JULY 30, 2014

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GOVERNOR’S IDEA: BENTLEY SAYS HE PLANS TO CALL
SPECIAL SESSION IN NOVEMBER.

Brendan Kirby • bkirby@al.com

Gov. Robert Bentley said Wednesday he plans to call a special session of the Legislature after the November election to shift money to the state’s General Fund from education funding to pay for economic incentives to lure new businesses.

Speaking at a workforce development summit in Washington County, Bentley said the state is running short on money to lure manufacturers and other large employers. That money traditionally has come from the General Fund, which pays for Medicaid, prisons and other non-education functions of government.

But Bentley said the additional tax benefits that new businesses bring to Alabama mostly flow to the Education Trust Fund.

“Who pays for the incentives? It’s not education, but they benefit from it totally. You ought to eat what you kill,” he said.

Later the same day at an event in Oxford, Bentley appeared to back off some of those comments, saying he would “never” call for using money from the Education Trust Fund, unless that money could be immediately pumped back in.

“We will never take money from it,” he said. “Never. We’re going to support education.”

Instead, he said a special session was up for discussion.

“We’ll work closely with our education leadership, with Sen. (Del) Marsh and Speaker (Mike) Hubbard,” Bentley said. “We’d be in a consensus before we called a special session.”

Senior lawmakers have been lukewarm toward a special session, and Senate President pro Tem Del Marsh, R-Anniston, said he opposes it.

“I think we’ve got so many challenges with the budget that I’m going to be very resistant to offer any kind of economic incentive packages,” he said. “I’m not on board.”

The Alabama Department of Commerce announced earlier this year it was studying ways to revamp the state’s economic incentives structure.

Other lawmakers expressed more support Wednesday.

Sen. Arthur Orr of Decatur, who chairs the Senate’s General Fund budget committee, said the state needs to revamp its economic incentive program because it depends too much on borrowing money by selling bonds.

“The idea of issuing debt to fund economic development certainly, in my opinion, is not the best way to support economic development,” Orr said. “There are better ways to achieve that goal.”

Orr said he had discussions earlier this year with Alabama Secretary of Commerce Greg Canfield about alternatives. He said he has not seen any proposals for what might be introduced in a special session, but said there’s still plenty of time for the governor to share those with legislative leadership to build support before a special session.

Orr said Alabama needs to make changes to be more competitive.

“Right now, it would appear the case can be made that Alabama is at a marginal competitive disadvantage because of our current structure for economic development incentives,” he said. “It would appear that other states have more arrows in their quiver than we do when it comes to incentives.”

Rep. Steve Clouse of Ozark, who chairs the General Fund committee in the House, said, “My only thoughts are we need to make sure we stay competitive, particularly with the bordering states, on economic development incentives. But then the question always is where is the money going to come from?”

Bentley told people at the Delta Regional Authority workforce development conference in Clanton and said he plans to call for a special session of the Legislature after the November 2014 election.

Gov. Robert Bentley spoke this week at a Delta Regional Authority workforce development conference in Clanton and said he plans to call for a special session of the Legislature after the November 2014 election. (AP)
Feds offer funds to help Alabama ‘reimagine’ workforce development

Brendan Kirby - bkirby@al.com

The Delta Regional Authority announced Wednesday that it is spending $1.7 million to help "reimagine" workforce development in the Mississippi Delta region, including 20 counties in Alabama.

The federal-state agency, which represents 252 counties and parishes in an eight-state region, made the announcement in Washington County at the first of a series of summits planned throughout the larger region this summer.

"Just like the flow of the Mississippi River, the Delta economy is constantly changing — and our workforce training needs to change with it," Delta Regional Authority Federal Co-Chairman Christopher Masingill said in a prepared statement. "Working with our state partners, we are committed to enhancing the system of how we train our workers and connect our people to the jobs of the future."

The money will pay for technical assistant for communities to strengthen the connection between education and job skills. Communities can apply for grants of up to $50,000 for technical assistance. The region covers high-poverty counties and parishes along the Mississippi River; from southern Illinois to Louisiana, some Alabama counties are included, even though the state doesn't touch the Mississippi River, because the profile of those counties is similar.

Alabama Gov. Robert Bentley boasted during his keynote address at the conference that the state already has the best workforce training program in the county. He said the state has spent $15 million on scholarships for dual enrollment programs that allow high school students to earn two-year college degrees while they obtain high school diplomas.

He said Alabama also has spent $51 million on new programs and equipment at high schools and colleges.

Bentley created a workforce council made up of 31 members from business and industry.

"That's how business and industry and education work together, and that's the way it should be," he said.

Within the next two months, Bentley said, his administration will roll out a small business initiative that will pull all of the state's resources for small businesses under a single umbrella.

"By far, the most important thing we can do is organize, and also create training and education for people of our state, and that's what companies really look at," he said.

Chatom Mayor Howard Crouch praised the state's dual enrollment program and said 15 Washington County students had gotten two-year college degrees by the time they graduated from high school.
VP says workforce numbers stabilizing

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Large scale job reductions could be over at Lockheed Martin, the company's vice president said, even as he warned the world's largest defense contractor must still grapple with the uncertainty caused by sequestration.

Lockheed VP and Controller Chris Gregoire told Politico's Morning Defense he thought the size of the company's workforce had leveled out.

"I think right now we're pretty well sized for the business base we expect to see in the future," Gregoire said.

Lockheed has 113,000 employees worldwide, down from 146,000 in 2008. The company has about 850 employees working its Space Systems division in Huntsville. The company also has a Missile and Fire Control test and assembly plant near Troy that employs 308 people.

The Alabama operations have mostly been spared the wide-scale reductions that have led to job cuts at other Lockheed facilities. The company announced late last year it would close facilities in Ohio, Arizona, Pennsylvania and California, eliminating 2,000 jobs with another 2,000 cut through reorganization efforts.

The jobs reductions and cost-cutting efforts have paid off in the form of steady profits, even as sequestration's across-the-board cuts causes ongoing uncertainty in the defense industry. Lockheed recently announced net sales last quarter fell 1 percent from the same period last year while profits increased 3 percent.

The company's net income rose 3.5 percent to $899 million, or $2.76 a share, from $859 million, or $2.64, from the same period the year before.

While the company has managed to deal with the uncertainty to this point, Gregoire conceded it looms large for the future.

"We're not out of the woods yet," he said.
NEW COMMERCE OFFICIAL

The Alabama Department of Commerce has named Angela Till, a veteran of the Alabama Department of Revenue, its deputy secretary of commerce.

Till, who has worked at the revenue department for two dozen years in various roles, replaced Linda Swann, who retired after 11 years with the agency.

“Angela’s expertise in the financial and tax-related aspects of incentives packages and her deep experience in working with economic developers across the state will be valuable to us as we continue to pursue our job-creation strategies,” Commerce Secretary Greg Canfield said in a statement.

Till most recently served as the abatement program administrator for the Office of Economic Development in the revenue department, helping to craft the tax-related elements of incentive packages. She has 14 years of experience in administering Alabama’s tax incentive programs.

Swann retired after having worked on the recruitment of the ThyssenKrupp steel mill near Mobile, the Raytheon missile plant in Huntsville and the Hyundai Heavy Industries factory in Montgomery. “She has been at the center of projects that have brought billions in new investment to the state and created thousands of high-wage jobs,” Canfield said.

Michael Tomberlin
MAGIC CITY UPS ANTE ON DNC BID

CITY COUNCIL: APPROVES PLAN TO SPEND $250K TO LAND EVENT, PLEDGES $5M IF CITY IS SELECTED.

Joseph D. Bryant / jbryant@al.com

Just a week after the banners were hung, receptions held and tours given to Democratic Party brass, Birmingham is increasing its efforts to clinch the 2016 Democratic National Convention.

The city will spend $250,000 to hire a team of consultants to organize and promote the city's bid to host the 2016 Democratic National Convention.

In addition, Birmingham will guarantee $5 million in cash to the DNC event if Birmingham wins its bid. The Birmingham City Council approved both measures Tuesday.

"The move today really makes a bold statement that (Mayor Bell) is not only serious about the bid, but the mayor is letting the committee know that Birmingham is committed," said Chuck Faush, Mayor William Bell's chief of staff.

The team will assist in recruitment and marketing, Faush said.

Faush said the city has experience hosting large-scale events, but needs more expertise for a major political convention.

"The city hosts events of this magnitude on an annual basis," he said. "When you look at the transportation, housing and hospitality..."
DNC

From Page 1

Hosting for the ESPN Bowl, Barber Motorsports and the Magic City Classic, yes, we do. A Democratic National Committee evaluation committee toured Birmingham last week.

“We want to make sure that we get them here and that they understand the city of Birmingham is serious about us wanting them here,” Council President Johnathan Austin told AL.com. “We’ve said we were serious, but we have to put our money where our mouth is.”

The $250,000 will come from last week’s sale of the former Alabama Department of Revenue Building. The building at 2024 Third Ave. N. was sold to real estate company Shannon Wachtack for $350,000.

Contracts for the city’s consultants for the DNC effort will come to a vote later; possibly next week.

The city’s $5 million would fulfill the DNC’s requirement that a host committee have $5 million on hand as a deposit if its city is selected.

The city’s cash would only be available if Birmingham is tapped as the location for the 2016 convention.

Birmingham is in competition with Columbus, Ohio; New York, Philadelphia and Phoenix. Birmingham was the first city on the DNC evaluation committee’s list of stops last week.

Birmingham would have to raise about $30 million for upgrades, including at the BJCC, if it successfully lands the convention.

City officials have said another $49 million could come from a federal security grant, bringing the total price tag — public and private cash — to $79 million.

Nevertheless, supporters of Birmingham’s 2016 bid said the thousands of visitors attracted, millions spent at hotels and restaurants and the national status gained would make the effort worthwhile.

“The city is in a pivotal moment in history now with (the mayor’s) international appeal,” Austin said. “The mayor is putting forth every effort to make sure we master this moment. We are going to do that.”
Harley-Davidson dealership coming

Owner plans spring opening in Cottondale

By Patrick Rupinski
Business Editor

Hogs are coming to the Tuscaloosa area, and they’re not the barbecue kind. Harley-Davidson, the maker of the iconic American motorcycle, will open a dealership here next year.

