

# Alabama CURRENTS

July/August 2015

A Publication of the Alabama Municipal Electric Authority



**The Utilities Board  
of Tuskegee investing  
in today and  
the future**

See Page 14





# Alabama Communities of Excellence

**H**ats off to AMEA Members, Alexander City and Fairhope, for being named “Alabama Communities of Excellence”

Alabama has many towns, cities and communities that possess qualities of excellence. They may demonstrate that through their many programs and services, education, healthcare, historic preservation, leadership development, tourism, or economic development, just to name a few.



But what does it really mean to be designated as a “Community of Excellence”? For 26 Alabama communities with populations of 2,000 to 18,000, they bear the mark of distinction by being named just that, an “Alabama Community of Excellence.”

Recently, Alexander City and Fairhope joined the ranks of 26 of Alabama’s finest small towns to become an “Alabama Community of Excellence.”

Alexander City, Elba, Fairhope, Rainsville, and Saraland were recently recognized at the Alabama League of Municipalities 2015 Annual Convention in Tuscaloosa as the newest members of the Alabama Communities of Excellence (ACE) program after they completed each of the three phases for becoming an ACE community.

I was particularly honored as president of the ACE program to present these five cities with their plaques during the graduation ceremony at the League meeting.

The Class of 2015 was also announced during the League meeting. They include: Abbeville, Geneva, Jasper, Oneonta, Red Bay, and Spanish Fort. These cities will begin the process of becoming ACE communities this summer, joining Helena, which continues working through the phases of the ACE program.

The 26 communities which have previously been certified as Alabama Communities of Excellence are: Arab, Atmore, Brewton, Childersburg, Demopolis, Eufaula, Evergreen, Fayette, Foley, Graysville, Guin, Gulf Shores, Guntersville, Haleyville, Hartselle, Headland, Heflin, Jackson, Jacksonville, Leeds, Livingston, Millbrook, Monroeville, Montevallo, Thomasville, and Valley. The addition of Alexander City, Elba, Fairhope, Rainsville and Saraland brings the



The City of Alexander City was recently designated as an “Alabama Community of Excellence.” The designation was bestowed on the City at the Alabama League of Municipalities 2015 Annual Convention in Tuscaloosa. Shown are (L to R): City Councilman Bobby Tapley, City Councilman Tony Goss, City Clerk Harriett Scott, ACE President Lisa Miller, Mayor Charles Shaw, Lavern Shaw, ACE Co-Captain Dr. Joe Summers, and City Councilman Billy Ray Wall. Not shown is Local ACE Coordinator Randy Thomas. (Photo by Joe Watts)



ACE President Lisa Miller (center) presents Fairhope Mayor Tim Kant with a plaque recognizing the city for its recent ACE designation. Shown with Miller and Kant are (L to R): Local ACE Coordinator Sherry Sullivan, City Council President Jack Burrell, City Councilman Mike Ford, and City Councilman Kevin Boone. (Photo by Joe Watts)

total to 31 Alabama communities that have been designated as “Alabama Communities of Excellence.”

Foley, also an AMEA Member city through its public power utility, Riviera Utilities, was designated an “Alabama Community of Excellence” in 2012.

In 2002, the ACE program was created as a 501 (c)3 non-profit corporation for the purpose of utilizing the collective expertise of partner organizations to provide small communities throughout the state with tools and resources to help them insure long-term economic success.

The ACE program offers a systematic approach with technical resources and the tools needed to help Alabama’s

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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

The Utilities Board of Tuskegee (UBT) Water Filtration Plant was constructed in the early 1970s. This plant has served UBT well since its construction, but had not been upgraded since its inception. Major improvements have been made in recent years not only to the physical structure itself, but also to the pumps and equipment housed in and outside the plant.

UBT draws water from the Tallapoosa River to be treated and converted to clean, refreshing drinking water that meets state and federal standards and into which UBT discharges wastewater that has been treated and cleaned to Alabama Department of Environmental Management and Environmental Protection Agency standards.

Mrs. Katie Robinson and a student trainee are shown performing water quality tests in the lab. Mrs. Robinson is very knowledgeable in state and federal clean water standards and is instrumental in making sure that the drinking water and the water discharged into the environment meets the highest industry standards.

Also shown is UBT's substation 5 in the Town of Shorter, which was constructed at a cost in excess of \$2.5 million. This substation will ensure that economic development occurs through Macon County. UBT and its customers will benefit from that future development.

## Preparation is the best protection against the dangers of a hurricane

**2005 Hurricane Katrina, \$75 billion**

**2005 Hurricane Dennis, over \$2 billion**

**2004 Hurricane Ivan, \$14 billion**

**1995 Hurricane Opal, \$3 billion**

**1979 Hurricane Frederic, \$2.3 billion**

**T**hese were all huge hurricanes that hit Alabama, among other states. How many families do you think were really prepared when they hit?

In Alabama, we can experience a variety of weather catastrophes including hurricanes, tropical storms, ice storms, tornadoes, thunderstorms, and floods. And, severe weather can affect power delivery across the entire state. When outages do occur, your public power system responds immediately and works as quickly and safely as possible to restore your service.

