June 14, 2013

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UA’s Bryce land project includes new $25M road

By Stephanie Taylor
Staff Writer

TUSCALOOSA | The University of Alabama’s plans to develop the Bryce Hospital property will happen sooner than expected thanks to a $16 million state grant.

The grant awarded in April will allow the university to build a $25 million road that will cross the Bryce property and connect the eastern portion of campus with Jack Warner Parkway.

The properties committee of the UA board of trustees discussed the road project at its meeting Thursday and approved a preliminary construction budget the full board will consider today.

UA paid the Alabama Department of Mental Health nearly $72 million for the Bryce property in 2010. UA planned to build the road in phases but will be able to complete the project at once because of the $16 million grant awarded by Gov. Robert Bentley’s office in April through the Alabama Transportation Rehabilitation and Improvement Program.

"This road will open up the Bryce property and will be the impetus to start development," said UA planner and designer Dan Wolfe.

"All of the things we have in our master plan will be easily accessible," he said.

UA plans to construct new buildings and use existing ones on the 160-acre property. There are plans for student housing, a performing arts center and administrative buildings, Wolfe said.

"There are several studies that must be completed to comply with ALDOT and Federal Highway Administration regulations and procedures before the road design can be initiated," he said.

A four-lane road will connect the end point of Fifth Avenue to Hackberry Lane near Shelby Hall. A two-lane road is planned to connect that extension to Jack Warner Parkway.

The entire road project, including construction, security, lighting, emergency phones, bus shelters, architecture, engineering and other fees is projected to cost $25,134,670.

Construction is expected to cost $19,145,000.

The $16,081,800 grant awarded to UA is based on 80 percent of the construction cost, $15,316,000; plus a 5 percent contingency, $765,800. UA will cover the remaining $9,052,870 with future revenue bonds.

ATRIP was established by Bentley to help local areas get access to money needed for essential road and bridge improvements.

Since July 2012, Tuscaloosa County has received more than $83.5 million in ATRIP money for road and bridge projects in cities and rural areas.

Stephanie Taylor at stephanie.taylor@tuscaloosanews.com or 205-722-0210.
Alabama Athletics Department to pay for part of new fraternity house

By Melissa Brown

TUSCALOOSA, Alabama -- The University of Alabama Board of Trustees approved the preliminary project plan for the demolition and construction of a new, relocated Phi Kappa Psi fraternity house at its physical properties committee meeting Thursday.

The university will loan the chapter $4.6 million of the $6.2 million project budget. The athletics department is set to contribute $1.2 million. University spokeswoman Cathy Andreen said the contribution is due to the fraternity's cooperation in giving up their property at the north end zone of Bryant-Denny stadium. The new house will be constructed across campus on University Boulevard.

The current house is in a comparable position to the recently-demolished Office of Student Media, which was razed for Walk of Champions green space. The board also approved four other resolutions regarding the construction or expansion of Greek houses at its physical properties committee meeting Thursday afternoon. The resolutions included the future Alpha Phi and Gamma Phi Beta sorority houses planned on Bryant Drive. Both houses are budgeted at around $12 million, and the University will furnish loans of around $11 million for each.

Kappa Kappa Gamma's reallocated $13.3 million project budget was also approved. The current KKG house will be demolished and a new, expanded facility will be built in the same location.

Retiring employees, including Bill Jones, the veteran director of governmental relations, were also honored prior to committee meetings. U.S. Rep. Jo Bonner, R-Mobile, is set to fill Jones's position on Aug. 16. The UA System announced Wednesday Bonner would receive a $350,000 salary.

The Board will reconvene Friday morning at 9:30 a.m. for other committee meetings before the cumulative Board of Trustees meeting at 10:45 a.m., when trustees will vote on raising tuition for in-state student 2.7 percent.
UA Board of Trustees committee approves further construction

By Katherine Owen

The University of Alabama Board of Trustees physical properties committee approved further action in the UA Sorority Expansion Master Plan at Thursday’s meeting. The entire board will vote on the actions Friday.

The affected houses include Alpha Phi, Gamma Phi Beta, Kappa Kappa Gamma and Phi Mu.

Alpha Phi and Gamma Phi Beta will both construct houses on Paul W. Bryant Drive with budgets set at roughly $12 million.

Kappa Kappa Gamma will demolish its current house and is set to rebuild on Colonial Drive with the committee’s approval for a revised budget of $13 million.

Phi Mu was also approved for a preliminary budget of $13 million for a house on Colonial drive.

The committee approved Phi Kappa Psi fraternity for a preliminary budget of $6 million to construct a house on University Blvd.

Additionally, the committee approved a budget revision for an increase of roughly $2 million for the Ferguson Center renovation, bringing the project in at around $43 million.

The board as whole will also vote Friday on a potential tuition increase for all UA system campuses, which would raise tuition $125 for in-state students and $500 for out-of-state students at the University of Alabama specifically. The committee meetings will reconvene at 9:30 a.m. Friday followed by the entire Board of Trustees at 10:45 a.m.
UAB's Barnes & Noble bookstore to make temporary move during project

Stan Diehl
sdiel@al.com

The Barnes & Noble bookstore at UAB will be temporarily relocated to the former Food Fair supermarket building nearby while the university conducts a $48.5 million replacement and renovation of portions of its Hill University Center, a university official said. The University of Alabama System board of trustees last year approved the plan to demolish and replace portions of the center and to renovate an adjacent office building. The center, at 1400 University Blvd., houses dining facilities, the UAB Ticket Office, student publications, mail services and Blazeradio, among other services and administrative offices. Demolition is scheduled to begin in August.

The Birmingham Design Review Committee this week approved design plans for the temporary bookstore. UAB owns the former supermarket building, at 1216 Sixth Ave. South.
Alabama Board of Trustees to vote on 2.7% tuition increase for in-state students

By: Melissa Brown

The University of Alabama Board of Trustees will vote Friday on a 2.7 percent tuition increase for in-state students and a 4.4 percent increase for out-of-state students, the smallest percentage increase seen in recent years.

The proposed tuition hike is estimated to raise an additional $15,775,000 annually, according to a memo from the Financial Affairs office.

The proposal, to be presented and voted on Thursday and Friday at the Board's meeting in Tuscaloosa, would set tuition at $4,725 per semester for in-state students for the upcoming fall semester, up from this year's $4,600. Out-of-state students would have to pay $11,975 per semester, a $500 increase.

These numbers are for tuition -- no room, board or fees -- for students taking 12 to 16 semester hours. In-state students would have to pay $385 for each additional hour in excess of 16 semester hours they would take, and out-of-state students would be charged $1,010 per hour.

Dr. Ray Watts, president of UAB, is requesting a 6 percent increase of in-state and out-of-state credit hour tuition rates, which would account for $9.6 million in additional revenue for the school.

UA Huntsville will request a 4.53 percent increase for an average 12 semester hour in-state student workload, and a 1.9 percent increase for out-of-state students.
Jo Bonner to receive $350,000 in University of Alabama System position

By: Melissa Brown

U.S. Rep Jo Bonner, R-Ala., will earn $350,000 in his new position with the University of Alabama System office.

The salary constitutes more than a 100 percent raise from the current congressional compensation of $174,000.

A salary had not been set on May 23, when Bonner announced he would be resigning from Congress to take the position of vice chancellor for economic development and governmental relations.

The job was originally reported as a new position, but a UA System spokeswoman said that is not the case. After Bill Jones, the veteran director of government relations, retired this spring, Reinhart said administrators began examining the job.

"It is not a new position," Kellee Reinhart said. "Bill's announcement prompted us to look at the scope of responsibilities of that position and formally recognize the UA System's growing role statewide in economic development. The result is a change in the title of the position."

Bonner will begin his duties as vice chancellor on Aug. 16, and Reinhart confirmed that the position will be based in Alabama, not Washington, D.C.

Bonner's announcement stunned constituents and politicians alike and raised questions among some about nepotism at the University of Alabama. Bonner's sister and current UA President Judy Bonner was nominated for her position by UA Chancellor Robert Witt in October 2012 following the abrupt exit of then-president Guy Bailey.

In a May 23 press conference, Bonner said he previously had no intention of leaving Congress mid-term until Witt approached him with the position. At the time, no salary had been set.

However, UA officials continue to reiterate that Judy Bonner is an employee of the University of Alabama and Jo Bonner will work for the UA System, two separate entities. Bonner told UA's student newspaper The Crimson White, who first reported the salary, that working with his sister will be no different than working with other campus presidents.

"Regarding how I intend to work with my sister, I would expect the same way I hope to work with Dr. Watts, and Dr. Altenkirch: proactively helping them accomplish their goals and agendas for the three campuses," Bonner told the CW.

President Bonner released a statement in May, saying she is proud of her brother on a personal level for the "contributions he has already made and the work he will accomplish in this new position."

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"Certainly, his experience and expertise in the area of government relations and economic development will be invaluable as he works with all three campuses to enhance the quality of life for all Alabamians," she said.

To date, at least six people are in the running for Bonner's seat in the 1st Congressional District, including State Rep. Randy Davis, Dean Young and former state Senator Bradley Byrne.

Information on Bonner's expected salary comes just on the heels of news that the UA Board of Trustees will consider a tuition raise for all three campuses. The board increased tuition last year by 7 percent at UA to $9,200 for two semesters; 8.5 percent at UAB to $8,400, and 8.6 percent at UAH to $8,794.
UA system determines Jo Bonner's new position salary

Jo Bonner, Judy Bonner to work under separate divisions

By Katherine Owen
Production Editor.

U.S. Rep. Josiah "Jo" Bonner, R-Ala., will have a salary of $350,000 when he begins work with The University of Alabama System in the fall, Kellee Reinhart, vice chancellor of system relations, said.

Bonner will be taking on the position of vice chancellor of economic development and government relations starting Aug. 16. When Bonner announced May 23 that he would be stepping down from Congress to take a job with the UA system, his salary was still unknown at the time.

The position is a result of the retirement of previous government relations director Bill Jones and the resulting reorganization of the entire branch.

"When Bill Jones, the UA system's director of government relations, announced his plans to retire after more than 30 years, we began looking at the scope of the responsibilities of that position," Reinhart said. "We made the

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Jo Bonner discusses goals for UA system

Bonner from Page 1

decision to formally recognize the UA system’s increased role in economic development and expand the position. The result is a new title and added responsibilities for a position that has been a part of our organizational structure for many years.”

Reinhart said there was an interview process for filling the position, though a list of considered candidates is not available.

Bonner is the brother of UA President Judy Bonner, though Reinhart said the siblings will be working in different parts of the UA body. Judy Bonner is an employee of The University of Alabama, and Jo Bonner will be an employee of The University of Alabama System. Reinhart said there are no policies preventing siblings from both working in the system.

Jo Bonner, too, said while he and his sister are very close, he will be working with the system at large and not the Tuscaloosa campus.”

“As such, I will be working with Dr. Witt on behalf of all three campuses,” he said. “Regarding how I intend to work with my sister, I would expect the same way I hope to work with Dr. Watts, and Dr. Altenkirch. Proactively helping them accomplish their goals and agendas for the three campuses.”

UA system Chancellor Robert Witt said the system found Jo Bonner’s history with state government and economic development makes him the “ideal candidate” for this position.

“Jo Bonner’s career in government, the great respect he has earned in Washington [D.C.] and Montgomery, and his extensive track record in economic development make him the ideal candidate for vice chancellor for government relations and economic development,” Witt said. “We look forward to his arrival later this summer.”
Board of trustees to consider on Friday sixth straight annual hike

By Stephanie Taylor
Staff Writer

Tuition for University of Alabama students could increase nearly 3 percent for the 2013-14 academic school year.

The board of trustees of the University of Alabama will consider raising tuition for each of the system's three campuses at its meeting Friday.

If a proposal included in the board's agenda is approved, tuition for full-time undergraduate and graduate students who attend the main campus would increase $125 per semester. Tuition for full-time students from out of state would increase $500 per semester.

The tuition hike is expected to generate an additional $15.8 million for the UA main campus, according to a memo from the university's financial affairs office to school President Judy Bonner that was included in the agenda provided to The Tuscaloosa News on Wednesday.

The proposed increases would raise in-state tuition for students enrolled in 12 to 16 hours of classes at the main campus from $4,600 to $4,725 each semester—a 2.7 percent increase. Tuition for out-of-state students would increase 4.4 percent—from $11,475 to $11,975.

If approved, it would be the sixth tuition increase for the UA main campus. A total of $13.7 million has been raised since 2010.

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Annual in-state tuition for UA

Up 3%

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STAFF GRAPHIC | ANTHONY BRATINA

Thursday, June 13, 2013
TUITION

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straight year of tuition increases at the UA main campus, UAB and the University of Alabama in Huntsville. University administrators and board members have cited cuts in state funding when raising tuition in recent years.

This year’s tuition increase would be the smallest percent-
age increase in the past six years, from a high of almost 13 percent in 2010 to a previous low of nearly 7 percent last year.

The board’s finance committee will discuss the proposal at a 10 a.m. Friday meeting at the Bryant Conference Center. The full board will vote on the committees’ recommendation at its 10:45 a.m. meeting.

Reach Stephanie Taylor at stephanie.taylor@tuscaloosa news.com or 205-722-0210.
People have right to know where their money goes

Most students and parents of students are relieved to hear that the University of Alabama System board of trustees plans to vote on a tuition increase of “only” 2.7 percent this year. That’s considerably less than the almost 7 percent increase last year.

It’s not that any increase is welcome. Tuition has been climbing steadily, piling up year upon year for the past decade while wages have been largely stagnant. The board of trustees has offset losses in its endowment investments and flat or declining state funding on the backs of students and their families.

We have argued previously that the university system cannot continue to increase tuition. To do so will eventually drive the cost of a college education beyond the reach of the Alabama citizens who the state flagship university serves. An education at a public university is the primary way that average people have to improve their lives.

At some point, UA officials must learn to tighten their belts and make do on less. It is what just about everyone has been doing through almost five years of difficult economic times.

It is hard for university system officials to make the case that they are making the wisest use of the taxpayers’ and the tuition payers’ money when the University of Alabama continues to pay former UA President Guy Bailey more than $500,000 annually, apparently for not working. Bailey’s position is ostensibly that of professor, but he is not teaching or conducting research. UA also paid partial salaries to two of Bailey’s aides who followed him here from Texas.

Bailey resigned unexpectedly last year after a brief tenure in office. He said he needed to take care of his wife, who has had cancer. He also said that she could not meet the social obligations expected of the university president’s wife.

Bailey’s resignation raised questions immediately. His wife was ill when he accepted the job, and the job’s requirements should have been clear from the outset.

We certainly have compassion for someone suffering from that dreadful illness and do not wish to be hard-hearted.

But we do not believe that every University of Alabama employee is afforded the opportunity to stay on full salary while tending to sick relatives. Most would consider themselves fortunate to receive an unpaid leave of absence.

Neither the board of trustees nor UA System Chancellor Robert Witt have offered what we feel like is a full or satisfactory explanation of why Bailey continues to be paid his full salary when it does not appear that the university is obligated to do so. Their failure to explain this has unnecessarily led to ugly rumors that have circulated around town.

People who are asked to pay the bills have a right to ask what they’re paying for. If they are going to be expected to pay more for their education and their children’s education, they are at least due an explanation.
Bronner: Governor 'irresponsible' on Medicaid

Bentley opposes expanding health care program despite federal incentives

By Patrick Rupinski
Business Editor

TUSCALOOSA | The head of the pension funds for Alabama’s state workers on Tuesday accused Gov. Robert Bentley of acting irresponsibly by refusing to expand Alabama’s Medicaid program.

David Bronner, the longtime CEO of the Retirement Systems of Alabama, told members of the Tuscaloosa Rotary Club that Alabama is one of 14 states with conservative Republican governors who have refused to accept federal dollars to expand their Medicaid programs.

"To turn it down makes no sense whatsoever to me. It is irresponsible," Bronner said during a luncheon speech at Indian Hills Country Club.

Bronner never mentioned Bentley by name but said most governors, including Republicans and Democrats, have accepted the Medicaid expansion "except for these 14 idiots across America."

Bentley has maintained that he will not expand Medicaid as it now exists because the state can’t afford it.

