AUGUST 14, 2014

ARTICLES OF INTEREST
AUGUST 8, 2014 – AUGUST 14, 2014

FOR SPECIFIC NEWS STORIES, SEE THE FOLLOWING PAGE NUMBERS:

NEWS ABOUT

STATE ISSUES 2
UA CAMPUS ISSUES 19
UAB CAMPUS ISSUES 26
UAH CAMPUS ISSUES 28
OTHER STATE UNIVERSITIES 32
SPORTS 33
NATIONAL NEWS 48
Tuscaloosa-based Parker Towing acquires Port of Decatur on Tennessee River

By: Lucy Berry

One of the busiest ports on the Tennessee River has been acquired by Tuscaloosa-based Parker Towing.

The Decatur Transit Company's Port of Decatur is now under ownership by Parker Towing, one of the largest barge lines in the Southeast. Officials did not disclose a purchase price.

The Port of Decatur, which was founded in 1971, handles more than 5 million tons of cargo flow each year. It is connected to the Norfolk Southern and has access to CSX railroads, the interstate and regional highway networks.

"It will be a great addition to our current portfolio of ports and terminals in the Southeast and expands our capabilities on the Tennessee River," said Tim Parker III, director of sales for Parker Towing, in a statement.

The Port of River features a more than 2,000-foot riverfront, 12 acres of open storage, more than 90 fleeting spots and a two-week barge shipping time from New Orleans. The port operates about a mile from U.S. 31 and six miles from Interstate 65/565.
Bentley seeking ways to beef up funds for recruiting industries

By Patrick Rupinski
Business Editor

Gov. Robert Bentley said Thursday that his administration is still studying ways to beef up the state's funds for recruiting new industries.

Bentley said a few weeks ago that he was considering calling the Legislature into a special session this year to consider borrowing money from the state's Education Trust Fund to provide incentives to new industries.

The state recently has made a major effort to recruit more aerospace industries and it continues to recruit automotive and other manufacturers, too.

Alabama and other states offer new and expanding manufacturers incentives like new infrastructure (roads, sewers and site preparation) and tax breaks in return for the new manufacturing jobs that will be created.

On Thursday, Bentley was in Tuscaloosa to welcome one of the state's newest industries, Bolta, a German automotive parts manufacturer that will start building its first U.S. plant in the Airport Industrial Park this fall.

Asked after the ceremony if a special session is likely, Bentley said it was just one of the options. He said he would not call a special session unless there was a consensus among legislative leaders to support a proposal.

"We will never do anything to harm the Education Trust Fund," he said.

Only the governor can call the Legislature into a special session to consider specific proposals that usually cannot wait until the legislators convene in their regular yearly session in January.
Bolta breaks ground on plant

German car parts company coming to industrial park

By Patrick Rupinski
Business Editor

Nathu Ram Puri, the founder of Purico Group Ltd., an international diversified company, said he prefers to let his executives make the decisions, but one decision he did make was to open a factory in the United States.

INSIDE

BENTLEY: Governor says studying ways to recruit new industries | 4A

Puri, a native of India who founded Purico in the United Kingdom in 1983.

He recalled that during a dinner a few years ago with executives from Purico and one of its companies, Bolta, the executives asked him if he wanted to build a Bolta plant in China to make automotive parts.

"I said I would rather go to the United States," he said Thursday as he attended a ceremonial groundbreaking for a new Bolta plant whose construction will start this fall at the Tuscaloosa Airport Industrial Park.

Puri said a few months later, the executives asked him again about building in China, noting labor was cheaper there and it was a hot spot for global manufacturers.

"Again, I said I would rather go to the USA."

Puri said Christian Falk, the managing director of Bolta, a

See next page
German-based automotive parts maker, and the other executives, responded by promising to find the right place for the company’s first American plant.

They picked Tuscaloosa.

In an interview after Thursday’s groundbreaking, Puri said he “sees things globally.”

China has enough manufacturers, he said.