Bill Peek, owner of the Harley-Davidson motorcycle dealership in Pelham, has acquired a 2.5-acre site near Interstate 20/59 for a dealership that will be known as T-Town Harley-Davidson.

"Just as soon as all our plans are together, we hope to start building," said Peek, whose Harley-Davidson franchise territory also includes a dealership in Trussville. "We hope to have it open by late spring."

Peek said Tuscaloosa's continuing population growth convinced him it was time to put a dealership here.

The satellite dealership will be smaller than Peek's Heart of Dixie Harley-Davidson dealership off of Interstate 65 in Pelham. But Peek said the facility, which will be about 15,000 square feet, will offer a full range of products and services, including sales of motorcycles and parts, service by trained H-D mechanics and a stocked Harley-Davidson store with apparel and other branded merchandise.

Like most H-D dealerships, it will be open seven days a week. It will have about 25 employees.

The Tuscaloosa dealership will be built near I-20/59's exit 77 on the vacant property between the Pizza Hut and Ruby Tuesday restaurants on Interstate Parkway near Tuscaloosa Chevrolet.

Peek said he plans to meet with a Harley-Davidson dealership design team in early August to go over the site and develop the layout and building design. He said the team will probably develop two or three concepts before he chooses the one that best fits the Cottondale site.

See HARLEY | 3D

T-TOWN HARLEY-DAVIDSON
Bill Peek, owner of the Harley-Davidson dealership in Pelham, says plans for the Cottondale dealership include opening in late spring of 2015. The new dealership will represent at least a $2 million investment.
HARLEY
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1D

Once the plans are done, construction can start. Peek said he hopes to have the dealership ready to open in late spring of 2015. The new dealership will represent at least a $2 million investment.

Peek, who has been in the motorcycle business for 30 years, said Harley-Davidson likes to have its dealerships near interstate exits and visible from the interstate. That's because the dealerships serve not only area bikers, but also riders passing through on longer treks. The dealerships often are near restaurants and hotels so H-D riders can stop for a rest or get their vehicles serviced, he said.

H-D service departments are set up so riders needing just an oil change can get in and out quickly and won't have to wait if someone ahead of them is having more extensive work done, he said.

"Mainly, our service work will be just on Harley-Davidsons because our mechanics are factory-trained to work on our bikes," Peek said.

Patrick Agee of Advantage Realty, who handled the land sale for Peek, said the H-D dealership will boost the Tuscaloosa economy.

"What it does for the area is it brings in a new quality business with a great reputation. It also will bring in additional traffic to businesses around it as people stop there."

It will also allow area H-D owners to get their bikes, accessories and service locally. "For the city of Tuscaloosa, it stops some of the retail leakage to different markets because now we will have it here," he said.

Right now, West Alabamians looking for a H-D dealership have to go to either Pelham or Meridian, Miss.
Major retailers coming to town
Council votes today on incentives package

By Jason Morton
Staff Writer

The major tenants of a proposed retail shopping center in Tuscaloosa have been revealed.

Dick's Sporting Goods, Fresh Market, PetSmart and DSW Shoes are coming with the completion of The Shoppes at Legacy Park, a $62 million, 250,000-square-foot shopping center under development by Alumni Development & Construction LLC of Clanton.

Bed Bath & Beyond and Cost Plus World Market already have been announced as tenants for the project, and they will be the featured stores in a new retail development planned for a 16.25-acre tract in the former Cedar Crest neighborhood at the corner of McFarland Boulevard and 13th Street.

"We're excited to have them in the market and excited to bring new retailers to Tuscaloosa," said developer Keith Owens of Alumni Development. "We believe they will enhance the atmosphere of shopping in the city."

Owens said construction is expected to begin within the next 90 days with an expected 2015 opening.

SEE SHOPPES | 7A

Which new store are you most looking forward to in The Shoppes at Legacy Park? To vote, visit www.tuscaloosanews.com.
SHOPPES
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1A

On Friday, Alumni Development is hosting a contractor fair at the city's new Environmental Services Department facility for companies that may be interested in working on the project.

The involvement of local contractors is a requirement in the $16.57 million incentive package that the City Council is set to vote on today.

The council approved the incentive package in principle earlier this year.

"January was the authorization for the mayor to continue negotiations (with Alumni Development)," said City Attorney Glenda Webb. "Negotiations are completing, and we are moving to execution."

Once completed, the retail development is projected to create up to 500 new jobs, at least $37.2 million in annual sales taxes, up to $120,000 in new yearly business license fees and generate property taxes of more than $160,000, which will increase each year for the next three decades.

One of the $16.57 million in city-based incentives, City Hall will rebate to Alumni Development 78 percent of the sales taxes generated from the six anchor stores it plans to bring in over 15 years or for a total of $9.8 million, whichever milestone comes first.

FOUR STORES ANNOUNCED FOR CENTER

All of the major retailers for The Shoppes at Legacy Park, the $62 million retail development planned at the former site of the Cedar Crest neighborhood, have now been announced. In addition to Bed Bath & Beyond and Cost Plus World Market, the new stores coming to Tuscaloosa are:

Dick's Sporting Goods: A Fortune 500 corporation headquartered in Coraopolis, Pa., that offers a full line of sporting goods from a broad assortment of brand-name sporting goods equipment, apparel and footwear manufacturers.

Fresh Market: Begun in 1982 in Greensboro, N.C., this national retailer now has more than 100 stores in more than 20 states across the country that focus on providing fresh local ingredients. The store features an open-air market, European-style atmosphere and shelves stocked with meats, seafood, fruits and vegetables.

PetSmart: A publicly traded specialty pet retailer of pet products and services, such as pet adoption, boarding, grooming and training. The company started in Arizona in 1987 and now employs about 52,000 workers and operates almost 1,300 stores in the U.S., Canada and Puerto Rico.

DSW Shoes: Formerly known as Designer Shoe Warehouse, the company that began in Dublin, Ohio, in 1991 now has more than 410 DSW stores in 42 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. It specializes in footwear from leading manufacturers and offers a wide selection of brand-name and designer dress, casual and athletic footwear and accessories for men, women and children.

Information compiled from the companies' respective websites.

Additionally, the city will rebate property taxes from the project for the next 30 years or for a total of $6.77 million, whichever comes first.

The agreement also contains stipulations requiring Alumni Development to use a certain percentage of developers from the Tuscaloosa and Tuscaloosa County area along with disincetives should an existing Tuscaloosa retailer relocate to the new shopping center, thereby eliminating some of the new sales tax generation.

Property taxes for city schools, which will not be affected by the incentive package, are estimated to reach $430,000 a year, or $12.9 million over a 30-year span.

The incentives were based on data and information compiled by Retail Strategies, a Birmingham-based consulting firm that performs market research, analysis, strategic planning and retail recruitment services for cities across the country.

Retail Strategies has been contracted by the Chamber of Commerce of West Alabama to assist in its economic recruitment efforts.

Robert Jolly, principal for Retail Strategies, presented an in-depth report to the City Council's Finance Committee last year that indicated there was a significant retail spending shortfall—known in market terms as a "gap"—in the Tuscaloosa area.

Using data compiled from the federal Bureau of Labor Statistics, the U.S. Census and estimates from the developer and its own internal resources, the retail gap for the type of stores Alumni Development is proposing to bring to the Tuscaloosa market totals at least $276.9 million, Jolly said.

But if the development is complete, the shopping center could offset this retail shortfall by $49.6 to $87.2 million.

"All of us have a vested interest in Tuscaloosa in one way or the other," Owens said of his Alumni Development partners. "This will keep people from having to go outside the Tuscaloosa city limits and allows them to spend money in town without having to travel long distances.

"It keeps that money in the market."
Shopping center project gets OK

Council unanimous in approving incentive package for developer

By Jason Morton
Staff Writer

An incentive package of $16.57 million in tax rebates for a Clanton-based developer was approved unanimously Tuesday by the Tuscaloosa City Council.

Alumni Construction & Development Co. will get the tax rebated for its $62 million shopping center it will build at the corner of 13th Avenue and McFarland Boulevard — the site of the former Cedar Crest neighborhood that was destroyed by the April 27, 2011, tornado.

The 217,500-square-foot development will bring six new anchor stores — Dick’s Sporting Goods, Fresh Market, PetSmart, DSW Shoes, Bed Bath & Beyond and Cost Plus World Market — to the area with the completion of the Shoppes at Legacy Park.

With approval of the incentive agreement came an update on the project’s timeline. Alumni Construction is now required to begin construction by Oct. 1 and developers...
COUNCIL

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1A

expect the project to be finished by October 2015.

"Come next Christmas, there will be a new place to shop in Tuscaloosa," said Keith Owens of Alumni Construction & Development. "I believe Alumni Development has delivered on its promise to the city of Tuscaloosa."

"We're doing everything we can to get the community energized about what's coming."

Prior to Tuesday night's meeting, Jim Page, president and CEO of the Chamber of Commerce of West Alabama, said he supported the incentive package not only for the benefit of Alumni Development, but also for the future of the Tuscaloosa retail market.

"These new-to-the-market tenants will not only keep sales tax dollars at home, but they will make the Tuscaloosa market more attractive to retailers not currently here," Page said.

Essentially, Tuscaloosa has suffered from a misrepresentation of demographics, meaning more retail store companies have not seen it worthwhile to invest here, he said.

Now, college students — and the money they can spend — are part of the equation. And with the six new anchor tenants now announced, it will make other companies see the area as desirable, Page said.

"Momentum breeds momentum," he said. "There's going to be other retailers asking: 'Why aren't we in that market?'"

Once completed, the retail development is projected to create up to 600 new jobs, at least $37.5 million in annual sales, up to $220,000 in new yearly business license fees and generate property taxes of more than $160,000, which will increase yearly for the next three decades.

Of the $16.57 million in city-granted incentives, City Hall will return to Alumni Development 78 percent of the sales taxes generated from the six anchor stores it plans to bring over 18 years or a total of $9.8 million, whichever comes first. For the remaining stores, the city will collect all the sales taxes.