Medicaid is a program that provides health care to the poor. It is funded by the federal government and the states, with the states handling much of the administration.

Part of President Barack Obama’s Affordable Care Act includes expanding Medicaid coverage across the country. Under the Obama health care plan passed by Congress, the federal government will pay for the full cost of the expanded Medicaid program for three years.

After that, the federal government would pay for 90 percent of the expanded program’s cost while states would pay for 10 percent, Bronner said.

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MEDICAID
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In return, about 330,000 Alabamians without health insurance, most of them women and children, would be covered by Medicaid, Bronner said.

"After 2016, you and I would have to put up 10 cents on the dollar," Bronner said of the cost to state taxpayers.

Bronner said it makes economic sense for the state to expand its Medicaid program, noting it would inject money into the state economy that would create jobs. "As money comes in, it creates jobs," he said.

"The governor will use (the recruitment of) Airbus as a key for his re-election," he said of the European aeronautics company building a giant plant near Mobile. "That is great. It is 1,000 jobs.

"If we can come up with $360 million (in incentives) to get Mercedes-Benz and $180 million (in incentives) for Airbus, there is no reason why we cannot come up with the money to pick up $1 billion" in federal money, he said.

He argued it would save money in the long run as those who are denied Medicaid will seek care at hospitals if injured or seriously ill.

Bentley’s press office did not reply to an email from The Tuscaloosa News requesting a response to Bronner’s remarks.

Bronner never mentioned Bentley by name but said most governors, including Republicans and Democrats, have accepted the Medicaid expansion “except for these 14 idiots across America.”

In responding to questions from the audience, Bronner said the Retirement Systems of Alabama is not looking at building any projects in Tuscaloosa.

He said Tuscaloosa missed out on being part of the Robert Trent Jones Golf Trail, which the RSA built across the state in the 1990s. He said some area politicians at the time, whom he did not identify, were uncooperative.

He said RSA also considered building a luxury hotel/ convention center complex in Tuscaloosa, but that the site offered to RSA was not desirable.
David Bronner unbridled (again)

Says state is ‘idiot’ not to expand Medicaid coverage

David Bronner, the longtime head of the Retirement Systems of Alabama, a man with a reputation for being blunt, lived up to that billing on Tuesday in an impassioned speech to the Rotary Club of Tuscaloosa, calling on the state to take part in the federal government’s expansion of Medicaid health care coverage for the poor.

Gov. Robert Bentley has repeatedly said he will not allow the state to take part, and Bentley’s decision has broad support in the Republican-dominated state Legislature.

What Bronner said

• “I don’t think I’ve ever given a more important speech ... and I want you to know the facts because facts are a little elusive in Alabama.”

• “These 330,000 Alabamians don’t have adequate health care. They get their arm cut off, they get sick ... what are we saying to them by refusing to take this money?”

• The 14 states refusing to take part in the Medicaid expansion, including Alabama, are “idiots.”

• The expansion approved by Congress would pay the entire cost of the expanded Medicaid program for three years. “... The guess of most experts is that in Alabama, the expansion would bring in between $15-$17 billion in those first three years with the cost to the state of between $700 million to $1 billion. After 2016, the cost to you and me would be 10 cents on the dollar. How dumb would it be not to take that trade?”

• He knows that based on opinion polls, so-called Obamacare is unpopular with 60 percent of Alabamians, “but get over it. It’s the law of the country. Back in the 1930s, Social Security had its critics but today it is maybe the most popular federal program we have.”

What you’re saying

(Comments posted on AL.com)

• I still have trouble understanding why a program developed by the ultra-conservative Heritage Foundation gets so much backlash from Republicans. Why a program that gives money to private insurance companies is so hated by Republicans. The program was first and foremost a GOP response to more liberal ideas about a single payer system — to keep the private sector involved. I can only conclude that Republicans now hate it because it was finally put into effect by a Democrat.

• Bronner is correct. Those of you who think you are being harmed by the strengthening of the common good should just stop. You are all recipients of some form of government benefit at some point as a citizen in our great nation.

• I see the liberals are out in full force again with the name calling and denigrations instead of any valid viewpoint other than, as Bronner put it, “get over it.”

• Alabama can hardly keep up with its share of funding for the present Medicaid program. Consideration of an expanded Medicaid program borders on financial suicide.

• Bronner is correct. Those of you who think you are being harmed by the strengthening of the common good should just stop. You are all recipients of some form of government benefit at some point as a citizen in our great nation.

• Reporting by Charles J. Dean, al.com
MEDICAID

Study blasts states that won’t expand

A RAND Corporation study was published in the journal Health Affairs. RAND, located in Santa Monica, Calif., describes itself as a nonprofit institution that helps improve policy making through research and analysis.

**Subject**

Impact of 14 states, including Alabama, so far choosing not to expand Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act. Under the act, Medicaid eligibility could be raised to nearly everyone with an annual income of less than 138 percent of poverty.

The federal government will cover 100 percent of health care expenditures from 2014 through 2016. The federal matching rate declines after 2016, falling gradually to 90 percent in 2020.

**The states**

Alabama, Georgia, Idaho, Iowa, Louisiana, Maine, Mississippi, North Carolina, Okla-

homa, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, South Dakota, Texas and Wisconsin.

**Conclusions**

- The states still will be subject to the taxes, fees and other revenue provisions of the Affordable Care Act, without reaping the benefits of the additional federal spending.
- The states will leave a total of $8.4 billion on the table.
- The states will spend $1 billion more on uncompensated care in 2016 than they would by accepting the federal expansion.
- 3.6 million fewer people will be insured.
- Based on previous study data, 19,000 more deaths will occur than if every state expanded.

**Quote**

“We conclude that in terms of coverage, cost, and federal payments, states would do best to expand Medicaid.”

— Carter Price, RAND mathematician and study’s lead author

**Alabama’s viewpoint**

Gov. Robert Bentley says he will not expand a "broken" Medicaid system. If Alabama did so, the annual cost would increase from $39 million in 2014 to $222 million in 2020, with a total cost of $771 million over that period. Instead, Bentley signed into law last month a Medicaid reform bill, which will end the fee-for-service model in favor of a network of locally run, managed care networks.

Compiled by Mike Oliver, al.com
Path to Bentley’s re-election just got easier

Former opponent Byrne seeking Congress instead

Kim Chandler
kchandler@al.com

Republican Bradley Byrne’s decision to run for Congress, instead of seeking a rematch with Gov. Robert Bentley, increases the chances that Bentley will cakewalk back into office, two veteran political observers say.

With the gubernatorial primaries exactly a year away, so far no big-name candidates have emerged to challenge to Bentley in next year’s GOP primary.

“You would have to assume Bentley is the odds-on favorite to be renominated,” Natalie Davis, a political scientist and pollster at Birmingham-Southern College.

Byrne lost to Bentley in the 2010 Republican primary. Byrne was initially considered a favorite and Bentley the long shot. But Bentley’s folksy campaign was buoyed after the Alabama Education Association bankrolled attack ads against Byrne.

However, Davis questioned how much of a challenge Byrne could have given Bentley now that Bentley’s the incumbent.

Davis said she doesn’t believe Byrne could have dethroned Bentley, who enjoys high approval ratings. However, Byrne would have made the campaign interesting, Stewart said.

“If he wants to continue his political career, a (congressional run) is a good option for him,” Davis said.

Stewart said Byrne’s decision makes the coastal district’s congressional primary, which is becoming as crowded as the beach on Memorial Day weekend, more interesting. The gubernatorial race is becoming less interesting, he said.

Byrne’s only Republican opposition so far is Stacy Lee George, a north Alabama Republican who was the first Republican elected to the Morgan County Commission.

No Democratic candidates have come forward yet for 2014, although speculation is widespread over who might run.

Some Democrats are urging former Chief Justice Sue Bell Cobb to throw her hat into the ring. Cobb was one of the last Democrats to win statewide in Alabama.


“It takes away what would have been a major challenge.”

William Stewart
Retired political science professor

for comment.

House Minority Leader Craig Ford, D-Gadsden, is also mulling his options for 2014 and those options could include a run for governor or another office.

“As of right now, I’m running for my House seat again, but that could change,” Ford said.
Uproar expected over new science standards

Republicans likely to fight national guidelines

Evan Belanger

If the fight over Alabama public schools’ use of national education standards for math and English was contentious, wait until state education officials consider adopting new national science standards released this year.

In the wake of failed legislative attempts to repeal the Common Core State Standards for math and English, State Superintendent Tommy Bice says education officials are not ruling out the new Next Generation Science Standards as they look to update their science standards for the first time since 2006.

“Are we going to look at those standards? Absolutely, we are,” he said.

Bice said the Alabama Department of Education is still about two years away from starting the process to recommend changes for consideration by the Alabama State Board of Education.

Released in April, the Next Generation Science Standards were developed by a consortium of 26 states, the National Research Council, the National Science Teachers Association, the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and Achieve Inc., a nonprofit group that was involved in creating the common core standards.

Like the common core, the standards are designed to align varied state standards to a common minimum each student should master by grade level.

They are also meant to ensure all U.S. high graduates receive an internationally bench-marked education and to encourage high school graduates to select science and technology majors in college.

But state Republicans, who attempted to repeal Alabama’s math and English standards during the 2013 legislative session because they believe the standards represent too much federal government control, have already scrutinized the new science standards for their similarity to the controversial common core.

Alabama’s current standards already require students to learn about “natural selection” and “survival of the fittest,” as well as the “impact of society on human health and environmental conditions.”

Unlike the common core, which limits states to adding no more than 15 percent of their own content, states that adopt the new science standards are free to add as much state-specific content as they want, so long as they don’t eliminate any of the national standards.

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Chad Colby, a spokesman for Achieve Inc., said the standards do not take control over local curriculum away from educators.

“Standards are just the basic expectation of what we expect our students to know,” he said. How you get there is still left up to teachers.”
Bice focuses on graduation rates

By Jamon Smith
Staff Writer

TUSCALOOSA | When Alabama Superintendent of Education Tommy Bice stepped into the position 18 months ago, he said he stepped into the perfect storm.

The state's education budget was a billion less than it was the previous year and the No Child Left Behind Act was still in place.

Besides a fair share of difficulty, the position gave him something else.

"It gave me the opportunity to put all the sacred cows to rest and decide which to slaughter, keep or put out to pasture," Bice said.

Bice, Tuscaloosa City Schools Superintendent Paul McKendrick and Tuscaloosa County Schools Interim Superintendent Dan Butler were the keynote speakers at the Chamber of Commerce of West Alabama's annual State of the Schools address Thursday.

The three superintendents were

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each given 10 minutes to tell business leaders and a crowd of hundreds at the Bryant Conference Center what’s going on in their respective areas of responsibility.

Bice said he created a new education plan for the state called Plan 2020, which has the goal of increasing the state’s overall graduation rate to 90 percent by the year 2020. The plan calls for every student to graduate, but students don’t have to reach that goal in the same way. The plan provides the flexibility for students through individualized four-year plans that take into account students academic and career interests.

Plan 2020 also focuses on getting students college- and career-ready, developing a unified pre-K plan and creating a balanced assessment and accountability system.

“Sixty percent of the lunches served in schools in Alabama are free and reduced,” Bice said.

“Our biggest issue is poverty.”

Bice said if more students graduate and find gainful employment, students will on average earn $250,000 more each in their lifetimes, which will help solve public education’s funding problems since public education in Alabama is mostly funded through income tax and sales tax.

An increase in graduates would also save the state money because with fewer dropouts the prison population would slow its ever-burgeoning expansion.

During the question and answer session, Tuscaloosa City Councilman and city school board candidate Lee Garrison asked Bice when the list of fail-

“Sixty percent of the lunches served in schools in Alabama are free and reduced. Our biggest issue is poverty.”

Tommy Bice, superintendent of education, said the schools required for the new private school tax credit law would be ready. Bice said the list should be ready by June 13. He said most of the schools on the list are middle schools.

McKendrick, in his remarks, announced two new projects. He said he’s been in discussions with the school board about adding ninth and 10th grades to the magnet schools. Ninth and 10th grade classes at the magnet school would close the gap that exists between the magnet schools and the International Baccalaureate program for 11th and 12th grades at Central High School.

He also talked about having new computers for every student.

“The largest and most complicated project we have is the move to one-to-one computers,” McKendrick said.

He said the system has the funding for it and the project’s already been approved.

“This will give kids access to 24 hours of learning,” he said.

“We think this will be a great achievement for us because it will level the playing field and open up the students world beyond Tuscaloosa.”

McKendrick said he expects computers to be distributed to students in September 2014.

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Bentley: School transfer necessary for tax credit

Associated Press

Gov. Robert Bentley says he believes Alabama’s new private school tax credits should not apply to students who never enrolled in a failing school, but his state tax agency will make the final determination before classes resume in August.

Exactly who will qualify for the tax credits has been in question since the Legislature passed the Alabama Accountability Act in February and Bentley signed it in March. Lawmakers passed another bill in May to make some revisions in the law, but they could not agree on how to clarify who gets the credits, particularly whether they apply to students who have attended private schools their entire academic career but are zoned for a failing public school.

The law provides for state tax credits to cover the costs when parents choose to send their children to a private school or a nonfailing public school rather than a public school rated as failing. The tax credits are worth about $3,500 annually.

Bentley said in an interview Wednesday that he believes the tax credits apply only for a student who transfers out of a failing school. He said he doesn’t think the law applies to a student who was zoned for a failing school but never enrolled in that school before going to a private school.

“I’ve read the bill at least 10 times. The way I read it is the tax credits are used to transfer out of failing schools. But we will let the legal folks at the Revenue Department make the final decision,” he said.

The sponsor of the Accountability Act, Republican Rep. Chad Fincher of Semmes, shares the governor’s view. He said recently a family must incur the cost of transferring to qualify for the tax credits. If there was never a transfer, no tax credits apply, he said.

A determination on which schools qualify as failing will come soon. Malissa Vales-Hubert, spokeswoman for state Superintendent of Education Tommy Bice, said Friday he plans to present a list to the state school board on Thursday.
State GDP grew at half the pace of US economy

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Gross domestic product in Alabama — a widely-used measure of overall economic output for an area — grew by 1.2 percent in 2012 relative to the prior year, about half the U.S. rate of 2.5 percent.

Alabama's GDP growth in 2012 made it the 39th fastest-growing state economy in the country, according to data published by the Bureau of Economic Analysis on Thursday.

Its rank put it just behind Arkansas; making it the slowest-growing economy in what the BEA calls the "southeast" last year. Five other southeastern states were in the top 15 in terms of GDP growth: Tennessee (3.3 percent, ranked 9), West Virginia (3.3, 10), North Carolina (2.7, 11), South Carolina (2.7, 12) and Florida (2.4, 14).

The state with the fastest-growing economy in 2012 was North Dakota, where GDP grew by 13.4 percent. An energy boom is fueling that state's success.

In current dollars, Alabama generated $183.5 billion in economic output in 2012, representing about 1.2 percent of the nation's total overall activity.

Alabama has the 26th largest economy among states based on its 2012 activity. Thursday's GDP calculations were preliminary, and are expected to be revised slightly in future updates.
Airbus cranks up plant hiring

First openings posted for jobs related to manufacturing work

Kelli Dugan kdugan@al.com

Airbus Americas has posted its first openings for manufacturing-related jobs at the company's new assembly plant at the Brookley Aeroplex. In this first wave, Airbus seeks 10 manufacturing engineers in the fields of electrical, mechanical, systems and aircraft cabin.

The plant, for which ground was broken April 8, is expected to employ 1,000 people directly by 2018, and will be dedicated solely to production of A320 Airbus family aircraft.

Of the 10 new hires, eight will assume their new roles in November this year, and the final two will join the company in January.

The new hires will be trained by Airbus teams in Hamburg, Germany; Toulouse, France; and Tianjin, China. A minimum of nine months' training abroad is required.

Hiring for the remaining manufacturing positions is expected to continue into 2014.

According to the company's

AIRBUS

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job description, manufacturing engineers are expected to manage "non-conformities and design deviation as well as late changes to support aircraft production. They answer technical questions, prepare new modifications for country-specific constraints and explain work orders and drawings, especially for electrical, mechanical, systems or cabin-related items."