“We are the most efficient company, and where we go, we have the most success and efficient production,” he said. “We did not go to China and get cheap labor because they will steal your technology.”

That does not happen in the United States, he said, noting he felt the company could prosper here.

Bolta, Purico’s German company, makes high-quality polymer products. The Tuscaloosa plant will make the radiator grills and other chrome-like parts for the Mercedes-Benz in Vance, Puri said.

In addition to Mercedes, the Bolta plant also will make parts for Volkswagen.

Additional customers might be added later.

“We can supply from here and ship car parts,” anywhere, Puri said.

The new plant will be around 180,000-square feet and will represent a $55 million to $65 million investment.

It will employ at least 350 people and operate three shifts, said Johannes Carl, managing director for the new plant.

He said Bolta is now getting the permits needed for construction and it expects to start grading the site in September.

Construction will start in October and should be completed around June 2015.

Equipment will then be brought in and the first production should start in October of next year.

Gov. Robert Bentley, who attended Thursday’s ceremony, said Bolta reflected the continued growth of Alabama’s auto industry, which started with Mercedes in the mid-1990s.

He said Mercedes helped transform Alabama from a low-skilled manufacturing state to a high-tech manufacturing state.

“We will have more and more skilled workers in Alabama and we will recruit more industries and help our existing industries expand” by offering a skilled work force, he said.
Rebuilding small-town Alabama

MAIN STREET: WHAT KILLED IT AND HOW WE'RE BRINGING IT BACK TO LIFE.

Kathryn Jacoby • kjacoby@al.com

For the most part, interstates and the Internet are useful, convenient tools, but over the past few decades, they’ve helped decimate America’s small downtowns. Alabama has been no exception.

“When I was growing up, you shopped pretty much in a 30-mile radius of where you lived,” explained Mary Helmer, president and state coordinator of Main Street Alabama. “But today, you can drive for miles to get to a mall, or shop at 3 a.m. in your fuzzy pajamas. That changed everything.”

After seeing this decline across the nation, the National Main Street Center, a nonprofit subsidiary of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, began reaching out with locally accredited Main Street programs that seek to bring life back to downtowns through sustainable economic development and community engagement.

Cities that have been or are moving through the Main Street revitalization process include Alexander City, Florence, Athens, Decatur, Gadsden, Anniston, Oxford, Birmingham, Opelika, Selma, Eufaula, Monroeville and Dothan. Although the programs have operated nationwide in some form for 34 years, Alabama’s programs really got started in 2010.

“It comes down to small businesses, entrepreneurs and revitalizing the core of your community,” Helmer said in an interview with AL.com at the Economic Development Association of Alabama’s summer 2014 conference. “It’s always a different story. Every downtown has had its own struggles, and they’re all poised for their own successes.”

Diamonds in the rough

Often times, many people who live in a small town don’t realize how
special their historic downtown area really is, Helmer said.

"They may have lived there their whole life, but they don’t realize how much it has to offer."

Waking up a town’s residents to the “diamond in the rough” down the street is part of what Helmer and other Main Street Alabama teams do best. In addition to economic development, the team also runs creative advertising campaigns to attract young people to the area, and plans community events such as races or bike rides to draw visitors.

“We have to sell the image and promise of downtown,” she said. “Sometimes the perceived image is a poor one, but often that’s because people haven’t been there in a while. When you bring them back to the area, that changes.”

Helmer referenced Oxford as a Main Street city that’s showing a lot of promise.

“Just walk around Oxford and you’ll see. The arts and entertainment community is thriving there,” she said, citing Sarah Cavender Metalworks as the type of nationally known artists that Oxford attracts. “When you find that kind of stuff in a town, you’re fascinated by it. You want to come back.”

Helmer also pointed to Oxford’s “Terroortorium,” a haunted house that also creates costumes, purses and hats, as well as unique local eateries and architectural detailing throughout the town.

With that said, Helmer and the Main Street Alabama team are realistic about a town’s real economic prospects.