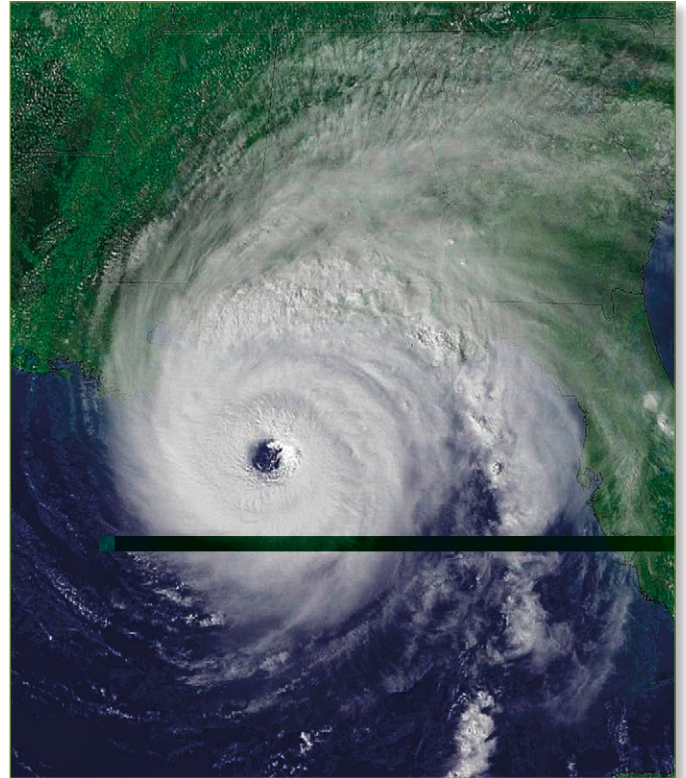
Knowing what to do before, during and after an emergency is a critical part of being prepared and may make all the difference when seconds count.

Now that we are in the middle of hurricane season (June 1-November 30), we encourage you to make sure you, your family and your home/business are well prepared for whatever may come your way.

For our friends along the Alabama Gulf Coast, including AMEA Member cities, Fairhope and Foley, hurricane preparedness is a continuous effort. They know that it only takes one storm to change your life and community. Your public power utility is always prepared for what Mother Nature may throw their way.

Preparation is the best protection against the dangers of a hurricane. Before a disaster, learn how you will know there is an impending hazardous event. Familiarize yourself with the signs of events that come without warning and know the local advance alerts and warnings and how you will receive them. Knowing about the local emergency plans for shelter and evacuation and local emergency contacts will help you develop your household plan and will also aid you during a crisis.

Learning what to do in different situations and developing and customizing your plans for your local hazards, the



*Hurricane Ivan on September 15, 2004. (Photo by NOAA)*

locations frequented by members of your household and the specific needs of household members including animals will help you reduce the impact of disasters and may save lives and prevent injuries.

We encourage you to develop a family communications plan and prepare an emergency supply kit for your home or business.

It is important to make sure that the entire family is prepared and informed in the event of a disaster or emergency. You may not always be together when these events take place, therefore you should have plans for making sure you are able to contact and find one another.

We suggest these basic steps to make sure you remain safe:

- Meet with your family or household members.
- Discuss how to prepare and respond to emergencies that are most likely to happen where you live, learn, work and play.
- Identify responsibilities for each member of your household and plan to work together as a team.

A basic emergency supply kit could include the following recommended items:

- Water – one gallon of water per person per day for at least three days for drinking and sanitation
- Food – at least a three-day supply of non-perishable food
- Battery-powered or hand-crank radio and a NOAA Weather Radio with tone alert and extra batteries for both
- Flashlight and extra batteries
- First aid kit
- Manual can opener
- Cell phone with chargers
- Medicine (7-day supply), other medical supplies, and paperwork about any serious or on-going medical condition
- Emergency blanket
- Soap, toothbrush, and other personal care items
- Family and emergency contact information
- Multipurpose tool
- Copies of important documents such as insurance cards, immunization records, etc.
- Extra cash
- Map(s) of the area
- Extra set of car keys and house keys

AMEA provides storm preparedness resources on our web site, [www.amea.com](http://www.amea.com), Safety Resources. Some of these resources include power restoration steps, generator safety, and tips on preparing before, during and after a storm.

Also in our Weather Center, you will find additional weather-related resources and links, such as the National Hurricane Center, ReadyAlabama, the Alabama Emergency Management Agency, and the American Red Cross.

Being prepared for an emergency isn't just about staying safe during a disaster. It's about how to stay comfortable, clean, fed, and healthy afterwards – when a storm or disaster may have knocked out electricity. Considering the threat that hurricanes pose to property and life, isn't it a good idea to be prepared no matter what this hurricane season holds?

*Fred Clark*

AMEA President & CEO

## FROM THE EDITOR

*Continued from page 2*

small towns foster growth and prosperity by focusing on their distinctive assets and resources. The ACE program understands the uniqueness of each community, recognizing that each town has different assets, values, concerns and priorities. The ACE program assists participating communities to develop a vision based on its own unique sensibilities and assets.

At its core, ACE principles include the active involvement by community stakeholders across a broad demographic spectrum coupled with development of local leaders and leadership capacity and an emphasis on the importance of developing and implementing short and long-term plans to further the realization of the town's vision.

ACE helps communities with the following: Leadership Development, Strategic Planning, Comprehensive Planning, Commercial Business Development, Education Enhancement, Infrastructure Requirements, Health and Human Services, Tourism, Economic Development, Recreation Opportunities, and Quality of Life.

ACE Partner organizations, which are actively involved in this process, include: Alabama Association of RC&D Councils, Alabama Association of Regional Councils, Alabama Department of Commerce, Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs, Alabama Historical Commission, Alabama League of Municipalities, Alabama Municipal Electric Authority, Alabama Power Company, Auburn University Economic & Community Development Institute, Goodwyn, Mills & Cawood, Power-South Energy Cooperative, Regions Bank, Southeast Alabama Gas District, the University of Alabama Center for Economic Development, and the University of West Alabama.

In Alexander City and Fairhope, Local ACE Coordinators, Randy Thomas and Sherry Sullivan, led the way for countless hours and meetings throughout the 18- to 24-month process with city leadership and community stakeholders. Local engagement in the process was key to these two communities being successful in their quest for ACE designation.

Through the ACE program, communities find vision. More citizens take part in active roles within the community. ACE helps communities to have a structured way to bring many citizens to the table to share their views and ideas. This enables communities to have the public input needed to gain community support for the projects and visions shared during ACE team visits. In the long run, ACE helps communities become communities that work together as a team to establish a widely-shared comprehensive vision for the future.

We commend Alexander City Mayor Charles Shaw, the Alexander City City Council, Fairhope Mayor Tim Kant, the Fairhope City Council, their Local ACE Coordinators, and the many community stakeholders who took part in the process to make their cities "Alabama Communities of Excellence." This is your moment to shine. You now lead the way for other small towns and communities to follow.

