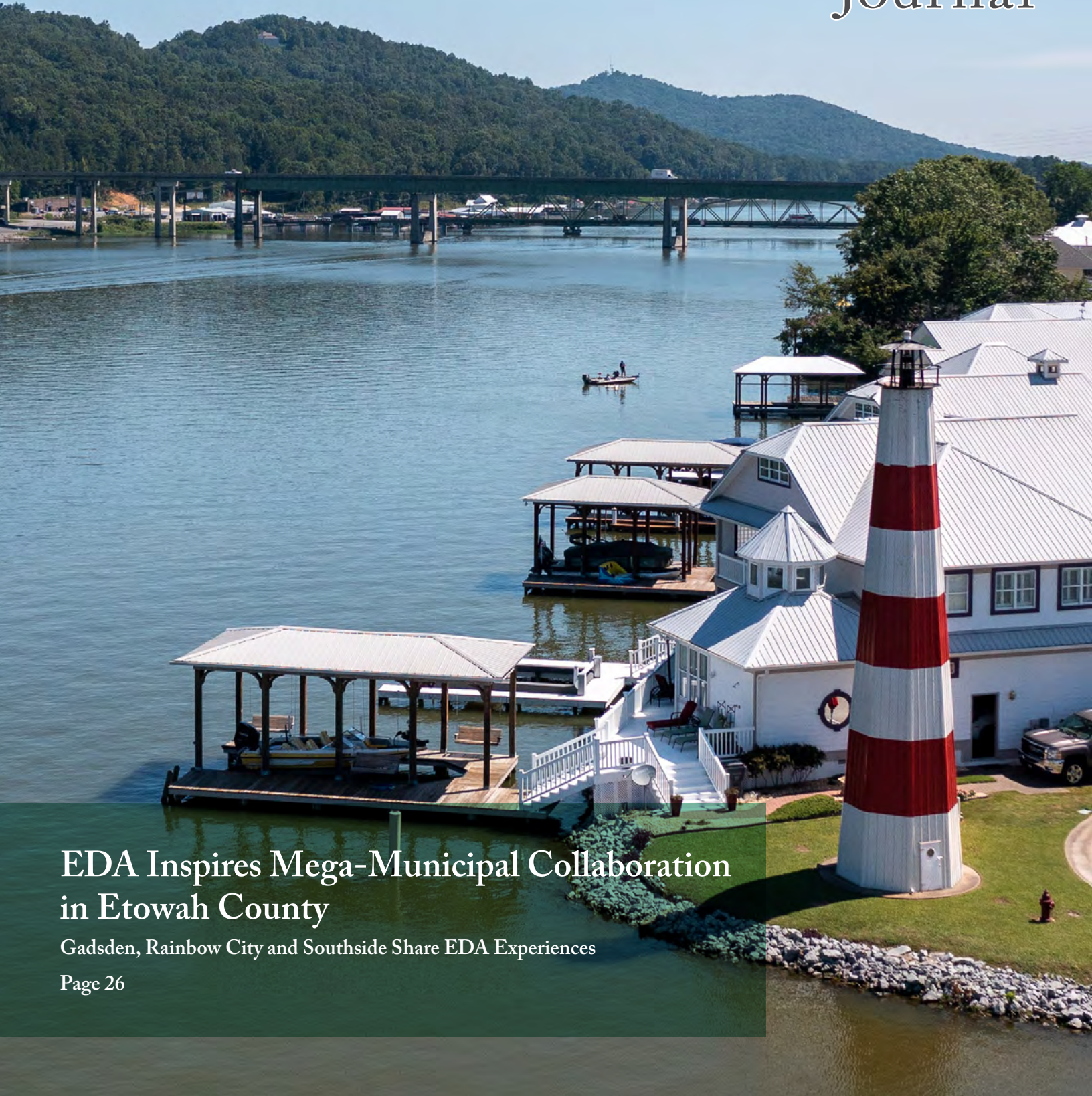


Fall 2023 Volume 81, Issue 2

The Alabama MUNICIPAL Journal

Official publication of the Alabama League of Municipalities



EDA Inspires Mega-Municipal Collaboration in Etowah County

Gadsden, Rainbow City and Southside Share EDA Experiences

Page 26

LEAGUE OFFICERS

RANDY GARRISON

Mayor, Hartselle, President

MARK SALIBA

Mayor, Dothan, Vice President

GREG COCHRAN

Executive Director

CHAIRS OF THE LEAGUE'S STANDING COMMITTEES

**Committee on State and
Federal Legislation**

RALPH HELLMICH

Mayor, Foley, Chair

CHARLES BLACK

Councilmember, Priceville, Vice Chair

**Committee on Finance, Administration
and Intergovernmental Relations (FAIR)**

SHELDON DAY

Mayor, Thomasville, Chair

CRYSTAL SMITHERMAN

Councilmember, Birmingham, Vice Chair

**Committee on Energy, Environment
and Natural Resources (EENR)**

ASHLEY CURRY

Mayor, Vestavia Hills, Chair

RON MASON

Councilmember, Butler, Vice Chair

**Committee on Transportation,
Infrastructure and Communication (TIC)**

TAB BOWLING

Mayor, Decatur, Chair

DON MACK

Councilmember, Centreville, Vice Chair

Committee on Public Safety (PS)

MICHAEL ELLIS

Councilmember, LaFayette, Chair

JOE TAYLOR

Mayor, Rainbow City, Vice Chair

**Committee on Human
Development (HD)**

RON ANDERS

Mayor, Auburn, Chair

GAYLE ROBBINS

Councilmember, Florala, Vice Chair

**Committee on Community and
Economic Development (CED)**

JOE WATSON

Councilmember, Brewton, Chair

BRIAN PUCKETT

Mayor, Helena, Vice Chair

About ALM:

The Alabama League of Municipalities is a nonpartisan membership association of over 450 incorporated cities and towns. Since 1935, the League has worked to strengthen municipal government through advocacy, training and the advancement of effective local leadership. As the recognized voice of Alabama's cities and towns, ALM's member municipalities benefit from a variety of member programs, services and activities that are impossible to accomplish alone.



Photo Credit: Jamie Martin

Go Digital!

Scan the QR code to see e-versions of *The Alabama Municipal Journal* available online. Between editions, keep up with ALM's daily activities via our social media channels. Photos from League events are also available for viewing and downloading on our new Flickr page ([flickr.com/photos/alabamaleagueofmunicipalities/albums](https://www.flickr.com/photos/alabamaleagueofmunicipalities/albums)).



Follow us on Twitter: @AL_League



Follow us on Facebook: @ALALM



Follow us on Instagram: @alabamacitiesandtowns



Follow us on LinkedIn: @alabama-league-of-municipalities



Follow us on Flickr: Alabama League of Municipalities

Advertising with the League:

The Alabama Municipal Journal is published by the Alabama League of Municipalities, 535 Adams Avenue, Montgomery, Alabama 36104. Telephone (334) 262-2566. Website: www.almonline.org.

Subscriptions are \$26.00 per year. Advertising rates and a circulation statement are available at www.almonline.org or by calling the above number. Statements or expressions of opinions appearing within this publication are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the Alabama League of Municipalities. Publication of any advertisement should not be considered an endorsement of the product or service involved. Material from this publication may not be reprinted without permission.

Editor: LORI JHONS Graphic Designer: KARL FRANKLIN



The Alabama MUNICIPAL Journal

Official publication of the Alabama League of Municipalities

Fall 2023 • Volume 81, Issue 2

In this Issue:

| | | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|----|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Executive Director's Report | 5 | EDA Inspires Mega-Municipal Collaboration in Etowah County | 26 |
| Leadership Perspective | | Making Government Work for Kids: Considerations When Planning City Childcare and Education Programs | 29 |
| President Randy Garrison | 6 | Positively Phenix City Celebrates Centennial | 34 |
| Vice President Mark Saliba | 6 | From Patriarchy to Progress: The Extraordinary Life of Jean Price Lewis | 36 |
| Who Knows What the Tide May Bring? | | Power of the Purse: Congressionally-Directed Spending is Back and Hopefully Here to Stay | 41 |
| A Message of Gratitude | 7 | ADEM Seeks Increased Funding for Water Program | 44 |
| More than 100 Participate in Standing Committees Meetings | 13 | New Interstate Lighting Initiative Gives Alabama Municipalities a New Reason to Shine | 47 |
| Gardendale Maximizes New Sports Complex for Community Growth | 15 | Resilience and Innovation in South Alabama | 49 |
| American Rescue Plan Act Updates and Reminders | 18 | ADEM to Host Nonpoint Source Conference in January | 53 |
| Legal Viewpoint: | | Sponsorship Opportunities with the League | 54 |
| FAQs: Rebuild Alabama Act | 21 | | |
| 10 Municipalities to Graduate from Second EDA Class | 25 | | |



On the Cover:

Southside's Buck's Island, a residential neighborhood, sits across the Coosa River from Rainbow City.



Low-interest loans ideal for:

Equipment Financing • Capital Improvement Projects • Refinancing

Simple application process:

Straight-forward • Quick Turnaround • No Obligation

Complete application.

Provide 3 most recent audits.

Sign and submit.



It's that simple.

www.amfund.com

Director's Fall Report

Gregory D. Cochran • Executive Director

After a fast-paced summer of hosting intentional meetings around our state, our team is excited to be settling into the fall season with great expectations of continuing our focus of delivering resources and networking opportunities for our officials. We hosted the ALM Board of Directors' July meeting off campus for the first time, in Opelika and Auburn, to give the board exposure to projects in these communities that could be replicated across the state. We had a productive time viewing and discussing various projects from new schools and athletic facilities to new first responder infrastructure and businesses. Additionally, board members experienced lunch at the Tony and Libba Rane Culinary Science Center where they heard from Auburn University President Chris Roberts on their efforts to train students interested in the hospitality industry.

During August and September, the League's advocacy team hosted six summer congressional luncheons across our state, which more than 300 municipal officials and ALM strategic partners attended. These luncheons provide our members and partners with an opportunity to voice their needs and concerns with their congressional representative, and we appreciate our congressional delegation for participating in these events. Many of our League staff members also participated in several state, regional and national conferences throughout the summer.

The ALM Board of Directors recently held its fall meeting here at our headquarters and our ALM standing and legislative committees met at Frazer Church, here in Montgomery, to discuss new ideas for engagement through the legislative session and throughout the year with state and federal lawmakers. You can read a full recap on page 13. We continue to encourage our members to be active in this organization and aware of current issues affecting municipal authority.

Now, our team is preparing for the Municipal Leadership Institute (MLI) at the Perdido Beach Resort and the National League of Cities' (NLC) City Summit in Atlanta. MLI, which will be held November 8-10, recognizes officials and communities that have accomplished their CMO, CMA, EDA, ACE and DesignAlabama designations and is a great opportunity for officials to network and engage with peers and partners from across the state. We also have an exceptional line-up of speakers to present relevant topics to our attendees.

The NLC City Summit will be November 15-18, and our team is looking forward to connecting with our municipal officials and staff from around the country. There are several Alabama officials seeking NLC leadership positions, and we support these efforts to be engaged with our national association. To learn more and to register, visit: www.nlc.org.

We appreciate our members, strategic partners, event sponsors and stakeholders in collaborating with our organization to provide intentional programs, resources and networking opportunities to better serve you and your communities. Thank you for the privilege of representing you. Peace be with you. ■



Deputy Director Kayla Bass, Hokes Bluff Mayor Scott Reeves and Executive Director Greg Cochran



Pictured left to right: Baker Allen, Kayla Bass, Greg Cochran, Lori Jhons Pike Road Mayor Gordon Stone, U.S. Rep. Barry Moore, Dothan Mayor Mark Saliba, Hal Bloom and Bryan Parker



Greg Cochran speaks at a luncheon the League hosted with U.S. Rep. Gary Palmer.

Leadership Perspective

Mayor Randy Garrison • Hartselle • ALM President



Hello, my fellow League friends, it is hard to believe that we are almost in the home stretch of this calendar year. I suppose most of us, in local government, just finished up our fiscal year. For the city of Hartselle, 2022-2023 has been a good year, in terms of revenue and growth. I hope the same is true for your municipality as well. It was great to see so many of our members at our Certified Municipal Official trainings, summer congressional luncheons, the Economic Development Academy's south Alabama tour and the recent leadership committee meetings.

One of the most important things I chose to do, when I was elected mayor in 2016, was to learn as much about municipal government as I could. Despite the fact that I covered city council meetings for many years, in my role as a newspaper publisher, I still did not have an in-depth knowledge of all its workings, especially all the legalities. I began the CMO program very soon after being elected. Not only did this help fulfill my goal of knowledge, but it also made my job much easier. There is no handbook to use when you sit down behind the mayor's desk or behind the council bench. As of this year, I have achieved the emeritus level in the program! Yet, even now, I continue to attend professional development classes offered by the League and other organizations because learning is a lifelong adventure.

Being involved in the CMO program has not only enriched my learning experience, but it has also enabled me to meet, interact and learn from many of the League's staff members. Each person at the League fills an important role in serving the members and offers a wealth of expertise in their respective fields. I encourage each of you, if you have not done so, to get involved in the CMO program and take advantage of the awesome opportunities offered. It is a true pleasure to serve you as president and work alongside each of you, as we learn from each other, to better each of our communities. ■



Mayor Mark Saliba • Dothan • ALM Vice President

It is hard to believe that fall is here and that soon Thanksgiving and Christmas will be nipping at our heels, and our lives will surely jump into hyperdrive! Be that as it may, the Municipal Leadership Institute is coming up on November 8-10. There are so many resources (a major Greg Cochran theme) to take advantage of at this conference, along with celebrating the achievements of our graduates. We have a range of presentations, this year, from the Alabama Health Care Summit panel to "Learning How to Lead with Meaning" and "Building Effective Council Leadership." One of my favorite parts about convention or MLI is the opportunity to visit the "Ask Your Attorney" booth, where you can ask any legal question pertaining to municipal government to which the legal team quickly provides answers.

During our annual convention in Birmingham, Executive Director Cochran reminded us of who we are, and the League's purpose, "**Educate, Advocate and Innovate!**" "Ask Your Attorney" fits easily into the educate heading and our new Economic Development Academy program does as well. By the end of 2023, nearly 40 municipalities will have participated in the program and have covered a myriad of issues, from affordable housing to "Seeds" money for industrial sites.

I always appreciate talking to my colleagues at different events. Please reach out to me, President Garrison or anyone at the League, if you ever have ideas to pitch us for an event. Remember, this is your League; so, let us know how we are doing and what you need to be successful! See you soon. ■

Who Knows what the tide may bring?