Additionally, the city will rebate property taxes from the entire 16.155-acre tract for the next 30 years or a total of $6.77 million, whichever comes first.

The agreement contains stipulations requiring Alumni Development to use a certain percentage of contractors from Tuscaloosa County.

Property taxes for city schools will not be affected by the incentive package. Those taxes are estimated to reach $420,000 a year, or $12.9 million over a 30-year span.

Also included in the agreement is a "New Business Marketing" provision that requires Alumni Development to fill 90 percent of the retail space with businesses and stores that are new to the Tuscaloosa market.

For the remaining 10 percent of space or about 2,000 square feet, Alumni Development will face additional limitations for three years after its grand opening.

During that time, Alumni Development cannot recruit existing businesses unless the relocating tenant is moving into a larger space or it signs a longer lease in the Alumni Development project than it has with its current landlord.

The limitations are not enough, according to at least one Tuscaloosa-based development company that is concerned about losing tenants from its current and future shopping sites.

Pate Companies, attorney Cam Parsons told the City Council that the New Business Marketing provision did not do enough to protect existing property owners from having their tenants poached by the Shoppers at Legacy Park.

"How much of that total $420,000 in annual property taxes are you going to allow to be taken from other landlords?" Parsons said. "On behalf of those who have been developing here for decades, we are concerned about the competitive advantage of the incentives."

Parsons, who first brought his concerns to the council members during its pre-council meeting, succeeded in getting the 36 months from the grand opening provision added to the incentive package. Initially, it was for 24 months, starting from the moment construction began.

Still, the change was not enough, he said, asking for a five-year window from the time the retail center opened.

"I still don't think this provision, as drafted, does what it's intended to do," Parsons said. "Associate City Attorney Tom Bobitt, who authored the final incentive package, said the agreement allows the City Council to revoke any or all tax rebates if Alumni Development does not fulfill all of the detailed rules and regulations.

"If the developer defaults on any part of the agreement," Bobitt said, "the developer could lose their incentives."

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Bentley excited about I-10 bridge

TOLLS AN ANSWER? GOVERNOR SAYS HOW TO PAY FOR IT WILL BE ANSWERED ANOTHER DAY.

Brendan Kirby  

Gov. Robert Bentley this week expressed elation that a long-planned bridge over the Mobile River appears to be moving forward and said there is plenty of time to figure out funding.

Speaking to reporters after a workforce development summit in Washington County, the governor said he was pleased the Federal Highway Administration had released a draft of an environmental impact statement – a years-long process that had kept construction plans in a holding pattern.

"I am very excited about that," Bentley said. "This is a project that needs to be done."

The release of the environmental draft in some ways is the beginning, not the end, of the process. The government still must schedule public hearings, receive feedback and issue a final report.

A local consensus appears to have formed around the so-called "B prime" route, which would connect Interstate 10 at Virginia Street in Mobile with the Bayway. It would cross the Mobile River just south of the Mobile cruise terminal and move across Pinto Island. As part of the project, the Bayway would be widened to eight lanes.

Then there is finding a way to pay for the project, which some officials have estimated at $850 million or more. That is more than the federal government spent on all transportation projects in Alabama last year.

The state's 20 percent match would come to at least $170 million. That, too, is an enormous sum for a state that has struggled to pay for routine transportation projects in recent years.

"We have to decide on how to fund it," Bentley acknowledged.

He said tolls could be an answer. But he added those decisions are a ways away.

"We haven't gotten to that point yet," the governor said.

BENTLEY SAYS HE WILL CALL A SPECIAL SESSION AFTER THE NOVEMBER ELECTIONS. 26
Rising to the occasion

Mandy Jocham, 6, third from left, waits alongside other graduates during the 2014 graduation rehearsal at the Rise School in the Stallings Center on Thursday.

Program graduates 21 students with emphasis on possibilities

By Ed Enoch
Staff Writer

Ute Jocham wiped tears away as she watched her daughter Mandy — a flash of red hair and smiles in a grass hula skirt dashing about — rehearse with her classmates for their graduation from the Rise School at the University of Alabama.

The tears came with the combination of Edward Elgar’s “Pomp and Circumstance” played on piano by a Rise staff member and Mandy’s walk to the dais that represented the culmination of her six-year experience in the integrated preschool program for students with disabilities and peers who are developing normally.

Mandy’s older brother, 9-year-old Kevin, is also a Rise graduate. Kevin, who developed normally, attended the school because of his sister, Jocham said.

“It’s so thrilling,” Jocham said. “She made such good progress. It’s unbelievable.”

Mandy, who was diagnosed with Down syndrome, was among 21 students who graduated from the school located on the University of Alabama campus on Thursday. The Rise program is part of the university’s College of Human and Environmental Sciences and serves students ranging in age from infants to 6 years old.

The graduation featured an eclectic soundtrack of rock, soul, pop and country classics accompanied by student skits.

See Rise | 7A
Mandy in a grass hula skirt danced along with a group performing to Elvis Presley's "Rock-a-Hula Baby."

Jocham said she can't imagine the last six years without the emotional and programmatic support from the Rise school, which she and her husband, Andy, learned about from friends.

"Every day when I walked in ... love, there was so much love," Jocham said.

Mandy, born four weeks premature, spent the first three months of her life in a neonatal intensive-care unit because of a heart defect, which was eventually repaired with a surgery at the University of Alabama at Birmingham.

Jocham was shocked when doctors first told her Mandy had Down syndrome.

"I had no clue about Down syndrome," she said.

The anxiety and anguish over the uncertainty of what that would mean for her daughter's life became a resolve to make the best of the situation and move forward.

"It took us a short while, but then we knew she would be all right," Jocham said.

The Jochams, who moved to Alabama from Germany about 12 years ago because of Andy Jocham's job with ISE Innovative Systems U.S. Inc., were advised intervention early was key.

Mandy came to the Rise School, a 9-month-old. This fall, the 6-year-old who is fluent in German, English and sign language will begin kindergarten at Northport Elementary School.

"It will be a new challenge, but it will be all right," her mother said.

Now Jocham's dreams for her daughter are of an independent life.

"She is such a quick, easy learner," Rise Director Martha Cook said of Mandy.

During the rehearsal, Cook stood on the dais as emcee, greeting each student with a hug and a kiss as they accepted their diplomas. In her praise for the students, Cook noted the dire predictions for some with severe disabilities never materialized.

"It's incredible what children can achieve if you don't put a cap on them," Cook said.

Cook said the school tries to foster a nurturing, family atmosphere that cultivates a sense of possibility for its graduates rather than limitations. She wants her students defined by what they become rather than their disability.

Rise works to build students' self-esteem with the hope it will continue to grow after the students leave, Cook said.

"We want them to get out of here being proud for who they are not for who they are not," she said.

Reach Ed Enoch at ed.enoch@tuscaloosanews.com or 205-722-0209.
UA Tri Delts are biggest fundraiser for St. Jude

The University of Alabama’s Delta Delta Delta sorority chapter has been recognized as the top fundraiser in 2013-2014 for the sorority’s philanthropic partner, St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital.

The chapter raised $204,414.79 for the hospital, which has been the sorority’s national philanthropic partner since 1999, according to UA. It is the first chapter in history to donate more than $200,000 in a year. The $204,414.79 contribution from UA’s chapter was part of $6.1 million raised this year by chapters nationwide.

St. Jude will place a UA flag signed by the sorority members on display in the hospital to mark the achievement.

The chapter expanded its fundraising event roster during the campaign to reach a greater audience from across the Greek and broader campus community.
A cultural exchange

Students from Japan are spending a week in north Alabama

By Angel Coker
Staff Writer

Teen-age Japanese students reverted to the attitude of 4-year-olds, giggling as they flocked to Mound B, the Principal Chief’s mound at Moundville Archaeological Park.

The students, from Narashino, Toho, Tsudanuma and Mimomi high schools in Japan, visited the park Tuesday as a part of their tour of the Tuscaloosa area with the Tuscaloosa Sister Cities — Tuscaloosa City Schools Exchange Program.

Their stay from July 25 to Aug. 4 will consist of tours of Tuscaloosa City Schools to demonstrate how the American school system works and tours of local sites such as Bryant-Denny Stadium and the University of Alabama, historic downtown Tuscaloosa, the new federal building and the Tuscaloosa Amphitheater. They will also visit Vulcan Park and the McWane Center in Birmingham and the NASA/Huntsville Space and Rocket Center.

Bill Skinner teaches Eemi Ueki, 16, about stones, ancient tools and weapons Tuesday at Moundville Archaeological Park. She’s one of 20 students who arrived in Tuscaloosa last week as part of the Tuscaloosa Sister Cities International Exchange Program.

Lisa Keyes, director of Tuscaloosa Sister Cities International, said students from sister city Narashino visit every other even

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EXCHANGE

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numbered year. In odd number years, students from Tuscaloosa's sister city of Schorn-dorf, Germany, visit, and every two and a half years, students from the sister city of Sunyani-Techiman, Ghana, visit.

Student, business and community exchanges have been taking place between Tuscaloosa and Narashino for 28 years, Keyes said.

"The goal of the Sister Cities Program is to foster peace, mutual respect and understanding among all cultures with the idea being that, if you stay with a host family and you experience meals with them and you talk about the things that are important to each, (you learn) we're all more alike than we are different," she said.

The students will visit several high schools to get a taste of what American teenagers are like, Keyes said. The students visited Paul W. Bryant High School on Monday where they learned how to do the electric slide from the cheerleaders.

"Young people sometimes have a preconceived notion of what American youth are like. Sometimes the notions are accurate, and sometimes they're not accurate," Keyes said.

"The students who visit from Japan often find that American students are so similar to them in that they like to go out and they like to spend time with their friends."

Sixteen Tuscaloosa students visited Narashino in June. Chaperone Dajiro Yamaguchi, a board member of the Narashino International Association, said it is important for the students to learn about other cultures.