*Lisa Miller*

AMEA Manager of Communications and Marketing

# Just run the numbers

In past columns, I have made mention of our “Home Remedies” radio program which provides energy-efficiency advice to those listeners who call in to the program. The program (just like this column) is totally about making your house or business more comfortable and also having the lowest utility bills feasible.



I have hosted the radio program every Saturday morning for over 20 years and it is presently aired on about 75 stations in 14 states. The co-host on the show is Tom Hunt. We call him the professor because he is very organized with a mentality of a banker or an accountant, and because he has taught in high school and college. Tom has also been in the heating and air business, energy audit business, insulation business, and is a licensed builder. He is the serious one like Abbott or Ed. I am the clown like Costello or Carson, and I hardly even know the meaning of the word “organized”. I am an architect, artist, and musician. Need I say more? My mother gave me a wall hanging that says, “Creative People are Rarely Tidy.” I am very fortunate to have Tom as my co-host.

Several weeks ago, one of our listeners called to ask about converting an older home to geothermal heating and cooling. As is usually the case, it was necessary for us to ask several questions about the existing house before we could give an accurate answer. We had discussed this with the caller for several minutes when Tom said, “Just run the numbers.” We ran some fast numbers and determined that it was feasible to convert to geo. We actually get similar calls like this on just about every show although not all calls are about geothermal.

I have found “just run the numbers” to be a good answer to many questions about energy efficiency, because it takes the guessing and personal feelings out of finding the best solution. For example, one lady, with high utility bills, called and said that she felt like she needed new windows. With our questions, we learned that the existing windows were only about 14 years old, all in working order, still looked good and the house was comfortable. We also learned that a window salesman had given her a quote of \$7,500 to install new windows. As Tom talked to her, I ran the numbers. Then I asked her this question, “Would you give me \$7,500 if I lowered your utility bill \$30 per month and had a 21-year payback?” And she simply said that she would not. I think

that we just saved this lady \$7,500, and \$7,500 would probably go a long way to pay for other energy improvements that might be a better investment. I suggested to the caller that she call me at the office where we would take more time to fine the best way to lower the utility bill. And then we took the next call.

About three days later, the lady called my office and we talked for about 30 minutes about what, if any, energy improvements might be feasible for her house. We determined that additional ceiling insulation was needed and feasible at a cost of about \$1,500. We also determined that the 14-year-old old heating and cooling system was requiring high maintenance dollars, was not very efficient, and the return air filter grille was less than half the size needed. Remember the famous Doug Rye saying, “The AC air system can’t blow more air than it can suck.” While no one looks forward to buying a new heating and cooling system, it was time for this lady to do so. So we ran the numbers.

- We saved her by not buying windows, \$7,500; Balance \$7,500
- Additional insulation cost, \$1,500; Balance \$6,000
- New high-efficient heating and air system, including a properly-sized return air grille, \$8,000; Balance -\$2,000

Let’s see how we helped the caller by running the numbers. For \$2,000 more than she was going to spend for something that she didn’t really need, she got a more efficient house and a much needed new high-efficiency heating and cooling system. We estimated lower utility bills with a three-year payback for these improvements. I consider this a no-brainer, particularly since she was going to have to purchase a new heating and air unit anyway. We did not recommend a geo system because we could not find an experienced dealer in her area. I think that all would agree it was good that she called us.

If you need us to help you run the numbers for energy improvements, you can call us on the show at (800) 477-1037 between 9 and 10 a.m. (Central) on Saturday, or as always you can call me at the office. Happy Fourth of July and stay cool until football season starts.

*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.dougyrie.com](http://www.dougyrie.com).*

## Help your parents plan their “someday”

Since your parents have done a lot for you over your lifetime, this is the perfect time of year to return the favor by helping them find their “Someday” at [www.socialsecurity.gov/myaccount](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/myaccount).

In May, we honored mothers on Mother’s Day, and in June, we thanked our fathers on Father’s Day. In July, we get to show our appreciation for both. Parents’ Day, celebrated on July 27, is a great time to make sure your parents take the necessary steps to have a bright and comfortable “someday” in retirement.

Even if they’re still young, it’s never too early to help your parents start planning for their retirement or help them imagine what their “someday” might look like. When you ask them about their retirement plans, encourage each of them to open their own secure my Social Security accounts at [www.socialsecurity.gov/myaccount](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/myaccount). It’s quick, easy, and free to do. They can even do it from the comfort of home.

my Social Security features several tools available to guide your parents through the retirement process, whether they’re just starting to think about it or they’re already retired. Before retiring, your parents can view their Social Security Statement to verify the accuracy of their earnings records and find out what benefits they can expect to receive at age 62, full retirement age, and at age 70. They can also get personalized benefit estimates using the Retirement Estimator at [www.socialsecurity.gov/estimator](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/estimator).

The Estimator shows different scenarios, like how future wage changes or alternate retirement dates will affect their future benefits.

Once your parents have retired and are receiving Social Security benefits, they can use their accounts to:

- Check benefit information;
- Get an instant letter with proof of their benefits;
- Change their address and phone number;
- Get a replacement SSA-1099;
- Get a replacement Medicare card; and
- Start or change their direct deposit or electronic payment method.

Retirement is a big life change, so let your parents know you’ll be there for them just as they’ve been there for you. When you help them sign up for my Social Security at [www.socialsecurity.gov/myaccount](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/myaccount), you’re showing that their “someday” means something to you.



WATTS NEW IN  
**Sylacauga**

## Sylacauga Utilities’ Electric Department to undergo many improvements

By Christa Jennings

The Sylacauga Utilities’ Electric Department is in the process of making numerous improvements to enhance system reliability, safety, and overall service to customers. These improvements are coming at a time when much of the transmission and substation equipment are nearing the end of their life cycle.

A bond issue was recently secured in the amount of \$7.9 million to make the improvements in phases. The department plans to complete the improvements over the course of three to five years.