“Is downtown Oxford going to be the center of commerce again? Probably not,” she said. “We talk to them about that reality, and show them how to embrace and capture what makes them unique. They need to find their own identity as a vibrant arts and entertainment district.”

‘Cohesive structure’

Although it’s certainly more aesthetically pleasing to stroll through a thriving historic downtown than a dead one, restoring Alabama’s small towns to their former economic glory goes beyond just appearances — it’s something the state can’t afford not to do to, Helmer said.

“In a lot of places, downtown accounts for as much as 30 percent of a town’s jobs and 40 percent of its tax base,” she explained. “That’s huge.”

Although it would be fantastic if every little historic strip in Alabama could be refurbished, Helmer said that’s not always realistic.

“We look at how deteriorated things are at the core of your community. If you are rotten from the inside out, we don’t want to be there,” she said.

At the end of the day, Helmer said what sets Main Street Alabama part from previous urban renewal or “paint up and fix up projects” is the organizations emphasis on economics.

“Everyone wants to get to the sexy stuff right away, ‘Let’s redo our facade, let’s recruit businesses,’ but you have to get people singing out of the same songbook first,” she said. “You will not recruit businesses to a weak district. There has to be that cohesive structure.”
Q & A with Greg Canfield: Alabama commerce secretary talks incentives, unemployment, economic development

By: Michael Tomberlin

Point clear, Alabama – The pressures of Greg Canfield's job include trying to help his boss, Gov. Robert Bentley, make his first paycheck.

As the secretary of commerce and the head of the Alabama Department of Commerce, Canfield is charged with recruiting and expanding business in the state.

That makes job growth a key task. Bentley's pledge when he ran for governor was to not take a salary until the state reached full employment. The governor is nearing the end of his first term and has yet to draw that paycheck.

But the unemployment rate is not necessarily a fair measure of Canfield's performance. The truth is the state has recruited and expanded industry in the state. It just hasn't offset the losses of other sectors of the economy that has been shedding jobs.

After speaking to economic professionals at the Economic Development Association of Alabama's 2014 Summer Conference, Canfield sat down with Alabama Media Group to answer questions about those job losses, incentives and the current economic development project pipeline.

AMG: The governor has tapped you to look at incentives. What is the process and how long will it take to present a plan to the governor on incentives?

Canfield: Actually, we at the Department of Commerce have been looking at incentives for two years. It's a process you don't undertake lightly. It's a process you want to give some real thought and research toward evaluating and looking at metrics to see what your competition is doing that's successful and also evaluating what we're doing that's not successful. So the governor recently, as we talked to him about the incentives structure and what was happening in the global marketplace with incentives, said "I need you to focus on this." So, yes, we are charged with this. Our process is an inclusive process. We've had an EDAA representative at the table. Many economic developers across the state have been involved in this process. We've brought forth a small working committee of our more experienced professionals – a group of about seven or eight people – who have been working over the last month and a half. This group made some recommendations and we are beginning to follow up on those recommendations in terms of pursuing the meat around the bone of how we're going to develop general concepts that were recommended out of this group's ideas.

AMG: At one time Alabama was the leader in incentives. From Mercedes-Benz on we were considered one of the best states when it came to incentives. How did we get behind? What changed?

See next page
Canfield: I think we rested on our laurels. I think we unintentionally allowed it to slip up on us as other states began to look at Alabama as a state to compete against. Those other states became energized and activated and they created new tools that we didn't have. So, yeah, we're playing a little catchup here. But we want to play a little more than catchup. It's not necessarily about more money available for incentives. It's about how incentives are crafted or designed so they can be more effective.

AMG: At one time, we could just put up more money for a project. We could just outbid the other states.

