tremendous planning efforts that are being undertaken in Dothan, and the recognition of those efforts from *Business Alabama* magazine. Dothan's planning efforts have also been acknowledged by the Alabama Chapter of the American Planning Association, who presented Dothan with the Outstanding Planning Award in 2012 for its long-range plan and in 2013 for its bicycle and pedestrian master plan.

According to Todd McDonald, Dothan's Director of Planning and Development, community involvement is one of the most critical components of any successful governmental plan.

"We fully understand that our citizens are one of our finest assets, and whenever they are involved in our governmental or planning processes, tremendous value is added to our community," said McDonald.

The article can be viewed online at <http://www.businessalabama.com/Business-Alabama/September-2013/Thoughtful-Communities/>.

## “Run, Hide, Fight” Sylacauga Police offer active shooter training

By Emily Adams

**Y**ou never expect it to happen to you. But what if it does? Do you know how to protect yourself against an active shooter?

From the Sandy Hook Elementary in Newtown, Conn., last December to the July 2012 movie theater killing in Aurora, Colo., to the Navy shipyard shooting in Washington, D.C., in September, active shooter events are seemingly increasing in frequency and violence.

For this reason, the Sylacauga Police Department is initiating a bold effort to protect citizens in the event of an active shooter in this community.

“People tend to put active shooters in a box with schools, but we’re seeing more and more active shooters at businesses, office complexes, factories,” Police Chief Chris Carden said. “In my opinion, you have two choices: you can sit back and do nothing and just hope it never happens, or you can prepare in case it ever does.”

The entire department completed ac-

tive shooter training for law enforcement earlier this year, and eight officers have since been certified to instruct a separate course for the public called “Run, Hide, Fight.”

An initiative of the Alabama Department of Homeland Security, the course curriculum was developed to demonstrate best practices for surviving a shooting event. As the name suggests, it centers on three approaches. First, assess if you can run to safety. If that is not an option, find a good hiding place, preferably behind furniture in a dark, locked room. If the first two options fail, use your own discretion about when to engage the shooter. The roughly two-hour course goes into extensive detail on these, and other, actions one should take during an emergency.

“The concept is a common sense approach,” Carden said. “It all boils down to the basic concept of fight or flight. Generally, active shooter situations are very short in duration. Law enforcement

typically arrives within a matter of minutes, so if you can mitigate your situation for just a few minutes, your chances of survival increase drastically.”

The department held its first public class last month, and the free training is also offered to any business or organization upon request.

“Run, Hide, Fight” was developed from a statewide project to train all law enforcement in the Advanced Law Enforcement Rapid Response Training, or ALERRT, course. A natural progression of this newly required officer training was to train the public on active shooters as well. While not required, it is something law enforcement agencies across the state, including other agencies in Talladega County, are taking advantage of to proactively protect citizens.

“This coincides with our core values, ‘Duty, Honor, Community,’ and I saw it as a good opportunity to help the public and to teach something useful,” Carden said. “Most of the stuff we do in the community is crime prevention; this is live-saving advice.”

The course, he said, “brings attention to a sensitive issue that we have to come to terms with being part of our everyday life.”

“God forbid it ever happens here, but even if ‘Run, Hide, Fight’ just saves one life, or if one person in a shooter situation has had the training and can lead others out of harm’s way or call police and give us good, detailed information, then it has accomplished what it is intended for,” Carden said. “To do nothing is the wrong answer. You can lay there and be a victim, or you can run; you can hide; you can fight.”

Emily Adams is a staff writer for *The Daily Home in Sylacauga*.



Police Chief Chris Carden discusses active shooter procedures with Lt. Rondell Muse, left, and Sgt. Matt Emlich, center. Muse and Emlich are two of several officers at the Sylacauga Police Department certified to instruct an active shooter preparedness course for the public. (Photo by Emily Adams).