A Message of Gratitude

Lorelei "Lori" Lein
General Counsel • ALM

No one says “I want to be a local government attorney when I grow up” that is not a thing. Maybe there is a rare circumstance where someone, who has been raised by a local government official, goes to law school and takes an interest in local government law, but let’s be honest, no kid dreams of being an attorney for municipalities. In high school, I participated in Girl’s State where I learned more about local government than I had all through primary and secondary school, and still I never considered local government law as a career path. Yet, here I am, almost 30 years out of law school, deeply humbled to have spent my career representing, advocating for, and educating local government officials and employees.

After a few years in private practice where I represented county officials who were sued by inmates in county jails (Who knew you had a constitutional right to not be served grits seven days a week in the county jail?), I landed a job working with the Alabama Legislative Reference Service (LRS), now the Legislative Services Agency (LSA). Because of my background in local government, I quickly became one of the go-to drafters of legislation impacting local government. Looking back, securing a job with LRS was my first experience lobbying. When I originally reached out, there were no openings. I had to repeatedly touch base with Jerry Bassett, former LRS director, for more than a year while waiting for a position to become available. I got to know Jerry over those months as we shared our stories about being transplants to Alabama from the West.

With my husband working for the state, I was thrilled to land a state government job doing something I enjoyed and knew well. Ready to start a family, I also appreciated the set hours and work week (other than during the legislative session) the job afforded me, something private law firms did not accommodate well during the late '90s. I settled into the role and worked at LRS through a couple of legislative sessions.

When Mary Pons, former general counsel for the Association of County Commissions of Alabama, approached me at the State House to let me know that the Alabama League of Municipalities needed an attorney and that I was the “perfect person” for the job, I told her, “Thank you for thinking of me, but I waited a long time for this job, and I enjoy it.” However, after a few hours of reflection, I realized I should never pass up an opportunity – especially one that presented itself in such an enthusiastic way – and I found Mary in the hall later that day and asked who I should contact at the League.

The rest, as they say, is history.

So, there I was, in late 2001, in what is now the second floor Director’s Conference Room at League headquarters,



waiting for my interview with Perry Roquemore, the executive director at the time, and Ken Smith, the deputy director/chief counsel then, looking over a railing to the first floor main hallway and thinking that both walls on either side of me looked like exterior walls – as if two buildings were joined together. About that time, Perry came to greet me, and, in the pre-interview nervousness, I blurted out something about the walls, and that is how most of my first interview became a history of the League headquarters and its expansion. Carrie Banks, former long-time ALM communications director, later told me she vividly remembered this moment because she was walking down the hall and saw me standing next to Perry, the two of us looking over the railing while engaged in a detailed discussion on building design and League history, and she said what immediately struck her was “Wow. She’s really tall.”

Accepting the position at the League left me with the difficult task of telling Jerry I was leaving the job I had vigilantly lobbied him for and patiently waited for. Disappointed that I was leaving, he said something along the lines of “You kids [his daughter is my age], you just hop from job to job. I predict you won’t stay there long.” I took some degree of pleasure over the years checking in with Jerry during legislative sessions to say “Hey, Jerry! I’ve been with ALM five years!” or “How are you, Jerry? I’ve been at the League 15 years now – can you believe it?” and so it went.

I like to tell people that I have represented all levels of government in Alabama, and – while it is not politically wise to admit having favorites – I can wholeheartedly say municipal government officials are closest to my heart. Municipal officials and employees have unique, *special* connections with their communities. I know first-hand how seriously you take your roles and embody servant leadership. Let’s face it, you are not in it for the money. In fact, most of you

have sacrificed for your communities, doing more with less while navigating challenging state and federal policies and political platforms. We are only afforded a finite number of heartbeats in this life and knowing that there are *thousands* of municipal officials and employees who have given so many of theirs in service to Alabama’s municipalities is remarkable and inspiring. I am grateful to each of you for your service, your selflessness, your sincerity and your integrity.

Throughout my 22 years with ALM, I have had the opportunity to continue the tradition of providing important legal services to Alabama’s municipalities. A typical year at the League has the legal department fielding thousands of phone calls and emails from officials and employees seeking guidance on issues impacting their communities. From the mundane and detailed bid law inquiries to non-stop calls leading up to a municipal election to the afterhours panicked calls on how to deal with the tragic and sudden death of a mayor, it has been my privilege to help municipalities navigate the issues in front of them on any given day (or night). During my tenure with the League, I have seen the publication of our *Selected Readings for the Municipal Officials* (a.k.a. “The Municipal Bible”) go from a large, spiral-bound book updated and mailed every four years to every municipal official and municipal clerk, to a DVD updated every four years, to now having every article updated annually and available as a stand-alone publication on the League’s website.

What I have most enjoyed about my role at the League, however, has been training and educating our members, city clerks, revenue officers, recreation employees, legislators and the general public on municipal law. This was a shock to me as I remember specifically telling Perry and Ken, shortly after I was hired, that I did not want to do any public speaking. Now, I find that teaching is the one aspect of my job I value





the most – perhaps it is because I have actual facetime with officials and employees rather than just responding to calls and emails. Municipal law can be very nuanced, and I really delight in being able to break it down in digestible and useful ways for people.

As ALM’s general counsel, another highlight has been working with municipal attorneys, judges and prosecutors through the Alabama Municipal Attorneys Association (AAMA) and the Alabama Municipal Judges Association (AMJA). Both organizations were formed under Ken’s leadership and handed off to me as healthy organizations that were poised to grow and expand. We continue to break attendance records at the Fall Municipal Law Conference, and I am very proud that the Alabama League of Municipalities is now the leading provider of legal education and training in the field of local government law in Alabama.

You may be wondering what I consider the most challenging part of my job as League general counsel; it is the non-stop, continued and difficult fight to protect municipal authority at the State House. Because I understand the vital role municipalities play in creating real and sustainable quality of life services for Alabama citizens, it is extremely frustrating how much energy must be spent each year to *protect* municipal taxing and regulatory authority. Yet, it has not all been defense. Over the past 22 years, I have assisted with many legislative priorities for our members as well as the training that went along with the new laws, including: election law changes (2003, 2021), Open Meetings Act

reform (2005), business license reform (2006), clarification of mayors’ voting powers (2009), pre-zoning authority (2009), expanding the use of corrections fund monies (2010), annexation validations (2011, 2023), easing of publication requirements for certain ordinances (2011), making fines and penalties parallel to state law (2011), wet/dry referendum changes (2015), repeal of the commission form of government (2018), legislative functions of mayors with populations over 12,000 (2018), and increases in the competitive and public works bid laws (2023). These, along with the dozens of other issues I helped navigate, were challenging; however, during the process, I forged many important and memorable relationships and, hopefully, educated a few lawmakers on issues that are important to Alabama’s municipalities.

In addition to my gratitude for all the municipal officials and employees I have worked with in the past, I am so very grateful for everyone I have worked with at the League. The staff at the League are some of the most delightful humans I have ever had the pleasure to interact with and their dedication to local government and the League’s membership is evident in all that they do. I am truly blessed to call many of them *friend*. I will forever be grateful to Perry and Ken for giving me the opportunity to join the League team and for mentoring me into my love for educating and training elected officials, employees and citizens across this state.

Lastly, and certainly most importantly, I want to thank my wonderful family for their continued support and love. Greg and Brennan sacrificed in so many ways for me to enjoy





the wonderful career I have had at the League, and I look forward to many adventures with them in the years ahead.

As I complete my final days as your general counsel and prepare to journey in a new direction, I earnestly thank each and every person in municipal government who has touched my life, both directly and through their service to their communities. The relationships and friendships I have forged during my time at the League are invaluable to me. I will always cherish them as I hold dear the many successes that are part of my history with this remarkable organization. Rest assured that the League’s Legal Department is in capable hands as I depart. Rob Johnston will serve as director of legal services and has done an excellent job mentoring and training Kaleb Beck. Both have the necessary heart and passion for local government (even though, like me, I doubt either thought they wanted to be a local government attorney when they grew up). With Sharon Carr serving as the department’s gatekeeper, I have every confidence that the legal services our members have come to expect will be provided with continued expediency, skill, professionalism, and, most importantly, deep respect and appreciation for the importance and significance of local government.

What does my future hold? Well, *it depends* (worked that in for one special former past president of the League – IYKYK). For now, I leave you with this quote from Tom Hanks, as Chuck Noland in *Castaway*, “I know what I’ve got to do. I’ve got to keep breathing because tomorrow the sun will rise. Who knows what the tide could bring.” ■



Join us for a

RETIREMENT RECEPTION

Celebrating

LORELEI “LORI” LEIN
ALM General Counsel



Wednesday, November 29, 2023
4:00 - 6:00 p.m. ♦ ALM Headquarters
(535 Adams Avenue, Montgomery, AL, 36104)



Alabama's only state tax refund
municipal debt recovery program

(FREE to eligible participating members!)

www.alintercept.org

Why use Municipal Intercept Services (MIS) when you already have a debt collection service?

MIS is **NOT** a debt collection agency or service. MIS does not do what debt collection services do and debt collection services cannot offer what MIS does. MIS is a unique way to attempt to recover money owed to your municipality by “intercepting” an individual’s Alabama State tax refund. Debt collection agencies **CANNOT** offer you this service. MIS is a legislatively sanctioned conduit with the Alabama Department of Revenue (ADOR) that enables ADOR to recover delinquent debts owed by individuals to your municipality by collecting this debt from the individual’s Alabama state tax refund. This system was made possible by an Alabama legislative change enacted in 2014 through which ADOR agreed to process these debts through only two clearinghouse organizations: the Alabama League of Municipalities (ALM) for municipal entities and the Association of County Commissions of Alabama (ACCA) for county entities. In 2015, ALM formed MIS to act as the clearinghouse on behalf of its municipal entities. **NOTE:** If the debtor is not eligible for an Alabama State tax refund, no money can be collected.

Who is eligible to use the MIS system?

Only municipal entities within Alabama are eligible to use the MIS system. This includes cities, towns, certain utility boards, housing authorities and hospitals. **For more information, visit: www.alintercept.org.**



More than 100 Participate in Standing Committees Meetings

The Alabama League of Municipalities’ six standing committees, comprised of mayors and councilmembers from each congressional district in the state, convened at Frazer Church in Montgomery on October 11, 2023, for their annual meeting. The six committees are: the Committee on Finance, Administration and Intergovernmental Relations (FAIR); the Committee on Energy, Environment and Natural Resources (EENR); the Committee on Transportation, Infrastructure and Communication (TIC); the Committee on Public Safety (PS); the Committee on Human Development (HD); and the Committee on Community and Economic Development (CED).

We were honored to have presentations from the Alabama Community College System, the Alabama Department of Commerce, the Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education, the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs, the Alabama Department of Environmental Management, the Alabama Department of Mental Health, the Alabama Department of Revenue, the Alabama Emergency Management Agency, the Alabama Law Enforcement Agency, the Alabama Section of the American Society of Civil Engineers, AT&T, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Alabama, the Rural Water Association, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Vestavia Hills Mayor Ashley Curry and Oxford Police Chief Bill Partridge.

Committee members and guest speakers had passionate discussions on everything from mental health to policing and disaster relief to broadband connectivity. ALM’s Committee on State and Federal Legislation met afterwards to establish priorities for the upcoming regular legislative session, based on the committees’ recommendations. We encourage our members to reach out to the standing committee chairs and vice chairs, if you ever have any questions or suggestions for a particular committee. As always, our team will keep you apprised of any legislative updates before next year’s session kicks off in February. ■



Members of ALM’s Legislative Committee on State and Federal Legislation




Birmingham City Councilmember Crystal Smitherman



Priceville Councilmember Charles Black



Members of ALM’s Committee on Community and Economic Development

 Scan the QR code to view the list of standing committees’ chairs and vice chairs.

Insuring the Future of Local Government



Is *YOUR*
Future Covered?

Rated A- by A.M. Best



www.amicentral.org

1-866-239-2642 (AMIC)

Gardendale Maximizes New Sports Complex for Community Growth



Lori Jhons • Communications Director • ALM

A few weeks ago, several team members of the Alabama League of Municipalities traveled up to the city of Gardendale to meet with Mayor Stan Hogeland for a tour of the city's new Bill Noble Park Athletic and Recreation Complex. Upon arrival, a huge replica of the Olympic torch greeted us, and of course (me being a former college athlete) I gravitated toward it, which is the exact intent the mayor and city council had when they were designing the look. I must say, all of us who had the pleasure of seeing this place in person, were blown away, but we will come back to all the facts and figures in a moment.

We are delighted to recognize Gardendale as this quarter's Alabama Communities of Excellence honoree! The ACE program was established in 2002, and officially became a League program last year. ACE offers free tools and resources to smaller municipalities, with populations ranging from 2,000 to 18,000, to ultimately leverage a community's unique assets to promote growth and prosperity.

Gardendale was founded in 1955 and has over 16,000 residents living in this northern suburb of Birmingham.

★ If you have never visited, you might at least recall seeing the iconic, 125-foot-tall steel cross on the side of I-65 in front of Gardendale First Baptist Church. Gardendale applied for the ACE program in 2019 and attained designation in 2021.

Bill Casaday, Gardendale's ACE local coordinator, spearheaded the city's participation by attending ACE training workshops, Your Town Alabama's workshop and worked closely with ACE leadership to meet the

program's requirements. One of the main ACE requirements is establishing a strategic plan. Gardendale formed an ACE Strategic Planning Committee, consisting of elected officials, business owners, retirees, educators, a minister, parents and young professionals to develop the city's goals. Within this group of 20 community leaders, they formed subcommittees on marketing, education, infrastructure

Mary Jackson, Kayla Bass, Gardendale Mayor Stan Hogeland, Councilmember Bryan Knox, Baker Allen and Greg Cochran stand in front of the Olympic torch replica at Bill Noble Park in Gardendale.



and economic development. Casaday said the strategic plan allowed their city to assess its strengths and weaknesses, encourage citizens' participation, and create measurable action plans for each approved improvement.

Casaday stated, "The involvement of citizens in the assessment and goal setting process was priceless for our city because it gave us grassroots information to allow us to make our goals match the needs that we had in our city."

The ACE process has helped with focusing on the economic development of the city, its marketing, and improving education and recreation opportunities for their youth. The biggest accomplishment, since participating in the program, has been the completion



of their new \$34 million Bill Noble Park, which has all turf fields for football, nine baseball/softball fields, 11 pickleball courts, eight tennis courts, a beach volleyball court, an event center, a putting green, two half-sized basketball courts and a state-of-the-art playground for the community to enjoy. The park has not only improved the quality of life for local families, but it has made Gardendale a destination place for families, all over the Southeast, to visit, eat and shop in their city.