The positions require a minimum of five years' experience as a technician or foreman with electrical, mechanical, cabin or systems installation with an aviation company and/or a degree in aerospace, industrial or mechanical engineering.

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Business community has big stake in quality of local education

By Patrick Rupinski
Business Editor

Businesses depend on educated workers to succeed. So it was no surprise that among the several hundred people at Thursday's Education Summit were business people.

Their concern focuses on educating today's students for tomorrow's jobs.


"In today's economic development climate, if you do not have a workforce that is up to the standards employers look for, you are not in the ball game."

The quality of school systems is a major consideration when industry decides where to build plants and create jobs, he said.

Jamison said Neal Wade, a longtime industry headhunter in Alabama and the director of the Alabama Development Office during the administration of Gov. Bob Riley, told him that before ThyssenKrupp made its decision to build a steel production facility in Mobile, its officials met for two days with state and local officials to review the education system.

ThyssenKrupp is a major German steel maker that built a $4.65 billion steel mill outside Mobile during Riley's tenure.

Wade now heads the Public Affairs Research Council, which presented a report on the performance of Alabama schools at the Education Summit at the Bryant Conference Center.

Jim Page, president of the Chamber of Commerce of West Alabama, the summit's sponsor, said a chamber survey found that quality education was the No. 1 concern of business and civic leaders in the Tuscaloosa area.

"It is critical to economic development, and it affects the whole community. It affects the businesses a community has, the growth of the community and even housing values," he said. "It affects the whole quality of life."

Page said he hopes the summit prompts discussions in the community about how to improve education, particularly with elections for the city's school board slated for August.

The Public Affairs Research Council's information on area schools' dropout rates is particularly alarming, he said. All the Tuscaloosa city and county high schools had graduation rates below 80 percent with one school at only 54 percent.

Studies have shown dropouts not only have the hardest time finding a job but also tend to have more problems with the law.

"We have to either improve our education situation or extend the size of our jails," Page said.

State Superintendent of Education Tommy Bice said during his comments that eight of 10 prison inmates in Alabama are high school dropouts.

Fitzgerald Washington, the chamber's chairman and general sales manager for Buffalo Rock in Tuscaloosa, said having well-educated workers also is important for longtime businesses like Buffalo Rock, a Pepsi bottler and distributor.

"It is imperative for Buffalo Rock to have skilled workers," he said.

His company hires high school graduates, but they must possess basic math skills, writing skills and the ability to solve problems, he said.

There is a need for workers who possess more technical skills, too. Washington said he knows of two area companies with jobs to fill but the companies cannot find workers with the technical skills.
Above, the Rev. Thomas Linton, standing, speaks during an interfaith prayer service Friday at the Bryant Conference Center to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Stand in the Schoolhouse Door. A plaque, top, and the original doors from Foster Auditorium, left, were also on display.

"THROUGH THE DOORS: COURAGE. CHANGE. PROGRESS."

When: 5:30-7 p.m. Tuesday
Where: Program will begin with a 5:30 p.m. reception in the Malone-Hood Plaza outside Foster Auditorium and will conclude by 7 p.m.
Admission: Free and open to the public
Parking: Park in any legal parking space
On the Web: throughthedoors.ua.edu

To see more photos from the event, visit www.tuscaloosanews.com.
Wallace’s stand was pivotal point in civil rights history

By Stephanie Taylor
Staff Writer

The days leading up to the hot summer morning when George Wallace made his infamous “Stand in the Schoolhouse Door” were expectant ones on the University of Alabama campus and in the Tuscaloosa community.

It was well-known that the governor planned to block the door at Foster Auditorium to symbolically protest the admittance of black students to the university.

It was also well-known that his actions wouldn’t stop integration — the question remained of whether it would happen peacefully without a deadly riot like the one at the University of Mississippi the previous fall.

A story printed in the Sunday, June 9, 1963, edition of The Tuscaloosa News described the mood of the campus and the city that weekend as calm but expectant.

More than 700 law enforcement officers had set up a command post in the parking lot of Tutwiler Hall a few days before the June 11 showdown. Army helicopters circled over the campus the preceding weekend. A prison transfer bus with heavy metal bars and wire-mesh covered windows was parked on the Quad next to Denny Chimes.

Journalists from across the United States and some from England, Japan, Korea, Canada and the Netherlands were arriving in the city, making clear to Tuscaloosa and the university community that the world was watching.

In Tuscaloosa, people paid close attention to what was happening blocks away on the UA campus, according to a News file story.

The Rev. Thomas Linton is a minister and owner of Howard’s and Linton’s Barbershop on T.Y. Rogers Jr. Ave., where UA’s first black student, Autherine Lucy, sought refuge after an angry mob gathered outside of her class in 1955.

Linton’s shop has been open in the same location since 1951 and was an important hub of the civil rights movement in Tuscaloosa.

Alabama state troopers escorted Lucy, the black graduate student who attended UA for just three days, to the nearby black-owned newspaper The Alabama Citizen. She was pelted with eggs by a mob of white students and Tuscaloosa residents. Lucy found protection at the shop.

Vivian Malone Jones is silhouetted in the doorway of Foster Auditorium during the 40th anniversary celebration of the integration of the University of Alabama on June 11, 2003.

"THROUGH THE DOORS: COURAGE. CHANGE. PROGRESS."

What: University of Alabama’s commemoration of 50 years since the school’s integration.

When: 5:30-7 p.m. today.

Where: Program will begin with a 5:30 p.m. reception in the Malone-Hood Plaza, moving inside Foster Auditorium at 6 p.m. Gov. Robert Bentley, who was a UA student in 1963 and witnessed George Wallace’s “Stand in the Schoolhouse Door,” will attend today’s event.

Admission: Free and open to the public.

Parking: Park in any legal parking space.

On the Web: throughthedooors.ua.edu

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where beauticians helped clean the egg from her face and her hair before a caravan of black leaders escorted her to a family member's house in Birmingham.

Linton said that members of Tuscaloosa's civil rights movement were likely in the shop on the day of the schoolhouse door stand, listening to history unfold on the radio.

It was a meaningful event for us because it meant the governor could no longer control the school. It showed him that he was not in complete control," said Linton, now 81. "To us, it was a great thing to see Wallace defeated."

The school's administration had taken measures to avoid a riot like the one seven years before.

President Frank Rose had students sign pledges that they would not bring guns to campus. Rose ordered maintenance crews to remove any loose bricks or sticks from around campus. All bottled soft drink machines were replaced with ones that dispensed cups. Students were ordered to abide by a 10 p.m.-6 a.m. curfew.

June 11, 1963, would pass with no bricks thrown, no shots fired. There weren't any shouts or catcalls as James Hood and Vivian Malone walked into the auditorium.

"The entire student body has demonstrated a determination to proceed with their education and avoid anything that would interfere with the school's reputation," an editor wrote in a 1963 Tuscaloosa News editorial.

Alabama was the last state in the country to integrate its education system. A U.S. District Court issued court orders on May 21 and June 5, 1963, ordering Wallace to allow Malone and Hood to register for classes on June 11.

Wallace had made clear that he intended to keep the "segregation now, segregation tomorrow, segregation forever" promise made in his 1963 inauguration speech. He also made clear that he wanted to stand alone, as a representative of the people, and strongly discouraged any dissent from the public.

The events of the day played out along the lines of a carefully orchestrated script between Wallace, President John Kennedy and the Department of Justice, which was led by the president's brother, Attorney General Robert Kennedy.

The Kennedys wanted to avoid making Wallace appear a martyr for segregationists, which they feared could happen if he were arrested or physically moved.

A plan was conceived that would keep Wallace from technically violating the court order not to bar entrance to the auditorium. Malone and Hood remained in a car while Deputy U.S. Attorney General Nicholas Katzenbach confronted Wallace at the door.

Katzenbach approached Wallace and stated that he had a presidential proclamation that Wallace was not to obstruct the students from registering. Wallace ignored him, and read a 15-minute statement that was printed in its entirety in The Tuscaloosa News.

"The unwelcome, unwanted, unwarranted and force-induced intrusion upon the campus of the University of Alabama today of the might of the central government offers a frightful example of oppression of the rights, privileges and sovereignty of this state by officers of the federal government," he said.

Katzenbach and other federal officials escorted Hood and Malone to their dorms. The Kennedys then decided to federalize the Alabama National Guard.

The guardsmen were from Alabama, not Army regulars, which may have made the federal interference more acceptable to Wallace supporters, according to a Tuscaloosa News editorial.

National Guard Gen. Henry Graham approached him that afternoon, saluted Wallace and said, "It is my sad duty to ask you to step aside under the orders of the president of the United States." Wallace stepped aside and the students entered.

Larry Norred was one of the Alabama National Guardsmen who was ordered under federal command that day and the following week. As a member of the 20th Special Forces Group headquartered in Birmingham, he experienced firsthand many events of the civil rights movement.

The unit arrived on campus and stayed in a dorm on June 9. The guardsmen were on lock-
down, but Norred said that one man nicknamed Pigpen had found a student to bring in ice and beer within an hour.

Norred, who lives in Birmingham, said that he and many of the other guardsmen didn’t view Wallace’s stand as a racial one, and said that many weren’t happy to be put under command of the federal government.

“It was always about states’ rights for me,” he said. “I had no problem subordinating myself to Gen. Graham or others, but I didn’t want the Kennedys to have dominion over us. I didn’t like them. They didn’t live in the same world that I did.”

Norred knew that he was watching history unfold, and said that he also knew it had been carefully planned by the country’s most powerful men.

“They had scripted this thing out,” he said. “Everyone knew their role. Everyone knew that George (Wallace) was going to step down. Integration was inevitable, but they used this as an opportunity for a political chess game.”

In the days after June 11, the group stayed on campus to keep the peace. They responded to unfounded bomb threats and guarded the dorms where Hood and Malone lived.

The country’s attention shifted from Alabama the next day, when civil rights activist Medgar Evers was shot dead in the driveway of his Jackson, Miss., home.

The previous night, hours after Wallace stepped aside, President Kennedy delivered a historic speech in which he cast civil rights as a moral issue rather than a legal one. He proposed what became the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the legislation that forbids discrimination in public accommodations, employment and federally funded programs.

“This nation was founded by men of many nations and backgrounds,” he said during the speech. “It was founded on the principle that all men are created equal, and that the rights of every man are diminished when the rights of one man are threatened.”

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'Amen, praise God, and Roll Tide;' Hundreds gather for prayer breakfast commemorating UA desegregation

By: Stephen Dethrage

Sellers Auditorium in the Bryant Conference Center was full of fresh food, hot coffee and prayerful people Friday morning during the University of Alabama’s interfaith prayer breakfast commemorating the 50th anniversary of the desegregation of the school.

The breakfast was part of the university’s Through the Doors series, a number of activities and events held to remember the school’s past, celebrate its progress and plan for its future. Specifically, Friday’s event recognized the role that churches and ministers played in both the desegregation of the Capstone and the civil rights movement as a whole.

The first prayer of the event was to Allah, as Arzo X, the student coordinator for the Muhammad Study Group of Tuscaloosa, led the invocation and expressed thanks for the strength of Vivian Malone, James Hood and the people who helped them find the bravery to become the first black undergraduate students to enroll at the University of Alabama.

“We thank you for sending two of your brave soldiers this way 50 years ago,” he said. “Brave soldiers that forged the way for so many others to come through. We thank you and ask for special blessing on their family, because we know they had to endure much pain and suffering.”

Events like the prayer breakfast are necessary to remember what has led to the present and use it to structure the future, Arzo X said.

“We must know our history to accurately chart our future,” he said.

UA President Judy Bonner took the podium next and lauded not only the known faces and leaders of the civil rights movement and the desegregation of the school, but also the unsung heroes, such as local ministers and church leaders.

“There are many heroes 50 years ago who are known, but there are many other unsung heroes who made a difference in the lives of those students and who continue to make a difference in the lives of our students even today,” Bonner said. “Those unsung heroes are often in the faith community who provide support that our students need in order to make progress and in order to achieve all that they can be.”

Bonner presented commendations to leaders from two Tuscaloosa churches for their roles in fostering justice and encouraging change in the past and present. The Rev. Richard Morgan from First African Baptist Church and Father Grant Montgomery from Canterbury Episcopal Chapel were recognized.

The event’s primary speaker was the Rev. Thomas W. Linton, who experienced the desegregation movement in Tuscaloosa firsthand. Linton spoke of Moses freeing his people from
Egypt, the 1863 emancipation of American slaves and his own work in civil rights
demonstrations in Tuscaloosa.

He said the Alabama civil rights movement is largely remembered in places such as Birmingham
and Anniston, but it was alive and well in Tuscaloosa, too. One demonstration, he said, ended in
the hospitalization of 39 people and the arrest of 97 more. Protestors gathered in a local church,
his said, and were preparing to march on Tuscaloosa’s courthouse to decry segregation. The
ministers leading the march were arrested, though, and when those gathered there were chased
back into the church by the police and angry locals, they did not find sanctuary.

“Something happened in Tuscaloosa that happened nowhere else. The police department shot
tear gas through the windows of the church, put on their masks and went in there and began to
beat everybody that was in the church,” Linton said. “Nowhere else in the south do we have a
record of the police invading a church.”

The attack was brutal, Linton said, but the unity it inspired outweighed the pain of the beatings.

“It was during that period that we were so united,” he said. “Our unity, our prayer, our
togetherness — all the white churches in the city came to us and said 'Can we join you?' That is
the power of prayer, and it was brought about by pain.”

The university’s Afro-American Gospel Choir gave three powerful performances during the
breakfast, which rose in intensity from song to song and ended in the explosive climax of
Richard Smallwood’s “Total Praise.”

The Rev. Kelvin Croom of Alberta’s College Hill Baptist Church gave one of the last prayers of
the morning, asking for strength and guidance for the current generation of University of
Alabama students.

“Give our students wisdom and understanding. Enable them to have reason to give thanks to you.
It is our prayer that you will protect them, that they might dwell in the secret place of the most
high God,” Croom prayed. “In the name of your son Jesus Christ I pray, amen, praise God, and
Roll Tide.”
Solemn ceremony marks how far UA has come
Speakers pay tribute to courage of heroes of 1963

By Lydia Seabolt Avant
Staff Writer

TUSCALOOSA | When Vivian Malone and James Hood walked through the "schoolhouse" door at Foster Auditorium on the University of Alabama campus 50 years ago this week, it opened the door for thousands of black students who followed in their footsteps. It took courage, change and progress for that to happen. But 50 years later, the progress is still happening and must continue, said university leaders and representatives at a commemoration event Tuesday night marking the anniversary.

"I've been inspired by the courage of all those people who came before me and those who were here when I was here," said Judge John England, a trustee of the UA system who was admitted to the University of Alabama School of Law in 1969.

Today, university students, leaders and the community need to ensure that no doors will ever be closed again, England said.

"Today, we are talking about going through those doors," England said. "I've been inspired to do all that I can do and hope you, too, to ensure the flagship institution is a leader, not a follower, to ensure diversity, inclusion and tolerance."

On June 11, 1963, former Gov. George Wallace stood in the doors of Foster Auditorium in a symbolic attempt to block the registration of Malone and Hood as students and thwart the desegregation of the university.

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University of Alabama. But, through a federal court order and the assistance of the Alabama National Guard, Malone and Hood were allowed to walk through the doors and officially become students at UA.

The anniversary of the stand was marked with a ceremony at Foster Auditorium on Tuesday. Black students, alumni and university leaders spoke about what courage, change and progress meant to them and how the Stand in the Schoolhouse Door paved the way for their experience at UA.

Andre Taylor, the first African-American president of the University of Alabama National Alumni Association, said that he first decided he wanted to go to UA the day of the Stand in the Schoolhouse Door, as a kid watching the news on TV with his mother.

"I'm having a very serendipitous moment, because it was 50 years, 1 hour and 17 minutes ago that I had the first thought about attending the University of Alabama," he said.

Taylor, who spoke on UA's progress, said that progress means becoming a community that is open to all, "where boundaries are removed and brothers and sisters are not shut from each other."