"I think it is very important to acknowledge cultures are different, especially for high school students," said Yumi Miya-take, Japan Outreach Initiative Coordinator at the University of Alabama. "If they get to know the difference between their cultures, when they grow up, they have more wide vision. It will make them think about their own life as well."

Haruka Watanabe, a 16-year-old Toho High School student, said she has found, through the program, that Americans are a very accepting people.

"The students are happy to find that Americans, especially in the South, are very friendly," Keyes said. "Today you've got fighting among nations, and when you have programs like this, it brings people together. It causes people to try to understand that, because you do things differently in another culture, doesn't make it wrong."
UA to hold graduation ceremony on Saturday

The University of Alabama will hold summer graduation exercises at 9 a.m. Saturday at Coleman Coliseum on campus. At least 1,708 undergraduate and graduate students are scheduled to receive degrees.

James P. Cover, an economics, finance and legal studies professor who has taught at UA for 32 years, will be commencement marshal.

Video of the ceremony will be archived online at ua.edu/commencement/ and it will be available for viewing for 30 days after the ceremony.
UA, city focus on thwarting counterfeitors

Ticket resellers and runners require business license to operate in town

By Ed Enoch
Staff Writer

With the college football season less than a month away, University of Alabama officials have their eye on ticket counterfeitors, while the Tuscaloosa City Council has taken steps to ensure that all people involved in the reselling of tickets are licensed by the city.

The University of Alabama Ticket Office will continue to verify the authenticity of tickets to football games this season before and on game days.

The process will be the same as in years past, according to Chris Besanceney, assistant athletic director for tickets and Tide Pride, the donor program that administers ticket sales.

Besanceney said Friday that the ticket office at Coleman Coliseum will

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TICKETS

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verify tickets during regular business hours ahead of game days. The ticket office has two locations on game days at gates 3 and 32 at Bryant-Denny Stadium for verifying tickets.

Fans can visit the UA Athletic Ticket Office at Coleman Coliseum to verify their tickets from 8 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Wednesday. On game days, officials will be available beginning at 10:30 a.m. at the stadium.

Season tickets are scheduled to ship in early August, according to the schedule on the UA Athletics Department website. The Tide begins its season Aug. 30 in Atlanta against West Virginia and its home schedule against Florida Atlantic University on Sept. 6.

Last week, the Tuscaloosa City Council amended the municipal code to require the licensure of all members of ticket reselling businesses.

The amendment focused on runners who purchase tickets from other individuals before sporting events and return them to the licensed reseller. The runners, who were previously unlicensed, as well as the resellers must purchase a $100 business license in order to legally operate. The licenses purchased from the city must be on display while the resellers are operating.

The city of Auburn took similar steps at a July 15 meeting to license ticket resellers, citing concerns about traffic delays on game days because of curbside sales and counterfeit tickets.

Besanceney did not report any upticks in counterfeiting observed by the university, but noted historically counterfeiters typically target games in high demand, using the Tide’s matchups with LSU and Penn State in 2011 as examples.

Fans can generally check the clarity of the printing on the ticket as a quick field test of a ticket’s authenticity, according to Besanceney. The printing should be crisp and without blurred lines.

“Blurred printing on anything is a good indicator (of a fake),” he said.

The holographic foil with the UA logo printed on the ticket stock is another good indicator of authenticity, he said. The foil and logo are proprietary and difficult to replicate.

People with a stolen or counterfeit ticket may be denied admission at the gates and any individual trying to gain entry with a fake ticket could be subject to investigation, according to the UA Athletic Ticket Office. Any person in the stadium who is caught with a stolen or counterfeit ticket will be ejected.

“It’s a double-edged sword,” Besanceney said of buying tickets from scalpers or other irregular sources.

Besanceney said there is not a lot of recourse for the duped fans, other than filing a police report. The counterfeit tickets discovered by the university are collected, he said.

“There is not a lot we can do when an event is sold out,” he said.

Reach Ed Enoch at ed.enoch@tuscaloosanews.com or 205-722-0209.
Team available after Fan Day practice

By Tommy Deas
Executive Sports Editor

University of Alabama football players and coaches, including head coach Nick Saban, will be available for a 45-minute autograph session after Sunday's open practice at Bryant-Denny Stadium as part of UA's annual Fan Day activities.

The two-hour practice session is scheduled to start at 2:30 p.m., with the autograph session starting at about 4:45. Fan Day is free and open to the public.

UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA FAN DAY AUTOGRAPHING

The Crimson Tide football team will be available to sign autographs starting at about 4:45 p.m. Sunday at Bryant-Denny Stadium after its 2:30 open practice.

Fans will be able to enter the stadium starting at 1:30 p.m. through gate 44 and sit in the lower bowl sections AA-NN for the practice. At the conclusion of practice, fans can enter the field through gate 21 and exit through gate 44. Those who wish to skip the practice viewing to start lining up early for the autograph session can congregate at gate 31 starting at 1:30 p.m.

Fans will be limited to one item per person for autographs. Posed photos will not be permitted. Five thousand posters will be distributed.

The autograph event will move indoors to Coleman Coliseum in the case of inclement weather.

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STAFF FILE PHOTO | ROBERT SUTTLE
FAN DAY

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Concessions vendors will walk through the stadium with items for sale, and concession stands on the east side (field and mezzanine levels) will be open.

Surface parking lots and two parking decks in the West: ten Hoor area will be open. Parking for people with disabilities will be available on a first-come, first-served basis in the Communications car lot and the Wallace Wade lots.

No accommodations will be made for recreational vehicles on campus. Patrons driving RVs are asked to park at the Northington lot near University Mall.

Children attending can sign up for the Big Al’s Kids Club and attendees can register for the Crimson Tide Rewards program outside the east side of the stadium at gate 44 starting at 1:30.

Go to www.rolltide.com for more information.
UAB begins advanced drug trial for potentially fatal pregnancy complication

By: Mike Oliver

Birmingham, Alabama – A sometimes deadly condition of pregnancy called preeclampsia may be on the verge of a treatment that may reduce pre-term births and infant mortality.

The University of Alabama at Birmingham has enrolled the first patient in the United States in a Phase III clinical trial to find a treatment for preeclampsia.

Preeclampsia affects a relatively small number of pregnancies – 5 to 8 percent – but its prevalence is growing. The cause is unknown, but the incidence of the disorder has increased by approximately 25 percent since 1987.

With the condition, abnormal development of blood vessels from the uterus to the placenta may decrease the flow of nutrients and oxygen from mom to baby. The baby faces the risk of abnormal fetal growth or prematurity. Blood vessels swell and as a result high blood pressure, stroke, seizures and liver and kidney problems can occur.

The drug trial involves ATryn®, or antithrombin recombinant. It will be administered to treat preeclampsia in pregnant women during the 24th to 28th week of pregnancy as part of the PRESERVE-1 trial. The randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled trial will assess whether ATryn, produced by rEVO Biologics Inc., prolongs pregnancy in mothers with early-onset preeclampsia and reduces the high rates of perinatal mortality and disability it causes.

"Currently, when patients have preeclampsia, all we have to offer is delivery of the baby as the ultimate treatment," said Dr. Alan Tita, professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology in UAB’s School of Medicine and lead investigator for the trial. "If preeclampsia presents early in the pregnancy, it has serious implications for both mother and baby. For the target group, women in their 24th to 28th week of pregnancy, this could be a substantial advance in the treatment of preeclampsia and significantly improve outcomes for mother and baby."
Texting while driving bans really do save lives, UAB study finds

By: Mike Oliver

Birmingham, Alabama — It may not seem like it on the roadways, seeing drivers tap-tap-tapping on their phones. But outlawing texting while driving does have an effect, UAB researchers have found.

In a study published in the August issue of the American Journal of Public Health, researchers at the University of Alabama at Birmingham found that texting bans were significantly associated with a 3 percent drop in traffic fatalities among all age groups.

That's not huge, but it equates to saving an average 19 lives per year in states with such bans, said Alva O. Ferdinand who conducted the study, in a UAB news release.

In 2012, Alabama became the 38th state to ban texting and driving.

"Very little is known about whether laws banning texting while driving have actually improved roadway safety," Ferdinand said. "Further, given the considerable variation in the types of laws that states have passed and whom they ban from what, it was necessary to determine which types of laws are most beneficial in improving roadway safety."

Ferdinand said primarily enforced texting laws that banned only young drivers from texting were the most effective in reducing deaths among the 15- to 21-year-old age group. That kind of ban is associated with 11 percent reduction in traffic fatalities among this age group in states with such bans.

Some states' texting bans involve only secondary enforcement, which means an officer can only cite you for texting if you are pulled over for another infraction, such as speeding. Other states have the so-called primary bans, which means an officer does not have to have another reason for stopping a vehicle.

States with secondarily enforced restrictions did not see any significant reductions in traffic fatalities.
Tech Trek inspires girls to get involved in math, sciences

By: Melissa Riopka

Huntsville, Ala. (whnt) – Alabama’s first Tech Trek camp appears to have been a success. The week-long residential camp, for rising 8th grade girls, wrapped up Friday at UAHuntsville. The camp is designed to empower girls to become more involved in science, technology, mathematics and engineering.

Tech Trek began at Stanford University in California in 1998. It was organized by the American Association of University Women. This year, the program added three more camps, including one at UAHuntsville.

While the camps all focus on STEM topics, each location comes up with its own curriculum. The Huntsville camp included a NASA robotics challenge and the opportunity to develop an app using the MIT App Inventor, sponsored by the Verizon Foundation.

Dr. Rhonda Gaede, associate professor of electrical and computer engineering at UAHuntsville, served as camp director. She says the students represented a diverse group from across North Alabama, many of them interested in STEM fields.

The girls received inspiration and encouragement from meetings with professional women in the community. Ultimately, Gaede says, ”I hope they learn that they can do whatever they want to do.”

UAHuntsville and sponsoring companies covered the majority of the cost of the camp. A grant from AAUW also provided $10,000 for its operation. The girls’ families were only asked to pay $50 for the week.