★ WATTS NEW IN  
**Luverne**

Time  
to bloom

By Regina Grayson

**A**h, yes....retirement. For most people, retirement comes with a mixture of emotions – sadness, joy, excitement, maybe even a little anxiety. And Mrs. Charlotte Flynn has every right to celebrate all of these emotions.

Flynn just celebrated 40 years with the City of Luverne, officially retiring on Sept. 27. She began working with the City in 1972.

“I started out in the billing of the electric bills,” she said. “Back then, we mailed out the power bills on a post card, and everything had to be entered by hand.”

Flynn worked with Mrs. Bonnie King, who served as City Clerk for several years until 2000 when Flynn was named City Clerk.

“I’ve worked with four different mayors – Mr. Ed Turner, Mr. Clement Carpenter, Mr. John Harrison, and finally with Mr. Joe Rex Sport,” she explained.

“I have loved my job and the people who came in all these years. It’s been such a delight to work with all of the City’s employees, and especially Mr. Joe Rex and the girls. We’re like family.”

When Flynn refers to “the girls”, she is referring to Margie Gomillion and Vicki Coggins, assistant clerks in the office.

“I want to say a huge thank you to both of them for not only helping me to learn about the computers, but also for our close friendship to me and my whole family.”

Flynn is not the only one who values and appreciates working with faithful employees who treat each other like family.

“I have never had to worry about things at City Hall, especially if I was going out of town,” Mayor Joe R. Sport said. “I always knew that I was leaving everything in good hands. Not all mayors can say that.”

And what are Flynn’s plans now that she has retired?

“My main focus will be on Joe (Dexter Flynn),” she said, smiling. “Oh, and of course, my grandchildren!” The Flynn’s have three grandchildren, Taylor Hester, and Sawyer and Riley Flynn.

“I’m going to be spending all the time I can with them,” she said.

In addition to her family, Flynn has another great love that she is planning to spend more time with — her beautiful Canna Lilly garden. Anyone who has driven by the garden on Highway 10 in Rutledge would not help but notice Flynn’s beautiful garden.

“They bloom from June all the way to October,” she said. “I just love to be outside, to just sit outside and enjoy nature.”

When she thinks about her retirement in general, Flynn smiles that sweet smile of hers.

“Joe Dexter is delighted that I’m home now. And if he gets tired of me being around, he can just go up to the barn for some peace and quiet,” she said, laughing.



Retiring City Clerk Charlotte Flynn with Luverne Mayor Joe Rex Sport during her retirement reception Sept. 27 at Luverne City Hall.

## Opelika Power Services' employees "FISH" to improve team building skills

By David Horton

On Sept. 5, the entire group of Opelika Power Services' (OPS) employees reported to the Opelika Sportsplex and Aquatic Center for an afternoon to work on team building skills. What the apprehensive employees found when they got to the complex was high energy volunteers Valeri White, Tyrone White, and Laura Leigh Pierce. They were busy energizing everyone and preparing them for an afternoon of fun and learning all about the FISH! Philosophy.

Each employee was given a family name within the FISH! family such as Zippy Bubble Bass, Lumpy Girdle Crappy and others. There were some really funny names that the employees had to live with that afternoon. Others who assisted with the training were Billy Jackson, Mary Kuhn, Roy Smith, Pat Ford and Deana Moore.

As the day progressed, the apprehensive employees mellowed and actively participated in the process with much enthusiasm.

"I had no idea of what we were really going to do at the complex," said David Horton, Director, OPS. "The one thing I was hoping for during our time there was to be able to learn how we could be a better team, come together and sharpen our skills, and learn how to serve our customers better with excellence. And I can tell you, after we finished the FISH! Philosophy program, we did just that. Our group came together as one and our attitudes were changed. We went about building stronger working relationships with each other and changing our attitudes so we can have better customer relationships. The program was very rewarding and the volunteers were awesome. This program works and is great."