Canfield: It's always good to have the ability to be flexible and we don't want to underestimate or overestimate that importance, but flexibility can often be the key to success, especially when you get to the last moment and you're trying to close a win and get those jobs coming to Alabama. But what we really want to do is be more strategic. Accelerate Alabama is all about having a strategy and taking a rifle or a sniper approach. We're no longer doing the shotgun approach to economic development, we're really rifled in on the sectors we think will help grow our economy over time. Unfortunately, I think people tend to be impatient with long-term strategies and this is a long-term strategy. We will begin to see and are just now, I think, beginning to see the fruit of the efforts that began with the implementation in 2012 of this strategy. Because, the mere fact that we win a project, it doesn't mean those jobs come online the next day. Those jobs are going to come online after a plant is constructed. Now, we are going to benefit from those construction jobs and that's a very important factor as to why economic development is important. But those construction jobs are temporary based on the build-out of that project, but they are important. I think people sometimes hear us make announcements and they think those jobs are coming the next day, when typically it's going to be 18 to 36 months before those jobs begin to come online because these are huge capital investments, oftentimes, with huge build-outs of plant and installation of equipment and then training on that equipment before the hiring will occur.

AMG: You announced in your address to EDAA that there have been 38,000 jobs created since Accelerate Alabama was unveiled two years ago and, as you just said, some people expect those jobs to start counting right away. So when you see a report that Alabama is ranked 49th in the nation with job growth, the assumption is we're not adding enough jobs. Do you take that personally? What's your reaction?

Canfield: I think that's lazy analysis. Yes, we're not performing well in overall job growth but if you look at it and dive into it more deeply, it's because we've shed jobs in right-sizing government. We've lost a lot of state jobs. Locales and municipalities around the state have shed a lot of their jobs. I don't know the number off the top of my head, but between state and local government I know we've see more than 5,000 jobs have been eliminated — and perhaps even more than that when you fully account for local. Certainly, the federal government in the state has shed jobs as well. So the government job losses have helped keep our numbers down in terms of job growth. If you lose 10,000 government jobs, you've got to grow 10,000 private sector jobs just to be where you were before. But all during this time, we've been growing manufacturing jobs, transportation and trade related jobs. We've been growing the service-related jobs that support industry. If you look at those numbers and isolate them compared to the trough
of where we were, you will see positive growth in Alabama in those targeted areas. Unfortunately, we don't have the ability to impact all job categories because we're more focused in the types of industries that we're recruiting and help grow.

AMG: Does this feed into the need to better communicate to Alabamians what the Department of Commerce and economic developers are accomplishing in the state?

Canfield: That may be an indirect benefit of what we want to do. It's not really about that. We want Alabamians to understand – especially young Alabamians, especially students – we want them to begin to understand this state that I'm growing up in is attracting the kind of industries that is sparking my interest. I can see a future in Alabama that I've never seen before, didn't know it existed. So, if we tell the story to young students and to Alabamians about the type of sectors that are locating here and the knowledge-based jobs we're having success attracting to our state, maybe those children – my children, your children, our grandchildren – are going to look at Alabama and say, "I don't have to go somewhere else. I might be able to stay right here." I think, given the choice, they would want to stay right here.

AMG: Getting back to incentives. There are those who call it corporate welfare? How do you respond to those characterizations?

Canfield: That's all political doublespeak. We're in a political season and I'm not in politics anymore. I'm in the job of helping create an atmosphere where jobs can grow in a meaningful way. What is corporate welfare? Welfare in and of itself is typically defined as giving someone something and not expecting anything in return to help them sustain themselves. Well, if you take that definition and apply it to corporate welfare, this is not corporate welfare. We're only providing a fraction of the investment being made by these companies to locate in our state and create jobs in our state and drive revenues in our state that benefit education and communities and individuals in meaningful ways. And those companies are expected, through our project agreements, to provide a positive return to the state. So this is not corporate welfare. This is an investment by the state in the growth of our economy over time.

AMG: It's my understanding that the state does a cost-benefits analysis on every project that receives incentives to ensure that return to the state is there and there are clawback provisions in the project agreement to recoup all or some incentives if they fail to provide that return, right?