Each camper was nominated by her middle school principal. The girls then had to go through an application and interview process before being accepted. Fifty were selected.
Making startup life easier: UAH's ICE Lab launches back-office support service for new businesses

By: Lucy Berry

Huntsville, Alabama – The nearly 1-year-old Huntsville Open Tech Coffee (HOTCoffee) bi-weekly gathering is more than just a networking opportunity for Rocket City professionals. It is also breeding ideas for the future.

The University of Alabama in Huntsville's College of Business Administration announced late last week that the school's Innovation, Commercialization, and Entrepreneurship (ICE) Lab has formed a new service for budding entrepreneurs called Huntsville Startup Ventures.

The idea to help startups was born out of HOTCoffee, which started last fall as an initiative of the ICE Lab at UAH.

James Vaughn, coordinator of Huntsville Startup Ventures, said the group will help new businesses and nonprofit organizations in Huntsville/Madison County with filing incorporation papers, securing permits and learning requirements associated with starting a business in the area.

"We want to make Huntsville the easiest place to start a business in the country," he said in a statement. "So what better way than to welcome entrepreneurs with a team of professionals ready to start them up so they can get on with business?"

Members of Huntsville Startup Ventures include Kellie Andrews of Huntsville Hub, which provides startup space and support services; Samantha Brinkley, SPHR, a human resources expert and founder of Rocket City HR; Benjamin Jarrell, Esq., an attorney specializing in business startups at Rocket City Lawyers; Ben Singleton, a Certified Public Accountant; and Maureen Vaughn, who provides accounting, bookkeeping, payroll, and tax services through her firm, Vaughn Accounting Services.

Others will provide advice about banking, real estate and marketing. To learn more about Huntsville Startup Ventures, contact Vaughn at 256.653.3212 or jwvashford@gmail.com.
Is Alabama going to miss a 100 degree day for the second straight year?

By: Paul Gattis

Alabama could be headed toward a historic summer.

The state is on track for the first back-to-back summers on record without a single day of hitting 100 degrees.

According to state climatologist John Christy, it's never happened.

"In terms of the probabilities, the highest opportunities are over (for hitting 100 degrees)," said Christy, who is also director of the Earth System Science Center at the University of Alabama in Huntsville. "But there are still probabilities. We have now gone through July and you look at the forecast, it's definitely not going to be 100 anywhere for the next week."

Indeed, with temperatures expected to peak in the low 80s in north Alabama and the low 90s in the Mobile area, it's going to feel most un-Alabama-like for late July.

Still, Alabama is flirting with some impressive weather history. Since 1884, Christy said only six Alabama summers have gone without hitting 100 degrees at least once: 1965, 1974, 1994, 2001, 2003 and 2013.

"It's the way that climate and weather works," Christy said. "You just can't predict one year to the next. For example, last year we didn't hit 100 primarily because a lot of cloudy and rainy weather. This year, it's been actual cool fronts coming in from the north that have created cool, dry weather, which is pretty unusual.

"We've had three legitimate cool fronts in July -- each one of which looks like it's going to take temperatures down into the 50s throughout north Alabama."

So if Alabama has never gone two straight years without hitting 100 degrees, is 2013-2014 going to be the first back-to-back non-100 degree years?

Christy pointed out that the hottest day in state history was on Sept. 5, 1925 when temperatures hit 112 degrees in Centreville, so there are still about six weeks left where it could happen.

"The answer I would give, there's a 50 percent chance of a 100 degree day," Christy said in going out on a scientific limb. "That way, whatever happens, I think I'll be OK."
Australia Cancels Climate Change Carbon Tax to Lower Business Costs and Ease Cost of Living for Households say Friends of Science

"The Australian Government has abolished the carbon tax, effective 1 July, 2014. This will lower costs for Australian businesses and ease cost of living pressures for households" is the bold statement on the Australian government's environment website, say Friends of Science, noting this challenges conventional climate change policy 'wisdom.'

According to a related report of July 17, 2014 in the Wall Street Journal, Australia is the world's 12th largest economy and due to its reliance on coal-fired power plants, is one of the world's largest per capita greenhouse gas emitters.

Australian Prime Minister Tony Abbot, at a press conference on July 14, 2017, posted on the Australian government Prime Minister's website, said that this repeal will save voters and business around A$9 billion a year. He said of the carbon tax: "A useless, destructive tax which damaged jobs, which hurt families' cost of living and which didn't actually help the environment is finally gone" posted on Thursday, 17 July 2014.

The same Wall Street Journal story of July 17, 2014 reports that Abbot said the carbon price was acting as a A$9 billion a year handbrake on the economy.

The Wall Street Journal reports that Virgin Australia Holdings Ltd. says the carbon tax was responsible for losses of A$27 million in six months through December 2013; this could not be passed on to customers due to a competitive market - reporting a first-half loss of A$83.7 million.

JPMorgan is also cited in the same Wall Street Journal report of July 17, 2014 suggesting that valuation on companies like BHP and Rio Tinto would jump as much as 6%, due to the cancellation of Australia's carbon tax.

Energy expert and Business News Editor, Andrew Critchlow, of The Telegraph of the UK in an article published July 17, 2014 slammed the tax as "Poorly thought out and highly unpopular, the tax is almost unique in that it generated virtually no revenue for the Australian Treasury due to its negative impact on productivity; contributed to the rising costs that have taken the gloss off the country's resources boom; and essentially helped to bring down Ms Gillard's former Government."

Critchlow also noted the failure of carbon tax programs elsewhere: "Ms Gillard had also hoped that the tax would transform Australia into a global carbon trading superpower instead of the world's biggest mining hub. However, her thinking ignored the fact that carbon trading mechanisms and green taxes have largely been a failure elsewhere and especially so in Europe where they have dragged on investment and threatened long-term energy security."

Friends of Science note that the IPCC Working Group I report of September 2013 stated there has been a "hiatus" in global warming of 15 years (to 2012) – now more than 16 years, despite a rise in carbon dioxide, as reported by the Wall Street Journal Oct. 1, 2013.
"Atmospheric scientist Judith Curry testified to the US Senate on Jan. 16, 2014 that carbon dioxide is likely not the 'knob' of climate variability, that natural factors are likely more influential than human factors in global warming, and the case for human-caused warming is weakened by the evidence," says Ken Gregory, research director for Friends of Science.

IPCC scientists have been saying for years that natural climate change is small compared to human-caused warming, but those scientists are now saying natural factors have cancelled out the supposed warming from 16+ years of CO2 emissions. Dr. Roy Spencer, a principal research scientist for the University of Alabama in Huntsville wrote on July 17, 2014 on his website, "They fail to see that a climate system capable of cancelling out warming with natural cooling is also capable of causing natural warming in the first place."

After almost a dozen years of climate science review, Friends of Science position is that the sun is the main driver of climate change.

About

Friends of Science have spent over a decade reviewing a broad spectrum of literature on climate change and have concluded the sun is the main driver of climate change, not carbon dioxide (CO2). The core group of the Friends of Science is made up of retired earth and atmospheric scientists.

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USA has $459 million in endowments, but tuition continues to increase; here's why

By: Sally Pearsall Ericson

Mobile, Alabama – The University of South Alabama and an independent foundation that supports it have $459 million in assets, but that has not stopped the school from raising tuition by about 40 percent since 2008.

The University of South Alabama's endowment has risen to $139.9 million. The University of South Alabama Foundation, an independent entity that supports the university, has total net assets at $319.5 million.

Neither of these resources was available to university officials, however, as a way to avoid raising tuition for the fourth straight year, which USA's Board of Trustees agreed to do at its June 6 meeting.

Why not? The answer lies in how the endowments were created and how people choose to give to the university. Although both endowments are meant to grow the university's assets, neither can be used as a quick-cash resource.

USA's endowment

The university's endowment, which was created in May 2000 and is under the direct control of the Board of Trustees, was built from donations and gifts, almost all of which were designated for a specific purpose, such as creating a scholarship.

"Most people, when they give a gift, they tell us how they want us to spend it," said Stephen Simmons, USA's vice president for financial affairs.

When the university receives unrestricted gifts, that money goes into the general fund and is used for operations, Simmons said. "It's just not that much of it."

If a wealthy donor had stepped up and asked to give enough money so that the university could avoid a tuition increase, that would have been great, Simmons said, but that's not how giving usually works.

"Theoretically, if we got a gift of $3 million and the donor said, 'I want this used instead of a tuition increase,' I believe we'd cash that check," he said. "That's the trick to this is, what does the donor want? Typically people want their money to go into buildings or scholarships, something that's long term."

The USA Foundation

Similarly, the USA Foundation was not created with the idea of assisting the university with operating expenses and therefore keeping tuition down, said Maxey Roberts, the foundation's managing director.

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Asked if the foundation's assets could be used to reduce tuition, she replied that its funds are not meant to be used to address all the needs of the university, "but to support specific activities and to enrich what the institution is able to do."

The foundation's support includes funding for the university's hospitals, along with scholarships, faculty salaries and other programs, she said.

"The concept of an endowment foundation is that it not only supports the programs of today, but also to make sure that the funds exist over the long term, so that as needs arise over the years there are funds available to support those needs," Roberts said. "The idea of a foundation is to provide continual support."

A look back

The university's endowment was created after Frederick Whiddon, USA's founding president, stepped down in 1998 amid controversy over transfers of federal Medicaid funds received by the university hospitals for treating large numbers of poor patients.

Starting in 1989, more than $135 million in the so-called DSH funds –disproportionate share payments – were transferred to the foundation by the university, according to Press-Register archives.

After Whiddon resigned, the foundation's board of directors created a managing director post for him, which he held until his May 2002 death. For several years, the university and the foundation were embroiled in a struggle over who should control the foundation's investment policies and direct its giving to USA.

"The big controversy was when he left, he took the university foundation with him," said Joe Busta, USA's vice president for development and alumni affairs. "Most of the endowment went with the USA Foundation at the time."

University officials began the separate endowment using non-designated state funds and donations, he said.

Decisions and investments

USA's endowment is governed under a spending policy similar to those of other universities, with the Board of Trustees' oversight, Busta said.