The FISH! Philosophy program itself is based on four

principles: Be There, Play, Make Their Day and Choose Your Attitude. Through the program, you learn to build stronger relationships with team members you work with, the customers you serve, the people you teach and the people you love. FISH! is alive and well in organizations around the country — large and small. Business leaders and owners, HR and training professionals, and individuals use the FISH! Philosophy to build cultures of service, trust, accountability and innovation.

"The FISH! program supported everything I believe in," Horton added. "OPS' success with our new Smart Grid system and new fiber project will be determined by our employees' attitudes and actions. The attitude of our employees, in my mind, is the road to happiness and success for us as a company. And, those of our employees who are determined and exemplify values such as Customer Focus, Integrity, Personal Responsibility, Working Together, Innovation and High Achievement in their work behavior will be successful in our organization and help make OPS a great place to work. It will also help us provide a positive and pleasant experience for our customers who come to our office to purchase electric and fiber services from us. I would encourage anyone to explore using the FISH! Philosophy program and put it to work in your organization."

The Opelika Sportsplex team can help you change the culture and attitude of others as well. They are willing to come and do the program for you and your city or business. Just ask the City of Troy how the Opelika team came and presented FISH! to all of their city employees and it worked for them.

For more information, contact Valeri White at (334) 705-5560.



*Together we succeed to cross the finish line.*



*OPS employees realize first hand that teamwork wins every time.*

# WATTS NEW AT Riviera Utilities

## Vegetation Management 101

By Miles McDaniel

It's a fact...trees and power lines don't mix. It's as simple as that.

When trees or branches get too close to high-voltage lines, electricity can arc through the air like a lightning bolt, seeking the nearest path to ground. When that path is a tree, it can short out the line, severely damage or destroy nearby property and structures, and present a risk to public safety.

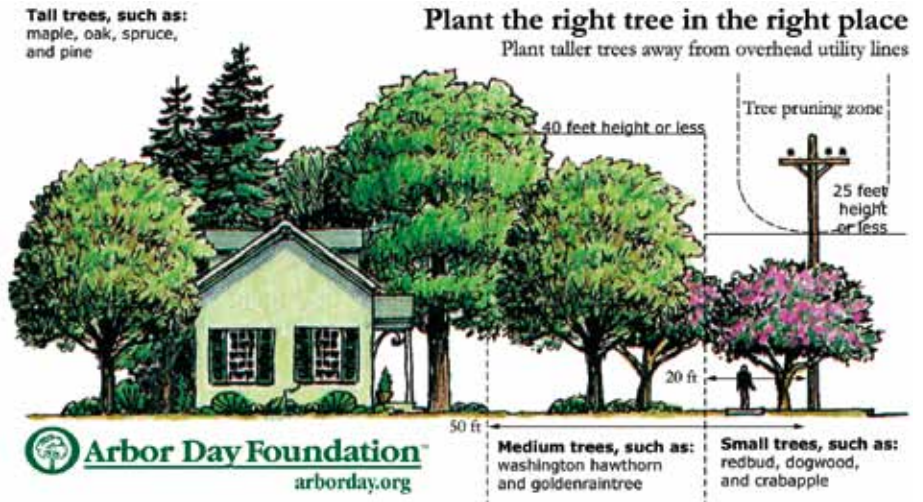
Contact and flashovers can occur:

- When a tree or branch grows too close to a line.
- When a tree or branch grows into a line.
- When a tree or branch falls or blows onto a line.
- When tree branches sag because of the weight of fruit and/or absorbed water.
- When lines sway into trees or branches in windy weather.

Power outages can have big consequences for individuals and business owners, especially if power can't be restored quickly because trees and shrubs impede access to the lines:

- Health care at hospitals and nursing homes could be degraded; heating and cooling interruptions can be especially hard on these groups.
- Automated assembly lines can grind to a halt, requiring long and costly restarts.
- Schools and businesses may be disrupted.
- Office computers and communications systems may stop working, often resulting in loss of productivity and data.