Another area of impact has been enhancing the local education system. The mayor and city council have provided several million dollars through a 5-mill property tax to improve their four schools, which are a part of the Jefferson County School System. They have also made efforts to recognize the positive things happening in their schools through highlighting them on social media, websites and in a campaign with a local news station. ACE program participation even led to the creation of the Rocket Education Enrichment Foundation. The third major change has been implementing two new websites - cityofgardendale.com and mygardendale.com - for the city to share general city information and events, along with marketing it to its citizens, visitors and prospective businesses.



Gardendale's ACE Strategic Planning Committee was instrumental in the city receiving the ACE designation in 2021.

Mayor Hogeland said, “The changes we have experienced during the ACE process have been awesome and really have made a huge difference in our city’s growth over the last several years.”

In order to fully appreciate the significance of the sportsplex, I want to rewind and give you some background. Gardendale’s Municipal Park was built in the 1960s and was eventually renamed after longtime Gardendale Mayor Bill Noble, who served from 1972 to 1996. Mayor Hogeland, a

★ lifelong resident of Gardendale, has been involved with the city either as an employee or elected official for 48 years. In fact, he began his first city job at just 14-years-old with the Gardendale Parks and Recreation Department before working his way up to director.

In 2020, Mayor Hogeland decided the park and ball fields, which he played on as a child, simply had outgrown its original design and that the city needed to modernize and show an enhanced commitment to their youth and the future of the city. He, along with the city council, also wanted a park that allowed both boys and girls to play softball and baseball in the same complex for the first time. The goal was to eliminate the split of the family on game nights: having a son at one park and a daughter at another. Mayor Hogeland was very passionate about sharing the motivating factors for revamping the park; he wanted to put the citizens first, not the economic impact. After two years of planning and 15 months of construction, the new facility opened in March of 2023!

Since then, the park has hosted over 50 athletic tournaments and has become a major economic driver and marketing tool. The city has partnered with The Retail Coach recruitment firm to assist the city with locating possible new businesses in Gardendale. The city boasts an attractive new development called Magnolia Crossings, right off I-65 at the 271 exit, which has a new Olive Garden, Longhorn Steakhouse and Chipotle. An Ulta, cosmetics store, is also being built there with more room for growth.

Mayor Hogeland said, “We are experiencing a tremendous amount of momentum in new businesses openings in our city, and our desire is to continue working on making it easier for new businesses to find a home in our city.”

Casaday advises cities interested in participating in the ACE process to get the buy-in from the mayor and city council, along with including a broad section of the community in the strategic planning phases, to make the effort a success.

“The aspect of the ACE process that we enjoyed the most was the involvement of our citizens on the different committees and their insight, and input, on what the city needed to address for improvement,” Casaday shared. “Their engagement in the ACE process was a joy to watch and be a part of because you could see the love they had for our city.”

Looking toward the future, Mayor Hogeland and Casaday said they will continue to have follow up meetings with their strategic planning committees to check the status of where they are in achieving their goals and will set up an ACE program page on their city website.

As we approach the League’s Municipal Leadership Institute, Gardendale will be among the newest Economic Development Academy graduates. The mayor told me their engagement with the retail recruitment company was a direct result from working with the EDA and realizing that the city needed to have an entity actively working for them to identify and recruit specific businesses to the city. Mayor Hogeland and several city councilmembers have not only been active with ACE and EDA, but with the League’s Certified Municipal Official program as well.

“The knowledge learned in each of these programs is like pieces of a puzzle that are different but, put together, have helped our city as we work on growth and development,” Mayor Hogeland said. ★ “It would be very beneficial for any city in Alabama to be involved in CMO, ACE and EDA processes because it gives your city such a wide range of knowledge to assist you in growing your business community and your city.”

Although Bill Noble Park has put Gardendale on the sports tourism map, Mayor Hogeland made it very clear to us that quality of life is the priority in the city of Gardendale. “Maximize usage, while protecting the rights and expectations of the local residents” is the motto they developed to ensure that the park functions as planned. I predict Gardendale will do just that. I could not convince our team to go down the big slides, but I did convince them to hop on a seesaw and merry-go-round! Mayor Hogeland, Director Casaday and all the wonderful people that operate Bill Noble Park would love for you to visit; just give them a holler, and you might even get the golf cart tour! ■

**For more information
about the ACE program,
scan this QR code.**





AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT

Updates and Reminders

Baker Allen • Director of Policy and Research • ALM

Since 2021, the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) has pumped billions of dollars into Alabama to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and make long term infrastructure investments. For local governments, an important component of this legislation was the Coronavirus State and Local Government Fiscal Recovery Fund (SLFRF), which sent approximately \$787 million to Alabama's municipalities.

The U.S. Department of the Treasury allocated the SLFRF fund in two tranches, with the second tranche delivered 12 months after the initial allocation. Municipal, state and county governments have received both tranches of funding. Under the SLFRF, municipalities were either designated as a non-entitlement unit of government (NEU) or as a metropolitan city. These distinctions are important for distribution of funds and reporting requirements. The state of Alabama distributed funds to NEUs, and the U.S. Treasury directly distributed funds to metropolitan cities. SLFRF funds must be obligated by December 31, 2024! Unobligated funds may be returned to U.S. Treasury. When allocating funds, keep in mind that all funds must be expended by December 31, 2026.

The state of Alabama received approximately \$2.1 billion in SLFRF funds. In 2022 and 2023, Gov. Kay Ivey called the Alabama Legislature into special sessions to allocate each tranche of the state's funding. While the Legislature allocated the funds to various projects, municipalities directly benefited from allocations to infrastructure. Combining both tranches, the Legislature allocated \$537 million for broadband expansion and \$625 million for water and sewer projects.

In August, the U.S. Treasury released the 2023 Interim Final Rule which incorporates ARPA Flex that was passed by U.S. Congress in December 2022. ARPA Flex added three additional expenditure categories: Emergency Relief from Natural Disasters; Surface Transportation Infrastructure; and Title I Projects (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Community Development Block Grant

Program). Under the 2022 Final Rule, there were only six eligible uses: Support Public Health Response; Expand Public Sector Capacity; Water, Sewer, and Broadband Infrastructure; Address Negative Economic Impacts; Premium Pay for Essential Workers; and Replace Lost Public Sector Revenues. Even though some of these categories seem broad, each category contains specific requirements for projects to remain eligible.

The inclusion of the three additional expenditure categories particularly benefits municipalities that received over \$10 million in SLFRF funding. While municipalities that received under \$10 million in SLFRF funding could benefit, those municipalities are eligible under the standard allowance to categorize all of their funding as revenue replacement, which allows for great spending flexibility. Make sure your community keeps records of all SLFRF spending.

As with any federal funding, your municipality needs to remain in compliance with reporting requirements. All municipalities are required to complete a projects and expenditures report that is submitted to the U.S. Treasury. Municipalities that received over \$10 million in funding must complete this report by the last day of the month after the end of each quarter. For municipalities receiving less than \$10 million in funding, the report is due annually by April 30th. Even if no funding has been allocated, your municipality must complete the reporting requirements.

SLFRF funds must be obligated by **December 31, 2024 and all funds must be expended by **December 31, 2026.****


Some municipalities have reported difficulty submitting the report. Completing the report early provides time to catch technical difficulties and to receive clarity about the reporting process. If your municipality needs to contact the U.S. Treasury about reporting concerns, keep a record of all correspondence.

SLFRF funding provided Alabama municipalities an incredible opportunity to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic and make long term investments in their community’s future. The League encourages its members to think strategically about these one-time funds. Please visit the websites of the League, National League of Cities

and U.S. Treasury for additional information and resources.

The League is grateful for our leadership at the state and federal levels for ensuring that local governments were included in ARPA. Please reach out to the League, if there is anything we can do to assist your municipality. ■

**For more information
about the ARPA program
and its local implications,
scan this QR code.**



| | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 2022 Final Rule Eligible Uses | <p>Support Public Health Response Fund COVID-19 mitigation and prevention, medical expenses, behavioral health care, and community violence response and prevention.</p> |
| | <p>Expand Public Sector Capacity As part of the public health and economic response, fund public safety, public health, and human services staff and hire public sector workers up to a pre-pandemic baseline.</p> |
| | <p>Water, Sewer, and Broadband Infrastructure Make necessary investments to improve access to clean drinking water, invest in wastewater and stormwater infrastructure, and provide new or expanded broadband access to communities and businesses with an identified need.</p> |
| | <p>Address Negative Economic Impacts Respond to economic harms experienced by households, small businesses, non-profits and impacted industries.</p> |
| | <p>Premium Pay for Essential Workers Offer additional support to those who bore the greatest health risks from their service in critical sectors during the COVID-19 public health emergency (as defined in the 2022 final rule).</p> |
| | <p>Replace Lost Public Sector Revenue Use funds to provide government services to the extent of the reduction in revenue experienced due to the pandemic.</p> |
| New Eligible Uses | <p>Emergency Relief from Natural Disasters Use funds to provide emergency relief from natural disasters or the negative economic effects of natural disasters.</p> |
| | <p>Title I Projects Invest in community development in line with HUD’s Community Development Block Grant program.</p> |
| | <p>Surface Transportation Infrastructure Invest in surface transportation infrastructure, in line with certain U.S. Department of Transportation programs.</p> |
| <p>NOTE: Recipients may use funds under these new eligible use categories for costs incurred beginning December 29, 2022.</p> | |

For More Information: Please visit www.treasury.gov/SLFRP

For General Inquiries: Please Email SLFRF@treasury.gov for additional information



NAFECO

 **rosenbauer**

Recent Delivery
**City of Brewton
Fire Department**



ROSENBAUER COMMANDER

- 60" Commander Cab with 11" Raised Roof
- Waterous CXVC20, 1500 GPM Pump
- 1000 Gallon Poly Tank
- Cummins L9, 450 HP Engine
- Akron Apollo Hi-Riser Deck Gun
- 9 SCBA Spare Bottle Storage Slots
- 3/16" Aluminum Body
- Whelen LED Warning Lights & Surface Mount Scene Lights
- Triple Camera System



NAFECO.com/FireTruck
info@nafeco.com • 800-628-6233



By Rob Johnston, ALM Senior Associate Counsel

FAQs: Rebuild Alabama Act

Alabama has several state taxes on gasoline, lubricating oil and motor fuels. There is also an inspection fee on motor fuels. These taxes and fees are collected by the state, and the revenue is shared with counties and municipalities to be used for specific purposes.

In 2019, the Alabama Legislature passed the Rebuild Alabama Act (legislation supported by Gov. Kay Ivey and the Alabama League of Municipalities along with other stakeholders) to levy an additional 10-cents excise tax on each net gallon of gasoline and diesel fuel. Rebuild Alabama funds are distributed to municipalities each month. In addition to placing restrictions on how Rebuild Alabama Act funds are used, the act also places several reporting requirements on municipalities to show that the funds are properly used.

For what purposes can a municipality use Rebuild Alabama funds?

A municipality can only use Rebuild Alabama funds for roads and bridges. Specifically, Section 23-8-8, Code of Alabama 1975, provides that the funds received from the Rebuild Alabama Act may only be expended for the following:

1. The maintenance, improvement, replacement and construction of roads and bridges;
2. Matching funds for federal road or bridge projects;
3. Debt repayment for road and bridge projects; or
4. Joint-road and bridge projects with one or more municipalities and/or counties.

Can a municipality use Rebuild Alabama funds for something other than roads and bridges?

No. The Rebuild Alabama Act specifically prohibits use of funds that are not a part of a road or bridge project. The funds **cannot** be used for the following:

1. Salaries, benefits or any other form of compensation for county, municipal, or contract employees or officials, except as included as project costs and subject to audit by the Alabama Department of Examiners of Public Accounts;
2. The purchase, lease or maintenance of equipment, other than equipment purchased and permanently installed as part of a road or bridge project; or

Gov. Kay Ivey hosted a press conference on February 27, 2019, in Maplesville, to announce her plan to improve Alabama's infrastructure system. These plans would eventually become known as the Rebuild Alabama Act. Photo credit: Governor's Office/Hal Yeager



3. The maintenance and construction of public buildings or other structures that are not integral to the system of roads or bridges. Section 23-8-8(c), Code of Alabama 1975.

Do the Rebuild Alabama funds need to be placed in a separate account?

Yes. The monies paid to municipalities “shall be deposited into a separate fund.” Section 23-8-8(a), Code of Alabama 1975. As such, it is the opinion of the League that these funds must be maintained in a completely separate account.

Keep in mind that your municipality will receive two monthly distributions – one for gas tax and one for diesel tax. It is the League’s opinion that all the gas tax funds received from the Rebuild Alabama Act can go into the same account. In other words, you can combine the diesel and gasoline distributions from this new money into the same account, which is separate from your other gasoline taxes.

If a municipality wishes to commingle these funds with other gasoline tax funds and simply account for them separately, it is **strongly** advised that you request an attorney general opinion be issued to your municipality before doing so.

What is the purpose of the **transportation plan**, and when should it be adopted?

While receipt of distributions is not tied to any report or plan, the transportation plan shows how the Rebuild Alabama Act funds will be used.

The act requires municipalities to adopt, by majority vote of the council, an annual transportation plan “no later than **August 31** for the next fiscal year.” This plan must provide “a detailed list of projects for which expenditures



Members of the League joined Gov. Kay Ivey on March 1, 2019, on the steps of the state capitol, to show support for her Rebuild Alabama plan. Photo credit: Governor's Office, Sydney A. Foster



are intended to be made in the next fiscal year” based on an estimate of the revenues from the fund. Once adopted, the plan must be posted at city hall at all times and posted on the official municipal website, if one exists. Section 23-8-8(d), Code of Alabama 1975.

Are municipalities required to spend all the Rebuild Alabama funds received each year?

No. While a transportation plan must be adopted annually, the act does not require the funds to be spent each year. Instead, a municipality can accrue Rebuild Alabama funds for an appropriate use in the future.

Are municipalities required to submit the transportation plan to the League or state agency?

No. The act does not require that this transportation plan be submitted to any agency or department of the state. Instead, the transportation plan must be posted at city hall. If a municipality has an official website, the transportation plan must be posted on the official municipal website. Section 23-8-8(d), Code of Alabama 1975.

Are municipalities required to submit bid plans to the League on projects using Rebuild Alabama funds?