If it weren't for the university's desegregation, UA alumna Vesta Lowe said that not only would she not be a graduate of Alabama, but she might not even exist. Her parents and her brothers met while at UA in the 1970s. In the 1990s, she attended Alabama and met her husband on campus.

"Change is inevitable, Lowe said, but it's up to UA to ensure it's positive change."

"Positive change is standing alone if it means standing for what is right," Lowe said. "Change is going to happen, so my question is, what kind of change?"

During the ceremony, UA President Judy Bonner read a quote from Malone, a quote that is inscribed on the tower outside Foster Auditorium.

"There will come a day in your life when you act for others... and you must be ready. You must be bold, have courage and walk through a door that leads to opportunity for others."

Tomorrow and in the following days and for the next 50 years, the university and the community will "walk boldly through those doors," Bonner said. "We will make a positive and lasting difference in the lives around us."

The commemoration event was attended by several state leaders, university administrators, notable alumni and relatives of Hood and Malone.

Wendell Hudson, the first African-American scholarship athlete at UA, said that the Stand in the Schoolhouse Door had a special impact on him, because, like Taylor, it was the first time that he thought attending Alabama would be an option.

Hudson first came to Alabama in 1969, when he signed to play basketball. Hudson also served as head coach of the Alabama women's basketball team from 2008 to April of this year.

"There were no longer any barriers, it literally opened doors," Hudson said.

When Darrell Hood, son of James Hood, arrived at the event at Foster Auditorium on Tuesday, he said that it was especially meaningful to him.

"When I got out of my vehicle and walked up to this building today, I thought to myself, my father wasn't able to do that," he said.

It's important to remember those who were willing to do what others couldn't, added James Hood's other son, Anthony Hood.

"This ceremony shows the complexity, that little ripple of two people doing something that no one thought they could," Anthony Hood said. "It's phenomenal to see how transformation and change works."

Reach Lydia Seabolt Avant at 205-722-0222 or lydia.seabolt avant@tuscaloosanews.com.
UA community celebrates legacy and lessons

Vigilance still required today, speakers say

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"Why are we retelling the story? Why are we talking about such difficult times?"

Judge John England posed these questions Tuesday night to those gathered to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the first black undergraduate students enrolled at the University of Alabama and Gov. George Wallace’s infamous stand in the schoolhouse door.

"I’ve heard it said, why should we commemorate the past at the University of Alabama given the pain that many had to have suffered?" England said. "But as I have attended the various commemorations ... I have been inspired by the courage of all who came before me. What have I been inspired to do? To be vigilant, to make sure that no doors will be closed."

England, a trustee and one of the first black students admitted to the School of Law, was one of many who spoke.

The "Through the Doors" program highlighted the courage of James Hood and Vivian Malone Jones and the legacy they left at the university.

"Their perseverance to withstand so much danger and fear is surreal. It makes every year here at the Capstone worthwhile, because I know what it took for me to get here," UA student Tyler Merriweather said. Gov. Robert Bentley, who was a student in 1963, attended the reception and spoke to the media about his experience on June 11, 1963.

"Most of us just didn’t understand what all the commotion was really about," he said.

Alumna Shanique Milton hoped to impress the importance of the event and its legacy upon a friend's young children, who had previously described history as "boring."

"I explained that I and his mother both graduated from UA because of the sacrifice these people made before us," Milton said.

"This is not black history or white history, this is Alabama history."

Wendell Hudson, Alabama's first African-American athlete, now an administrator for the university, walks through a door once barred by then-governor George Wallace. (Vasha Hunt/vhunt@al.com)
**Black graduates make an impact**

**Evan Belanger**

The actions of Vivian Malone Jones and James Hood 50 years ago opened the door for thousands of black students to change their lives.

Without racial barriers broken, students such as Woodrow Lowe, the son of uneducated sharecroppers in Phenix City, could not have played for coach Paul “Bear” Bryant and become the president of Bishop State Community College after a decade-long career in the NFL.

His brother, Eddie Lowe, could not have followed in his footsteps, going on to become the mayor of Phenix City and a senior vice president for Synovus Financial Corp.

“I am very grateful, proud and blessed to have had the opportunity to go the University of Alabama, first to play football, but more importantly to get an education,” Eddie Lowe says today.

Sadly, change came too late for their older brother, James Lowe Jr., who played high school and college football, but did so in a segregated South.

Annetta Nunn became Birmingham’s first black female police chief.

Determining to pursue a career in law enforcement at 14, she went on to enroll in criminal justice at UA in 1976.

The daughter of a coal miner, she graduated magna cum laude in 1980 and joined the police force under a consent decree brought about by a discrimination lawsuit. By 2003, she was appointed chief of police and is credited with overhauling the penalties for police infractions and pushing officers to more closely engage the community.

Being a minority student at a predominantly white university helped instill a work ethic that she carried throughout her career, she said. “There were still those (at UA) who felt that we didn’t need to be there, so I felt I had to excel to show that I deserved to be there.”

Everett McCorvey, holds the Lexington Opera Society Endowed Chair in Opera Studies at the University of Kentucky. He earned a bachelor’s, master’s and doctorate in voice from UA.

“I asked my father if he thought he would live to see an African American president, and he said ‘I didn’t think I would live to see the end of segregation.’"
Bringing generations together

UA students, Habitat for Humanity help vet of WWII, Korea

Melissa Brown
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Zach Boyd's sawdust-covered T-shirt reads "They served us... Now we serve them" as he stands in the middle of a Habitat for Humanity renovation in Tuscaloosa.

Boyd, a University of Alabama student and president of the Campus Veterans Association, pulled together fellow students and veteran friends to help with the sorely-needed renovations of Willie Bishop's home.

Bishop, an 85-year-old Tuscaloosa native, served in the Army during World War II and the Korean War before coming back home, where he worked at a local lumber mill and hardware store.

The renovations, sponsored by Habitat for Humanity, involved gutting Bishop's home, keeping only the frame and siding. Volunteers installed a new roof and the house is ready for new insulation, siding, wiring and floors. The workers hope to finish by Thursday, which is Bishop's birthday.

Boyd said he felt compelled to lend a hand.

"I like doing these kinds of things because I like to connect the generations, you know? I feel like there's a big gap, but we're closing it.

Bishop's nephew, FrankGerman, traveled from Chicago to help. He said Bishop isn't able to come to the house every day to see the progress because of his health, but German takes daily reports back to him.

"I don't even have to overexaggerate the project to him... it's very nice."

German said he came down with his tools, prepared to help with what he thought would be some minor repairs. He was overwhelmed to see the scope of the remodeling project and the number of people lending a hand.

"Words can't express. We're just so elated. It just means so much to us," he said.

For Boyd, the opportunity to help a fellow veteran -- even one a few generations apart from him -- is important. He sees himself in Bishop and hopes one day others would help him out if he needed it.

The CVA is in the same vein, Boyd said, because it connects a community of people who can relate to each other over shared experiences. It's important, both on campus and off, to act as a support group for veterans, especially those having trouble coping with the transition to civilian life, he said.

"It's a camaraderie, being in the military, that you lose when you come back home. You have to support each other and help each other through that. It's stressful, coming from a combat zone to a totally different environment. It's an immediate, tough transition. You never know the numbers of troubled vets that you save. That's what pushes me."

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Boys, Girls State come together

Above, University of Alabama President Dr. Judy Bonner speaks to Alabama Boys State members at the organization's opening ceremony held at Morgan Auditorium on the UA campus Sunday. Lt. Gov. Kay Ivey, left, speaks to Alabama Girls State members in the Ferguson Center Ballroom. The Alabama Boys State and Girls State, which are government training programs sponsored by the American Legion and American Legion Auxiliary, are being held this week in Tuscaloosa. Students will conduct mock elections and learn about the civic process. They will also meet with former Alabama Chief Justice Sue Bell Cobb and Mayor Walt Maddox.

PHOTOS BY ERIN NELSON
About 75 local students in UA summer program

CollegeFirst helps high school students prepare for AP classes

By Jamon Smith
Staff Writer

TUSCALOOSA | More than 75 Tuscaloosa city and county high school students have been accepted into this year's CollegeFirst program at the University of Alabama.

CollegeFirst is a three-week summer enrichment program that prepares upcoming juniors and seniors to take Advanced Placement classes — college-level courses — at their schools.

The program was created by the UA Center for Ethics and Social Responsibility.

"Research has shown that students who take AP classes in high school are much more successful in college," said Sarah Louise Smith, program coordinator for the UA Center for Ethics and Social Responsibility. "AP can also help with the achievement gaps between different ethnicities. African-American and Hispanic students who take AP classes outperform their peers in college who don't take AP classes.

"It's also important because of summer slide," she said. "Getting students involved in academic programs helps them mitigate the academic loss they would otherwise experience during the summer."

Smith said the program focuses mainly on math and science but that it offers pre-AP biology, chemistry, calculus and English. She said program organizers choose to focus more on science and math because there's a greater demand for jobs that require science and math skills.

The program, which started this week, is held from 8 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. Monday through Thursday. In the morning, students attend a lecture and then break into groups based on subject.

"The science group goes into a college laboratory and conducts experiments," Smith said. "The math group does math exercises and games, and the English group will participate in reading, writing and analysis of literary passages."

Smith said this is the program's fourth year. She said the vast majority of students who finish the program take AP courses when they return to school and say they feel more prepared for them.

The program is free and is sponsored by A+ College Ready, which is a statewide initiative that works to increase student enrollment in AP courses.

Reach Jamon Smith at jamon.smith@tuscaloosanews.com or 205-722-0204.
MISS ALABAMA ‘It brought me out of my shell’ ‘Shy’ Chandler Champion says pageants took her to new heights

By: Mia Watkins

Chandler Champion has danced with the Rockettes, has a library named after her and, as of Saturday night, is Miss Alabama 2013.

But it wasn’t until recently that she learned how to ride a bicycle.

“I had never been on a bike,” she said. “I learned in an hour, and then the next hour I went mountain biking.”

She learned, without falling, competing for an award that’s connected to the Miss Alabama Pageant. As part of the requirements for the Duke of Edinburgh award, she had to go mountain biking. She eventually earned the Duke of Edinburgh gold award, along with three other contestants in the pageant.

Ready to serve

Whether on two wheels or on foot, she’s ready to begin serving her state both at home and at September’s Miss America competition.

“I’m so excited to get out into the community and get out to as many corners and every inch of the state that I possibly can,” she said.

The 20-year-old University of Alabama student says her family is proud of her. They’ve also accepted how different her life will be during her Miss Alabama reign. She will move into a new apartment this week, which means that her 10-year-old sister, Zoe, will have to get used to her being back in the Birmingham area, but not at home in Leeds.

Proud little sister

Zoe was especially excited seeing her big sister take the crown, Champion said.

“It was just one of those moments where she didn’t have to say anything because I knew they were all excited for me,” she said.

Champion has been competing in the Miss Alabama system for seven years after a chance meeting with a former Miss Leeds in 2007 who gave her a flier for that year’s Miss Leeds Area Outstanding Teen.

“I never would have thought I would have a chance, but I won my first pageant,” she said. “Ever since then, I knew what I wanted to do with my life.”

Still surreal

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She plans on taking a break from studying dance and broadcast journalism while she has the title. Being Miss Alabama is still surreal for her, she says.

“I would have moments where I would just see a picture, or someone would say something, and it would catch me off guard, but at the same time, it’s great,” she said. “It’s so exciting to realize that this is my job for the next year. I could not be more blessed and more excited about it.”

**Literacy platform**

She’s also able to further her passion for literacy by making it her personal platform for the Miss Alabama pageant. She plans on taking her initiative, which started in Leeds, statewide as Miss Alabama.

Champion says she’s always loved reading.

“Literacy has just always been something I’ve been passionate about,” she said. “Family trips to the library might as well have been a vacation to me when I was younger. My dad read while I was still in my mother’s womb. I think that was the start of them implementing my love for reading, and I’ve continued that.”

She took that love one step further while participating in the Duke of Edinburgh program. She rebuilt the library at Rushton School in Birmingham as her residential project. The school eventually named it the Chandler Champion Rushton School library.

**‘Somewhere to go’**

“I’ve just been working on it and really developing it,” she said. “It’s so rewarding to see the students actually going in and enjoying it. It is an alternative school, so they’re not allowed to go off site. Knowing that they have somewhere to go and they have somewhere to get a book where they could travel anywhere they wanted to go really touches my heart.”

Champion’s other love is dance. She has been dancing since she was 3, and her time as an Alabama School of Fine Arts student helped her hone her craft, she said. She was a member of the Crimson Cabaret Dance Team and participated in the Rockette Summer Intensive.

“I’ve really had an amazing dance career so far,” she said. “I do all types, even though my talent for Miss Alabama was pointe and a little jazzier. I’ve done everything from tap to hip hop to lyrical. You name it, I’ve probably had a class in it.”

**Next: Miss America**

She won’t have time to reflect on her already extensive list of accomplishments, however. Preparation for the Miss America competition starts almost immediately.

Between searching for the perfect gown, filling requirements for Miss America and honing her talents, she has her work cut out for her. But she says Miss Alabama has prepared her well. “It’s
not like some people think," she said. "Some people think you win your local title and then you just wait till Miss Alabama. No, it's an entire year of hard work and preparation." Champion says her journey from Miss Leeds Area to holding the state crown also gave her more self-confidence.

"It brought me out of my shell," she says. "I was one of the most shy people. I really was. I never would have been able to talk in front of people, especially Saturday night. This system has truly turned me into the woman I am today."
A Champion worthy of crown

University of Alabama student from Leeds edges Miss Rocket City

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Chandler Champion, a 20-year-old from Leeds studying dance and broadcast journalism at the University of Alabama, was crowned Miss Alabama 2013 at Samford University's Wright Center Saturday night.

Champion, who danced a ballet en pointe for her talent, promotes literacy through "Chandler's Challenge," her pageant platform.

Champion was competing as Miss Leeds Area.

First runner-up was Miss Rocket City Caitlin Brunell, second runner-up was Miss Smiths Station Haley Bagwell, third runner-up was Miss Cullman Area Kelsey Richter and fourth runner-up was Miss Jefferson County Hayley Barber.

The rest of the 11 semi-finalists announced Saturday night were: Miss Center Point Jordan Dailey, Miss Wiregrass Area Katherine Fuller, Miss Marble Valley Megan Smith, Miss North Jefferson Area Katie Malone, Miss Chattahoochee Valley Emilee Williams and Miss Lake City Callie Boyd.

The pageant began with 51 contestants.

The top 11 competed in the swimsuit, talent and evening wear competitions during the final night of the pageant. Saturday's final show, which followed three nights of preliminary competition, was hosted by Miss Alabama 1993 Kalyn Chapman James. Barber, Brunell and Champion all won their talent preliminaries. Champion and Bagwell won preliminary swimsuit competitions.

The new Miss Alabama will replace Anna Laura Bryan, a Samford graduate from Decatur who made it to the top 12 of Miss America.

In addition, Champion wins a $10,000 scholarship. She will represent the state at the Miss America competition on Sept. 15 in Atlantic City.
BIRMINGHAM | University of Alabama football coach Nick Saban offered Crimson Tide football tickets, sideline passes and an office tour in a charity auction linked to the sale of his multimillion-dollar lake home, which was set for Thursday.

The New York-based company selling Saban's north Georgia home at Lake Burton, Concierge Auctions, said fans could register online to win the ticket package. The game tickets and other perks were to be sold to the highest bidder before the sale of Saban's lake home, initially priced at $11 million.

All proceeds from the football package auction will go to Saban's charity, Nick's Kids, the company said. Saban and others have made donations to the nonprofit fund, which has provided money including more than $1 million for relief work after the monster tornado that wrecked Tuscaloosa in 2011, killing dozens.

The auction company did not respond to questions about whether the ticket package sold, or for how much.

Concierge Auctions announced the charity sale this week in an email message that linked to a website promoting the auction of Saban's six-bedroom, 9,600-square-foot home, which has a three-story lighthouse. The football package would be sold before the home was auctioned, the announcement said.

The charity sale included four tickets to Saban's private family box for a Southeastern Conference home game during the upcoming season; a parking pass; pre-game sidelines passes; and tours of Bryant-Denny Stadium.

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SABAN

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the Crimson Tide locker room and Saban's office.