Our home and office landscapes benefit greatly from the use of trees and



shrubs. They add beauty, help the environment, and increase the value of our property. However, these same trees can be a major challenge in providing safe and reliable electric service. Fallen trees or broken limbs are leading contributors to power outages. It is with this in mind that Riviera Utilities has developed a Vegetation Management Program. This program is a rotating three-year cycle of trimming that focuses on trees and other vegetation that could potentially interrupt service or block access to power lines.

If trees are targeted for trimming, we remove only the branches or limbs that could interfere with service or make contact with power lines. We strive to trim trees based on recommended methods approved by the International Society of Arboriculture and National Electric Safety Code.

The distance a tree is trimmed

primarily depends on acquiring a safe maintenance zone to work around the power lines, voltage the adjacent line supplies and/or the number of wires included in that service, and the type of tree. Most of the tree trimming we perform deals with limbs that extend too close to power lines. However, in some cases, the complete removal of the tree is required. It may simply be a case where the public's safety is jeopardized. A tree may have to be removed because it is dead, dying, or damaged.

If Riviera Utilities must remove a tree in a primary power line, customers are offered a replacement tree.

If you have questions about our tree trimming practices or if you wish to learn more about the program, please contact Josh Roberts, Vegetation Management Supervisor, at (251) 943-5001, or visit our website, [www.rivierautilities.com](http://www.rivierautilities.com).



# Places to Go & Things to Do

## Alexander City

**Wednesdays in November and December.** Story time from 10:30 a.m. until 12 p.m. at Mamie's Place Children's Library. All children welcome. For details, call (256) 234-4644.

**Senior Activity Center.** See all the senior activities planned for the months of November and December at <http://www.acpr.me/senior-activity-center.php>.

**Nov. 11, 2-3 p.m., Veteran's Day Services.** Join the Mayor and city leaders at Veteran's Memorial Park at the Charles E. Bailey Sr. Sportsplex. Visit the memorials to the Confederacy, World War I and II, Korea, Vietnam and Desert Storm. For more information, call (256) 329-6730.

**Nov. 14, 9 a.m.-3 p.m., Electronics Recycling.** Public Works Department, behind Darwin Dobbs. Every second Thursday. CE&E Solutions will be accepting electronics for recycling. ADEM certified. Contact Sabrina Wood at (334) 429-8832 or Amanda Thomas at (256) 409-2020. Sponsored by the City of Alexander City and the Middle Tallapoosa Clean Water Partnership.

**Nov. 14, 7-9 p.m., Second Samuel Christmas Show.** Presented by The Wetumpka Depot Players. Sponsored by the Alexander City Arts with support from the Alabama State Council of the Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts. The Wetumpka Depot Players.

**Nov. 16, 7-10 a.m., MainStreet's Thanksgiving Market.** At the fountain on Broad Street. Showcases vegetables for the upcoming holiday feast. For information, call (256) 329-9227, or visit [www.mainstreetac.org](http://www.mainstreetac.org).

**Nov. 17, Holiday Open House, Tree Lighting and Santa visit.** For more information, call (256) 234-3461.

**Dec. 12, 9 a.m.-3 p.m., Electronics Recycling.** Public Works Department, behind Darwin Dobbs. Every second Thursday. CE&E Solutions will be accepting electronics for recycling. ADEM certified. Contact Sabrina Wood at (334) 429-8832 or Amanda Thomas at (256) 409-2020. Sponsored by the City of Alexander City and the Middle Tallapoosa Clean Water Partnership.

## Fairhope

**Nov. 7-10, Film Festival.** The 2013 Fairhope Film Festival takes place with 40 films over four days at four walkable venues in downtown Fairhope. Festival passes will be available for sale through the website, with individual ticket sales at the door prior to film screenings. There will be other events throughout the festival as well. For more information, visit [www.fairhopefilmfestival.org](http://www.fairhopefilmfestival.org).