Yes. For municipal projects using Rebuild Alabama funds that are bid out, the law requires municipalities to send the **bid plans and bid opening date to the League no later than the tenth day of the month preceding the bid opening.** Section 23-8-6(b), Code of Alabama 1975.

The League has partnered with the Alabama Transportation Institute to host a website for municipalities to submit Rebuild Alabama projects for bids. Municipalities can submit bid plans on the League’s website. Scan the QR code at the end of this article for that link.

Are municipalities required to submit a list of contractors who have been awarded contracts using Rebuild Alabama Funds?

Yes. Beginning October 1, 2020, and **October 1** of every other year, municipalities are required to provide a list of all contractors who have been awarded projects using Rebuild Alabama Act monies to the president pro tempore of the Senate, the speaker of the House, and the chair of the Joint Transportation Committee. Section 23-8-6(a) Code of Alabama 1975.

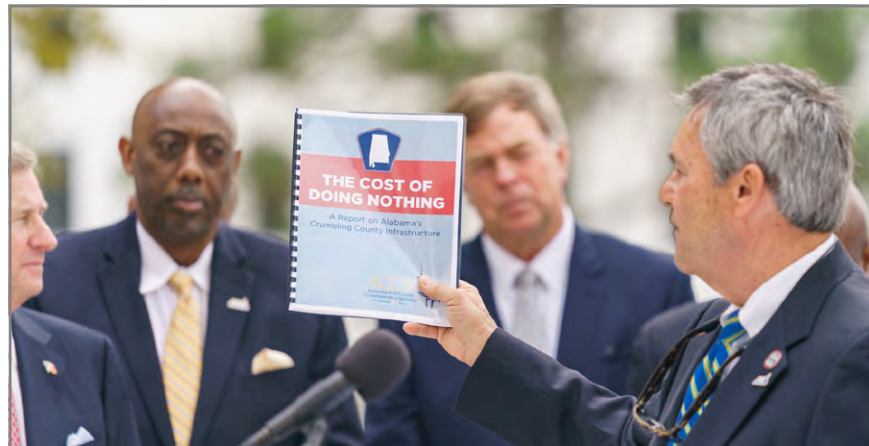
When should a municipality provide an annual report for Rebuild Alabama expenditures during the previous fiscal year?

At the **first meeting in January of each year**, the municipal engineer or other person designated by the municipal council shall present to the council an annual written report detailing the expenditures made from the fund during the previous fiscal year. The report should include the status of each project included in the previous fiscal year’s transportation plan. The report must be entered into the council meeting minutes and posted on the municipality’s website, if available. Section 23-8-8(e), Code of Alabama 1975.

Further questions?

Please contact the League’s Legal Department at 334-262-2566, or visit www.almonline.org, if you have any questions regarding the requirements of the Rebuild Alabama Act. ■

Scan this QR code to be linked to the League's Rebuild Alabama page.



The city of Prattville hosted an event with state leaders, including Gov. Kay Ivey, to celebrate Rebuild Alabama Act funds being used to widen U.S. Highway 82. Photo credit: Governor’s Office



**You have enough to focus on,
let us handle the health care benefits.**

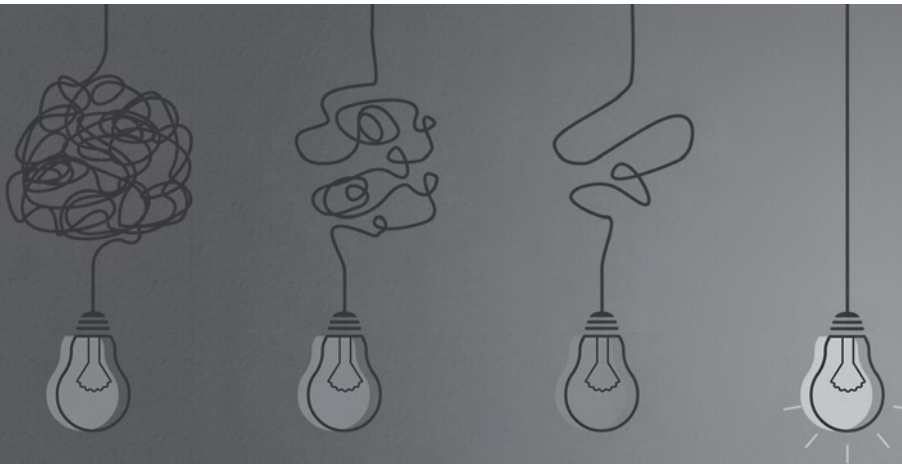
From birth through
Medicare, and all
things in between,
we've got you
covered.



www.lghip.org
(334) 851-6802

Local Government Health Insurance Board

Providing the health care benefits for
municipalities in Alabama for 30 years.



Simplify.

Distributed By

CSAsolutions
Accounting & Billing Specialists

www.csasolutions.com • 800.264.4465



Software should make
your job easier!

To get your FREE guide visit:
www.csasolutions.com/fundaccounting

CenterPoint Fund Accounting helps you simplify your job.

10 Municipalities to Graduate from Second EDA Class



Bryan Parker • Director of Governmental Affairs • ALM

The Alabama League of Municipalities is closing in on completing its second year of the Economic Development Academy! EDA was developed in conjunction with the Alabama Community College System (ACCS) and is supported by an advisory council of industry leaders to educate municipal officials about their role in recruiting and retaining businesses along with connecting them to resources to strengthen their communities. The ten communities that participated in 2023 include: Brewton, Evergreen, Fairfield, Gardendale, Greensboro, Luverne, Midfield, Priceville, Semmes and Southside.

In the second year of the program, we were able to take a deeper look at subjects presented in the first class and add even more topics. We even had 10 communities, who participated in class one of the program, to join communities in class two to discuss some of those issues and how EDA has helped their decision making. Additionally, this year, we partnered with the Alabama Port Authority to tour the port and learn how the Port of Mobile impacts the rest of the state. During this trip, in September, we also had the opportunity to visit the South Alabama Mega Site in Baldwin County. In 2022, Novelis announced they were investing over \$2.5 billion to build the most advanced aluminum plant in the world at that site in Bay Minette. This is the largest economic development investment in Alabama in the last decade. Both tours were enlightening for members of the class and our staff.

After conducting our Municipal Leadership Institute graduation ceremony, 37 communities will have completed the program. We are proud they are already putting their skills to work in their communities in retail, workforce and community development. We are excited to reveal the communities selected for our third EDA class soon. We look forward to building on the subjects from the first two years and adding even more content, especially on the grant and resource side to make sure the communities that participate are knowledgeable of how they can access state and federal funding to build their communities. The program will also include another opportunity for those who have participated in the past to refresh their education on economic and community development subjects and visit another part of the state to see how it impacts the rest of Alabama. ■



EDA participants toured the Port of Mobile on September 7, 2023.



Lee Lawson, president and CEO of the Baldwin EDA, presented Bay Minette Mayor Robert Wills the Silver Shovel Award for landing Novelis for their mega site. Tori Holt is the plant manager for this location.

For more information about the EDA program, scan this QR code.





EDA Inspires Mega-Municipal Collaboration in Etowah County

Gadsden, Rainbow City and Southside Share EDA Experiences

Lori Jhons • Communications Director • ALM

The Alabama League of Municipalities' Economic Development Academy has finished its second class. We are so proud to have had 37 municipalities go through the program in the first two years. EDA was developed to provide our members with an opportunity to expand their knowledge of the phases of economic development. We are pleased to select Gadsden, Rainbow City and Southside for this edition's EDA spotlight. These three cities are located in northeastern Alabama in Etowah County. It is the smallest county by total square miles, but it is in the top 15 by population. Gadsden and Rainbow City were a part of the first EDA graduating class in 2022, while Southside is a member of the second class.

Gadsden, the county seat, was founded in 1846, and has 34,000 citizens. The city is known for its industrial background and is home to Noccalula Falls Park. Mayor Craig Ford, a native of Gadsden, took office last November and is a member of the League's Board of Directors. He previously served in the Alabama House of Representatives for 18 years and was a major in the Alabama National Guard. He actually took office after Gadsden participated in EDA, but he has relied heavily on the feedback of his colleagues that did, which include current and present city officials and leaders at Gadsden State Community College (GSCC).

Rainbow City was established in 1950 and has grown to more than 10,000 residents. It sits on the banks of Henry Neely Lake along the Coosa River and neighbors Gadsden. Mayor Joe Taylor has served in this role for three years and was previously a professional firefighter, general contractor and served in the 20th Special Forces Group. He said his city applied for EDA to help gain a better understanding of the various aspects of economic development to craft their first master plan. Rainbow City was one of the 2022



Southside officials - Councilmember Joseph Hutchins, Mayor Dana Snyder and Councilmember Genny Ball



Greg Cochran, David Hooks, Gadsden State President Kathy Murphy, Councilmember Deverick Williams, Councilmember Kent Back, Councilmember Ken Kirkland, ACCS Chancellor Jimmy Baker



Greg Cochran, Councilmember Anita Bedwell, Mayor Joe Taylor, Councilmember Jeff Prince, Councilmember Clark Hopper, ACCS Chancellor Jimmy Baker

The Northeast Alabama Regional (NEAR) Megaproject is located in Etowah County. It is 1,100 acres.



class members that extended their learning by attending the second-year trainings.

Mayor Taylor shared, “This was an eye-opening experience for each of us. It should be a required curriculum moving forward.”

Southside is located just across the Coosa River from Rainbow City in the foothills of the southern Appalachian Mountains. It was formed in 1957 and has a population of approximately 9,400. Mayor Dana Snyder, a native of Southside, is also in her first term after previously serving on the city council from 2016-2020 and as a paralegal in public and private firms in Gadsden. She wants to move the city forward for future generations to enjoy and said EDA has given them that roadmap.

“By applying to the EDA and being proactive pursuing economic growth, we are focusing on the needs and quality of life in our city,” she said. “We have a large amount of untapped market potential, but we are in a great position with the highest median household income and the highest population growth in the region.”

Two of the main EDA requirements include completing a community economic vitality survey and implementing an approved project. Gadsden’s survey revealed their city is the core economic driver of their five-county region. As part of their project, they created an incubation coworking space at The Venue 2 with the Gadsden-Etowah County Industrial Development Authority, also known as IDA, and GSCC. They also identified health care deliverables for workforce development. They anticipate their new cancer treatment facility, Alabama Cancer Care, will open by the end of the year. This \$6.5 million investment is being built

on the site of an old National Guard armory. Mayor Ford has a major goal of rerouting a portion of U.S. Highway 411 to open up the city’s riverfront on the west side of the Coosa River, creating opportunities for commercial development, entertainment and recreation.

Rainbow City said the survey showed them how critical it is to plan for infrastructure needs along with forecasting housing. They also learned how they can leverage their two public schools and a K-12 private school for community growth. Their plan consists of three catalyst projects: a riverfront development, recreation center and city centre. They are currently constructing a 45,000-square-foot recreation center, which will consist of multi-sport courts and walking tracks for all ages. Once completed, they will have the only competitive swimming pool in the county, allowing their growing schools to create swim teams at all levels.



Gadsden Mayor Craig Ford hosts a press conference announcing Gadsden's selection for Ultra Safe Nuclear Corporation's new facility.

Additionally, they have purchased 125-acres for their city centre and are recruiting developers for it. Lastly, Rainbow City was chosen for the Northeast Alabama Challenger Center. It is being constructed to provide 5th-12th graders, in the region, access to hands-on experience and space-themed learning missions. It is expected to open in 2025 and will support the local workforce pipeline.

Southside's survey revealed their exponential growth and is helping them to concentrate on keeping young people engaged and providing them with the necessary jobs to keep them there. Mayor Snyder said EDA gave them the guidance to make their master plan, Southside Next, a comprehensive vision for the future. They have already taken steps to implement a few items, such as sidewalks, a city center park area and gateway signage. Ultimately, she wants to enhance their downtown area and make it a walkable, bikeable city center. Southside is one step closer to making that a reality after recently being awarded a Transportation Alternatives Program grant, from the Alabama Department of Transportation, to connect their high school to the football field, city hall and their community center/library. While participating in the EDA, they have seen new economic development, along state Highway 77, that includes the opening of a new coffee shop named Volt, Elite Healthcare and the expansion of Southside Hardware.

Some of you may recall the state's 1,100-acre Northeast Alabama Regional (NEAR) Megasite is located in Etowah County. Rainbow City has a Memorandum of Understanding to annex the site, so it can provide utilities and other municipal services like fire and police to tenants. Its location provides easy access to two international airports, local commercial air service, interstate access and a rail system that runs to the port of Mobile.

These three mayors are a part of a strong Etowah County Mayors Association and have great working relationships. The Etowah County Commission and several cities have recently

committed to funding their local industrial development authority to centralize their business recruitment efforts. Several municipalities are also financially supporting the Northeast Alabama Challenger Center and the \$24 million Advanced Manufacturing and Workforce Skills Training Center at GSCC. Furthermore, Rainbow City and the commission share in the expense of a water and sewer cooperative plan and have dedicated millions in American Rescue Plan Act monies to the NEAR Megasite to support water and sewer infrastructure.