A spokesman for Saban, Alabama sports publicist Jeff Purinton, said the sale of the home and the football package were separate.

Saban issued a statement last month saying he developed the home with a builder. Saban and his family have owned another house on the lake for 12 years.

The director of the Alabama Ethics Commission, Jim Sumner, said the sales did not appear to be a problem under a state law that prohibits public employees from personally profiting from their positions.

"It seems, other than creating some buzz for people looking at his property for sale, the benefits of all of this goes to Nick's Kids," said Sumner, who said he was unaware of the sale until contacted by The Associated Press.

While the stadium and office tours might sound exclusive to some fans, Sumner said they actually are "a fairly common thing they do for a lot of people."

An attorney for the ethics agency, Hugh Evans, said the football-related auction seemed to be nothing more than "a carrot to get people to see the property and maybe bid on it."

Realistically, Sumner said, the charity auction wouldn't do much to help the home sell.

"There are not many people who would have ... the wherewithal to bid on that property," he said.

Saban has led the Alabama football team to BCS titles in three of the last four seasons. He received a deal in March 2012 worth nearly $45 million over eight years.
University's decision to demolish historic Kilgore House a sad, unnecessary affair

Well, they've done it.

The University of Alabama, having declared it "surplus property," has razed the Kilgore House - that glorious example of late-19th century Victorian domestic architecture, and one of the oldest, most significant buildings on campus.

And why? To make room for an eating plaza of some sort.

"So what?" you ask.

Well, as the late, great Douglas Jones - long-term A&S Dean, gentleman, scholar and ardent historic preservationist - used to say: "Let's review the bidding."

The Kilgore House was built in 1890 as the home for Bryce Hospital's assistant steward, Charles Kilgore, a Civil War veteran. From 1905 through 1908 - before female students were allowed to live on campus - the house served as an informal dormitory and eating establishment for the young women, as well as for the University's first female faculty member, Anna Hunter. This history made the house the only structure left on campus that was directly associated with the earliest days of co-education at the Capstone.

In 1971, the Kilgore House was acquired by the University as part of a land swap with Bryce Hospital, and for 25 years it served as the home of Alabama Heritage, the multi-award winning historical magazine published by the University of Alabama, UAB, the Alabama Dept. of Archives and History. (Full disclosure: I am married to the founding/former editor of AHER.)

In 1988, the house was listed on the Alabama Register of Historic Places.

The house was architecturally significant, not only for being a fine, intact example of Queen Anne design, but also for a unique reason: Its basic construction and finely crafted interior woodwork were very likely the product of Bryce Hospital patients, overseen by Mr. Kilgore as an example of "work therapy."

The Kilgore House provided a charming counterpoint to the Gorgas House and its grounds on the opposite side of campus. Both sat amid large academic, brick buildings and pavement and parking decks and thus provided a welcoming respite of green in the middle of an otherwise hard-edged) built environment - a quiet reminder of what the 19th-century campus was like.

Instead of destroying its own irreplaceable heritage, here's what the University could have done: It could have left the editorial offices of Alabama Heritage magazine in the building instead of moving them to Northport and renting additional space.

Or, in keeping with long-established historic preservation practices current all over the United States, it could have repurposed the house to incorporate offices and a gallery displaying photographs and memorabilia honoring the history of women at the University - their struggles to gain entrance, to achieve equal educational opportunities, and to live, study and teach on campus.

Such a storyline could have included the great breakthrough for women represented by the passage of Title IX, which finally allowed women to enjoy equal access to sports - leading to the resounding successes of this school's much-heralded women's gymnastics program, championship softball teams, the superb golf and tennis teams and women's wheelchair basketball program, to mention just a few examples.

Finally, The University of Alabama could have followed the lead of the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill and the University of Georgia at Athens and - stepping back, taking its time and thinking through the options - it could have preserved this fine historic property as a reminder to all that this school actually has a worthwhile, complex history (apart from its notorious civil rights troubles) - and also that it takes more than red brick, limestone cornices, multi-storied, gargoyle-topped academic buildings to make a truly welcoming and beautiful campus.

But, no, we needed a place to eat.

Plus, as recently announced by the University, we needed to spend $30 million on a baseball facility.

Here's my question: Where was the University's board of trustees during this whole sad affair?

George Wolfe is a professor emeritus of English at The University of Alabama.
UAB researcher nears crowdfunding goal

Gun control funding gets boost from Sandy Hook parent

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Bisakha Sen, associate professor in the UAB School of Health, has only three more days to meet the pledge, or her Web page onmicroriza.com comes down and the fund-raising ends.

Since a March 26 AL.com story on her efforts, Sen’s crowdfunding for research story has been covered by BBC, Scientific American and the journal Nature, among other news outlets.

The reason Sen took to crowdfunding was in large part because federal funding for gun research through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention had been halted for 17 years through political efforts led by the National Rifle Association.
It’s only a drill

Emergency responders are tested at UAB during a simulated shooting

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Two armed men with explosives attacked the UAB Hill University Center during a rainstorm injuring at least 20 people Friday.

At least that was the scenario for an annual training drill to test emergency responders. No one was injured, and the shooting suspects were unarmed.

UAB police, Birmingham police and the Birmingham Fire and Rescue Service took part in the drill. University Hospital also conducted a mass-casualty drill.

In the drill, two armed men simulated taking hostages on the third and fourth floor of the building. They also had two simulated explosive devices. The building was closed during the event and an adjacent street blocked.
Federal agency halts disciplinary action for UAB

Study on infants drew criticism, national attention

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In the wake of significant outcry in the scientific community, a federal watchdog agency has put on hold disciplinary action against the University of Alabama at Birmingham for a study the school led involving premature babies.

The unusual dust-up among medical researchers and the government’s research watchdog group involves a study of 1,300 premature infants conducted at 23 hospitals.

At issue is whether researchers properly informed parents of the risks to their babies.

The study, called the Surfactant, Positive Pressure and Oxygenation Randomized Trial (SUPPORT), sought to determine ideal oxygen saturation levels for sustaining extremely premature infants. Higher levels of oxygen lead to retinopathy of prematurity, which can cause blindness, but too little can risk brain damage and death.

In March, the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) determined that researchers failed to adequately warn parents of risks involved and, in a letter to UAB, asked for a response and descriptions of corrective actions.

This week, the director of the National Institutes of Health and two colleagues said in an article published in the New England Journal of Medicine:

“We respectfully disagree with the conclusions of the OHRP.”

A week earlier, about three dozen doctors and scientists nationwide signed a letter to the watchdog office saying the OHRP’s conclusion “was a substantive error and will have adverse implications for future research.”

On Tuesday, the OHRP sent a letter to UAB saying “we have put on hold all compliance actions against UAB.”

In the wake of extensive scientific and public discussions ... OHRP has become aware of widespread misunderstanding about the risks that are required to be disclosed in obtaining informed consent for certain types of clinical trials,” the letter stated.

The office also said in the letter it would take no action in studies involving similar designs “until the process of producing appropriate guidance is completed.”

On another front, a lawsuit filed April 17 by some Alabama families involved in the research study remains active.

The lawsuit filed in U.S. District Court in Birmingham alleges careless, negligent and reckless behavior by the study’s overseers led to a range of severe health issues, including eyesight disorders, respiratory disease and permanent brain damage.

The March 7 letter from the OHRP is a supporting document in the lawsuit.

The suit seeks class action status. Damages would exceed $5 million, it said.

UAB spokesman Jim Bakken said the university would not comment because of the pending litigation.
List released of state colleges with highest return on investment: UAH ranked No. 1

By: Kelly Kazek

The University of Alabama in Huntsville was ranked No. 1 by The College Database on its list of Alabama colleges with the highest financial return on investment.

This distinction stems from a new metric created by The College Database that shows which colleges provide high quality educations at affordable prices.

Schools with tuition rates below $20,000 are ranked based on a comparison with the average starting pay of their graduates. Seventeen colleges made the list. Read full details here.

"With the cost of college a concern for many families, it's important for students to find a school that produces successful, well-paid graduates," said Matt Davis of The College Database. "Therefore, it's equally important to recognize the colleges and universities that offer both quality and affordable post-secondary options."

The College Database at www.onlinecollegesdatabase.org is a free, non-commercial website dedicated to providing current and future post-secondary students and their families with accurate information based on data from the federal government and the Carnegie Foundation.

Schools on the list are:

1. University of Alabama in Huntsville: Annual tuition, $8,094; average starting salary of graduates, $47,800;
2. Tuskegee University: Annual tuition, $17,070; average starting salary of graduates, $44,700;
3. Auburn University: Annual tuition, $7,296; average starting salary of graduates, $42,000;
4. Columbia Southern University in Orange Beach: Annual tuition, $4,800; average starting salary of graduates, $41,900;
5. University of South Alabama in Mobile: Annual tuition, $5,904; average starting salary of graduates, $41,500;
6. University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa: Annual tuition, $8,600; average starting salary of graduates, $40,800;
7. University of Alabama at Birmingham: Annual tuition, $6,264; average starting salary of graduates, $39,700;
8. Alabama A&M University in Normal: Annual tuition, $5,328; average starting salary of graduates, $39,100;
9. Athens State University: Annual tuition, $4,590; average starting salary of graduates, $39,000;
10. Auburn University in Montgomery: Annual tuition, $6,930; average starting salary of graduates, $37,100;
11. Troy University: Annual tuition, $5,640; average starting salary of graduates, $36,800;
12. University of North Alabama in Florence: Annual tuition, $4,896; average starting salary of graduates, $36,200;

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13. Jacksonville State University: Annual tuition, $7,650; average starting salary of graduates, $34,800;
14. Huntingdon College in Montgomery: Annual tuition, $16,702; average starting salary of graduates, $33,300;
15. Faulkner University in Montgomery: Annual tuition, $14,730; average starting salary of graduates, $33,300;
16. Alabama State University in Montgomery: Annual tuition, $6,312, average starting salary of graduates, $31,200;
17. University of Montevallo: Annual tuition, $8,040; average starting salary of graduates, $31,200.
SAIC donates $100K to UAH

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A Cummings Research Park technology company donated $100,000 to the University of Alabama in Huntsville, continuing a five-year partnership to develop a skilled workforce.

At a ceremony Thursday at the UAH Business Administration Building, SAIC presented the school with the check — pushing the total donation of the program to more than $500,000, according to Jeet Gupta, an eminent scholar and business professor at UAH.

The donations pay for UAH business faculty training with the SAP software. That knowledge is then passed along to students, Gupta said, who in turn often find jobs at Virginia-based SAIC upon graduation.

"Humongous' database system

"The funding also pays for the licensing fee for the software, the organization of workshops and the appearance of speakers, Gupta said.

"The SAP software provides an efficient database that keeps different aspects of a company working consistently off the same data, Gupta said.

"It's a humongous database system," Gupta said.

"It has a single version of the truth of the data. Most of the times in organizations, data resides in marketing, data resides in finance, data resides in accounting, data resides in procurement and they are all different data. They don't mean the same thing. So when people talk, they are talking from different data.

"SAP allows us to have the single version of the truth for that data all over the organization. Then you can process that data any way you want and it gives us the facility to process the data fast."

Source of innovation

Chuck Lewis, a vice president at SAIC, said the company relies on knowledge developed at the university level.

"SAIC is a company whose heritage is bringing high-technology solutions to solve the nation's most challenging problems," he said. "We look upon the universities as being a source of innovation for us to be able to bring about those solutions."
Desegregation nearly started at UAH

By: Challen Stephens

One more rail stop, and history could have recorded the sad saga of the Huntsville Boys instead of the Scottsboro Boys. And if activists had their way, George Wallace could have made his stand in the schoolhouse door at Morton Hall in Huntsville.

At least that was the original ambition of some of the 1963 organizers, who had identified two young African-American men who wished to enroll at what is now the University of Alabama in Huntsville.

According to historian E. Culpepper Clark, organizers in March of 1963 took steps to set the stage for confrontation in Huntsville. That same month, wrote Clark, Wallace told university trustees that he would make his stand in Tuscaloosa or Huntsville, where ever desegregation was first attempted.

‘Getting ahead’

The two 27-year-old Huntsville applicants, both of whom worked in technical fields at Redstone Arsenal, intended to take graduate courses in math and science. The Associated Press would run their photos on May 21, 1963, and report their applications to what was then known as the University of Alabama extension at Huntsville.

Dave McGlathery worked among the German rocket team at Marshall Space Flight Center under Dr. Ernst Stuhlinger. McGlathery, wrote Clark in “The Schoolhouse Door,” had already applied in late 1962. He had some support inside NASA, but was asked by the university to withdraw his application for one term, wrote Clark. McGlathery agreed. He applied again in the spring.


Unique situation in Huntsville

Marvin Carroll, who grew up in Atlanta, held a degree in electrical engineering and worked for the U.S. Army Missile Command. While McGlathery was quiet about his first application, Carroll’s application drew interest from the Anti-Defamation League and the Alabama Council on Human Relations, wrote Clark. Activists also learned of McGlathery and then met at the Huntsville home of Joan and John Cashin to discuss plans to support both applicants, wrote Clark. “In Huntsville, (there is) a unique situation for the South because (a) large percentage of the population is from other parts of the U.S. and because of federal installations and businesses with federal contracts,” said Joan Cashin during a speech in 1962 at Oakwood University in Huntsville. “This city is the weakest link in the chain of dichard segregation in Alabama and Mississippi.

“We have a chance to break this here.”

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Stalling tactics

Cashin was the wife of Dr. John Cashin, one of Huntsville’s most active civil rights leaders.

But Clark wrote that the university “gave signs of trying to sandbag the spring applications” in Huntsville. There was difficulty in securing transcripts. Reference letters were said not to have been received. “Through it all, officials were unfailingly courteous, if slow,” wrote Clark.

The delays pushed possible enrollment past the spring term. The stalling tactics led the NAACP Legal Defense Fund to look elsewhere. “Thus it came to pass that the most logical site for quiet desegregation, Huntsville, was set aside in the interests of the movement and, as it turned out, in the interests of George Wallace.”

Two days after Tuscaloosa

In the end, a federal judge ordered the admission of three students to the university. Two days after James Hood and Vivian Malone entered the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa, McGlathery quietly ended segregation at the Huntsville campus. It was much the same for Huntsville City Schools, as city officials sent away state troopers sent to block desegregation later that year.

McGlathery, reached at home in north Huntsville, declined to comment for this story. He has spoken some over the years about his experiences.

In 1993, he told The Birmingham News that he drove himself to Morton Hall that first day, that law enforcement watched from a distance and were not needed.

“I wanted the least amount of trouble as possible,” McGlathery told the News at the 30th anniversary mark. “I didn’t want a high profile ... I was just a person who wanted to go to school.”

Great-grandson of slave

Ten years later, in a NASA office newsletter, McGlathery spoke more expansively for the 40th anniversary. He was listed then as a senior aerospace engineer and the longest serving black professional at Marshall Space Flight Center.

“I am the great-grandson of a slave and the great-great grandson of a white slave owner,” he said in 2003, saying his family went back seven generations on the land that is now Redstone Arsenal.

McGlathery said, “I was probably the first black hired as a ‘full’ professional” at Marshall Space Flight Center.”

McGlathery had earned an undergraduate degree from Alabama A&M University and had

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worked as a mathematician at a U.S. Naval lab in Virginia before returning to Huntsville.

But he told the Marshall Star in 2003 that he flunked his first course at UAH and that he felt targeted as the grade appeared in newspaper headlines. He took advanced calculus next and earned an A. He told the Marshall newsletter that the A was never reported in the newspaper. He eventually earned a master’s in systems engineering management from the Florida Institute of Technology campus at Redstone Arsenal.

“I have always and consistently felt the need to prove that blacks could compete and excel in academia and the corporate and government work place,” he said in 2003.

Less has been recorded about Carroll’s role. According to Clark, Carroll’s application was eventually denied by the university. Carroll was away on business, and he did not return calls for comment. Carroll is currently president and CEO of defense contractor Tec-Masters in Huntsville.