Canfield: Project agreements are the contract we enter into with every project, I think people would be surprised if they knew how few projects we actually put discretionary incentives into. Most everything we're able to sell through statutory incentives, which is not what most people are led to believe sometimes.

AMG: Gov. Bentley mentioned in his speech at EDAA that the State Education Trust Fund is not off limits when it comes to considering a new incentives plan, but that any plan would have to result in a net-gain to the ETF. How do you interpret that?
Canfield: The governor has made it quite clear and we agree, we will not put forth any plan or incentive request that would have anything but a positive net benefit to the Education Trust Fund or the general fund, whichever way those revenues flow. Everything we do is about a net positive benefit to the state. That's our formula. It's got to be a positive benefit or we don't do it. We've walked away. I have walked away from projects because we looked at it and said, "I'm not paying that. It's too rich. It takes too long to get a return, or there is no net positive revenue benefit to the state." Our intention here is to help grow Alabama's economy, so if we were going to take from revenues that flow to help support the services that support that economy, we would be counter-productive to our goal, and we're not going to be counter-productive to our goal. Our goal is to grow the state.

AMG: In the past, we've relied on tobacco settlement money, oil and gas windfalls to fund incentives. Does Alabama need a devoted, sustained revenue source for incentives?

Canfield: We're going to look real closely at protecting current revenue flows. But, if we recruit a company to the state that hasn't been here or if we work with an existing industry to create jobs that haven't been here, the new payrolls from that are going to generate revenues. The sales taxes generated from consumers who have those jobs are creating new revenue. They're all positive, new revenue flows. So, what we may look at is taking portions of new revenue flows for using those to assist us.

AMG: For statutory and discretionary incentives?

Canfield: I'm not ready to commit on that. We're still evaluating all of that. We've not made those decisions. I think it's important to note we have not made those types of funding decisions. What we're going to work on first is, "What do we have to have in our arsenal to be successful?" and then our next stage is how do we fund it and can we fund it from existing sources. If not, what other sources should we look at.

AMG: Are you seeing things other states are doing when it comes to incentives that you think Alabama should emulate?

Canfield: Yes. (laughs)

AMG: I guess we will have to wait to see what you present to the governor?

Canfield: Yes. (more laughter)

AMG: If the governor wants to call a special session on incentives in November, will you have a proposal ready to take action on by then?

Canfield: We're going to have something ready when we have a meeting of the minds of our legislative leadership and the governor in a way that when we get the green light to move forward, we will be ready.
AMG: How soon could that be?

Canfield: As soon as it takes. We need a few more months.

AMG: Accelerate Alabama identified those sectors where we would focus our state economic development efforts. How does the pipeline look and are the companies we're dealing with in those sectors?

Canfield: You have to say we've seen great success continuing to build in the automotive sector with the growth of the supply chain. The introduction of the Mercedes C-Class, the introduction of the Acura MDX in the Honda plant, the sales and demand growth for the Hyundai products with both the Sonata and Elantra – the supply chain just continues to grow as production continues to rise and new models are being introduced. On the aerospace side is probably where we've seen the most robust growth in a very interesting way because it's not just necessarily manufacturing. We're seeing a lot of engineering, we're seeing more design and we're seeing much more interest in Alabama from a cutting-edge, technological development perspective.

AMG: It seems like we're getting more of the research and development type of work in aerospace than we've been able to get in automotive.

Canfield: But we're going to focus more on the R&D in automotive. We've had some success on the R&D side with companies like Rehaul, but there is a lot more opportunity out there and that will definitely be something that we will target. We've seen success, also, in biotech. Our focus on helping grow the entrepreneurial opportunities in the state is beginning to take hold. There is still more work to do there. That's one area we're looking at for incentives to create small business, entrepreneurial type incentives that we've not been able to support in meaningful ways in the past. We know small business is such a big part of job growth across the state.
PGA Tour event coming to Alabama

The Associated Press

OPELKA | The PGA Tour is coming to Alabama next year.