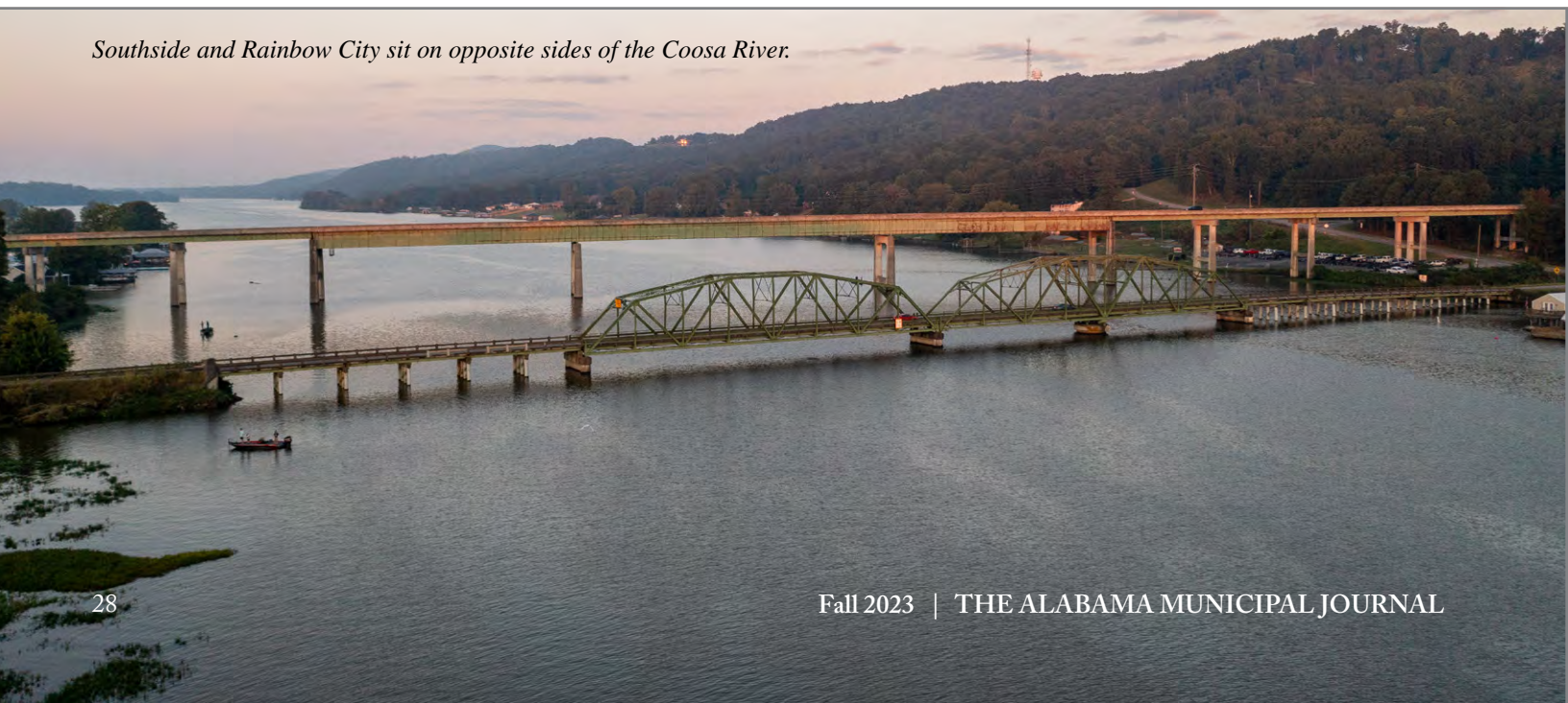
"The cooperation with the commission and other cities has never been so great here in Etowah County," Mayor Snyder shared. "Connection with and supporting the plans of adjacent jurisdictions and the surrounding region is very important."

Since Southside and Rainbow City are adjoined by a river, they have a common goal of building another bridge that will be for northbound traffic. They believe this will open up commerce and will be safer for school buses passing between the two cities' shared schools: middle schoolers go to Rainbow Middle School and high schoolers go to Southside High School. These two cities also have a recycling service together.

In addition, Mayor Ford credits two success stories to partnerships developed through the EDA program. Gadsden landed Ultra Safe Nuclear Corporation's \$232 million microreactor production facility in June, creating 250 jobs. He also shared that the city recently was able to save two dozen jobs when local leaders found a way to fund a new home for the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services' Gadsden office, which has to relocate to accommodate for the space used to create the workforce center at GSCC.

As you have read, Etowah County has several impressive projects taking shape, and we are excited to continue seeing Gadsden, Rainbow City and Southside put their EDA skills to work. ■

Southside and Rainbow City sit on opposite sides of the Coosa River.



Making Government Work for Kids:

Considerations When Planning City Childcare and Education Programs

Dr. Tracye Strichik • Director • Alabama Expanded Learning Alliance

The first few years of a child’s life are pivotal, significantly influencing their growth and development. In fact, 90% of brain development occurs by age five. The brain’s plasticity during this period means that it is highly responsive to environmental stimuli and experiences, making early childhood a critical time for learning and development. Research consistently emphasizes the long-term benefits of high-quality early education, as it equips children with the tools they need to excel academically and, eventually, contribute to the workforce.

Alabama’s dedication to early education is exemplified by the highly successful Alabama First Class Pre-K program, which has demonstrated that the 4-year-olds who participate in the state’s program are less likely to be retained or referred for special education. According to the Public Affairs Research Council of Alabama (PARCA) and the University of Alabama at Birmingham School of Public Health, they demonstrate higher proficiency in reading and math than their peers who did not participate. Every experience a child undergoes during their early years leaves a lasting imprint on their future potential.

Nonetheless, many families continue to encounter difficulties due to inadequate access to childcare, particularly when it comes to infant and toddler care, and this issue subsequently impacts Alabama’s workforce participation rate. A recent survey of Alabama hourly employees, conducted by the Alabama Workforce Council, found that 52% of parents have missed work because they do not have childcare. These challenges force parents, including single parents, to make difficult decisions between their careers and caregiving responsibilities. To add to that, Alabama faces early education gaps. High-quality preschool and after-school programs can bridge these gaps, providing children with the foundation they need to succeed in school and later in the workforce. Municipal leaders can craft a strategy to expand childcare and after-school opportunities, and in the process, advance the goals of academic achievement while affecting Alabama’s workforce participation rate.

Childcare

One of the most important components to contemplate is the accessibility and affordability of preschool programs and increasing the number of high-quality and affordable childcare programs. This allows more parents and guardians to enter the workforce knowing that their child is receiving



The Autauga County Technology Center hosts an Alabama First Class Pre-K program that serves as a lab for high school students interested in earning a Child Development Associate (CDA) credential. The CDA can be the first step toward an early childhood education career for high school students.

the highest quality education and care. As a municipality, there are numerous ways to support these programs. Alabama faces a shortage of providers, leading to long waiting lists and inadequate options for working parents. City leaders can make a significant impact in the following ways:

- By acting as a service provider and investing in preschool programs to expand the availability of childcare and reduce the strain on parents and employers. For example, the town of Double Springs, Alabama supports three pre-K classrooms at Seymour Beville Daycare Center.
- By collaborating with existing childcare facilities or school systems to provide matching funds for Alabama First Class Pre-K.
- By recognizing the diverse work schedules of parents and offering to provide before/after-school programs to existing childcare/pre-K programs so that families have a safe, quality program during transition hours.
- By providing funds to existing childcare programs to increase hiring qualified teachers, to maintain low teacher-to-student ratios, and to implement a well-structured curriculum that nurtures cognitive, social and emotional development.
- By contributing to the development of future teachers by partnering with your school systems to create or support an existing Child Development Associate (CDA) credential. For example, the Autauga County Technology Center hosts an Alabama First Class Pre-K program that serves as a lab for high school students interested in earning the CDA. The CDA can be the first step toward an early childhood education career for high school students.
- By recognizing that transportation is often a significant obstacle for families, city leaders can consider providing transportation assistance or collaborating with local transportation services.
- By boosting public awareness through methods such as media coverage, site visits and issuing proclamations that emphasize the necessity and significance of high-quality childcare and after-school programs. Make the public aware of the potential return on investment. The National Forum on Early Childhood Policy and Programs has found that high quality early childhood programs can yield a \$4 to \$9 return per \$1 invested.
- By creating a resource directory for parents using data compiled through city mapping efforts or by local childcare resources and referral agencies. Visit the VOICES for Alabama's Children website and their Alabama Child Care Roadmap Project to better understand the current supply of childcare throughout the state. Scan the QR code to the right.
- By investing in dedicated early childhood municipal staff. Across the country, cities are taking action to ensure early childhood success and hiring staff dedicated to developing quality programs and partnerships.
- By developing a one-cent sales tax for pre-K. A few large cities in Alabama, like Tuscaloosa, have a tax dedicated to funding pre-K programs.

After-school and Summer Programs

Another component to contemplate is the accessibility and affordability of after-school and summer programs. According to the Afterschool Alliance, by the end of the 2020-2021 school year, students were, on average, five months behind in math and four months behind in reading. After-school and summer programs can provide hands-on project-based learning; STEM,



For more information about the VOICES Alabama Child Care Roadmap, scan this QR code.





For more information about the Afterschool Opportunities Action Tool Kit, scan this QR code.



arts and music programs; academic enrichment and support; service learning and community projects; and career awareness. According to After School Matters, a Chicago-based education program, quality after-school programs have shown that those who participate have higher class attendance, lower course failures and higher graduation rates when compared to those who do not participate. Leaders of Alabama’s cities have an exceptional chance to elevate their communities and shape the future of the state by investing in top-notch after-school and summer programs in the following ways:

- Connect with the Alabama Expanded Learning Alliance, Alabama’s statewide after-school network that works to ensure Alabama’s youth, families and communities have access to high-quality programming, during out-of-school time, that promotes positive development and life-long learning.
- Prioritize economic and workforce development by supporting high-quality after-school and summer learning programs that expose young people to career options while building social and emotional skills to help them succeed in work and life. Scan the QR code to the left to download the Expanding Afterschool Opportunities Action Tool Kit.
- Invest in or partner with a community-based summer learning program, much like the Brain Forest program operated by the Montgomery Education Foundation and Summer Adventures in Learning (SAIL) program in Birmingham.
- Provide access to space for local school systems, churches or community-based organizations that may lack capacity.
- Host a community of practice with the purpose being to coordinate the efforts of government agencies, schools, community-based organizations, private funders and others to ensure that all children, have access to high-quality after-school and summer programming.

These investments not only support working parents and guardians, but they also lay the groundwork for a skilled and competitive workforce, ultimately contributing to a brighter future for Alabama. The possibilities for backing high-quality childcare and after-school programs are as diverse as the creative individuals within our communities. Please reach out to the Alabama Expanded Learning Alliance, if we can ever assist your community. ■



Prior to serving as the director of the Alabama Expanded Learning Alliance, Dr. Strichik was the director of the Alabama Reading Initiative at the Alabama State Department of Education. She was also Alabama's First Class Pre-K director and the senior director at the Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education, where she led departmental efforts and coordinated all aspects of research and program evaluation along with overseeing professional learning and efforts concerning higher education. She graduated from Auburn University, Auburn University at Montgomery and the University of Alabama at Birmingham. She was honored to have been selected as an Early Childhood Leadership Fellow by the Center on Enhancing Early Learning (2016) and an Out-of-School Time Leadership Fellow by the White-Riley Peterson Institute.



TRUCKWORX

Proud Sponsors of the Alabama League of Municipalities!

Recipient of the 2022 Gold Award for Overall Dealer Excellence
by Kenworth Truck Company!



Montgomery County



Birmingham Water Works



City of Bessemer

Contact Truckworx today to see how you can save money



Jay Callaway

VP of Government Sales

Cell: (601) 702-1923

Email: JonathanC@truckworx.com



Jamie Bush

VP of Medium Duty Sales

Cell: (205) 789-6108

Email: Jamie@truckworx.com



Martha Cooke

Corp. Coordinator - Government Affairs

Cell: (601) 955-6949

Email: MarthaC@truckworx.com

IT'S A WIN-WIN:

DRIVE THE WORLD'S BEST



City of Scottsboro



Conecuh County



Wallace State of Selma

and operate brand new Kenworth tractors and dump trucks!



Carl Cummings
Government Sales - Central Alabama
Cell: (205) 283-0878
Email: CarlC@truckworx.com



Jessica Perez
Government Sales - South Alabama
Cell: (334) 651-3898
Email: JessicaP@truckworx.com



Heith Pike
Government Sales - North Alabama
Cell: (205) 446-3028
Email: HeithP@truckworx.com

Positively Phenix City

CELEBRATES CENTENNIAL

Melony Lee • City Clerk • Phenix City

The city of Phenix City, aka Positively Phenix City, celebrated its centennial anniversary on August 9, 2023! The city hosted a birthday party and concert to recognize its distinguished history and embrace its ever-evolving movement into the future.

Phenix City is the county seat of Russell County and is located in east Alabama along the west bank of the Chattahoochee River, which separates the city from Columbus, GA. The region around the town of Girard, present-day Phenix City, was originally the territory of the Coweta branch of the Creek Indian Nation. The city was first named for a young, Philadelphia, PA philanthropist and slave dealer, Stephen Girard, who acquired much of the land in this area.

When Russell County was formed December 18, 1832, Girard became the county seat. After many years of confusing name changes from Girard to Lively to Brownsville, the Alabama Legislature officially incorporated the town of Brownsville on February 23, 1883. Sixteen years later, the Legislature changed the name to Phenix City. Although no definitive source reveals why this name was chosen, possibilities include it being named after the Phenix Mills in Columbus.

Throughout its history, Phenix City has survived an attack during the Civil War; going bankrupt during the Great Depression, accumulating more than \$1.1 million of debt; organized crime throughout the 1940s and 1950s; the assassination of Alabama Attorney General Albert Patterson; and a state order placing it under martial law, at the direction of Gov. Seth Gordon Persons.

After learning about his father's death, future Gov. John Patterson ran for the state attorney general's office in 1955. While in office, he prosecuted those who were responsible for his father's murder, though only one man was actually convicted. More than 700 people were indicted by a special Russell County grand jury, and by late 1955, the town was rid of all organized crime and vice. After the city's rehabilitation, Look Magazine named Phenix City as an All-America City in 1955, and in 2007, BusinessWeek named it the nation's best affordable suburb for raising a family.

Besides its cinema-worthy history, Phenix City is a blossoming community with the unique distinction of being located in the only Alabama county included in the Columbus Metropolitan Area. With such easy access to major metropolitan areas, the busiest airport in the world in Atlanta, major seaports and rail systems, the Phenix City region has established its place on the global map. Roughly 38,000 Alabamians call this vibrant city home. It has diverse recreation opportunities, facilities and amenities to suit any outdoor or indoor desire. Phenix City prides itself in its



Phenix City's new fire training facility features a training classroom, offices and an apparatus bay. The new fire drill tower in Phenix City offers firefighters critical hands-on training. Photo credits: Phenix City Economic Development Department





exemplary public and private school systems (including a NASA Explorers Elementary), state-of-the-art orthopedic and rehabilitation hospitals and an abundance of affordable housing opportunities.

Furthermore, the city has invested in strengthening its public service infrastructure. On June 30, 2023, the city finished renovating their public safety building. The \$5 million project took three years to complete and was constructed over the original site of the old Girard City Hall, which was built in 1910. The project consisted of remodeling and adding to a 1964-built building, which increased the size of the city council chambers and municipal court room. The police department, fire department administrative offices and municipal court are all also housed there. The upgraded facility was dedicated to Assistant Police Chief Gail Green, who we lost to COVID-19, for her 33 years of service.

Additionally, Phenix City is nearing the completion of a new fire training facility, which will allow local and surrounding firefighters to get critical hands-on training. It will feature a 4,893 square-foot brick building that will house a training classroom for up to 50 people; four offices for training staff; and storage for at least two fire trucks in the apparatus bay. It will also have a three-story drill tower and burn building.