His assistant, Dede Booker-Lacey, however, recalled the period, as she said she had been among the students who ended segregation at Chapman Elementary/Middle in Huntsville. She said people tend to think of segregation and the tumult of the civil rights struggles as three generations back. “But this was in my lifetime, and I’m only 57.”
Climate Models Predict Heat That Hasn't Occurred

Climate Change: The New York Times is wondering, as are other mainstream media outlets, "What to Make of a Warming Plateau." If the media had a more critical eye, they'd see what they've been expecting is wrong.

The Times reported Monday that "The rise in the surface temperature of earth has been markedly slower over the last 15 years than in the 20 years before that. And that lull in warming has occurred even as greenhouse gases have accumulated in the atmosphere at a record pace."

The reporter admits the break in temperature increases "highlights important gaps in our knowledge of the climate system" and says the lack of warming "is a bit of a mystery to climate scientists."

It shouldn't be. As many of us have known for some time, the models that have been forecasting doom are deeply flawed.

While Times reporter Justin Gillis was preparing his story, former NASA climatologist Roy Spencer was posting a chart that shows just how far off the models have been.

Spencer, working with University of Alabama in Huntsville colleague John Christy, plotted lines of the predicted temperature increases from 73 models beginning in 1979 and then included the observed — that is, actual — temperatures from 1979 through the present.

What turned out is 70 lines increasing sharply, three increasing more modestly and the observed temperatures slogging along a low incline.

The observed temperatures increased less than one-fourth of a degree Celsius since 1979, while the mean increase of the 73 models, many of which will be used to write the United Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's next report, is three times as high.

Making the case against the models even stronger is the fact that the observed temperatures were taken from the tropical troposphere where, according to Marlo Lewis of the Competitive Enterprise Institute, "the models project the strongest, least ambiguous, greenhouse warming signal."

These observed temperatures were taken from four radiosonde datasets and two satellite datasets, which provided "virtually identical trends," said Spencer.

Less reliable ground readings were not used. They are, says Christy, misleading, due to land-use changes.

"When humans alter the immediate landscape around the thermometer stations," he told Congress last year, "there is a clear warming signal due simply to those alterations, especially at night."
Given the clear evidence that the models are wrong, the next question is why. Spencer says he suspects "that the models' positive feedbacks are too strong ... and possibly of even the wrong sign."

On the same day the New York Times wondered where the warming went, the Washington Post thought it was a good idea to report that "Global emissions of carbon dioxide from energy use rose 1.4% to 31.6 gigatons in 2012, setting a record and putting the planet on course for temperature increases well above international climate goals."

Just to keep the alarm ringing in our ears, we suppose. Because the next paragraph was even more frightening.

The Post reported that the International Energy Agency declared on Monday that "continuing that pace could mean a temperature increase over pre-industrial times of as much as 5.3 degrees Celsius (9 degrees Fahrenheit), which IEA chief economist Fatih Birol warned 'would be a disaster for all countries.'"

A warming surge of that magnitude might well be disastrous. But it's not a given, due to man's capacity to adapt. And such a rise in temperatures is no sure thing.

There's no way to say with any degree of certainty that it will happen. The many troubles with the inaccurate warming models tell us this.

The Spencer and Christy chart should be a crippling wound to the global warming fear industry and its supporters. They are, pardon the expression, running out of gas. Their story is fading into the dim past, the sort of place we'd all be if we yielded to their solutions for a problem that doesn't exist.
Climate-change hype turns 25

By: Anthony J. Sadar

Global-warming hysteria was launched 25 years ago this month. On June 23, 1988, James Hansen of NASA testified before a congressional hearing and the world that “the greenhouse effect is here and is affecting our climate now.” His confidence, sincerity and humble demeanor captured political and environmental opportunists in a big way.

Here was a man and a cause that could propel up-and-coming politicians to new heights and fill eco-activist coffers to overflowing.

From the beginning, the fix was in, and theatrics took center stage. Then-Sen. Timothy Wirth, Colorado Democrat, and his staff left the hearing-room windows open the steamy night before the proceedings to make sure the room’s air-conditioners were chugging away against the heat during the momentous event.

Soon after the hearings, the U.N.’s Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change took over, and the rest is history.

For climate-change followers, celebrations are in order. Let’s review their “achievements”:

Hundreds of regulations are on the books, and more are coming down the pike to spike industrial growth and economic advancement;

Thousands of hours of political grandstanding about human exhausts have fueled funnel-cloud fears, hyped hurricane histrionics, and otherwise monkeyed with the meteorological mechanisms.

Billions of taxpayer dollars have been shoveled into bottomless pits of “free”-energy project subsidies, redundant Keystone XL oil pipeline and fracking environmental-impact studies, vacuous eco-activist indoctrination curriculums and crazy carbon-sequestration schemes.

Billions of people around the world remain in poverty who could easily be lifted out by access to abundant, low-cost, readily available fossil fuels.

To be sure, real-world global temperatures were on the rise, and climate modeling was improving to the point where consistency between that rise and the science that simulated it was fairly good. Throughout the 1990s, climate modelers were able to match and roughly predict global temperature changes using the assumption that carbon dioxide had a steroidlike impact on an otherwise feeble climate system.

Yet reality has a way of humbling even the least humble. For more than 15 years now, the global average temperature has been stubbornly uncooperative with the predictions of research climatologists and the wishes of environmental religionists.
The accompanying graph, recently prepared by climatologist John Christy of the University of Alabama in Huntsville, displays temperature response to greenhouse gases. The plot indicates estimates and predictions from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change’s climate models for the tropics against actual temperature measurement results.

The top line in the graph represents what the U.N. panel considers to be the best estimate of global warming. Such an estimate is being used to encourage scientists and politicians to promote dire consequences for the planet and its people.

However, the plot clearly shows that predictions are not successful in matching real-world global average temperatures, which are traced by the two lower lines for satellite and weather-balloon measurements of the lower atmosphere. According to Mr. Christy, the disagreement between predicted and actual temperatures suggests that the models “are significantly wrong compared with the real world.”

For the sake of humanity, the next quarter-century will hopefully be marked by not only a continued level-temperature trend, but also by more evenhanded approach to our ability to understand and predict the global climate decades ahead.
What do satellites, fish kills and farming have in common? They're all part of a new UAH-NASA study

By: Evan Belanger

University of Alabama in Huntsville could improve farming techniques, protect inland waterways, and prevent mass fish kills as well as algae blooms.

The study, unveiled recently by the university, will examine the relationship between aquatic vegetation growth and high agricultural activity around Lake Guntersville.

The student-driven project is being conducted by UAH earth science majors Casey Calamaio and Kel Markert with oversight from UAH advisers Rob Griffin and Jeff Luvall of NASA's Global Climatology and Hydrology Center.

"We'd like for the end result to this to be a type of product that you can use to predict the results of various activities on the watershed," Griffin said.

The researchers plan to use topographical maps from NASA satellites and space shuttle missions in conjunction with U.S. Department of Agriculture Statistics Service data to determine what crops were planted where.

They'll then use multispectral satellite imagery to observe aquatic vegetation growth in the lake and seasonal variations.

In doing so, they hope to show the effect of agricultural runoff on the lake. The study is the first of its kind on Guntersville since the Tennessee Valley Authority stopped spraying herbicides to kill aquatic vegetation.

If successful, the researchers say the study could benefit multiple groups. Controlling weeds and algae in the lake supports tourism they say by keeping weeds from choking landings and harbors and preventing fish kills the can occur when masses of plant matter decay and consume the available oxygen.

Known as eutrophication, the phenomenon can occur when waters over-enriched with fertilizer runoff lead to massive vegetation growth.

The research could also save farmer money, they say by showing them how much of the expensive chemicals they apply to crops are staying in place to do their intended jobs.

The study, which was selected through a competitive funding process, is being paid for by NASA's DEVELOP program.

"NASA is always looking for way to use its satellite imagery to benefit society," said UAH research adviser Rob Griffin.
Both Calamaio and Markert are working as paid NASA interns during the research project.
Alabama aerospace sector primed for growth, trade group says

Alabama’s aerospace and aviation sector, which stretches from Huntsville to Mobile, is well positioned for expansion as new projects land in a state with a rich heritage in the industry, according to Jeff Thompson, executive director of the Alabama Aerospace Industry Association.

“Aviation has been going on in Alabama for more than 100 years, since the Wright Brothers. So for us, it’s not a new business,” said Thompson, a professor at the University of Alabama in Huntsville. “If you’re looking for things that will give you an advantage — history and infrastructure are two things.”

Airbus is the latest big-name industry player to pick Alabama for a major project — the $600 million passenger jet production center it is building at Mobile’s Brookley Aeroplex. Alabama stands to win 1,000 Airbus jobs and as many as 4,000 related jobs thanks to the project.

Many of the industry’s biggest players have long had a significant presence in the state. Both Boeing and Lockheed Martin have had operations in Alabama for more than 50 years. Boeing maintains its Strategic Missile & Defense Systems headquarters in Huntsville, as well as its largest program, Ground-based Midcourse Defense. Huntsville also is home to Boeing Exploration Launch Systems, which oversees NASA’s Space Launch System and support to the International Space Station.

Lockheed Martin was one of the first tenants in Huntsville’s Cummings Research Park, recruited back in 1963 by rocket genius Wernher Von Braun himself. The company now performs work on missile defense and NASA test programs in Huntsville. It also has an advanced manufacturing facility in Troy that makes several missile types for the U.S. military.

Others with Alabama operations include Raytheon, Sikorsky, Bell Helicopter, Northrop Grumman, GKN Aerospace, General Dynamics, BAE Systems, Goodrich and Pratt & Whitney.

The Alabama Department of Commerce says there are 83,000 state residents working in the aerospace and aviation sector.

New projects are adding to the growth. In Auburn, GE Aviation just opened a jet engine components plant that eventually will have as many as 400 workers. In Dale County, Commercial Jet Inc. is investing $12 million to open a maintenance, repair and overhaul operation, creating hundreds of jobs. In Andalusia, Vector Aerospace, owned by Airbus sister company Eurocopter, is expanding its helicopter overhaul operation in a $3 million project that will create 75 jobs.

“Aerospace is a big industry in Alabama,” Thompson said.

Thompson says the Airbus project adds a new component to Alabama’s diverse mix of activities in the sector. The Brookley Aeroplex final assembly line will be just the fourth global passenger production center for Airbus, turning out 40 to 50 aircraft annually.

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"We have the capability to develop a new set of companies in Alabama," he said. "It gives us the chance to go after a new kind of business."

Alabama’s aviation roots date back to the Wright Brothers, who set up a flying school in Montgomery in 1910, just seven years after their celebrated flight at Kitty Hawk, N.C. The site eventually turned into Maxwell Air Force Base, home of Air University, the intellectual and leadership center for the Air Force.

U.S. Army Aviation also looks to Alabama for critical functions. Fort Rucker, near Ozark in Southeast Alabama, has been the training center for the Army’s helicopter pilots since 1955.

“If you are going to fly helicopters for the Army, you are going to go through Fort Rucker,” Thompson said. “It’s a very important facility.”

Redstone Arsenal in Huntsville is another Alabama aerospace industry. It houses the Army Aviation and Missile Life Cycle Management Command, which oversees the branch’s helicopter, missile and unmanned aerial vehicle weapon systems. Redstone has been the center of Army rocket development since 1948, and it was there that von Braun and a team of German rocket experts developed the first U.S. ballistic missile.

Redstone Arsenal also is home to NASA’s Marshall Space Flight Center, where the engines for the Saturn V rocket, which put men on the moon, were built and tested. Today, Marshall has key responsibilities in the development of launch vehicles and propulsion systems and for International Space Station programs. Work on the Space Launch System, which will be the most powerful rocket ever built, is being done in Huntsville.
Disputing cause of global warming makes UAH researcher 'world's most important scientist'

By: Paul Gattis

The man who may be the world's most important scientist has a corner office on the third floor of the National Space Science & Technology Center on the campus of the University of Alabama in Huntsville.

The view out Roy Spencer's window faces west, providing a real-time vantage point to the incoming weather.

But in the science community, what Spencer sees is frequently different from his colleagues.

Spencer, along with fellow UAH professor John Christy (the director of the UAH Earth System Science Center), do not fall in lockstep with the conventional scientific wisdom that humans are feeding global warming to their own detriment.

"I believe there has been warming and so does John Christy," Spencer said. "The question is what has caused the warming. It's an issue of causation. That's what the science argument is over is the extent to which humans are the cause of past warming."

It's this perspective that led to a story last month at AmericanThinker.com that included this headline: "Is Roy Spencer the world's most important scientist?"

The article's first paragraph offers this assessment of Spencer:

"He has discovered scientific insights and theories that cast great doubt on global warming doctrine. That doctrine has always been dubious and is often defended by attacking the integrity of anyone who dares to raise questions. Spencer is a rare combination of a brilliant scientist and a brave soul willing to risk his livelihood and reputation by speaking plainly."

To this, Spencer has an appreciative response.

"When I saw that, I thought it's nice to have a positive headline once every year or two," he said. "It's usually negative. John Christy and I tend to fight the consensus on the whole global warming thing. It's nice to have some positive press once in a while."

The scientific conclusions regarding global warming drawn by Spencer and Christy over the years have been largely derided. And Spencer dished out some scathing words to the global warming community.

"That's another problem with this whole global warming debate," he said. "It's been taken over by a vocal minority of scientists and politicians -- for instance, Al Gore, who has twisted the
science. They've exaggerated what we know and what we don't know to the point where the public has just ended up believing all of these talking points, which have very little basis in fact."

The thing about global warming, Spencer said, is that the globe has stopped warming. The Daily Mail in Great Britain reported last year that scientific data "reveal that from the beginning of 1997 until August 2012, there was no discernible rise in aggregate global temperatures."

"It's something that we've all known but it never gets out in the public because nobody in the media wants to report on it because it looks like they are global warming deniers," Spencer said. "They are afraid Al Gore is going to call them a global warming denier if they report anything is the truth."

Of course, the issue of global warming has many complicated layers. And in the end, Spencer said there is no absolute conclusion to be drawn that will be beyond dispute - leaving the scientists essentially shooting at what's a moving target.

"We agree there has been warming and where we disagree with the consensus of scientists is on causation," Spencer said. "Thirty years ago, most scientists who worked in this field believed there was such a thing as natural climate change. Now for some reason, in recent years it's gotten to the point that the scientific community has virtually decided there is no such thing as natural climate change any more. It's amazing to me as a scientist as to how they could sweep so much evidence under the rug.

"It's possible that all the warming we've seen in the last 50 years is due to humans. That's theoretically possible, just as there are alternative explanations."

Spencer said global warming supporters believe that while the warming of the earth has stagnated, the oceans are gradually absorbing that heat.

Again, Spencer said, it's possible.

"No matter which way you look at this problem, there are uncertainties," he said. "It's like nothing in this field can ever be proved or disproved. Everything is possible, really. When scientists come out with definitive statements, I just ignore them because there is nothing definitive in this field."

So what's a non-scientist to think?

"What I try to get people to understand is that scientifically, we don't really have any clue in the last 50 years how much of the warming is due to humans versus nature. The United Nations, the Inter-Governmental Panel of Climate Change, they claim it's mostly or all humans. But they have no way of knowing that. It's a possibility.

"But it's also a possibility that it's 50 percent nature and if it is, it's going to make a huge difference. If it's half due to nature, then forecasts warming into the future are only going to be

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half of what they expect. So it has a huge impact on what we do policy-wise. How much is natural versus man-made. It's a major issue."

Spencer said he spends much of his research these days on how the climate system works, which focuses on the impact of carbon dioxide on the environment. In short, that impact is minimal, Spencer said.

The demand for carbon dioxide from plants almost outweighs the supply, he said.

"Given that it's so important for life on earth, it's amazing how little (carbon dioxide) there is in the atmosphere," Spencer said. "I've had plant physiologists tell me it's almost as if life on earth has been sucking on the atmosphere as hard as it can trying to get all the (carbon dioxide) out that it can.

"That's why there is so little left in the atmosphere. As we add more (carbon dioxide) in the atmosphere, life breaths more freely. It's well known that for all the years that we keep adding more and more (carbon dioxide) to the atmosphere, it doesn't matter because nature takes out half of it. It just gobbles it up - mostly as plant food."

The resistance to the theories and conclusions presented by Spencer and Christy is that it jeopardizes the economic livelihood of those who study global warming, Spencer said.