**Nov. 9, 10 a.m., Veteran Day Parade.** The City of Fairhope will honor its military veterans with a Veterans Day Parade. The parade will begin and end at the Fairhope Civic Center. As part of the annual celebration, a Veteran of the Year will be named to lead the parade. Participants include military vehicles, bands, and floats from various organizations. Center Stage Show Choir will be performing and refreshments will be served at the Fairhope Civic Center lobby at 8:30 a.m. for all veterans and parade participants.

**Nov. 15, Round up Day at Museum.** Presenters in period costume will do talks throughout the day at the museum. This is the day that our founders designated in 1894 as the day to meet on the shores of Mobile Bay to build the new colony of Fairhope. Presenters that day will tell the founders' stories, about what brought them to Fairhope, and what their plans were for our town. There will be a museum scavenger hunt games that day, where participants will have to search exhibits for answers to win a prize.

**Nov. 15, 10 a.m.-2 p.m., American Recycles Day.** Warehouse. Citizens are invited to bring unwanted documents for shredding, a service provided by Cintas. These events give community members the opportunity to shred their personal information in an environment they can trust. There will also be useful demonstrations and information on recycling.

**Nov. 21, 6 p.m., Annual City of Fairhope Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony.** Join us as we turn on over one million lights in downtown Fairhope. The festivities begin at 5:30 p.m. and lights come on at 6 p.m. Artwork for the event is by Tina Powers. The artwork will be on display at Lyon's Share. Residents are invited to come stroll the streets of downtown and visit with Mrs. Claus and the Dogwood Trail Maids.

**Nov. 22, 6-8 p.m., Holiday Stroll.** First Friday holiday event. Join us in downtown Fairhope for food and drink as we introduce new art work to fulfill your holiday wish list. Just like our First Friday Art Walk but with holiday flair.

**Nov. 23, 6:30 p.m., Movie in the Streets.** The Downtown Business Association (DFBA) will host an outdoor movie at the intersection of Section Street and Fairhope Avenue. Those who plan to attend can bring lawn chairs and blankets. Children are invited to wear their holiday pajamas. DFBA "Movie in the Streets" is a family-friendly event. No alcoholic beverages will be allowed. Admission is free.

**Nov. 24, 1-5 p.m., Holiday Open House.** Live entertainment and refreshments throughout town.

**Dec. 6, 7 p.m., Fairhope Magical Christmas Parade.** Begins at the intersection of Morphy and Section streets, and continues down Section to Oak Street. The excitement will build as more than 50 parade units dazzle the crowd in anticipation of Santa Claus' arrival to Fairhope for the holiday season.

**Dec. 7 and 14, 10 a.m.-12 p.m., Santa at Welcome Center.** Santa will be in front of the Fairhope Museum of History in downtown Fairhope for children to visit. Parents may bring cameras to take pictures.

**Dec. 31, 8:30 p.m.-12:30 a.m., New Year's Eve Event.** Bring your family and ring in the New Year in downtown Fairhope with fireworks and a ball drop at midnight. Bring the whole family downtown to celebrate as we welcome 2014.

## Foley

**Dec. 6, 6 p.m., Foley's Annual Christmas in the Park.** Tree lighting, Santa, and more! Heritage Park. Come out to hear Christmas carols, sip hot cocoa, enjoy the lighting of the Christmas tree, and visit with Santa. Free cocoa and snack for all. For more information contact Linda Hula, (251) 943-1300.

**Dec. 7, 11 a.m.-3 p.m., Foley's Annual "Let It Snow!"** Heritage Park. Come out to hear live musical performances, listen to Mrs. Claus tell stories, make arts and crafts in the Children's Art Village, and of course, play in the snow. Contact Linda Hula, (251) 943-1300, for more information.