Time can move slowly, but it can also pass quickly. Positively Phenix City has taken positive steps in its last 100 years to bring us where we are today, and the steps we take today will lead us into the next 100 years. I will leave you with the words of Mayor Eddie Lowe, who often says, “Be a lifter, not a leaner.” May God bless Phenix City and help its citizens lift up our city, our nation and our world. Amen. ■



Top: Phenix City’s Centennial Logo. Image credit: Phenix City Parks and Recreation Department

Middle: Phenix City leaders and citizens celebrated the city’s 100th anniversary on August 9, 2023. Pictured in the first row, left to right: Councilmember Arthur Day Jr., Councilmember Steve Bailey, Mayor Eddie Lowe, Councilmember Dr. R. Griff Gordy and Councilmember Vickey Carter. Pictured in the second row: City Manager Wallace Hunter. Photo credit: Denise DuBois, executive editor of *The Citizen of East Alabama*

Bottom: Phenix City opened their new public safety building on June 30, 2023.

From Patriarchy to Progress: The Extraordinary Life of Jean Price Lewis

Tammia Jacobs • Communications Intern • ALM

From first ladies to enslaved workers, women have been intrinsically involved in American politics throughout time, while often being left in the shadows of their male counterparts. Although our country has yet to see the triumph of a female presidential candidate, women have played an integral role in molding the structure of government and defining the framework abided by today. One of these remarkable stories traces back to Alabama native and political trailblazer, Jean Price Lewis.

Lewis, 105, has a global political perspective sharpened by more years of public service than many modern politicians have been alive. As one of the brilliant minds behind presidents John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson's administrations, it is hard to fathom how such an unpretentious woman, from humble beginnings, could have unmasked a life of such achievement. Lewis was born on May 22, 1918, in Montgomery, two years prior to the ratification of the 19th Amendment, granting women the right to vote. Her mother was from Tuscaloosa and worked as an elementary school teacher, while her father hailed from Florence and was a shoe salesman.

Lewis' mother was regarded as one of Montgomery's leading school teachers. Two notable students were former Alabama Gov. Gordon Persons and Adm. John Crommelin of the U.S. Navy. Even among her mother's considerable work, Lewis recalls the patriarchal effect on women and their professions at the time.

"In those days if you married, you lost your teaching job," Lewis said.

While Lewis accelerated through her primary education, the Great Depression (1929-1939) brought about difficult times for her family. After graduating from Montgomery's Sidney Lanier High School in 1934, amidst the economic crisis, Lewis decided to take a secretarial course to eventually assist her family financially.

In September 1938, upon completion of a civil service examination, Lewis became the first secretary for Ed Reid, the first executive director of the Alabama League of Municipalities. One of the first tasks she had at ALM was writing a periodic newsletter that outlined the impact of congressional decisions on municipalities. A year later, she departed for a secretarial position at Maxwell Air Force Base in Montgomery. Both positions prepared her for a bright future by gaining experience handling administrative tasks and strengthening her writing abilities.

In 1940, Lewis met her future husband, Willis Lewis, a U.S. Air Force pilot who was stationed at Maxwell AFB for flight training. While America was suiting up for the likelihood of World War II, Lewis and the pilot got married in July of 1941. As a military wife, Lewis relocated several times. When the family was posted in Guatemala for three-and-a-half-years, she learned to speak Spanish fluently and welcomed their second child, a son. Years later, Lewis returned home to Montgomery and got a divorce.

Soon after, she reconnected with her old friend and former supervisor, Reid, whom Lewis regards as a man that had an everlasting impact on her life.

"I had a lot of opportunities to see, to meet people who were, you know, well-known, and it was all due to Ed Reid and the [Alabama] League of Municipalities," Lewis explained. "He was the one who recommended me to the Kennedy senate office staff. I really owe it all to the League!"

Reid was a supporter of Kennedy, a U.S. senator from Massachusetts seeking the presidency, and was in steady communication with his assistant and speech writer, Theodore Sorenson. Based on her impressive professional skills, Reid wrote an enthusiastic letter of recommendation to Sorenson, who



In 1958, Jean Price Lewis served as a correspondence secretary for Sen. John F. Kennedy's presidential campaign. Photo credit: Birmingham Post Herald, Oct. 29, 1958

also owed him a favor. As a result, Lewis was offered a position on the senator’s staff as a correspondence secretary in Washington, D.C. However, the strenuous schedule that required at least 60 hours a week, late nights and Saturday attendance, caused her to initially decline the offer, as the schedule was too demanding for a single mother with two young children. Then the unimaginable happened, Kennedy personally wrote Lewis a letter urging her to reconsider the position by explaining that the time spent working on his staff was comparable to working in a private business office, except she would likely receive more time off and adequate compensation.

“I was so flattered by his gesture that I decided to go to D.C. and work for his campaign,” Lewis said.

Reid wrote in a 1958 edition of the *Montgomery Advertiser* newspaper, “Kennedy told me the other day that she [Lewis] is doing a terrific job of handling his political correspondence; most of which she composes and handles without direction from the senator, looking after news stories, editorials and other matters that concern his political welfare. She will no doubt be a vital part of his campaign machine as it shapes up for the 1960 convention for the presidential nomination.”

Lewis worked her way up overseeing logistics for major events, including setting up Kennedy’s Los Angeles campaign office for the 1960 Democratic National Convention. She was one of the few staffers who was with Kennedy and his family in Hyannis Port, Massachusetts when he won the election. She considers his win one of the most fulfilling parts of her career because of all the exhausting time and effort it required.

During the Kennedy Administration, Lewis recalls one of her favorite memories.

“Let me tell you one thing that I liked about Kennedy.” Lewis began. “He was going on an afternoon trip to West Virginia during his re-election campaign. When I saw him, I explained that I told my son (who was 10 years old at the time) that I saw you today, he asked me ‘Did he ask about me?’ Kennedy said, ‘Tell him I did ask about him. In fact, I’m going to write him a note that said I wish you had come with us today.’ I said, ‘Thank you so much Mr. President, but I have a daughter too and she will be jealous.’” Lewis said, with a boisterous laugh. “So, he wrote her a note too.”

Tragically, Kennedy was assassinated on November 22, 1963, while riding in a presidential motorcade in Dallas, TX. Fortunately, when Vice President Lyndon B. Johnson became the thirty-sixth president of the United States, Lewis was asked to stay on in his administration. This period was a more tumultuous time, as the Vietnam War divided the nation and Johnson received heavy criticism for his role in accelerating the conflict. However, Lewis remembers Johnson as a genuine man who had a goal to end poverty in the nation.



Top: Senator John F. Kennedy (left) and Ed Reid (right) at the League’s 1957 Convention in Birmingham where Senator Kennedy addressed municipal delegates during the opening session. Photo from League archives.

Bottom: President John F. Kennedy sits in his original senate seat, which was collectively purchased by his staff, on his first day in the White House. (Lewis is pictured to the left behind Kennedy.) Photo credit: Cecil Stoughton, White House/ John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum, Boston

“I would definitely say the Johnson Administration was able to get a lot more done,” Lewis said. “The ‘War on Poverty’ legislation helped millions of poor Americans through social welfare. A lot of the programs are still relied on today.”

Following her incredible stint in the West Wing, Lewis served as a congressional liaison officer for Latin America with the U.S. Agency for International Development; she held several prominent positions at the U.S. Small Business Administration and retired in the early ‘90s as the associate director of immigration policy for Georgetown University. Surprisingly, even with her extensive career in politics, Lewis has never desired to run for any political office because she is admittedly “too thin skinned.”

Today, Lewis is still observant of modern political and social issues, although she does not concern herself with Alabama politics much, because her home is in Virginia, where she is a registered voter. She said she is most passionate about promoting immigration for a balanced workforce, gun control and access to quality health care.

As a little girl, Lewis said she never realized that women could do everything that men could do. “When I grew older, I was often the only woman in the room. It finally dawned on me that there’s nothing all that special about men,” Lewis said, with a laugh.

In 2023, our nation has 12 female governors, 25 female U.S. senators, 125 female U.S. representatives and our first female vice president. Even as society moves toward progressive ways of looking at gender, diversity and equity in all professions, Lewis still sees room for improvement for the inclusion of women in government and politics.

Her advice to her female successors is simple, “I would say, just keep on running for office!” ■

Top: Tammia Jacobs, ALM’s communications intern, and Lewis discuss some of the famous faces that she encountered while in the presidential office.

Middle: Lewis and ALM Communications Director Lori Johns take a photo after discussing the many highlights of her career in the home that she grew up in, in Montgomery.

Bottom: Lewis humbly showcases her biographical book, “A Remarkable Lady” by Mar Bourne, after sitting down for an interview with the ALM communications team in September 2023.



We are proud to support Alabama's Firefighters through the state's first supplemental cancer benefits policy



Claims:

- 🔥 **Dedicated 800 Claims Number**
- 🔥 **Dedicated Support Staff**
- 🔥 **National A+ Rated Insurance Company**
- 🔥 **Simplified Claim Filing**
- 🔥 **Endorsed by the Alabama League of Municipalities**



Insurance Coverage Options:

- 🔥 **Up to \$50,000 in Cancer Benefits**
- 🔥 **Up to \$3,000 in Monthly Disability Benefits**
- 🔥 **Guaranteed Coverage**
- 🔥 **Career Firefighters**
- 🔥 **Volunteer Firefighters**
- 🔥 **Certified and Non-Certified**
- 🔥 **Simple Quoting Process**
- 🔥 **Base & Enhanced Plans Available**



www.alfrbp.com

1-800-23-CANCER cancerinsurance@alfrbp.com



ALABAMA
MANUFACTURED
HOUSING
ASSOCIATION

DENIED

MORTGAGE APPLICATION

I. TYPE OF MORTGAGE AND TERMS OF LOAN

Mortgage
for:

- VA
- FHA
- USDA/Rural Housing Service
- Conventional
- Other (explain):

No. of Months

Amortization
Type:

- Fixed Rate
- GPM
- Other (type)
- ARM (type)

II. INFORMATION AND PURPOSE OF LOAN

Agency Case Number

Lender Case Number

No. of

Year

70%

OF AMERICANS CAN'T AFFORD
A MORTGAGE ON A **NEWLY
CONSTRUCTED HOME!**



The affordable housing crisis doesn't just impact low-income families. Housing has become unaffordable for the majority of Americans! The solution will require using several different approaches, and manufactured housing should be one of them.

**CONTACT LANCE LATHAM, EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR OF THE ALABAMA
MANUFACTURED HOUSING ASSOCIATION, AT
LLATHAM@ALAMHA.ORG TO LEARN MORE.**

www.alamha.org

POWER OF THE PURSE:

CONGRESSIONALLY-DIRECTED SPENDING IS BACK AND HOPEFULLY HERE TO STAY

UNDERSTANDING THE APPROPRIATIONS PROCESS AND WHAT MUNICIPALITIES CAN DO TO VOICE THEIR NEEDS

MICHAEL BERSON • PARTNER • ADAMS AND REESE

Federal congressionally-directed spending (CDS), also referred to as Community Project Funding, has returned and appears to have some staying power with Republicans in control of the House. GOP lawmakers have included nearly \$7.4 billion across 4,714 individual projects for Fiscal Year 2024 appropriations bills. With a revived, more transparent process, members can again exercise their “power of the purse,” as provided under the U.S. Constitution, to fund critical projects and support constituents back in their districts.

Without CDS, the executive branch and career federal employees were able to freely decide from their desks in Washington, D.C. how, and more importantly, where Alabamians’ federal tax dollars should be spent. It makes sense to have the member of Congress, who knows their district and constituents’ needs best, making those decisions. Therefore, in a major win for their districts and upon passage of a final bill, House GOP stands to take home \$4.5 billion, or 61% of the available funding; Democrats will bring home \$2.7 billion; and \$107.9 million requested by bipartisan groups of lawmakers. However, the House is not alone in taking care of their constituents back home as the Senate reported \$7.7 billion in CDS, with nearly \$4 billion requested by Democrats, \$3 billion requested by Republicans, and \$772.5 million by bipartisan groups, according to *Bloomberg Government*.

Alabama Congressional Leaders Invest in Infrastructure, Military Bases, Waterways, Hospitals and Law Enforcement

Alabama ranks seventh among dollars secured for local projects in the 2024 appropriations process. U.S. Sen. Katie Britt, who sits on the influential Senate Committee on Appropriations, joined her colleagues in advancing the Fiscal Year 2024 Energy and Water Development Appropriations Act, which would appropriate more than \$72 million in direct investments across the state, including \$20.6 million for the revitalization and repair of the George W.

Andrews Lock and Dam on the Apalachicola, Chattahoochee and Flint rivers, in Columbia, Alabama, and \$18.4 million for dredging, maintenance and operations on the, Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway.

U.S. Sen. Tommy Tuberville, a member of the critical Senate Committee on Armed Services, submitted 110 requests for CDS funding impacting projects in 51 of Alabama’s 67 counties, including, but not limited to, \$20 million for Redstone Arsenal, \$4 million for the city of Arab for critical water system improvements, and over \$2.3 million for the city of Heflin to construct a police department headquarters.

U.S. Rep. Jerry Carl (AL-01), who sits on the influential House Committee on Appropriations, was able to include Community Project Funding for a number of critical projects, including, \$4 million for Mobile International Airport fire and rescue improvements, \$750,000 for D.W. McMillan Memorial Hospital in Brewton, and \$1.3 million for Washington County Hospital and Nursing Home to construct a new physician’s office building in Chatom.



U.S. Rep. Mike Rogers (AL-03), chairman of the influential House Committee on Armed Services, requested funding for key projects including, but not limited to, over \$80 million for the Anniston Army Depot, \$3.8 million for the Lee County Sheriff’s Office’s communications system upgrades, and \$6.7 million to fund the design and construction of a new emergency backup generator system and per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) treatment system to treat groundwater in Auburn.

U.S. Rep. Terri Sewell (AL-07), member of the House Committee on Ways and Means and House Committee on Armed Services, was able to request funding for a wide variety of projects. This ranges from \$1.5 million for the West Alabama Food Bank and \$1.3 million for the engineering, design, and construction of a drone cage and testing facility at the Bessemer Airport to \$3.7 million for downtown revitalization efforts within a 12-block area of downtown Selma, and over \$2 million for the city of Demopolis for a new Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) certified storm shelter to house individuals during inclement weather in this rural area.