"As long as man-made global warming remains a threat, people whose career whose careers depend on funding from Congress are set for the rest of their lives," he said. "I include myself in that. Congress doesn't fund a lot of money into non-issues. As long as this remains an issue, scientists like myself will continue to get funded to continue to study the problem."
Amy Bishop, UAH shootings featured on ‘Fatal Encounters’ television show

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The television show “Fatal Encounters” will examine the case of Dr. Amy Bishop, a University of Alabama in Huntsville assistant professor of biology, who plead guilty to murdering three of her colleagues and injuring three others in February 2010.

The show will broadcast on Thursday at 8 p.m. on the Investigation Discovery channel, which is available on WOW Channel 110, Dish Network Channel 192 and Direct TV Channel 285.

“Fatal Encounters” looks at the relationships between killers and their victims. Each episode begins with the introduction of the victim or victim and the killer, with an on-screen clock counting down the final hours, days or years before the murder.

In the episode on Bishop, interview subjects include Michele McPhee, author of “The Professor’s Rage;” Leland Cseké, a UAH professor; Kenneth Brady, of the Braintree (Mass.) Police Department; and graduate students Renea Gooch and Rena Wright.

The Harvard University-trained Bishop entered a guilty plea for the murders of fellow biology professors Gopi Podilla, Maria Regland Davis and Adrielle Johnson. Biology professors Joseph Leahy, Luis Cruz-Vera and staff assistant Stephanie Monticciolo were injured in the shootings that happened at the end of a routine faculty meeting on Feb. 12, 2010.

The Alabama Court of Criminal Appeals recently denied Bishop’s request that her case be reheard after denying her appeal of her capital murder conviction and life sentence.
Abraham Mitchell has been involved in a range of civic endeavors through the years. Now, a $25 million gift from Mitchell is paying for extensive new scholarships at the University of South Alabama. (FWX)

Gift opens way for scholarships

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Academic scholarships worth up to $12,000 for tuition are available for incoming freshmen at the University of South Alabama, according to a news release from USA.

The scholarships stem from the Mitchell-Moulton Scholarship Initiative, a new program funded by a $25 million donation by businessman Abraham Mitchell. It is named for Mitchell and for retiring USA President Gordon Moulton.

The initiative is "a notable expansion" of USA's scholarship program.

Each high school student who meets ACT and GPA requirements will receive an annual renewable scholarship of $2,500 to $11,000.

The $25 million scholarship gift could have a $50 million impact because it is a matching challenge gift, according to the news release. When other donors contribute to the fund, Mitchell will match their gifts dollar-for-dollar to create a scholarship endowment of $50 million, the release said.

Mitchell announced the scholarship funding and a $25 million gift to the Mitchell College of Business on May 8 during USA's celebration of its 50th anniversary and its "tribute to Moulton, who will complete almost 47 years of service to USA when he steps down on July 1."
NCAA to reveal Mississippi St. decision today

STARKVILLE, Miss. | The NCAA is expected to announce its decision regarding an infractions case against Mississippi State's football program on Friday morning.

Mississippi State revealed last fall that it was working with the NCAA because of "potential recruiting irregularities." MSU receivers coach Angelo Mirando surprisingly resigned on Aug. 19 and the school announced the investigation days later, though it did not specifically link the two events.

Mississippi State disassociated from a booster in July because of "impermissible contact" with a recruit.

A Tennessee 7-on-7 football coach Byron De'Vinner has said he witnessed a payment of about $200 to a Mississippi State recruit and that Mirando knew about the payment.

The NCAA said in a statement on Thursday afternoon that it would not comment on the decision until Friday's conference.

Mississippi State athletic director Scott Stricklin said earlier this week that he could not talk about specifics of the investigation, but that the school was taking the NCAA investigation seriously.

"We're always going to be aggressive at correcting problems and making sure we're doing things the right way," Stricklin said. "If there's something we think is there, we're going to pull the rug all the way back, find the issue and address it."

Mississippi State finished with an 8-5 record last season, winning its first seven games of the season before losing five of six, including a 34-20 loss to Northwestern in the Gator Bowl.
UA track members earn All-America honors

NEW ORLEANS | A total of 15 members of the Alabama track and field team earned outdoor All-America honors from the U.S. Track & Field and Cross Country Coaches Association.

Juniors Dondre Batson, Alex Sanders and Akem Haynes along with senior Dushane Farrier earned first-team honors in the 4x100m relay after finishing second at the NCAA Outdoor Championships.

Senior Alexis Paine earned first-team All-America honors in the pole vault for the second year in a row after taking fourth place in her final NCAA Outdoor Championship.

Freshman Imani Brown and junior Kamal Fuller earned first-team honors in the triple jump and long jump, respectively.
Both men finished sixth at the national championships in their events.

Freshman Elias Hakansson became the first member of the Alabama men's team to earn All-America honors in the hammer throw, taking first-team honors after taking eighth at the national championships.

Freshmen Dwight Davis and Quincy Smith and juniors Joel Lych and Ken Taylor earned second-team All-America honors in the 4x100m relay. Freshman Justin Fondren and senior Kristle Schade earned the second team All-America honors in the men's and women's high jump. It was Schade's third outdoor All-America honor in the high jump after earning first-team honors in 2010 and 2012.

Senior Wilamena Hopkins earned honorable mention All-America honors in the shot put in her final NCAA Outdoor Championship appearance.
UAH's Smith, ex-Lee star Kimbrel pick up honors

Mark McCarter
Huntsville Times

Jaime Smith scored 1,980 points in his four seasons at Alabama-Huntsville, a vast number of them coming in clutch situations, like the game-winning 3-pointer in the NCAA South Region semifinals on an evening when he scored 31.

But the most imposing statistic is this: During his four years in the UAH lineup, the Chargers won 106 of 126 games, won four regular-season Gulf South Conference championships and earned four NCAA invitations.

Smith, a Hoover native, has been named Alabama's 2013 Small College Athlete of the Year by the Alabama Sports Writers Association, which holds its annual convention this weekend in Jacksonville.

The ASWA's Professional Athlete of the Year is Huntsville's Craig Kimbrel.

Kimbrel led a ballot that included the Minnesota Twins' Josh Willingham, pro boxer Deontay Wilder, pro golfer Jason Dufner, NBA players Mo Williams and DeMarcus Cousins and NFL players Julio Jones, Trent Richardson and DeMarcus Ware.

Kimbrel, in his third season with the Atlanta Braves, is a native of Huntsville, where he played for Lee High School. He pitched two years at Wallace State-Hanceville before the Braves made him their third-round pick in the 2008 draft.

Kimbrel was in the majors in less than two years after signing with Atlanta and was the National League Rookie of the Year in 2011, his first full season in the majors.

The Chargers' Smith was the GSC Player of the Year, the NCAA South Region Player of the Year and was selected for the NCAA Division II National All-Star Game, along with UAH teammate Zane Campbell.

Smith was second in the GSC in scoring at 18.5 points per game (46th in the nation) while making the difficult transition from shooting guard to point guard; he also averaged 4.8 assists per game.

The Smith family has a deep legacy at UAH that will continue one more season.

Jaime's younger sister Jordan is a rising senior for the Lady Chargers, who won the GSC tournament. She was the MVP of the tournament.

Previously, older brothers Joe and Jason played for the Chargers. Jason is the fifth-leading scorer in UAH history with 1,407 points — he was fourth before little brother leap-frogged him in mid-season — and Joe, who completed his 11th season in pro basketball overseas, is third all-time in assists.
Pacers' Hansbrough quizzed by camp kids

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When a college or NBA player was speaking at a camp, Tyler Hansbrough made it a point to attend as a kid.

That's why he was certainly happy to share his knowledge with the youth at UAB head coach Jerod Haase's basketball camp on Thursday. Hansbrough played at North Carolina when Haase was an assistant — actually, the first recruiting phone call he got was from Haase — and just finished his fourth season with the NBA's Indiana Pacers.

"You always get about 15 or 20 questions," the 6-foot-9 Hansbrough said. "Most of the kids want to hear about, 'Who's the toughest player in the league to guard, what shoe size are you?"

"There's some questions out there, (such as) what's the hardest part of being an NBA player, what's it like working, that you want to share and people are serious about the game and want to learn."

Hansbrough certainly got his share of tough questions from the kids:

Who's going to win the NBA Finals? "Spurs. I called it before the series."

Who's harder to guard, Carmelo Anthony or LeBron James? "They're both pretty tough. I wouldn't really want to guard either one. That's a tough one. LeBron's good, but Carmelo's mentality is always to score so I'd say he'd be a little tougher to guard."

His bigger message was about how kids should be spending their summer — staying active, and not playing video games.

Hansbrough grew up in Poplar Bluff, Mo., going to Missouri games, but the allure of North Carolina led him to Chapel Hill. He became UNC's all-time leading scorer before being drafted No. 13 overall by the Pacers in 2009.

He said he has full confidence that Haase will succeed as UAB's head coach.

"One, his work ethic, two he loves the game," Hansbrough said. "He's always wanted to be a head coach. You can tell that at Carolina the way he used to get into the game, the way he used to develop players and put a lot of time in the gym with them, I thought that would carry over."
Curry gets first two Crimson Tide signees

Combined reports

TUSCALOOSA | New University of Alabama women's basketball coach Kristy Curry announced the signing of Khadijah Carter and Karyla Middlebrook on Monday. Carter and Middlebrook are Curry's first signees since taking over the program last month and will join the team for the 2013-14 season.

Carter will arrive as a sophomore after spending one season at Jacksonville College in Texas. She earned first-team All-America honors at the junior college and was the Region XIV Freshman of the Year after averaging 18.5 points and 10.2 rebounds per game. The 6-foot-1 post player was also a 3-point threat, hitting 40 percent of her shots from long range. She scored in doubles figures in all but one game last season and collected 12 doubles-doubles.

"Khadijah is a versatile swing player who can get to the rim and step out and hit the 3," Curry said. "She can guard multiple positions. She comes from a great program having been coached by Lynn Nabi, which has prepared her for this next step in her career."

Middlebrook, a 5-7 point guard from Blue Springs, Mo., is ranked as the No. 22 point guard and No. 81 overall recruit in the 2013 class by ESPN.com. She is a two-time all-state selection. Middlebrook led Blue Springs High School to the state Final Four for three straight years, finishing third in 2013. She averaged more than 12 points and four assists per game as a senior and graduated magna cum laude.

"Karyla is the consummate point guard," Curry said. "All she knows how to do is win, and this is contagious with those around her. She possesses a great work ethic and will instantly impact the perimeter."

"Khadijah is a versatile swing player who can get to the rim and step out and hit the 3. Karyla is the consummate point guard. All she knows how to do is win, and this is contagious with those around her."

UA coach Kristy Curry, on her first two signees
Tide 4x100 relay comes in 2nd

Alabama men finish in 11th place overall

From combined reports

EUGENE, Ore. | The University of Alabama track and field team saved its best for the last day of the NCAA Outdoor Championships when its 4x100-meter relay crushed the school record and finished second overall, just a hundredth of a second out of first.

That relay finish, along with a sixth-place finish by freshman Imani Brown in the triple jump, catapulted the Crimson Tide from 23rd after Friday to 11th place overall with 200 points, just a half-point out of 10th. It marks Alabama's first top-15 finish since 2002, when it also finished 11th. It was the 12th top-15 outdoor finish for the UA men.

"What an incredible week," second-year UA coach Dan Walters said. "We went out there and competed hard in every event just as we have in every meet this year. I'm really proud of everyone here and the way they got after it. This is a great step in the development of our program."

The 4x100 relay of juniors Alex Sanders, Diondre Batson and Akeem Haynes and senior Dushane Farrier combined to cross the line with a time of 38.54 seconds, beating the school mark of 38.78 they set Wednesday during the semifinals.

Alabama's Dushane Farrier takes the baton from Akeem Haynes in the 4x100-meter relay. The Crimson Tide's school-record time of 38.54 seconds was just behind Florida's 38.53.

Florida won in 38.53.

"It's been great," Farrier, the Crimson Tide's anchor, said. "All the hard work that we've done from September to now has really paid off. Unfortunately, we didn't get the win, but we crushed the school record. Hats off to our coaches, our team and the whole Alabama nation for supporting us from Day One, it means a lot."

All told, the Crimson Tide quartet shaved more than three tenths of a second off the previous school mark set by Richard Beattie, Clive Wright, Eduardo Nava and Brad McCuaig at the 1990 NCAA Championships.

"Like our coach said, we didn't all get the chance to compete in individual races, but we were able to come together and achieve something great," Haynes said. "We didn't get the win, but that makes us even hungrier for next year. That isn't the last you'll hear of Alabama."

Brown, seeded 20th in the triple jump, uncorked back-to-back career-best leaps to take sixth with a best distance of 52 feet, 2 3/4 inches on his third attempt.

"It was a good year, it was tough with a lot of ups and downs, but it all paid off in the big meet," Brown said. "I came out today and I felt fresh. All week I felt good, and the environment and the excitement got me all pumped up and I took all that in and let it out on the track."

The Crimson Tide women finished 45th with five points coming from senior Alexis Paine's fourth-place finish in the pole vault.

Senior Krystle Schade took 11th in the high jump after clearing 5-10 3/4. She just missed 6 feet and a top-eight finish. Senior Wilamena Hopkins, who made her first NCAA appearance since 2011 and came back from two surgeries, finished 20th in the shot put with a best throw of 50-4 3/4.

"Being able to come back like this came down to dedication and trusting my coach, going along with what he told me to do, listing and understanding that what he's asking me to do is that best thing for me — that, and prayer," Hopkins said with a smile.

Between the men and women, seven members of the Crimson Tide's NCAA contingent scored points, and the Crimson Tide put finishers in the top half of the field in nine events.
UA's Fuller, Hakansson score at NCAA track

Combined report

EUGENE, Ore. | The University of Alabama track team got on the scoreboard on the second day of the NCAA Championships and is 21st on the men's side after earning top-eight finishes in the hammer throw and long jump.

Kamal Fuller added three inches to his career-best outdoor mark in the long jump to snap sixth place overall, jumping 25 feet, 8 3/4 inches.

Freshman Elias Hakansson finished eighth in the hammer throw with a throw of 213 feet, 10 inches. For Hakansson, who owns the top-10 throws in UA history after his rookie season, it was the third-best throw of his career, just a matter of inches off his personal best.

Diondre Batson posted a career-best 20.35 seconds in the 200 meters, shaving nearly two-tenths of a second off his previous best. Batson returned to action today in the finals of the 100, where he was fifth after the semifinals.

The Crimson Tide's 4x400m relay, which included freshmen Dwight Davis and Quincy Smith and juniors Joel Lynch and Ken Taylor, turned in a 3:06.69 to take 12th place.

The Crimson Tide women get things going today when senior Alexis Faine competes in the pole vault. Batson will run the finals of the 100m, while freshmen Imani Brown and Justin Fondren will compete in the triple jump and high jump, respectively.
Bama men's golf has four All-Americans

Combined report

TUSCALOOSA | The national champion University of Alabama men's golf team had four players selected to the Golfweek All-America team.

Juniors Cory Whitsett and Bobby Wyatt along with sophomore Justin Thomas were selected to the first team. Junior Trey Mullinax was an honorable mention choice.

It marks the first time Alabama has produced more than three All-Americans in one season and the first time it has had multiple first-team All-Americans in the same season.

Whitsett was also a first-team PING/GCAA All-American and the SEC Player of the Year. Thomas was the national player of the year and becomes just the second two-time first-team All-American in school history.

Wyatt is also a three-time All-American. He was a second-team choice a season ago and an honorable mention selection in 2011.

Mullinax captured his first All-America honor.

Alabama group starts Palmer Cup play

WILMINGTON, DEL. | The 2013 Palmer Cup, a Ryder Cup-style competition, between the world's best collegiate golfers from the United States and Europe starts today.

Alabama men's golf coach Jay Seawell will serve as the USA's head coach. The 10-man team will feature three Crimson Tide golfers - Cory Whitsett, Bobby Wyatt and Justin Thomas.