The majority of improvements will be done during the first phase. At substations one and two, they plan to add low-side switches and a 12-kilovolt tie buss. At substations three and four, they plan to replace one transmission switch and add two new transmission switches.

In substations three, four and six, they will install a 12 mega-volt ampere, or MVA, three phase transformer, a circuit switcher for transformer protection, a new low-side switch, new regulators and new regulator bypass switches. At substation seven, they plan to install a new low side switch.

Additionally, the department plans to replace six transmission switches, install pad-mounted switches in the downtown underground primary loop, and reconductor Feeder 103 to allow for greater electric current carrying capability.

For the second phase, they plan to change out the wooden transmission poles between Meter Point 1 and U.S. Highway 280, as well as move distribution to transmission poles from Meter Point 1 to substation six.

The department will also replace poles in the double circuit feeder, known as Feeder 401/402, poles from substation four east to Avondale Avenue. At substation seven, they will also make improvements to four feeder exits, and the department will construct a new tie line around the west end of the airport between Feeder 601 and Feeder 602.

New switches in the downtown underground system will allow line crews to more quickly and safely isolate failed cables or equipment.

Pole and line replacements are part of an ongoing process of system upgrades and hardening for reliability.

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

WATTS NEW IN  
**Alexander City**

# Alexander City Chamber hosts 3rd Annual Sun Festival



By Kim Dunn

The Alexander City Chamber of Commerce will kick-off the 3rd Annual Sun Festival on Saturday, July 18 with the Miss Sun Festival Pageant and Glow in the Dark 5K. The week-long festival will wrap-up on the following Saturday, July 25. While many of the favorite events will return, the festival will also see the addition of over a dozen new activities throughout the week.

Sun Festival Faith Night is set for Thursday, July 23. Radney Funeral Home will host Celebrate the Son Southern Gospel Concert featuring Karen Peck and New River at the Benjamin Russell High School Auditorium starting at 7 p.m. If contemporary Christian music is more your flavor, pack the picnic basket and cooler along with your blankets and lawn chairs for Praise in the Park. National recording artists, *Rush of Fools*, will headline this event in Strand Park in downtown Alexander City starting at 8 p.m. 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.

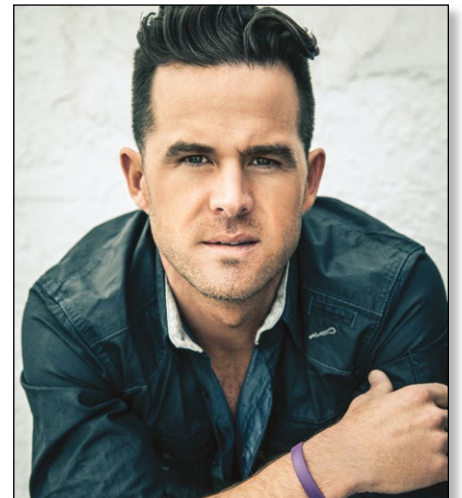
The live entertainment will continue on Friday, July 24 in downtown Alexander City with Band Battle at Strand Park where six bands will battle it out for the opportunity to open for David Nail on Saturday night. The first band will take the stage at 7 p.m. Each group will have the opportunity to perform 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.



*Rush of Fools will headline Praise in the Park on Thursday, July 23.*

The entire week will culminate with a day full of fun on Saturday, July 25. The morning will start with MainStreet Farmers' Market, Getting on the PATH Jr. Chef Farm to Plate Cook-off and Wellness Fair, 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 David Nail concert and Winn Dixie fireworks show. The winner from Friday's Band Battle will perform at 7 p.m., followed by David Nail with the Winn Dixie fireworks show lighting up the sky as soon as Nail finishes his performance.

Wristbands for the entire afternoon of activities are \$15 in advance and \$20 the day of. You can find the full schedule of events for the week at [www.alexandercitychamber.com](http://www.alexandercitychamber.com).



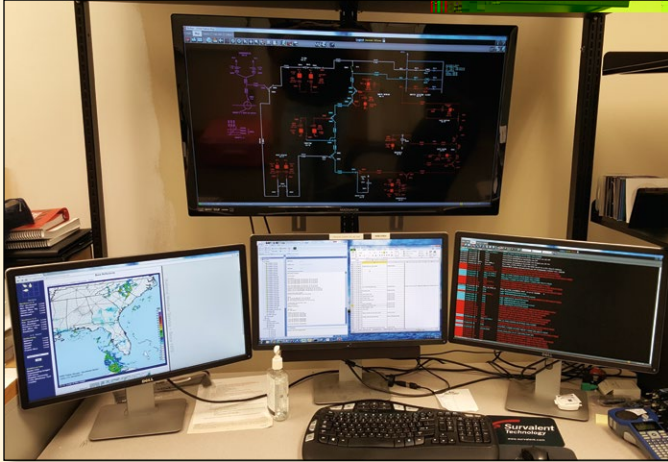
*David Nail will perform on Saturday, July 25 at the Charles E. Bailey Sportplex.*

Mark your calendar now. This is certainly going to be a week in Alexander City that you do not want to miss.

*Kim Dunn is the Director of Marketing & Event Planning for the Alexander City Chamber of Commerce.*



WATTS NEW IN  
**Dothan**



**Dothan's new  
Outage Management and  
Interactive Voice Response  
systems will help improve  
response to power outages**

By Chris Phillips, P.E.

The Dothan City Commission recently approved the purchase of an Outage Management system that includes an Interactive Voice Response system. These systems will work together to improve Dothan's response to power outages by streamlining customer calls and organizing the outage location information by displaying it on a map of the electric distribution system.

One of the main features of the fully-implemented system is that it will predict the cause of the power outage based on the calls it receives. This will help utility personnel pinpoint the issue so that power restoration will occur faster. These systems will also have the capability of calling customers to inform them of scheduled outages for maintenance, updating customer phone number information, taking messages from customers, and handling after hours call-backs to customers when power has been restored.

The system is in the implementation phase which is scheduled to be fully implemented by December 2016. When the Outage Management System is in the final stages, the City will notify customers and provide educational information of how to utilize the system and update their information.