U.S. Rep. Robert Aderholt (AL-04), chairman of the influential House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and Dale Strong (AL-05), member of the House Committee on Armed Services and Committee on Homeland Security, also hope to bring

home major wins for their constituents. This includes \$2.4 million for the Community Foundation of Northeast Alabama for the Challenger Learning Center; over \$3.8 million for a new community center in Russellville; more than \$4.1 million for a new pump station and gravity main for the city of Priceville; and \$240,000 for five new police vehicles for the city of Scottsboro.

Transportation and Infrastructure Dominate Nationwide Congressionally-Directed Funding

Nationwide, transportation and infrastructure lead the way with House (and Senate) members including \$4 billion for 2,665 projects within the Transportation-HUD Appropriations Bill, compared with \$2.1 billion for 919 projects in the Senate.

Understanding the Appropriations Process

Under the U.S Constitution, Congress exercises the “power of the purse” including Section 9 of Article I, which states funds may be drawn from the U. S. Department of the Treasury only pursuant to appropriations made by law.

The appropriations process is the process by which Congress authorizes and provides funding for the federal government. An appropriation is best described as a statutory provision that provides budget authority, thus permitting Congress to incur obligations and make payments from the U.S. Treasury for specified purposes. CDS is a congressional directive or a provision inserted into a discretionary spending

Here are some of the other critical areas of need supported by members of the House and Senate, according to data from *Bloomberg Government*.

Energy and Water

- House - \$944.5M, 89 projects
- Senate - \$952.6M, 211 projects

Interior-Environment

- House - \$880.4M, 767 projects
- Senate - \$744M, 436 projects

Commerce-Justice-Science

- House - \$600M, 650 projects
- Senate - \$547.3M, 460 projects

Agriculture-FDA

- House - \$484.9M, 396 projects
- Senate - \$290M, 225 projects

Military Construction-VA

- House - \$294.6M, 24 projects
- Senate - \$1.3B, 125 projects

Homeland Security

- House - \$181.2M, 123 projects
- Senate - \$120M, 91 projects

Labor-HHS-Education

- House - None
- Senate - \$1.4B, 1,076 projects

Financial Services and General Government

- House - None
- Senate - \$188M, 196 projects

The following are the main steps of the appropriations process:

- The president submits a budget request to Congress each year, typically in February, outlining his or her spending priorities.
- Congress then considers a budget resolution, which sets overall spending limits for the federal government. The budget resolution is usually passed in April or May.
- The House and Senate appropriations committees then hold hearings, typically held in May and June, on the president’s budget request and other spending proposals.
- The House and Senate appropriations committees markup appropriations bills by making amendments.
- The House and Senate vote on the appropriations bills. If two chambers pass different versions of the same bill, a conference committee is appointed to reconcile the differences. The conference committee reports a compromise bill to the House and Senate. The House and Senate then vote on the compromise bill.
- Once this occurs, the president signs the appropriations bills into law.

appropriations bill that directs funds to a specific recipient while circumventing the merit-based or competitive funds allocation process.

Congress regularly considers three main types of appropriations measures: **regular annual appropriations** to provide budget authority to fund programs and agency activities for the next fiscal year; **supplemental appropriations** to provide additional budget authority during the current fiscal year, if the regular appropriation is insufficient or to finance activities not provided for in the regular appropriation; and **continuing appropriations** (or continuing resolutions) to provide interim (or sometimes full-year) funding to agencies for activities or programs not yet covered by a regular appropriation.

By custom, appropriations bills originate in the House but may be amended by the Senate, as with other legislation. The process can be influenced by a variety of factors, including the political climate, the state of the economy and the priorities of the president and Congress.

Best Practices for Municipalities to Voice Needs

Here are some of the best practices that municipalities can undertake to voice their needs for federal funding:

Ensure your funding request is aligned with appropriations committees’ priorities.

Write a compelling funding request that is clear, concise, and persuasive - explaining the project need, project benefits and project cost. Be prepared to answer any follow-up questions from the appropriations committees.

Gather support from other stakeholders, such as local businesses, community organizations, and labor unions, to demonstrate the project’s wide-ranging support.

Identify members of Congress who are most likely to support your CDS request. This could include your own representative and senators, as well as other members who have a strong interest in your industry or issue area.

Build relationships with your congressional champions - meet with them in person, stay in touch with them regularly and provide them with updates on your project.

Be patient and persistent. The federal funding process can be long and unpredictable, so it is important to remain patient and persistent in your efforts.

It is also important to note that the congressional spending process constantly evolves with the rules and regulations changing from year to year. It is important to stay up-to-date on the latest changes. Advocacy is also critical to your needs; therefore, it is important to consider partnering with legal representation that is familiar with the appropriations process and has connections to the legislative playmakers who make these critical, financial decisions every fiscal year. ■



Michael Berson is a partner in the Mobile office of Adams and Reese. He is experienced in government relations as well as economic development and city, county and local government law. He has represented businesses, municipalities, airport and port authorities, nonprofits, education and charter school clients, and other governmental entities including water and sewer authorities, utilities boards and industrial development boards. At the intersection of business and government, Michael develops and implements federal policy and legislative strategies for clients on Capitol Hill and within various governmental agencies. He formerly served as director of government affairs and associate general counsel of the National Small Business Association in Washington, D.C. Michael can be reached at michael.berson@arlaw.com.

There is consensus among many Alabamians on several matters:

- Government spends too much.
- Government should exhibit high performance.
- Attracting new industry is beneficial because it creates jobs.
- Alabama controlling its affairs is preferable to federal control of Alabama's affairs.

If it is true that government spends too much, then we should require government functions be performed for the lowest possible cost. We should demand the quality of services provided by the government be highly ranked. The government services provided should support the creation of job opportunities for our citizens. State government functions should be performed in a manner that will minimize the need for federal involvement.

Government spends too much.

In 2020, after the last increase to the Alabama Department of Environmental Management's (ADEM) funding, the department's funding was dead last on a per capita basis among

all state and territory environmental programs. Excessive spending is clearly not a shortcoming attributable to ADEM.

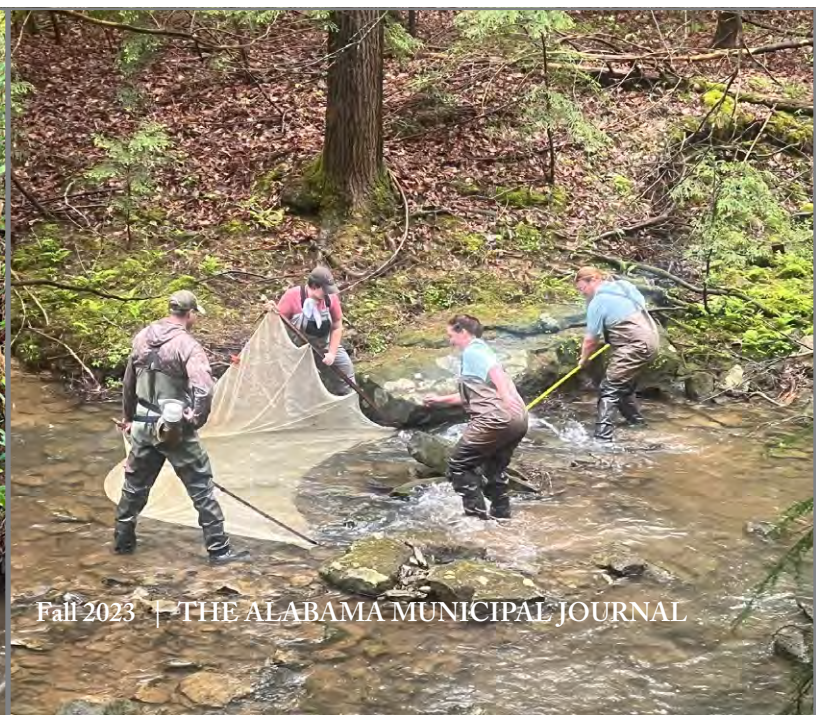
Government should exhibit high performance.

In terms of performance, it is important to consider both the Environmental Protection Agency's assessment of performance, as the federal oversight body assuring the health and safety of our citizens, and business assessment, as a driver of the economic wellbeing for our citizens. The most recent EPA ranking of environmental compliance and enforcement by states puts Alabama in the top 10.

Surveys over the last ten years by "Area Development," a national economic development publication, often quoted by the Alabama Department of Commerce, report that site-selection professionals it surveyed rank Alabama among the top states for doing business. Results of the most recent survey rank Alabama No. 6 overall in the nation. Of the 13 questions in the survey, two relate to the environment - permitting efficiency and regulatory environment. Alabama is ranked No. 1 and No. 3 respectively in the nation by the respondents.

Attracting new industry is beneficial because it creates jobs.

The state of Alabama has historically provided significant incentives to attract new industry with considerable success. In 2023, the Alabama Legislature enacted and Gov. Kay Ivey signed legislation known as "The Game Plan" to renew



and expand incentives to attract new industry to Alabama. In addition to incentives, the other key factors industry considers in deciding where to locate are the regulatory environment in the state and the cost of doing business.

The current regulatory environment in Alabama is highly ranked. Alabama has excellent water quality and the need for enhanced pollution controls by industry is limited. If water quality declines, permitted discharge limits must be tightened, which requires both increased equipment and operating costs.

Alabama controlling its affairs is preferable to federal control of Alabama’s affairs.

ADEM is the state agency that has been delegated the authority to enforce federal environmental laws in Alabama. So long as those laws are effectively enforced, the EPA will defer to state control. Should the state fail to adequately administer the requirements of federal environmental law, the EPA has the authority to take over some, or all, of the administration of those laws.

The extremely low funding level for environmental regulation in Alabama carries risks. At some point, performance can suffer due to a lack of funding. EPA can quickly take increasing control over permitting, inspections and enforcement activities, if performance drops. Greater EPA involvement in the state is detrimental to attracting industry.



ADEM officials conduct water quality testing in local rivers and lakes.



Is it necessary to increase funding of the water program at the Alabama Department of Environmental Management?

As noted earlier, ADEM's per-capita funding, after its most recent budget increase in 2019 (FY 2020), was dead last in the nation. ADEM's air, land and water programs are each partially funded through EPA grants and permit fees. The air and land programs also have supplemental sources of funding in the form of federally authorized Clean Air Act fees or state legislatively authorized user fees respectively. The supplemental sources of funding allow the air and land programs to carry out their required functions.

The Alabama Legislature's entire ADEM General Fund appropriation goes to the water program, but the program still lacks the supplemental sources of funding necessary to cover increased costs due to inflation and increased unfunded mandates, since ADEM's last budget increase in 2019 (FY 2020). Inflation between FY 2020 and FY 2025 (the budget under consideration in the 2024 legislative session) alone would warrant an ADEM budget increase of more than \$10 million.

There are three options currently under consideration to address the increasing environmental regulatory funding

shortfall in the water program that has the potential to have a wide-ranging adverse impact on our state:

1. Assess a modest user fee to drinking water systems, based on the number of customers.
2. Increase water permit fees paid by municipalities, industry and others by 70-80%.
3. Increase ADEM's General Fund appropriation by at least \$6 million.

An additional option is to utilize some combination of the three other options.

Each option has pros and cons. ADEM will be working with potentially impacted stakeholders, including municipalities, to have this issue addressed before the 2024 legislative session, where FY 2025 budgets will be considered.

We need to strongly request action by the Legislature. To do nothing risks a decline in environmental protection, increased federal intervention and loss of state control, and a business climate that is less attractive to business. Failure to address the current and growing funding shortfall also undermines the incentives lawmakers, themselves, put in place to create the jobs Alabamians need to better provide for their families. For more information, visit adem.alabama.gov. ■

 **BLACK MOUNTAIN**
SOFTWARE

SOLUTIONS

FOR YOUR EVERYDAY NEEDS

- Easy-to-use, time-saving, efficient software solutions for Alabama municipalities
- Interfaces available for most standard meter reading systems
- Knowledgeable, professional, "small town" friendly support
- FREE on-going online training

Fund Accounting | Payroll | Budget Prep | Accounts Receivable
Utility Billing | AMR Interface | Email Bills
Cash Receipting | Summit Service Orders | and more!

800.353.8829 | BLACKMOUNTAINSOFTWARE.COM

New Interstate Lighting Initiative Gives Alabama Municipalities a New Reason to Shine

Lane Proctor • Communications Specialist • Alabama Power

For more than 60 years, the interstate highway system has kept the nation connected, mobile and ultimately, safe. From providing an efficient means of transportation and tourism to creating jobs and supporting the rapid delivery of materials and products, the interstate system continues to shape the face of the nation. However, as municipalities and states evolve, advanced technology and innovative lighting solutions are changing the interstate experience.

Drivers traveling through Alabama will now experience brighter and safer interstates thanks to municipal interstate lighting partnerships with Alabama Power. New state of the art light-emitting diode (LED) lighting will give municipalities a chance to shine, while also improving safety.

“We are proud to partner with municipalities to enhance their interstate lighting,” Brian Lett, manager of Alabama Power’s lighting services, said. “As communities grow and evolve, we want to work alongside them to identify solutions to improve safety, maximize development efforts and strengthen the infrastructure of our state.”

The new initiative began when the Jefferson County Mayor’s Association approached the leadership team of Alabama Power’s Birmingham Division requesting their expertise and guidance in improving interstate lighting for local communities.

After the onset of the work in Birmingham, Alabama Power expanded its interstate lighting services to include pilot cities to hone its process and demonstrate the efficiency and need for the work. One of the cities that elected to participate in the pilot program was Clanton, with the first installation completed there along I-65 at exits 205 and 212 in May 2023; it featured 157 LED lights, including high-mast fixtures.

Now, the Alabama Power Lighting Services team is partnering with leadership at the Alabama Department of Transportation to engage with various city officials on these innovative collaborations. As part of the partnership with municipalities, Alabama Power

offers expert field analysis; advanced technology; installation of LED fixtures on ALDOT’s interstate poles; replacements, maintenance and repair, including when these services are needed due to aging and damaged infrastructure.

New LED fixtures illuminate much more efficiently than older forms of lighting. Inset: An older light fixture.



To fit the evolving needs of communities, Alabama Power offers three contractual service options for cities to improve their interstates and better support their communities. Cities can choose from one or all options, depending on their needs. **Services include:**

- **Infrastructure Repair Agreement:** Alabama Power will provide necessary repairs to ALDOT-owned lighting infrastructure
- **Illumination Agreement:** Alabama Power-owned LED fixtures are installed on existing poles
- **Maintenance Agreement:** effective throughout the agreed upon contract term

“Our interstate lighting partnerships allow us to work with municipalities to provide service before, during and after installation,” Jarrik Mitchell, Alabama Power’s interstate project manager, said. “By working directly with city officials, we are able to better understand the needs of the community and can work with the city to meet their needs and desired timeline.”