Whitsett was among the six U.S. players selected by the Palmer Cup Committee. Thomas was a Palmer Cup Committee selection. Wyatt was Seawell's coach's pick.
Alabama has solid showing in APR

By Cecil Hurt
Sports Editor

TUSCALOOSA | The University of Alabama made a solid showing in the NCAA’s annual release of Academic Progress Rate (APR) data, with both football and men’s basketball finishing in the upper 10 percent of the national rankings.

The APR measures the eligibility and retention of student-athletes and is an indicator of eventual graduation rates. The NCAA can penalize teams with chronically low APR scores, but none of Alabama’s athletic programs is near the danger zone.

"It was a year with steady improvement in a lot of areas," said Jon Dever, the assistant athletics director for student services at UA.

Based on multiyear averages, UA men’s basketball led the Southeastern Conference with a 995 score, including a perfect score of 1000 in the 2011-12 academic year, the most recent single year represented in the data. Football was No. 1 among the SEC’s four-year members with a four-year score of 978. (Missouri, which joined the league for the current year, had a 982 multiyear score.) Alabama football’s single-year score for 2011-12 dipped slightly to 968, but remained well above the national average.

Alabama joined Duke as the only Division I schools to finish in the top 10 in both football and men’s basketball this year.

Dever noted that UA had 10 sports with perfect scores of 1000 for the 2011-12 school year; men’s basketball,

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APR
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men's and women's golf, men's and women's tennis, women's cross country, gymnastics, women's soccer, women swimming and softball.

"Five of those programs won NCAA championships in the last two seasons," Dever noted.

"So we think that shows a good balance between our success on the field and success in the classroom, which is what we are trying to achieve."

The men's golf team, which won Alabama's most recent national championship, also finished with a perfect multiyear score of 1000.

Women's rowing had the lowest multiyear score among the UA programs with a 968, but remained a comfortable 38 points above the NCAA's future penalty line of 930, which takes effect next year.

"Rowing is an emerging sport, but they are making good progress and I think that will be reflected next year," Dever said.

Baseball also dipped to a one-year score of 953, but Dever indicated that he expected that score to rebound next year.

No SEC programs in its major sports will suffer APR penalties this season. Tennessee is the only football program whose multiyear average (924) is below the 930 line. Texas A&M (912) and LSU (909) were the only men's basketball programs below the line.

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Winning becoming the standard with all sports at UA

Track and field just wrapped up its season and other college baseball teams are still shooting for Omaha, but this is as good a time as any for a year-end look at University of Alabama athletics.

From the outset, the bar was set high. In 2011-12, UA won an amazing four national championships — football, softball, gymnastics and women's golf — and had a national runner-up in men's golf. That would have seemed impossible even a few years earlier, but it was possible and it takes little time for possibility to become expectation.

As tough an act as a four-title year is to follow, there were high hopes — and still enough talent to fuel the fires of the dream.

More than talent is involved in winning a title, though. You have to have good health. Softball didn't. You have to have good timing. Women's golf, which did not have its best weekend in a year in which Southern California had a historically good performance, didn't.

Perhaps the greatest asset Alabama athletics has at the moment is that it truly expects success.

There is some degree of good fortune, however, to be found in the University of Alabama football team being the best team in the country but would not have had the chance to make its imprint on the sport (and Notre Dame's backside) without some fortuitous results elsewhere. The opportunity did come, for football and men's golf, also the best team, and both seized it.

So it was a two-title year instead of four. Still, Bill Battle inherited five programs that are possible title contenders on an annual basis; women's tennis had its best finish ever and could be close to becoming a sixth. That is not a bad year by any definition.

It also is not a stopping point. If six programs are at that level, why not push for six more? And why have any programs that are floundering? Battle has already made some moves to make that happen. There is a new women's basketball coach who seems to have the dynamism needed to execute a long-term reclamation project.

The men's tennis program is on the verge of big things. The track programs are gradually getting better. Despite a massively disappointing NCAA exit, baseball seems to be executing a turnaround and to be on the verge of a much-needed infusion of facilities money. 2014 will be a closely watched season there and in men's basketball.

Football will still be the driving force. For the recent run of remarkable success, largely started by the contributions of the late Mal Moore, Nick Saban's program has set the tone.

Of course, the financial impact is huge, but so is the winning attitude that seems to spread from the success football has had. It is no surprise that Saban has given pep talks to the gymnasts or called men's golf coach Jay Seawell with moral (and a little strategic) support.

Perhaps the greatest asset Alabama athletics has at the moment is that it truly expects success.

For the most part, lip service does not suffice. 2013 may not have seen the unprecedented success of the preceding year but it was a success — and another step in Alabama eventually becoming not just an elite athletic program, which it is, but the absolute national standard.
SIAC eyes city as host site for championships

By: Joseph D. Bryant

Weeks after one college sports conference announced its exit from Birmingham, another seeks to take its place.

Officials with the Southern Intercollegiate Athletic Conference are in talks with Birmingham leaders to bring its football, basketball and golf championship events to the city. Those events are held in Atlanta, but with contracts expiring, the SIAC is eyeing Birmingham as its new venue.

The SIAC seeks city concessions totaling more than $100,000 and use of the city sporting facilities. The three-year football contract would begin this year while basketball would begin in 2014.

‘An opportunity’

“Birmingham is a town that has always struck me as a place that wants to support college championship events,” said SIAC Commissioner Gregory Moore. “Perhaps an opportunity may be created for us.”

The SIAC is a college athletic conference of 13 historically black colleges and universities. The Atlanta-based conference has three schools in Alabama: Miles College in Fairfield, Stillman College in Tuscaloosa and Tuskegee University. The SIAC competes at the NCAA Division II level.

A decision on the games is expected next month.

The SIAC’s proposal comes at the same time the city was blindsided by the Southwestern Athletic Conference’s announcement that it was moving its major games to Houston.

Incentives to lure SIAC games here represent a fraction of what the city spent annually on the larger SWAC conference.

Chuck Faush, Bell’s chief of staff, said the city is also aware of the SIAC proposal and is in talks with the conference.

Birmingham spent $500,000 on SWAC last year and had budgeted $550,000 for the conference in Mayor William Bell’s proposed 2014 spending plan. In addition, the city has provided free downtown office space for the conference.

The City Council is currently debating next year’s budget which begins July 1. Several council members propose eliminating the SWAC line item altogether.

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“The proposed budget has been presented to council, per the Mayor Council Act,” Faush said. “The mayor’s office will work with the Council via the budget process to make adjustments for any new opportunities.”

Bell this week will meet with officials from SWAC in a late attempt to salvage some relationship with the group.

**Fan base**

According to proposals obtained by AL.com/The Birmingham News, the SAIC’s 2013 men’s and women’s basketball tournaments drew more than 12,000 fans. The 2012 SIAC football championship drew about 9,500 fans.

By comparison, last year’s SWAC football championship attracted more than 32,000 fans to Legion Field.

The new SIAC proposal calculates a $2.5 million economic impact with expected larger attendance at the Birmingham-held events.

“It is our view that the event has only scratched the surface of its overall growth potential in light of the fact that the game has enjoyed growth without a meaningful municipal or city partnership, and without any print, or electronic advertising,” SIAC officials wrote in their proposal. “By adding these additional elements, coupled with ancillary and social activities, we project the event can ultimately grow to attract 10,000-15,000 attendees.”

**Golf contracts**

In addition, the SIAC proposes a three-year contract for its golf tournaments beginning in 2014. The city would provide $5,000 and in-kind services to support that event, according to the proposal.

The conference also includes tennis, softball, volleyball, baseball and track and field.

“The time might be opportune for all parties. I’d love to talk about perhaps filling that void,” Moore said. “For the deal they’re giving SWAC, I’d bring every championship to Birmingham.”

**More state-based schools**

Contrasting the SIAC to SWAC, Moore said his conference has more Alabama-based schools, all within reasonable driving distance to Birmingham. That makes Birmingham an ideal location for the conference’s major games, Moore said.

“Birmingham is one of our centers of gravity,” he said.

While based in Atlanta, the conference isn’t a stranger to Birmingham. The SIAC held its basketball championships at Birmingham’s Bill Harris Arena in 2009.
'Really good home'

Birmingham’s bid for the SIAC would be coordinated by the Alabama Sports Foundation, which also coordinates other major events in the city including the Magic City Classic and Honda Indy Grand Prix of Alabama event at Barber Motorsports Park.

"Going after this will further position Birmingham as an excellent place to host sporting events," said Faye Oates ASF’s executive director of the Magic City Classic. "This is right in line with all the other things that have been going in the city. The SIAC would have a really good home here."

Councilwoman Maxine Parker, chairwoman of both the park board and the council’s Park and Recreation Committee, called word of the proposal a positive opportunity for the city.

Mixed reactions

"People are really interested in coming to Birmingham, so we’re excited about that," she said. "We’ll continue to look at what they’re asking us to do. After reviewing it, I’m sure we’ll come up with some type of agreement."

Birmingham leaders for years have had mixed results in recruiting games to Legion Field.
Miss. St. penalized for recruiting violations

From wire reports

Mississippi State was slapped with two years probation and docked a few football scholarships Friday for major rule violations involving a booster, an assistant football coach and a prized recruit.

But the school escaped more severe penalties, according to Britton Banowsky, chairman of the NCAA Committee on Infractions, in part because of its cooperation in the case.

The NCAA essentially accepted the school’s self-imposed penalties, including a reduction of two scholarships in 2012-13 and 2013-14; fewer official visits by recruits in 2012-13 and 2013-14; fewer off campus recruiting opportunities by coaches in 2012-13; and no complimentary admissions for recruits during the Bulldogs’ first two conference home games next season. The most severe penalty was a one-year “show-cause” order on former Mississippi State receivers coach Angelo Miranda, who was found guilty of unethical conduct. A show cause order essentially functions as an employment ban.

Although Banowsky, who also is commissioner of Conference USA, called it “a serious case,” harsher sanctions such as a bowl ban weren’t considered because the case was “narrow in scope” and because of the school’s cooperation. He praised Mississippi State for its aggressive internal investigation.

According to the infractions report, the NCAA found that Robert Herring, a Mississippi State alum, and Will Redmond, a highly recruited defensive back from Memphis, exchanged 117 phone calls over a period of several months in 2011 and early 2012, as Mississippi State was recruiting Redmond. The NCAA said Herring provided Redmond with a jacket, a credit card and cash, and that he secured a $2,000 discount on a car for Redmond.

Redmond signed with Mississippi State in February 2012.

He was ineligible last season and will be ineligible for the first five games next fall. He repaid $2,660 in impermissible benefits.
Recruiting violations get MSU probation

The Associated Press

Mississippi State's self-imposed penalties on its football program for recruiting violations were apparently about what the violations merited.

The NCAA's Committee on Infractions on Friday largely accepted the university's sanctions, which included two years of probation and scholarship reductions after a report concluded that a booster provided a car and cash to a recruit.

"We worked in close and full cooperation with the NCAA in every phase of this process," Mississippi State President Mark Keenum said in a statement. "I am pleased that the Committee on Infractions recognized our good faith efforts to meet this issue head-on by taking swift action to administer self-imposed penalties and additional corrective actions to address the situation."

The NCAA report also revealed that former Mississippi State assistant coach Angelo Miranda was aware of the booster's actions but failed to report the violations.

Miranda, who resigned on Aug. 19 just days before the school announced the NCAA's investigation, was cited for unethical conduct and given a one-year show-cause penalty, which hinders his ability to secure employment at the college level.

According to the NCAA's report, a Mississippi State booster provided improper benefits to a recruit, including a car for $2,000 below the actual value.

The booster also provided the unnamed recruit — identified in media reports as defensive back Will Redmond — with cash on several occasions and offered him $6,000 to not take an official visit to another school.

The university released a statement saying the athlete involved — without specifically mentioning Redmond — must repay $2,660 in impermissible benefits, was suspended for the entire 2012 season and will miss the first five games of the upcoming season.

Mississippi State will be on probation until June 6, 2015, and lose two scholarships for the upcoming season. There are also recruiting penalties, including a loss of official visits.

Miranda, according to the report, "became aware of the improper recruiting activity but did not report it to university officials." The report also says Miranda denied knowledge of the booster's activities in two initial interviews by the NCAA and university, but acknowledged he was aware after resigning from MSU in August.

The NCAA's penalties end a review of Mississippi State's football program that lasted more than a year. The program will have several recruiting restrictions over the next year, including a reduction in official visits and recruiting days.
More details revealed about Santa Monica shooting spree: Gunman planned attack, had 1,300 rounds of ammo

BY: Tamara Ikenberg

At a Saturday afternoon press conference broadcast on CNN, more details about yesterday's Santa Monica shooting spree were revealed.

The Associated Press reported that the attack was premeditated and that the gunman had 1,300 rounds of ammunition.

Jacqueline Seabrooks, the police chief for the Santa Monica Police Department, said authorities know the gunman's identity, but have not released a name because the suspect's next of kin is out of the country and has not yet been contacted.

Today would have been the suspect's 24th birthday, she added.

According to the Los Angeles Times, five law enforcement sources in Washington and L.A. have identified the gunman as John Zawahri.

The Times reported that Zawahri's shooting rampage was sparked by his parents' divorce and that he had a history of mental health issues.

Seabrooks said the police department had contact with the suspect in 2006, but he was a minor at the time and the police can't share anything about what happened then.

Five people, including the shooter, died in the spree. Seabrooks said a sixth is in "grave condition" and "her prognosis is not good."

According to the Times report, the gunman's first victims were his father and brother, whose bodies were found in a burning home.

One of the victims has been identified as Carlos Navarro Franco, 68.

Seabrooks said the identities of the others cannot yet be made public because the police department hasn't informed all the victims' next of kin about the situation.

Seabrooks also said she believes the suspect's actions were pre-meditated and that the incident is not considered to be a school shooting.

According to ABC News, police are investigating nine crime scenes throughout the area - five to seven of which involved gunfire.
Senate fails to advance rival student loan plans

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON | College students faced increasing uncertainty about the cost of new student loans after senators failed Thursday to advance partisan proposals to keep interest rates from doubling on July 1.

Dueling measures in the Senate would have kept interest rates on some student loans from moving from 3.4 percent to 6.8 percent, although separate Republican and Democratic proposals each failed to win 60 votes needed on procedural votes. The failure means that unless lawmakers can find a rare bipartisan agreement, students are likely to face higher rates on new subsidized Stafford student loans this fall but enjoy greater certainty on the interest they will be expected to pay during the life of their loans.

"I cannot understand why we're having a problem with this," Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid told reporters after the vote.

Sen. Lamar Alexander, R-Tenn., called it a "manufactured" crisis. "If we can't agree on this, we can't agree on anything," he said.

The failure comes three weeks before interest rates increase on federally subsidized Stafford loans return to 2008 levels. For students who max out their student loans every year, the rate shift would mean this year's loans will cost more than $1,000 than last.

Democrats in the Senate unsuccessful sought a two-year extension of the current rates while lawmakers write a comprehensive overhaul of the student loan process.

Republicans, meanwhile, wanted to link interest rates to financial markets. Under Senate Republicans' plan, interest rates would be based on the 10-year Treasury note and, once the rates were set each year, remain there until the loans were paid off.

The GOP parameters were not that different from President Barack Obama's budget proposal, which also included interest rates linked to markets, or a version House Republicans have passed through their chamber.

Obama threatened to veto House Republicans' legislation.

The chairman of the House Education and the Workforce Committee, Rep. John Kline, R-Minn., said he does not plan to revisit his legislation and that it's up to Obama to negotiate a deal or get the blame for higher rates.

Rates on new loans would double from 3.4% to 6.8% on July 1 if agreement isn't reached.

"It leaves us with one body in Congress — the House — having passed legislation that would provide the long-term fix to the student loan interest rate problem," Kline told reporters.

Despite the failures, lawmakers said this would not be the final word as the clock ticked toward July 1.

"If you believe that it's appropriate for Congress to pick winners and losers then support this bill," Sen. Richard Burr, R-N.C., said of the Democrats' unsuccessful plan.

"If you believe that that's not the congressional role and that we need a long-term, permanent, transparent, predictable solution, then vote against this bill and let's sit down between now and July 1 and write a bipartisan approach that solves this problems once and for all," he added.