*Chris Phillips is the Electric Operations Superintendent for Dothan Utilities.*

WATTS NEW IN  
**Fairhope**

**Fairhope's Elderberry  
Festival returns**

By D. Fran Morley

The Fairhope Museum of History invites one and all to celebrate the humble elderberry at the 7th Annual Elderberry Festival, Saturday, Aug. 8. Festivities run from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the museum, with demonstrations, tastings, a pie-eating contest, music, and more throughout the day.

The public is invited to submit their best homemade elderberry goodies for the Elderberry Cook-off Contest, with ribbons awarded in different categories for the best elderberry

pie, cake, bread, jam, jelly, juice, Jello, and butter, as well as other elder-flower creations.

"The elderberry is essentially a lowland weed, but it is prevalent in Baldwin County and it's been used for generations to cook with, for wine, and for folk medicine remedies," said Museum Director Donnie Barrett. "Decades ago, the elderberry was celebrated in Fairhope, and we're happy to bring it back to its rightful place of prominence."

There will be music all day from Kracker Dan Band, art vendors on the lawn, tasty treats from Rita's, serving—what else?—elderberry frozen custard. The event is free and open to the public. To enter an item in the cook-off contest, bring it to the museum by 5 p.m. the day before, Friday, Aug. 7.

The Fairhope Museum of History is located in downtown Fairhope and is open Tuesday through Saturday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Admission is free. For more information on the museum or the Elderberry Festival, call (251) 929-1471.

*D. Fran Morley is a co*

## LaFayette embracing new brand

By Chris Busby

Like much of Chambers County, LaFayette was hit hard by the loss of the textile industry a little less than 10 years ago. The city's resiliency and drive to recover from that event served as a major inspiration in the creation of their new brand.

LaFayette has taken an active role in embracing this new brand, which includes a logo and tagline that represents the city and county. The dynamic logo features a gray and teal pattern woven within the borders of Chambers County. Referencing roots in the community's textile history, the tagline, "Strength Woven In," captures the city's proud past while embracing its unique spirit of strength in overcoming every challenge it faces.

The brand isn't unique to LaFayette, as Chambers County as a whole is taking part in the campaign. Each city and town, along with county organizations, have adopted their own logos around a central theme in an effort to define the county's vision for the future on a united front. The goal is for each entity to incorporate their unique design into their presence across the state, and LaFayette has taken initiative by leading the way.

It was the first city to formally adopt the logo and proudly displayed it on shirts during the 2015 Alabama League of Municipalities Annual Convention in May.



LaFayette Mayor Barry Moody displays the city's new logo on his shirt at a recent meeting.

"The response we've gotten has been remarkable," LaFayette Mayor Barry Moody said. "The logo and tagline really stand out and catches the eye. It inspires people to ask about it, and it opens the door for us to talk about and promote our city."

For Moody, the campaign and its message of strength is especially relevant. As a longtime employee of Russell Corporation, he was directly affected by the textile exodus, but he, like LaFayette, has persevered and benefitted from the new industries that have arrived in the city.

The design of the brand and tagline were the result of a 15-week study that included multiple focus groups that involved residents, local officials, community representatives and business leaders to gather core qualities citizens associate with LaFayette and Chambers County.

The implementation of the brand is a multifaceted one. Going forward, LaFayette will incorporate it on many levels, from everyday visibility such as community events, city vehicles, websites, local businesses, signage, and general correspondence to broader efforts such as marketing, recruitment and tourism. It will serve as an identifier and competitive differentiator from surrounding communities across the state and the Southeastern United States.

"It's a positive effort on so many levels," LaFayette City Clerk Louis T. Davidson says. "Not only does it draw attention to our city, but it delivers a lasting impression. This new brand helps you remember LaFayette, which will be beneficial when it comes to both attracting employers and new residents to our city."

"As we grow and move forward, this brand helps us convey the message to everyone that we are a city with strength and resiliency, a city that can overcome any challenge," Mayor Moody adds. "This brand helps us show what we've been through and that we have a passion to build a strong future, not just for ourselves, but for the many generations that will follow."

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



LaFayette has adopted a new brand that will help serve as a unique identifier for the city on many levels.

# WATTS NEW IN **Lanett**

## **Lanett hosts Lind-A-Hand Women's Build**

By Wayne Clark

**A**pproximately 60 volunteers, about half from the local area and the other half from all parts of the U.S., were in Lanett the first week in June taking part in the first-ever Lind-A-Hand Women's Build.

All of the work done to build a new home on North 12th Avenue in the Jackson Heights neighborhood was done by women. It was a first not only for the Chattahoochee Fuller Center Project (CFCP) but also for the Americus, GA-based Fuller Center for Housing. It was named in honor of Fuller Center co-founder Linda Fuller Degelmann, who played a very active role in building CFCP Home No. 34.

A home dedication ceremony took place on June 5. In the continuation of a Fuller Center tradition, new homeowner Jetorrie Johnson was presented the keys and a new bible.

Jetorrie's new home is the 13th CFCP home to go up in the Jackson Heights area. Three more CFCP homes are nearby on North 8th Avenue and five on North 6th. Homes that have been built by the CFCP in West Point and Valley bring the total number of completed homes to 34.

Women's Build Week got off to a rousing start with a Sunday evening dinner program at Pilgrim Baptist Church, which is located within walking distance of the work site. Speaking at this kickoff banquet were Linda Fuller Degelmann; the CFCP's first president, Bill Scott; and the current president, Curt Johnson.

Major sponsors for the build were Kia Motors Manufacturing Georgia (KMMG), InterCall, Point University and Four Seasons Heating & Air. Another major contribution made by InterCall was in terms of labor. The local communications company had at least six volunteers on site throughout the week.

JoAnn Distribution of Opelika also had six volunteers on the site all week long.

"Those lady contractors were amazing," said CFCP Executive Director Kim Roberts. "They all had their tool belts on and were ready to take on any problem that could come up. With this being the first-ever Women's Build for the Fuller Center, it had to be done right. We were laying the foundation for what would be done in the future by what we did the first week of June."