"Every time a gift is made, a new account is created," he said. For example, he said, if a donor gave $10,000 to create a scholarship, that money is invested and 5 percent of the earnings from that account are used to pay for the scholarship each year.
It's crucial how the funds are invested, Busta said, to ensure that the endowment grows faster than the spending rate so that it keeps up with inflation over time. But even in a good year, the proceeds can't be shifted to the general fund to keep tuition down.

"Last year, we had a 14 or 15 percent total return on the endowment," he said. The balance stayed in the endowment to make it bigger, so that the following year, the 5 percent would generate more money.

The USA Foundation, created in 1968, has a 21-member board of directors. Two of its current directors are also members of the USA Board of Trustees – Dr. Steve Furr, the trustees' chair pro tempore, and Ken Simon, the trustees' vice president.

Through June 30, 2014, the USA Foundation has given $138,145,121 in contributions to the university and its hospitals, according to figures provided by Roberts. That includes $61 million for faculty support and $16.7 million in scholarships.

"What has happened over time, the university has come to us with specific programs and specific needs," Roberts said. The foundation's board evaluates each request with regard to its assets, she said.

For example, in recent years, the foundation made a commitment to fund 22 graduate assistantships, and the board also agreed to give $12 million to help create the Mitchell Cancer Institute.

Also, in 2010, the foundation purchased a 327-acre site, part of the former Brookley Air Force Base, from the university to support USA's plan to expand USA Children's & Women's Hospital. The 195,000-square-foot, $72.6 million expansion was dedicated on Sept. 12. To make the purchase, the foundation agreed to pay $20 million in annual $4 million installments.

But the board does not approve every request. Last September, when Furr asked the foundation to consider a $5 million contribution to the Mitchell-Moulton Scholarship Initiative, the foundation's investment and audit committee did not recommend making the commitment.

Furr had requested a $5 million pledge to fund the scholarship over a period of five years, at $1 million per year, which would have been matched, dollar for dollar, by Abe Mitchell. One of the reasons given for the decision was the foundation's Brookley obligation.

Moulton died Sept. 28, 2013, after a long battle with brain cancer.

"We missed a chance to honor him while he was alive," Furr told the board at its December meeting. "I would ask you to reconsider (the scholarship) in light of how well we're doing these days. Scholarships are the lifeblood of the university."

Roberts said the investment and audit committee would continue to evaluate the Mitchell-Moulton request. "With any request, the foundation board looks at what's available to provide funding at a particular time," she said.
Tuscaloosan appointed to ASU board

The Associated Press

Gov. Robert Bentley on Friday appointed Ralph D. Ruggs, executive director of the Tuscaloosa Housing Authority, to serve on the board of trustees at Alabama State University in Montgomery. Ruggs will fill out the term of Circuit Judge Marvin Wiggins as an ASU trustee after Wiggins refused the governor’s request to resign.

Bentley, who is president of the Alabama State board of trustees, had given trustee Chairman Elton Dean and Vice Chairman Wiggins until Thursday afternoon to resign. Dean did, but Wiggins refused and said he had done nothing wrong.

Bentley sent Wiggins a letter Friday saying he was using his authority as governor to remove him immediately “out of deep concern for the future of ASU, the student body, its faculty, its accreditation and financial standing.”

Wiggins, a judge for Bibb, Dallas, Hale, Perry and Wilcox counties, said he will review Bentley’s actions with attorneys. He said his options include filing suit or continuing to serve and forcing the governor to take legal action.

The governor said the state law prohibits a trustee from being financially interested in any contract the university has. But he said Wiggins’ wife received more than $30,000 as director of a camp hosted by the university and Wiggins’ sister-in-law got hired to teach at Alabama State despite being a disbarred lawyer. Bentley said Wiggins violated his duty as a trustee by not informing the university president and the board of trustees that his sister-in-law had been disbarred in North Carolina.

The governor wrote that the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools gave Alabama State a six-month warning on July 9, and one of the reasons the accrediting agency cited was Wiggins having “a familial conflict of interest.”

Bentley also noted that Moody’s Investors Services downgraded Alabama State’s bond rating on July 17 and issued a negative outlook for the Montgomery university.

“Each of the above incidents, standing alone, is sufficient to justify your removal as a trustee of Alabama State University,” Bentley wrote.

Wiggins said state law allows the governor to remove a trustee for a violation of state law, but the issue is who determines the violation and what process to use. He accused Bentley of violating his due-process rights with the quick removal.

“He denied it because he based it on his attempt to control the board and control ASU,” Wiggins said.

Bentley noted in his letter that the president of the campus Student Government Association, the president of the alumni association and the chair of the Faculty Senate also had called for Wiggins’ resignation or removal.
Site at Alabama State picked for $2 million historic march exhibit

By Phillip Rawls
The Associated Press

MONTGOMERY | With the 50th anniversary of the Selma-to-Montgomery voting rights march coming up next year, the National Park Service has chosen Alabama State University as one of the locations for exhibits honoring the historic 1965 march and its impact on American government.

The park service and university President Gwendolyn Boyd signed a memorandum of understanding Monday for the construction of an interpretive center on a grassy lawn next to the university's new football stadium.

"The purpose of this edifice is to tell the Montgomery story of the historic march and, indeed, of the noble and peaceful quest and campaign for voting rights and equal justice under the law," Boyd said.

On March 7, 1965, marchers set out from Selma to seek voting rights for disenfranchised blacks. The marchers were beaten by law enforcement on the Edmund Pettus Bridge in what became known as "Bloody Sunday."

The beatings outraged the nation. The Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. and other civil rights leaders went to Selma and began the march again, this time with federal protection. About 26,000 marchers arrived at the state Capitol in downtown Montgomery on March 25, 1965. The march led Congress to pass the 1965 Voting Rights Act, which opened Southern polling places to blacks and ultimately ended all-white governments in the South.

In 1996, Congress approved the Selma-to-Montgomery National Historic Trail and authorized three interpretive centers. Centers are already open in Selma, where the march began, and in White Hall, the halfway point of the 54-mile trail. The White Hall center gets about 10,000 visitors annually and the Selma center about 6,000, park service officials said.

Boyd said the university is receiving $2 million in federal funds to build the center, and Trail Superintendent Sandra Taylor said the park service will supply about $3 million in exhibits. Groundbreaking is scheduled for September on a facility that will be at least 15,000 square feet, and completion is expected in about 18 months.

While the center at Alabama State won't be ready for the 50th anniversary of the march, it will join a corridor of historic attractions on or near the Alabama State campus, including the home of civil rights leader Ralph David Abernathy, the home of entertainer Nat King Cole and the parsonage where Martin Luther King Jr. lived when he was pastor of Dexter Avenue Baptist Church and leader of the Montgomery Bus Boycott in 1955-56.
ASU president gets car allowance but has no car

Officer who drives her had over $12,000 in overtime in 4 months

The Associated Press

MONTGOMERY | The contract for Alabama State University's president provides her a car allowance of $1,000 per month, but she doesn't own a car.

The Montgomery Advertiser reported that campus police drive President Gwendolyn Boyd and that the police officer who does most of the driving had more than $12,000 in overtime between Feb. 1 and June 1.

Boyd said having an officer drive her is nothing new.

"As president and CEO of ASU, it has been a standard requirement for the president of ASU to have a security escort," she said.

She said the campus public safety director is responsible for scheduling officers and that the scheduling should be done in a manner that doesn't call for overtime.

Former trustee Vice Chairman Marvin Wiggins first raised the issue of Boyd's car allowance and police driver. That was before Gov. Robert Bentley removed him from the Alabama State board on Friday.

Wiggins, a circuit judge for several West Alabama counties, said he has no problem with Boyd getting a car allowance or having someone drive her.

"But you simply cannot take the car allowance, not have a car and then cause thousands of dollars in charges to drive you everywhere," he said.

Boyd's contract, which she signed Jan. 2, calls for her to provide her own security escort.

Gwendolyn Boyd greets Gov. Robert Bentley after the Alabama State University board of trustees offered her the university presidency on Dec. 20, 2013, at the ASU campus in Montgomery.

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own vehicle for business use and for the board to provide insurance coverage and a credit card to cover gas and maintenance. That is in addition to the allowance.

Boyd, an Alabama State graduate, was an administrator at Johns Hopkins University before taking the Alabama State job.

Last week, Gov. Bentley, president of the Alabama State board of trustees by virtue of his office, called for Wiggins and trustee Chairman Elton Dean to resign by Thursday afternoon. His demand drew support from the presidents of the national alumni association and the Student Government Association. Dean resigned, but Wiggins refused. The governor removed him Friday and named Ralph D. Ruggs, executive director of the Tuscaloosa Housing Authority, to serve the remainder of Wiggins' term.

On Monday, the governor announced he had appointed Pam Ware of Pike Road to replace Dean as a trustee. She is an Alabama State graduate who works as manager of intergovernmental affairs for the Business Council of Alabama. The governor's appointments to the board are subject to approval by the Alabama Senate.

Also Monday, the governor scheduled a special meeting of the Alabama State board for Aug. 8 on the Montgomery campus. His spokeswoman said items to be discussed include the election of officers to fill the positions of chairman and vice chairman, the accreditation warning, and a financial report.

In a related development, former Alabama State trustee Donald Watkins of Birmingham distributed a letter saying he made a mistake when he recommended Boyd for the university presidency. He said Boyd and Bentley have formed "an unholy alliance."

"By removing any member of the board of trustees who discharged his/her statutory duty by questioning Boyd’s administrative actions and extravagant expenditures, Bentley has established an 'Imperial Presidency' in Boyd," Watkins wrote.

University spokesman Ken Mullinax said the university had no comment on Watkins' letter.

Alabama State has been in turmoil since late 2012, when Joseph Silver resigned as president after questioning some financial practices at the university. The governor hired a Birmingham firm to do a forensic audit and turned over its preliminary findings to state and federal prosecutors. Moody's recently downgraded the university's bond rating and an accrediting agency, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, gave the university a six-month warning.

Boyd said Monday she is working to respond to the accreditying agency and is confident the six-month warning will be removed.
Jacksonville State president to retire next year

JACKSONVILLE | The longtime president of Jacksonville State University says he will retire next year.