## Summerdale

**Dec. 5, 7 p.m., Classical Christmas Concert.** Summerdale Municipal Complex. Presented by the Marjorie Younce Snook Public Library. Featured musicians will be Victor Andzulis and Megan Andzulis.

## Sylacauga

**For the month of November,** the Isabel Anderson Comer Museum will feature local artists' exhibition and sale. All mediums. A reception will be held on Nov. 14 from 6:30 until 8 p.m.

**Nov. 1-3, Sylacauga's Holiday Open House.**

**Nov. 6, B.B. Comer Library's** SouthFirst Bank Lecture Series for fall 2013 will end with Delores Haydock, "Reunions & Rituals: Greetings from the Past."

**For the month of December,** the Isabel Anderson Comer Museum will feature paintings by Professor Edward Jennings. A reception will be held on Dec. 12 from 6:30 until 8 p.m.

**Dec. 3, 6:30 p.m., "A Sylacauga Christmas" Parade.** Entries must be submitted by Nov. 18.

## WATTS NEW IN **Lanett**

### *Senior center renamed after long-time manager*

By Jennie Gunnells

**T**he Lanett Senior Center has been renamed the Jane K. Farrar Senior Center, and that honor was formalized in a dedication and ribbon-cutting ceremony in September. The ceremony was hosted by the Greater Valley Area Chamber of Commerce.

Jane Farrar was the long-time manager of the center until her retirement earlier this year. Farrar started the Senior Center and had been employed with the center since 1977, when it opened as the Lanett Senior Nutrition Center. She passed away in July.

Ronnie Tucker, Director of Recreation, City of Lanett, stated that Farrar had always been a source of encouragement and guidance to many



Lanett senior citizens.

She encouraged and led them to take part in the Masters Games, as well as other games and activities to keep them occupied and active.

Farrar had two computers at the center and she felt it was important to have the seniors learn how to use a computer proficiently.

During the ceremony, Lanett Mayor Oscar Crawley remembered Farrar by talking about her can-do attitude and willingness to represent the seniors. He said she was never shy about asking for donations for the seniors, and that she worked tirelessly until her retirement in June of this year.

“We’re so pleased to be a part of the recognition of Mrs. Farrar,” Denise Clark, president of the Greater Valley Area Chamber of Commerce, said.

“An active and involved senior population is greatly important to any community and Mrs. Farrar did an excellent job of making sure that our Lanett seniors are a vital force in daily life.”

“Jane and I laughed and cried about many events over my 14 years here,” said Jennie Gunnells, Human Resource Manager, City of Lanett, “My father worked for her husband, Richard, at West Point Pepperell. My dad and I attended Jane and Richard’s 50th wedding anniversary celebration held at the local country club. We rejoiced over my grandchildren when they were born and cried when my father passed away. Jane Farrar was one of the strongest people I have ever known and when she loved you as her son, Kelley Farrar, stated, she loved you unconditionally.”



*A large crowd was in attendance in September for the dedication and ribbon-cutting ceremony for the renaming of the Lanett Senior Center in memory of Jane Farrar, who had directed the center from 1977 until her retirement in June 2013. Cutting the ribbon to inaugurate the Jane K. Farrar Senior Center were Mrs. Farrar’s son, Kelley, and her husband, Richard. Shown are (L to R): Denise Clark, President, Greater Valley Area Chamber of Commerce; Ronnie Tucker, Recreation Director, City of Lanett; Lanett Mayor Oscar Crawley; the Rev. Baxter Chisholm, Fredonia United Methodist Church; Kelley Farrar; Richard Farrar; Shirley Motley, Lanett City Council; Mike Farrar with one-month-old daughter, Taylor Jane Farrar, and wife, Teresa Farrar; Belva Durham, Program Coordinator, East Alabama Area Agency on Aging; and State Rep. DuWayne Bridges. (Photo courtesy of Wayne Clark, The Valley Times-News)*