One of the week's house captains was Mary Lou Bowman of Wilton Manor, FL, near Fort Lauderdale. She's an



From left, Chattahoochee Fuller Center Project (CFCP) Executive Director Kim Roberts, new homeowner Jetorrie Johnson and Fuller Center for Housing Co-Founder Linda Fuller Degelmann celebrate the progress made in building CFCP Home No. 34 in Lanett this past June. This was the first home built by the Fuller Center with all of the work being done by women. (Photo by Wayne Clark)

architect by trade and has led a number of women builds for Habitat for Humanity. Bowman has taken on multiple tasks in such projects for the past 25 years. She's been involved in a number of Fuller Center projects as well; the 2007 build in Shreveport, LA, being one of them.

Bowman's husband, Russ Cubin, was in town with her. Together, they've built over 300 Habitat/Fuller Center homes in Broward County, FL.

Another house captain, Laura Rzepka, came all the way from East Brunswick, NJ.

The CFCP was very busy over the first two weeks in June. The first week of the month was Lind-A-Hand week and the following week a Block of Blessings project took place on Gilmer Avenue, just north of Kroger in Lanett. An estimated 65 junior high- and high school-aged youth were in the local area as part of a summer youth camp of the Nazarene Church. They did a lot of yard work for elderly people who live in the area.

This fall, the CFCP will be rehabbing a home on Martin Luther King Drive in West Point for a veteran and his/her family, and in December the organization closes out the year with a Homeless for a Night event on the field at Morgan-Washburn Stadium on Dec. 4.

"It was a great two weeks for our organization," said Roberts. "It was amazingly fun to see women in their pink t-shirts doing such a great job in building a house in less than a week, and it was inspiring to see so many young people eager to help their fellow man."

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

# ★ WATTS NEW IN Opelika

## Opelika welcomes the PGA Tour

By June Owens

**A** new PGA Tour tournament sponsored by Barbasol will debut in Opelika, July 13-19, at the Robert Trent Jones Golf Trail at Grand National. Establishing a four-year agreement for the Barbasol Tournament, the Robert Trent Jones (RTJ) Golf Trail Foundation will serve as the tournament host organization. This will be the first-ever PGA Tour event in the state of Alabama and the largest purse awarded of any professional golf tournament hosted in the state.

The Barbasol Championship will be held at the Grand National Lake Course and will become part of the FedEx Cup competition.

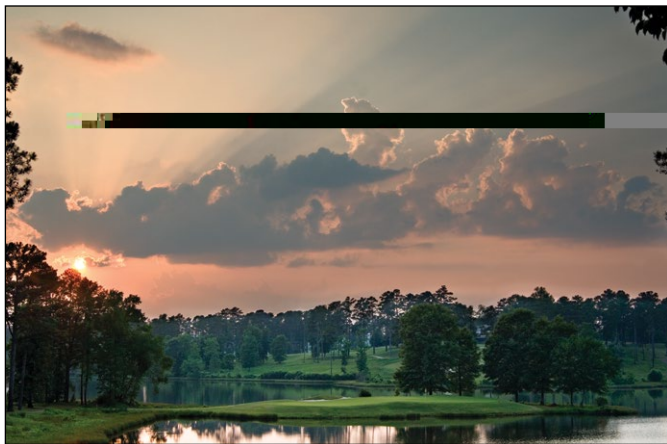
Opelika Power Services (OPS) has been chosen by the RTJ Golf Trail Foundation, the Golf Channel, as well as other vendors, to provide the communications infrastructure for this event. The services provided will include Video (TV), Voice (Phone), and Data (Internet) needs. With the 100 percent fiber network, OPS will offer the tournament vendors broadband speeds they say they have never had available to them before.

“We are looking forward to welcoming the PGA Tour and fans to Opelika...Alabama’s first Gig City,” said Opelika Mayor Gary Fuller. “This promises to be an exciting week of golf with some of the PGA’s top professional players. During the tournament, we hope that you will visit Historic Downtown Opelika, where you will find a treasure of amazing restaurants, unique shops and historical sites, and good old fashioned Southern hospitality. TigerTown at Exit 58, located off I-85, offers almost one million-square-feet of stores and restaurants. We are a community that loves and preserves our rich heritage, but we are also a community that keeps our vision focused on all that the future holds.”

One of the original RTJ sites, Grand National was the single greatest place for a golf complex Robert Trent Jones, Sr. had ever seen. Built on 600-acre Lake Saugahatchee, 32 of the 54 holes drape along its filigreed shores. Both the links course and the lake course were in the Top 10 of *Golf Digest’s* list of “America’s Top 50 Affordable Courses” and all three courses at Grand National are listed among the nations’ 40 Super Value courses by *Golf Digest’s*, “Places to Play”. National Village, a golfing community on the Trail, is adjacent to these courses and the Marriott Hotel.



Above and below: Robert Trent Jones Golf Trail at Grand National in Opelika. Photos by Michael Clemmer - Golf Landscape Photography. Copyrighted



This event will have an estimated economic impact of more than \$25 million on an annual basis. It will bring 132 professional golfers to the state along with families and sponsors. There is an expected attendance of more than 75,000 to attend the event throughout tournament week.

The Golf Channel will televise the event live all four official tournament days. There will be a minimum of 12 hours of coverage and includes same day telecast and re-broadcasts of each of the four rounds.

When Alabama Governor Robert Bentley made the announcement last summer that the PGA Tour had selected Grand National for the location of this new tournament, he spoke of the pride Alabamians have on the beauty, hospitality and charm of our state.

Come join us and you will see for yourself that this is true in our community. We are a great place to live, work, worship and play. As Alabama’s first Gig City, Opelika has a proven past but future focused.

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



# ★ WATTS NEW IN Piedmont

## A taste of history in Piedmont

By Ben Singleton

When you drive through downtown Piedmont, you might think that you have taken a trip back in history. As part of a 100th year celebration of Farmers and Merchants Bank, President and CEO Lin Latta has hired local artist Jocko Stephens to repaint some of the old store signs around town. Two of the most memorable ones are the old George Kass and R.M. Steward buildings.