The benefits of LED lighting go beyond a well-lit roadway. With improved lighting, cities and towns are more apt to attract tourists, travelers and new businesses to exit areas along the interstate, driving economic development in their communities. Improved lighting also increases safety and a sense of civic pride.

In addition to the visual benefits of LED lighting, Lett hopes this work will provide an opportunity to bring communities together to improve the state.

BENEFITS OF LED LIGHTING:

- LED light fixtures are more reliable and energy efficient than metal halide fixtures, high-pressure sodium and mercury vapor lights, which have been commonly used for decades.
- LED fixtures require less maintenance.
- Potential increase in energy savings.
- Superior lighting for enhanced safety.

“It’s when we work closely together, under one mission, that we can make a positive impact on peoples’ lives. When our infrastructure is strong, we have the foundation we need to power a better Alabama together,” Lett said.

To learn more about Alabama Power and its interstate lighting initiative, contact Jarrik Mitchell, Alabama Power interstate project manager, at 205-664-6635 or at jomitche@southernco.com. ■

Alabama Power, a subsidiary of Atlanta-based Southern Company (NYSE:SO), provides dependable, affordable electricity to 1.5 million customers across the state. Supporting the communities we serve is at the core of our mission, and we are focused on providing innovative solutions to grow the state and enhance the lives of our customers. Learn more at www.alabamapower.com.

New LED interstate lights in Clanton, AL.



Resilience and Innovation in South Alabama

Michael Chriszt • Vice President and Regional Engagement Officer
Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta

Editor's note: This article was published on the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta's website on May 9, 2023 and has been printed with permission from the author.

Brewton, Alabama—one of the first places I visited as part of the Atlanta Fed's regional outreach initiative—represents the often-overlooked strength of small-town America. Located just 60 miles from the Gulf Coast, Brewton boasts a highly rated school system and a well-established industrial base. But what I remember most, and what I have found in countless other towns across the region, is its spirit of optimism and resilience, which simply cannot be fully absorbed until you spend time with the people of these communities.

How did I choose Brewton? When this new outreach initiative launched, I reached out to Merrill Stewart, who was then a member of the board of directors of the Atlanta Fed's Birmingham Branch. Merrill runs Stewart Perry Construction, a general contracting company with business throughout the Southeast and beyond. Merrill and I had known each other for a long time, and I was familiar with his company's work in small towns. He was well positioned as someone I could go to for advice on my new venture. He immediately said I needed to go to Brewton. Having just completed construction in that town on the new Alabama headquarters for Provalus, an IT services company, Merrill had been to Brewton many times and had gotten to know it well. I'm deeply indebted to him and thankful for his support and inspired by his service.

To it, not through it

If you drive into Brewton from the south, a lovely mural depicting the town's historical ties to the lumber industry greets you, along with what looks to be an old movie theater. I learned later that it's not actually a movie house. The town had to raze its original movie theater back in the 1980s but salvaged the marquee and façade, attaching them to a facsimile of the original. This building is now used as a landmark to welcome travelers and as an announcement board for community events. It's a terrific symbol of the creativity and ingenuity that I've seen on display throughout my travels.

I met up with Merrill at city hall, where Mayor Yank Lovelace and Connie Baggett, the city of Brewton's program manager, welcomed us. They were incredibly gracious with their time, as were so many others that I met during my visit. We discussed Brewton's recent economic history and their work in revitalizing the downtown before we moved on.

The rest of my visit, which Merrill and the mayor's office had set up, included a tour of Provalus, discussions with business and community leaders from Brewton and nearby towns, and a talk with the Rotary Club of Brewton.



My favorite Brewton mural sits just outside the new Provalus campus. A few obliging Provalus employees posed for the photo.

This mix of tours, meetings, and talks has been something I've tried to replicate in my later visits to other towns in the Atlanta Fed's district. My goal is to spend time in these towns, talking to as many people as possible and learning as much as I can. It's my "to it not through it" approach: I never want to just drive through a town, give a talk, then drive away.

A successful blend of innovation and history

Provalus is a newcomer to Brewton, yet it matches the town's spirit of innovation. Will Ruzic, vice president of facilities and operations, showed us around the company's campus, which has a modern and fun layout that incorporates unused downtown structures, so it blends efficiently with the historic setting of downtown Brewton.

Brewton is one of four Provalus locations; the others are in Oklahoma, South Carolina and Texas. The company locates its offices in small towns, like Brewton, and rural areas to take advantage of untapped talent. It aims to help revitalize these important economic areas.

Brewton is also home to one of the oldest privately held sawmills in the nation. T.R. Miller Mill Company, in operation for more than 150 years, represents how the town manages its bountiful resources. The early town settlers and their descendants have tamed the resources they could and taken steps to manage those they could not, like the two creeks that bisect the town and often brought heartache when their waters spilled over their banks.

One of my most memorable encounters—it was during a meeting with local business leaders—was when members of the McMillen family, one of the town's most influential families, gave me the book "The History of Escambia County." They gave it to me with a smile and such a sense of pride that I knew its 600-plus pages hold more than just a region's



Merrill Stewart, Mayor Lovelace, Will Ruzic, and I at the Provalus campus in Brewton. No, I didn't go down the slide.



history. This book was their story, and the story of other families who had built Brewton with the kind of spit and grit it took to scratch out a town in what was a wilderness. They are still there—families with a long-standing presence in Brewton, continuing to invest in their town and guiding its future development.

Economic challenges and successes

Brewton’s economy, like that of many other small towns, has had its struggles, but the mayor and other city leaders have worked hard to bring in the kind of amenities necessary for successful revitalization. They expect more retail and restaurants to open and are conducting several beautification projects. These plans and projects have faced challenges because so many unoccupied buildings seem to be owned by someone or some firm from far away who has little interest in selling or refurbishing. Happily, many of the town’s historic buildings and residences have been lovingly cared for and remain in use today. These charming places are the cornerstone of Brewton’s presence, something that is true for other small towns throughout the region.

Some of the people I spoke with shared that housing is a concern—there’s not enough of it. Builders have supply and labor issues, and may find it more profitable to build in urban areas. I’m not sure how many of the 200 or so Provalus employees live in town, but community leaders shared that there weren’t as many as they would like. While these leaders are confident this will be resolved as Brewton continues to invest in itself and more housing becomes available, everyone acknowledged it would take time.

Labor shortages were another concern businesses expressed. Finding workers for open positions has been difficult. They shared that their top priorities are both attracting new employees and retaining the employees they have.

Some smaller companies were evidence of the town’s success at attracting and supporting businesses. For example, I met a married couple who came home to Brewton to start an IT training company to help prepare the next generation for the jobs that will be in demand. I also spoke with a young entrepreneur who had started her own coffee shop, one that everyone in town was talking about.

The pride, commitment, resilience and kindness of Brewton

I mentioned Connie Baggett earlier, Brewton’s program management director. Every small town seems to have someone whom I, in tribute to her, have come to call “Connie.” These are the folks who make things happen, who always seem to find a way to get things done, and whose energy is matched by kindness and warmth. Connie and those I’ve met like her strike me as the kind of people who would pitch in to help you with your chores, even if your chores had nothing to do with theirs, and still manage to finish everything on their own to-do list with time to spare.

Connie, the mayor, and all the other people of Brewton I was gifted with meeting were the epitome of pride, commitment, resilience and kindness that I experienced in Brewton and in every other small town I’ve visited since. They all know the challenges that lay ahead, but remain convinced they will meet and overcome them.

I, too, am convinced. ■



Michael Chriszt is the vice president and regional engagement officer for the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta’s Corporate Engagement Division. In this role, he serves as the Atlanta Fed’s lead public engagement officer focusing on smaller cities and towns, as well as rural areas, in the Sixth District, connecting directly with citizens to explain the Federal Reserve and its policy decisions. In turn, he learns how the economy is performing in the places he visits and shares this information with the bank’s senior leaders and other policy experts. Mike has been with the Atlanta Fed for nearly 34 years and has held leadership roles in both the research and public affairs departments. (Photo credit: Ted Pio Roda)

Learn more about the
CMO Program
 and how it strengthens
 municipalities by educating
 municipal leaders.



almonline.org/CMOProgram

IT in a Box

A complete IT solution for local government.



Sign up today and let us handle your IT needs and risks.

www.vc3.com/itnb

Ches Allen
 615.610.6122
ches.allen@vc3.com
www.vc3.com



Powered by
 Chuck Stephenson
 334.262.2566
cstephenson@almonline.org
www.almonline.org

JOIN US IN HUNTSVILLE - MAY 15 - 18 CONVENTION 2024

ADEM to Host Nonpoint Source Conference in January

Heather Griffin • Chief of NPS Unit • Alabama Department of Environmental Management

The Alabama Nonpoint Source Management Program, administered by the Alabama Department of Environmental Management, utilizes a voluntary approach to address nonpoint source (NPS) pollution within the state of Alabama. NPS pollution, also known as polluted runoff, occurs when rainfall flows over and through the land picking up contaminants such as sediment, nutrients or bacteria. These pollutants are then carried by streams or storm sewers to our lakes, rivers, wetlands, coastal waters and ground waters. Initiated in 1989, the Alabama NPS Management Program relies on best management practices, education and outreach, technology transfer, monitoring and assessments, and resource assistance using a balanced statewide and watershed-focused restoration approach to combat NPS pollution within the state.

The Alabama NPS Management Program will host its biennial statewide Nonpoint Source Conference on January 18, 2024, in Wetumpka. The conference will offer a variety of professional presentations surrounding topics on NPS pollution, water quality, implementation projects, soil health, community engagement and education, and stormwater management controls. The conference also provides an opportunity to spotlight other programs within the department such as Water Quality Monitoring and Assessment, the State Revolving Fund, Brownfields Redevelopment and Voluntary Cleanup, and the Alabama Recycling Revolving Fund.

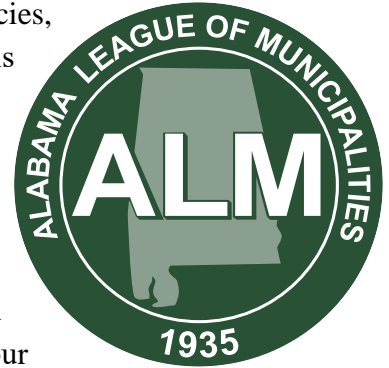
The Alabama Nonpoint Source Conference is a **free** event and open to the public. Registration is required, so staff can properly prepare for the conference. Presentations and agenda topics are geared toward water professionals, environmental engineers, environmental scientists, geologists, foresters, biologists, municipal leaders, stormwater professionals, watershed stakeholders and water quality specialists.

For further information on the Alabama Nonpoint Source Conference or the Alabama Nonpoint Source Management Program, please contact Heather Griffin, Nonpoint Source Unit chief, at hmgriffin@adem.alabama.gov or by phone at (334)394-4354. You can also scan the QR code above.



JOIN THE TEAM, TODAY! BECOME A SPONSOR!

At ALM, we are not only dedicated to advocating for strong municipal policies, but we are committed to educating both new and veteran municipal officials about best practices in doing their jobs and giving them the resources to develop innovative ideas. We want every one of Alabama's municipal leaders to have a firm foundation, so they can better serve their communities and that is where you come in. As a strategic partner, sponsor or exhibitor, you will play a special role in supporting our mission to strengthen local leadership. Your partnership will assist us with hosting strategically crafted events and programs throughout the year. We hope that you will join us in our journey to make Alabama's communities the best places to live, work and play.



Scan the QR code to view a video message from our Deputy Director Kayla Bass about the benefits of the Sponsorship Program!



NLC
NATIONAL LEAGUE OF CITIES



ATLANTA
PRECONFERENCE ACTIVITIES AND EXECUTIVE EDUCATION SESSIONS

**NOVEMBER
16-18
2023**
NOVEMBER 15, 2023

Meeting
the **Moment**

State Municipal League members **save**
REGISTRATION DISCOUNT **35%**

**Experts, renowned speakers
and workshops to strengthen
and build your skills.**

Connect with peers and thought
leaders to learn proven best practices
for serving your community.

**Early bird pricing
ends June 30.**

REGISTER TODAY
at citysummit.nlc.org

Make plans to join the League for training in 2024!



- **February/March/April/June/July: CMO Regional Trainings** (February 22 - Montgomery; March 21 - Spanish Fort; April 4 - Troy; June 20 - Vestavia Hills; July 11 - Hartselle)
- **February 7: Legislative Advocacy Day, Montgomery**
- **March 10 - 13: NLC Congressional City Conference, Washington, D.C.** (Pre-conference activities will begin March 9-10. Learn more: www.nlc.org)
- **May 15 - 18: Annual Convention and Expo, Huntsville**
- **August: ALM In-State Congressional Luncheons, (locations and dates TBD)**
- **October 30 - November 1: Municipal Leadership Institute and League Graduation Ceremonies, Orange Beach**
- **November 13 - 16: NLC City Summit, Tampa, FL (www.nlc.org)**

January - December: Anytime Training (www.almonline.org/AnytimeTraining)

Visit www.almonline.org/UpcomingTraining for training and registration information. Registration for League events opens six - eight weeks prior to the date of the event. *Any municipal official or employee may register for these events, but only elected officials will be awarded credit hours in the Certified Municipal Official Program.*

Scan the QR code to view a video message from our Deputy Director Kayla Bass about the benefits of participating in the CMO Program!



Alabama League of Municipalities
PO Box 1270
Montgomery, AL 36102

Presorted Std.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Montgomery, AL
PERMIT NO. 340

Add Peace of Mind

The Municipal Worker's Compensation Fund has been serving Alabama's Municipalities since 1976 and is the second oldest league insurance pool in the nation!



- Directed by Veteran Municipal Officials from Alabama
- Over 600 Participating Municipal Entities
- Free Safety Video Library & Online Training
- Since 1976, MWCF has returned over \$81 million to its members as Renewal Dividends.
- Free Medical Cost Containment Program
- New Member Discounts
- Loss Control Services, Including:
 - Skid Car Training Courses
 - Fire Arms Training System
- Claims Analysis
- Safety Discounts Available

Contact Us!
Quick Quotes
available online.
www.almwcf.org

Richard Buttenshaw
President, MWCF
P.O. Box 1270
Montgomery, AL 36102
334-262-2566

Terry Young
Marketing Manager, MWCF
P.O. Box 43769
Birmingham, AL 35243
1-888-736-0210
email: tyoung@mrm-llc.com