Bill Meehan told trustees that he’s stepping down as of June 2015. The school announced his decision on its Facebook page.

- The delay in Meehan’s departure provides a chance for board members to name a successor.

- Meehan has been president since July 1, 1999.

- Meehan is a Jacksonville State alumnus who started working at the school as a biology instructor. He held other positions at the northeast Alabama campus through the years including several vice presidential jobs.
SHELTON STATE COMMUNITY COLLEGE
Welcomes New President
Dr. Andrea S. Mayfield

A native of Livingston, Alabama, Dr. Andrea Mayfield has been an educator and a member of the East Mississippi Community College team for eighteen years during which she held leadership roles in e-learning, international student services, human resources, institutional research/effectiveness, academics, and technical/vocational instructional areas. During that time, she served as an instructor of biological sciences, e-learning coordinator, e-learning dean, dean of instruction, vice-president for instruction, vice-president for institutional research and effectiveness, and most recently, vice-president of the Scooba campus.

Dr. Mayfield holds a doctorate in educational leadership with a special emphasis in the administration of higher education from Mississippi State University; she earned B.S. and M.A.T. degrees in biological sciences from Livingston University and The University of West Alabama.

As an educational leader, Dr. Mayfield is passionate about her field, providing access to opportunities and making a positive difference in the lives of people. She values people and leads through a team-based leadership approach, providing people with the necessary skills to be successful while leveraging knowledge and skills of team members for cohesive success.

Dr. Mayfield’s strength in building strong college and community relationships is paramount to success. Her work with Mississippi workforce partners and local and state organizations follows her belief that the community college holds the key to local and state economic growth and development. Her experience in aligning instructional program curricula with needs in business and industry workforce results in a well-educated and highly skilled customized workforce.

Dr. Mayfield and her husband George are parents to Michael, Kelly, and Alex; they are the proud grandparents of three boys.

The Shelton State Foundation will be hosting a Welcome Reception for the community to meet Dr. Mayfield on July 31, 2014, from 4:30 p.m. until 6:30 p.m. in the Atrium of the Shelton State Martin Campus.
HOPE AND BASKETBALL

FORMER UAH WOMEN'S COACH ROY HEINTZ TRAVELING TO ROMANIA TO TEACH BASKETBALL, FAITH.

Jane Hammond
jhammond@ai.com

Roy Heintz isn’t quite done with basketball. The former UAH women’s basketball coach, who resigned after five seasons of turning the program around, still has some coaching tricks up his sleeve.

Heintz, along with six other members of Asbury United Methodist Church in Madison, is traveling to Romania later this month on a mission trip, teaching basketball to an impoverished region hungry to learn the sport.

Groups from the church have taught Vacation Bible School camps for several years in the area, but this summer marks the first basketball-focused camps.

“When the group got back last year,” Heintz said, “a couple of my friends were in that group, and they said, ‘Basketball is just a passion for these kids. Really would be neat if you would come over and do basketball camps.’ And I said, ‘It’s a no-brainer.’

John Shaw has visited Dorohoi, the northern Romania site of the camps, several times through Asbury UMC.

Heintz’s potential impact, and was a proponent of adding a basketball camp to the church’s missionary lineup. After regular Bible lessons, the underprivileged children clamor to play basketball, barely understanding the basic rules while playing haphazard 12-on-12 games.

Eighty children signed up for this summer’s VBS, but attendance grew to 120, so the basketball camp has similar expectations.

Heintz will instruct — through an interpreter — children in three different age groups. Some local coaches will also work with him to improve their skills, something that Heintz hopes to build upon in future trips.

He’ll be teaching the kids through an interpreter, plus help from an eighth-grade church member making the trip who can help demonstrate the Xs and Os. Heintz went through a similar thing seven years ago, with a group of players he coached at Covenant College.

“We were there for two weeks, and that was during the heyday of Yao Ming, and if you didn’t know how to say basketball in Chinese, all you had to do was say Yao Ming and make a motion like you’re shooting the basket,” Heintz said. “They love it, but weren’t very skilled. From what I’m told, it’s very much the same way (in Romania), but probably worse. They love the game but don’t have a lot of fundamental skills.”

Ultimately for Heintz, the real payoff will be bringing happiness to children who usually don’t have much of it — along with boxes of T-shirts and basketballs.

“To be able to use (basketball) as a vehicle to maybe bring a smile to somebody’s face, to bring a bit of light into their world ... I really hope to give them some enjoyment and a time of hope.”

Roy Heintz
Former UAH women’s basketball coach
Don’t tell Clark that UAB football has to wait four years to win

Solomon Crenshaw Jr.
screnshawjr@al.com

First-year UAB football coach Bill Clark is not content telling his team success will wait for another two or three years.

"I told our guys that it is not fair to our seniors to say we are going to win in four years," Clark said at Conference USA Media Day in Dallas. "That is not the climate we are in anymore. I think our players have already seen a difference in the way we train and the way we prepare. I hope they have already seen the kind of climate we want to create here."

Clark, receiver J.J. Nelson and defensive lineman Diaheem Watkins expressed confidence as the team looks to rebound from last season’s 1-7 record in C-USA play.

"We control our own destiny," said Nelson. "We went 2-10 (overall) last year, so for us there is nowhere to go but up. We are just looking forward to having a good season."

"My personal goal is to just stay healthy and do whatever I can for my team," the senior wide receiver said. "Winning the conference championship and making a bowl game are our goals."

During the offseason, the team focused on developing unity, Watkins said.

"The biggest thing we have been able to do in the offseason is come together as a team," the senior defensive lineman said. "Coach Clark has done a great job of creating a family atmosphere. We just have to stay hungry and stay together going into that first game against Troy."

Watkins said receivers and defensive line were the strengths of the team. He added that experience on offense and defense is another plus.

"I’m just trying to lead this team by example," he said. "At this point, you don’t necessarily need a lot of vocal leaders, you need guys that are going to work hard and lead by example."
PRO PATH

Quickest route into NFL Draft goes through SEC

The Associated Press

MONTGOMERY | The Southeastern Conference has become the most popular jumping-off point for underclassmen looking for a head start on NFL careers, creating more spots to fill around the league with preseason camps approaching.

No league has had nearly as many players leaving early to pursue NFL careers over the past eight years, and LSU has had the most of any program two years running.

"We do lead college football in three-and-outs," Tigers coach Les Miles said.

It's not a distinction coaches particularly covet — except perhaps to juice the sales pitch to teenage recruits already dreaming of their first NFL paycheck. It also creates some potential headaches for those who have — sometimes unexpectedly — more job openings leading into August, not that coaches around the country have much sympathy.

LSU has lost 18 underclassmen to the draft over the past two years. Since the league's title run began in 2007, the SEC has had nearly as many early departures drafted (109) as the next two leagues combined. The Pacific-12 (57) and Atlantic Coast Conference (54) rank second and third, according to research by STATS, Inc.

The 49 first-round selections among underclassmen during that span tops the Pac-12, ACC and Big Ten combined (44).

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The exodus can affect the quality of play at certain positions even with a new wave of four- and five-star recruits coming in annually around the SEC, which had its seven-year run of producing BCS champions halted by Florida State in January.

Alabama had three junior cornerbacks picked in the first round from 2010-2013, and a position of strength became a weak link last season with several young players thrust into big roles.

"I think we recruit a lot of good players in this league," said Crimson Tide coach Nick Saban, who played 14 freshmen last season. "What it does for me, and what it does for our team, I guess is what I should say, is the players turn over more quickly so you play more players.

"It's not that those players aren't good players, but in some cases they might be playing a little bit before they're ready to play."

Alabama will have five-star freshmen Tony Brown and Marlon Humphrey vying for playing time at cornerback when camp starts.

The SEC has had 60 underclassmen enter the draft the past two years, counting players who graduated but had eligibility remaining. Not all have been hot commodities.

The latest group had six juniors picked in the first round and nine go undrafted, nearly one-third of the 98 SEC players who declared for the draft.

Former LSU and NFL defensive lineman Marcus Spears said the players leaving creates a big challenge in having enough depth to overcome injuries and other issues, and forces coaches like Miles to plan ahead in recruiting.

"You have to be able to look out maybe a year or two years in advance and kind of start honing in on those guys that can come in and replace them.

"I think we recruit a lot of good players in this league. What it does for me, and what it does for our team, I guess is what I should say, is the players turn over more quickly so you play more players." 

Alabama coach Nick Saban and play right away," said Spears, now an analyst for the SEC Network. "When you lose those guys, it is a huge void, especially those underclassmen that apply for the draft. Having guys in the stable is very important."

The good news for newcomers: There are plenty of opportunities for playing time, partly because of players not sticking around for senior seasons.

Here are a few:

- Texas A&M quarterback Kyle Allen is competing to replace 2012 Heisman Trophy winner Johnny Manziel.
- LSU tailback Leonard Fournette, considered the nation's top-rated prospect, should carve out a role for himself after Jeremy Hill and Alfred Blue both left with eligibility remaining.
- Alabama's Cam Robinson is the apparent front-runner to replace left tackle Cyrus Kouandjio.

Some prospects are weighing their career options long before they arrive on campus.

"I've had three (prospects), and these guys are like 16 years old, they're saying, 'If I go out and don't make it, you're going to put me back on scholarship if I want to come back, right?'" Saban said. "I'm saying this guy just got his driver's license and he's got this figured out already... But still they've really minimized in some cases their chances of being successful, having a career as a football player."
Tide's Fan Day scheduled for Sunday

Staff report

The University of Alabama's 2014 football Fan Day is Sunday at Bryant-Denny Stadium.

The open practice will start at 2:30 p.m. Attendees will have an opportunity for autographs after the practice. This is the only practice open to the general public. Attendance is free. UA will begin fall practice later this week.

More details on Fan Day, including parking and other festivities associated with the event, will be released in the coming days.

Alabama is coming off an 11-2 season that ended with defeats at Auburn and to Oklahoma in the Sugar Bowl after winning back-to-back national championships the two previous seasons.