The George Kass building was a clothing store and carried a variety of family clothing. The Steward building was a 10 cents store and carried a variety of things including candy, toys, mops, brooms, as well as other household items. These were thriving businesses back in the 1950s.

"I appreciate Mr. Latta getting this done," said Mayor Bill Baker. "It is nice seeing this piece of history."

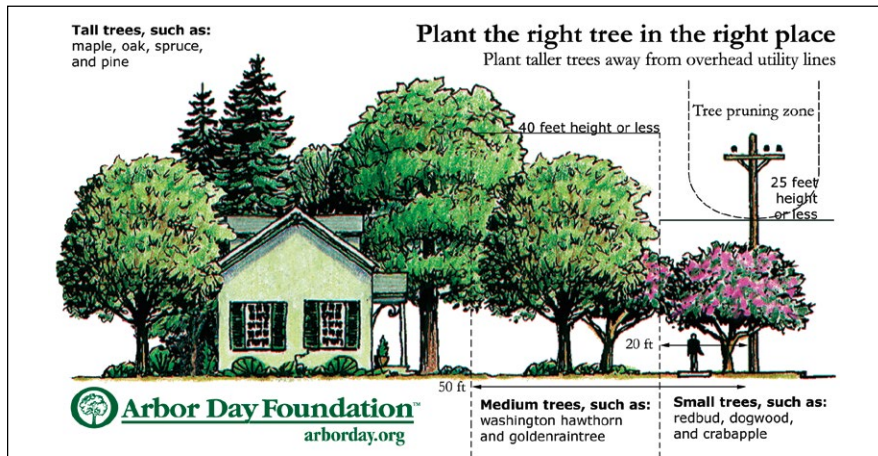
*Ben Singleton is the IT Manager for the City of Piedmont.*



# ★ WATTS NEW AT Riviera Utilities

## Right-of-way maintenance ensures delivery of safe, reliable electricity

By Miles McDaniel



Summertime gives us a chance to start looking forward to a much-needed vacation, along with a little rest and relaxation. Most of us take advantage of longer daylight hours for yard work and cleaning the house. Similarly, to protect our lines and keep power flowing safely to your home, Riviera Utilities maintains our rights of way. Think of it as summer cleaning (a continuation of spring cleaning) for power lines. The difference is, here in our area, where vegetation grows almost non-stop, we do our "summer cleaning" throughout the year.

Right-of-way (ROW) maintenance keeps tree limbs and other obstacles away from high-voltage power lines. It's an important part of the service we provide to you for three reasons: safety, reliability and cost.

Power lines are a constant part of our landscape; it's easy to forget they are around. We work hard to keep the area around our lines clear, but we need your help. Be alert this summer. Don't plant trees or tall vegetation under power lines, and keep an eye out for power lines when working in your yard. Our primary concern is the safety of our workers and customers. Properly maintained (ROW) keeps our crews safe when they are restoring service and maintaining our system. Keeping trees clear of power lines also keeps your family safe. From making sure a child's treehouse doesn't hit power lines to creating a safe environment while doing yard work, a well-maintained ROW helps avoid tragedy.

If severe weather blows through — as it can do at any time of year — a well-maintained ROW leads to fewer outages and faster response time. Trees are less of a threat. When trees do fall, crews are able to restore service more quickly than they could with poorly maintained areas.

Riviera Utilities strives to keep costs affordable for you. Maintaining our ROW is an important part of controlling costs. Fewer and shorter outages save money for everyone. When crews work in well-maintained areas, we can reduce risks for employees and equipment too — another way to keep costs low.

Safety, reliability, and cost...this is why we believe in ROW "summer cleaning." If we compromise on one of these areas, it impacts the others. At Riviera Utilities, we aren't willing to compromise. Maintaining our ROW is a priority for your safety, comfort, and pocketbook.

*Miles McDaniel is Manager of Public Affairs for Riviera Utilities.*

# WATTS NEW AT Utilities Board of Tuskegee

## Investing for today and the future

By Gerald B. Long, CPA, CGMA

Imagine a community where there is no electricity, no clean drinking water flowing into the homes and businesses, and no sanitary sewer services connected to those homes and businesses. In our modern times this would be unacceptable. Without these basic services that oftentimes go unnoticed by us because they are so commonplace, it would be impossible to attract any new businesses, residents, and Tuskegee University would probably not exist. To the average citizen, these services are normal and they really don't realize the type of investment that is necessary to create and sustain these services.

I thought it would be good to let you the citizens and customers who utilize the services of the Utilities Board of the City of Tuskegee (UBT) know just how we are investing the dollars we receive from you in the form of rates and fees.

In the last several years up to the current date, UBT has made major investments in our electrical, water filtration, and wastewater systems. These investments are designed to meet the needs of our current customers, attract new customers, position the community for economic development, and comply with ever-changing regulations.

### Electric System

There was a time in our history when the power would go out each time the wind blew. But now as a result of our reinvesting in our electrical system, our reliability is at 99.99 percent on a consistent basis. We have made service reliability a top priority because we realize that in order to grow economically, we must provide reliable electric service to our customers.

Many of our customers have reported seeing a tree trimming crew in their neighborhoods in recent months. We bid out the tree trimming contract and the crew that has been working in our service territory was the winning bidder. Consequently, since November 2012, we have invested over \$900,000 in tree trimming alone to ensure that our service reliability remains strong.

In the Town of Shorter several years ago, we invested over \$2.5 million on a new substation to increase our service capacity throughout the county and aid in economic development throughout Macon County. We now have five (5) substations, over 11,000 poles and 355 circuit miles of distribution lines covering a service territory of 103 square

miles. A tremendous amount of money (over \$13 million) was invested to develop our electrical system and ongoing maintenance is made to keep our system running efficiently. As a result of these investments, we are poised for economic growth.

### Water Filtration System

In 2009, we initiated a project designed to upgrade our water filtration plant with new state-of-the-art equipment, a new 500,000-gallon Clearwell, upgrades to our raw water pumping station at the Tallapoosa River, and new pumps at the plant itself. The investments in the upgrades at the water filtration plant and river raw water pumping station approximated \$4 million.

This plant was built in the 1970s and the upgrades were badly needed to ensure that the customers of UBT receive clean drinking water that meets the highest industry standards. This plant operates 24/7/365 and is run by certified water treatment plant operators who are required to be onsite at all times. These operators are required to pass a state administered examine to become certified and must have a certain number of years of experience and take annual continuing education classes to maintain their certification. Because of the importance of providing our customers with clean refreshing water, the Board did not hesitate to make this investment.



New lift station

### Wastewater Treatment System

Beginning in 2011, we invested approximately \$1.7 million in two (2) lift stations around the lake and one (1) lift station at the Dialysis Center in Tuskegee. These lift stations are facilities including pumps and equipment for pumping and removing sewage from low-lying areas and delivering it to our sewage processing plants.

Last but not least, we invested \$10 million to decommission our South Wastewater Treatment Plant, upgrade the lift station at the plant, build a 10-mile pipeline to the North Wastewater Treatment Plant, and add two (2) new

*Continued on page 16*

**Aug. 1, 10 a.m.-1 p.m., Summer Reading Finale Party.** Games, food, and more. Mamie's Place. For more information, contact Mamie's Place Children's Library at (256) 234-4644.

### **Fairhope**

**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 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.

**July 9, 3-6 p.m., Fairhope Spring/Summer Outdoor Farmer's Market.** 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

/Span /MCID 1404 BDC 0 Tw T(in e6 woer')90(s Market.

### **Alexander City**

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

**Movie Day, 2 p.m., every Tuesday.** Mamie's Place Children's Library. For more information, contact Mamie's Place Children's Library at (256) 234-4644.

**Teen Detective Academy, 10 a.m., every Tuesday.** Adelia Russell Conference Room. For more information, contact the Adelia M. Russell Library at (256) 329-6796.

**Community Hero Story, 10 a.m., every Thursday.** Mamie's Place Children's Library. For more information, contact Mamie's Place Children's Library at (256) 234-4644.

**MainStreet Farmer's Market, 7-11 a.m., every Saturday.** Broad Street. For more information contact, MainStreet Alexander City at (256) 329-9227.

**July 8 and Aug. 13, 9 a.m.-3 p.m., Recycle Electronics.** Public Works Department, behind Darwin Dobbs. Electronics Recycling Event, 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 9, 2 p.m., Super Hero Costume Party (all ages).** Adelia M. Russell Library. Come by to sign-up to enter the contest. Everyone is welcome to attend. Good Morning Lake Martin's, Steve Culberson and Dr. Doug Roberts, will emcee. There will be pizza and more. Call (256) 329-6796 for more information.

**July 13, 2 p.m., Magical Balloons.** Mamie's Place Children's Library. For more information contact, Mamie's Place Children's Library at (256) 234-4644.

**July 18-25, 3rd Annual Sun Festival.** See *Sun Festival Magazine* for times, activities and locations. For more information, contact the Alexander City Chamber of Commerce, (256) 234-3461.

**July 23, 2 p.m., Star Shine.** Face painting at Mamie's Place Children's Library. For more information contact, Mamie's Place Children's Library at (256) 234-4644.

**July 23, 3:30 p.m., Nancy Anderson,** Associate Professor at AUM, will speak on *Zelda Sayer Fitzgerald*. Adelia M. Russell Library. For more information, contact the Adelia M. Russell Library at (256) 329-6796.

★ WATTS NEW AT  
**Utilities Board  
of Tuskegee**

*Investing for today  
and the future*

*Continued from Page 14*

lift stations along the 10-mile pipeline to transport the waste from the south plant to the north plant. We also made major upgrades to the North Wastewater Treatment Plant to enable it to handle the additional flow that will be coming from the now decommissioned South Wastewater Treatment Plant.



*New clarifier*

One part of the upgrade includes a new clarifier which is shown here. This project is 99.99 percent complete and is currently in operation.

The forgoing projects are just a few of the investments we have made to ensure that our customers receive the best services we can provide. You can rest assured that we will not stop here. We are constantly looking for ways to improve how we serve you.

*Gerald B. Long is the assistant general manager of the Utilities Board of Tuskegee.*



## Reduce energy bill by reducing the time your air conditioner operates

**T**he trick to reducing your summer air conditioning costs is to reduce the amount of time that your air conditioner runs. There are three basic ways to reduce operating hours.

The first is to make sure your system is running properly with good maintenance and service.

The second is to increase your thermostat setting either manually or automatically. And the third is to employ low-cost cooling methods.

Your system's filters and coils should be cleaned periodically. A dirty system deteriorates air conditioning performance and increases operating time. Ask your service technician how to change filters and how to clean your outdoor coil. The filters should be changed every one to three months and the outdoor coil should be cleaned every year. You will probably find that you can easily change the filter yourself.

If your home is vacant for part of the day, use a programmable thermostat to turn the temperature up before you leave and down before you return. You will need to experiment with different time settings to test how long it takes the system to recover from the higher temperature.

By the way, closing registers in unused rooms doesn't usually help to reduce operating hours and may reduce your system's efficiency.

For low-cost cooling methods, try these effective improvements to reduce air conditioning operating hours:

- Set your thermostat up four (4) degrees and run room fans to move the air and cool your family by the wind chill effect. Fans can counteract the higher thermostat setting.
- Install shades, blinds, awnings, sun screens, or window films on your sunny-side windows.
- Insulate your attic to the maximum practical depth of insulation.
- Line-dry your clothes if possible.
- Don't use your oven on hot days.
- Install compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs) in the fixtures you use the most. Old-fashioned incandescent lamps produce 10 percent light and 90 percent heat.

For more energy-efficiency tips, visit [www.amea.com](http://www.amea.com), Energy Efficiency.