The Crimson Tide will open the season Aug. 30 against West Virginia in the Georgia Dome in Atlanta.
PLAYING IT SAFE

NCAA settles head-injury suit, will change rules

Michael Tarm
Associated Press

CHICAGO | The NCAA agreed on Tuesday to help athletes with head injuries in a proposed settlement of a class-action lawsuit that college sports' governing body touted as a major step forward but that critics say doesn't go nearly far enough.

The deal, filed in U.S. District Court in Chicago, calls for the NCAA to toughen return-to-play rules for players who receive head blows and create a $70 million fund to pay for thousands of current and former athletes to undergo testing to determine whether they suffered brain trauma while playing football and other contact sports.

A lead attorney for the plaintiffs who spearheaded nearly a year of talks culminating in the agreement said the provisions would ultimately improve players' safety and leave open the possibility of damage payments later.

"I wouldn't say these changes solve the safety problems, but they do reduce the risks," Chicago attorney Joseph Siprut said. "It's changed college sports forever."

Others strongly disagreed.

Unlike a proposed settlement in a similar lawsuit against the NFL, this deal does not set aside any money to pay players who suffered brain trauma. Instead, athletes can sue individually for damages; the NCAA-funded tests that would gauge the extent of neurological injuries could establish grounds for doing just that.

One plaintiffs' attorney not involved in the negotiations called it a "terrible deal" that lets the NCAA off the hook far too easily. Jay Edelson called the agreement "window dressing," saying the NCAA will be able to settle one-off suits for several thousand each. He estimated that a single, class-action damages settlement could have been worth $2 billion to players.

"Instead," he said, "it's worthless."

The settlement is primarily directed

In this Sept. 26, 2009, photo, Florida's Matt Patchan (71) and Marcus Gilbert (76) look on as quarterback Tim Tebow lies on the turf after being sacked during a game against Kentucky in Lexington, Ky. Tebow received a concussion on the play that put him in the hospital for a night.
NCAA

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Women and men who participated in basketball, football, ice hockey, soccer, wrestling, field hockey and lacrosse.

There is no cutoff date for when athletes must have played a designated sport at one of the more than 1,000 NCAA member schools to qualify for the medical exams. That means all athletes currently playing and those who participated decades ago could undergo the tests and potentially follow up with damage claims.

Tuesday’s filing serves as notice to the judge overseeing the case that the parties struck a deal.

At a status hearing later in the day, U.S. District Judge John Lee said he wanted more time to consider whether to give the deal preliminary approval. If he does, affected athletes will have a chance to weigh in before Lee decides about granting a final OK.

The NCAA, which admits no wrongdoing in the settlement and has denied underscoring the dangers of concussions, hailed the deal.

“This agreement’s proactive measures will ensure student-athletes have access to high-quality medical care by physicians with experience in the diagnosis, treatment and management of concussions,” NCAA’s chief medical officer Brian Hainline said.

Haimline added that stricter rules and oversight should help ensure the viability of football by allaying fears of parents now inclined not to let their kids play.

“Absent these kinds of changes, the sport will die,” he said.

To keep the NCAA from having to hold awkward talks with multiple plaintiffs, 10 lawsuits filed nationwide were consolidated into the one case in Chicago, where the first lawsuit was filed in 2011.

The lead plaintiff is Adrian Arrington, a former safety at Eastern Illinois. He said he endured five concussions while playing, some so severe he said he couldn’t recognize his parents afterward.

Another named plaintiff is former Central Arkansas wide receiver Derek K. Owczarski. His symptoms became so severe he dropped out of school in 2011, telling his mother, “I feel like a 22-year-old with Alzheimer’s.”

Among other settlement terms, all athletes will take baseline neurological tests to start each year to help doctors determine the severity of any concussion during the season; concussion education will be mandated for coaches and athletes; and a new, independent Medical Science Committee will oversee the medical testing.

Robert Cantu, a Boston-based clinical professor of neurosurgery and a longtime critic of the NCAA, said the deal is a huge shift by the organization.

“It’ll make collision sports much safer,” said Cantu, who was one of the plaintiffs’ experts.

But former UCLA linebacker Ramogi Huma said it’s all for show.

“It takes some of the things many of us have been advocating for and pretend to address it,” Huma, president of the College Athletes Players Association, said.

Plaintiffs’ filings say the number of athletes who may require testing to learn if they suffered long-term damage runs into the tens of thousands. They cite NCAA figures that from 2004 to 2009 alone, 29,225 athletes suffered concussions.

Internal emails unsealed in the lawsuit illustrate how pressure mounted on the NCAA over the issue.

In a Feb. 23, 2010, email, the NCAA’s director of government relations, Abe Frank, wondered whether debates about new safeguards for young children playing contact sports would crank up the pressure on the NCAA to do more.

David Klossner, NCAA’s then-director of health and safety, responded bluntly a few hours later: “Well since we don’t currently require anything all steps are higher than ours.”

Later that year, the NCAA established a head-injury policy that states that athletes should be kept from play for at least a day after a concussion. It also requires each school to have a concussion management plan on hand.

But plaintiffs blamed a tendency of some teams to hurry concussed players back into games, in part, on the NCAA’s lax enforcement of the policy.

In a 2012 deposition, asked if any schools had been disciplined for having subpar concussion plans, Klossner said, “Not to my knowledge.”
Recent college grads' starting salaries lag behind the rest

By Chris Kirkham
Los Angeles Times

Starting salaries for recent college graduates have risen far more slowly than the average earnings of all U.S. workers since the recession, an analysis by the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco found.

The study, released last week, found that median earnings for recent college graduates rose only 6 percent from 2006 to 2013, less than half the rise of 15 percent for the overall U.S. workforce over roughly the same period.

Such disparities in pay growth rates have been seen in previous recessions, but the report says the current one “is substantially larger and has lasted longer than in the past.”

“The gap between the two groups of employees appears to be substantially wider and their paths appear more divergent,” the report found.

College graduates are particularly susceptible to wage stagnation during weak labor markets because older, experienced employees tend to have more job protections.

In trying to pinpoint the lackluster wage growth for recent college graduates, researchers at the San Francisco Fed had a key question: Are graduates getting different jobs that pay lower wages, or are salaries in the traditional career fields not growing?

The study concluded that college graduates are going into the same fields as before the recession, but that wage growth has been slow. In the two most popular categories for recent graduates — professional occupations and management, business and finance — there was only a 2.6 percent growth in median earnings since 2007.

Such sluggish growth could dissuade potential college students from enrolling, the report said, but the authors cite ample research showing that the lifetime earnings of college graduates far outpace those of non-graduates.

Entering the job market during an economic downturn, however, is likely to make it more difficult to pay back debt in the near term, the report finds.

“Low growth in starting wages does not mean that going to college is a poor investment,” the study concluded. “It just reflects that it will take longer to recoup the cost of the college.”
Sex scandal rocks Ohio State band

Probe: Leader had ignored ‘serious cultural issues’

The Associated Press

COLUMBUS, Ohio | Ohio State University fired the director of its celebrated marching band on Thursday after determining he ignored a "sexualized" culture of rituals including students being pressured to march in their underwear and participate in sexually themed stunts.

Jonathan Waters had led the band since 2012 and served in lesser capacities for a decade before that. His halftime shows for what's known to fans as "The Best Damn Band in the Land" were considered revolutionary and drew millions of viewers on YouTube.

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OSU
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Ohio State President Michael Drake, on the job just three weeks, said in an Associated Press interview that he was "profoundly disappointed and shocked" by the findings of a two-month investigation that began before his arrival.

"This is 2014, and we respect our students as young adults," Drake said. "We respect women, and we respect all the different people who work with us, we respect that diversity. We just had to make a square-wave change, between this report, which was unacceptable, and the future, which we start today."

The probe determined Waters knew about and failed to stop what the university called "serious cultural issues" within the band. Email and phone messages were left for Waters and the band alumni association seeking comment.

In the report, Waters denies the allegations against him — including that he texted sexual limericks to band members — and disagrees that the band’s culture is sexualized. He said the culture was evolving, while suggesting to investigators "that sexual innuendo is found in much of what college students do."

A spokesman said the university was required to promptly perform the probe under federal Title IX sexual discrimination laws, after a parent complained band members were asked to swear secrecy oaths "about objectionable traditions and customs," some in place well before Waters took over.

Those included raunchy songs and a late-night march, described as optional, in which band members stripped down to their underwear. Investigators found band staff and directors, including Waters, had sometimes attended. One female student said older members of the band would warn newcomers to wear "fuller coverage" undergarments for the event; others wore pajamas or shorts, but some marched naked.

In the report, Assistant Director Michael Smith said he didn't believe it when he saw it. An associate band director, Christopher Hech, said he recalled a student having alcohol poisoning at the event some years ago.

The report also described students earning sexually themed nicknames based on tasks other band members assigned them: One female student had to pretend to have an orgasm while sitting on the lap of her brother, a fellow band member, and others pretended to be sex toys, prostitutes or body parts. Waters was aware of some students' nicknames and allegedly used them "when he was upset," witnesses said, but he’s also reported to have advised students against the monikers.

Drake, the university’s first black president, said he wants to see the band get beyond such activities and carry on its tradition of excellence.

"There are an infinite number of ways that people can bond that are not really demeaning and anachronistic," he said.

The university has appointed former Ohio Attorney General Betty Montgomery to lead an independent task force assigned to review the matter, which will include representatives from Ernst & Young, the Sports Conflict Institute and outside counsel to provide guidance on Title IX compliance.

Waters started in the band as an undergraduate, playing sousaphone all four years during college. He graduated in 2000 and became a graduate assistant with the band, its assistant director and then interim director under Jon Woods, who retired after 25 years. Waters told an OSU Alumni Club gathering in Chillicothe in March his was "the greatest job in America."

His firing was first reported by The Columbus Dispatch. During his tenure, Waters revolutionized the band’s halftime shows through the use of iPads instead of paper, allowing students to morph into the shapes of horses, superheroes and dinosaurs galloping, flying and tromping across the field. Its technological advances landed the band in an Apple commercial in January. One performance in which the band takes the shape of a moonwalking Michael Jackson has more than 10 million views on YouTube.