The new tournament will be played July 13-18, 2015, at the Robert Trent Jones Golf Trail at Grand National in Opelika. Shaving product company Barbasol will sponsor the tournament for four years.

Alabama Gov. Robert Bentley and PGA officials announced the event Monday. Bentley said the tour will generate millions in tourism revenue for Alabama and put the state in the international spotlight as some of the world's best golfers come to the state.

"I hope this is the start of a long relationship between Alabama and the Robert Trent Jones Golf Trail and the PGA," Bentley said.

The Barbasol Championship, scheduled for the same weekend as the British Open, will become part of the PGA Tour's FedEx Cup competition.

Grand National in Opelika is one of 11 facilities of the Robert Trent Jones Golf Trail throughout Alabama.

The PGA held a one-time championship event at Shoal Creek in Birmingham in 1990.

"This is for four years. This is a big deal," said David Bronner, chief executive officer of Retirement Systems of Alabama. The Retirement Systems developed the golf trail across Alabama.

The Alabama Tourism Department is providing $200,000 to help host the event.
Parker Towing buys Port of Decatur

By Patrick Rupinski
Business Editor

Parker Towing has acquired the Port of Decatur from the Decatur Transit Co. for an undisclosed amount.

The Port of Decatur is the largest privately owned port on the Tennessee River. Its acquisition opens up some new areas and opportunities to handle some additional commodities for Parker Towing, said Tim Parker Jr., chairman of the privately owned Tuscaloosa-based barge and stevedore company.

"It's a great growth opportunity for us on the Tennessee River."

Tim Parker Jr., chairman of Parker Towing

"It's a great growth opportunity for us on the Tennessee River," he said.

"They have some good people and good management" who have joined Parker Towing, he said.

The management at Decatur will report to Parker's son, Tim Parker III, director of sales for Parker Towing, one of the largest barge companies in the Southeast.

In Tuscaloosa, the company's barges are most identifiable for moving coal and other bulk items on the Black Warrior River.

In Decatur, there will be an opportunity to handle some agricultural commodities, the senior Parker said. "In Birmingham and Tuscaloosa, you do not see a lot of agricultural products" being unloaded from barges.

The Port of Decatur handles some Midwestern shipments of soybeans, corn and wheat that are used by the state's poultry industry, he said.

Tim Parker III said in a statement that the acquisition "will be a great addition to our current portfolio of ports and terminals in the Southeast and expands our capabilities on the Tennessee River."

Port of Decatur's main operations are fleeting and shifting of barges and the loading and unloading of barges. Its facilities include intermodal transfer points for switches between barge, road and rail; storage facilities for bulk liquids, dry bulk products and general cargo; and 12 acres of open storage.

The port is directly connected to the Norfolk Southern Railway and has access to the CSX railroad and interstate and regional highways, the company said.

Parker Towing has its headquarters in Tuscaloosa and operates port facilities and provides stevedore services in Northport, Birmingham, Mobile and Pickensville in Alabama and Chattanooga, Tenn., and provides stevedore services.
Birmingham named most exciting place in Alabama

By: Bryan Davis

It's no secret that Birmingham's night life is heating up with venues like Iron City and the host of breweries, bars and eateries located in the metro.

A real estate website has named the city the most exciting place in Alabama and has the data to back it up.

Movoto ranked 64 cities in the state with a population of 10,000 or more, finding Birmingham has the right combination of music, restaurants and activities.

"It's no surprise that Birmingham-home to more nightlife per capita than anywhere else in the state-came in at No.1 on our list," Movoto's ranking said. "Even aside from places like Workplay, Blue Monkey and Parkside, though, Birmingham has a lot to offer."

The ranking is based on criteria that includes, nightlife per capita (bars, clubs, comedy etc), live music venues per capita, active life options (parks and outdoor activities), arts and entertainment, fast food (the fewer the better), non-fast food restaurants (the more the better), residents ages 18 to 34 and population density.

Birmingham ranked No. 4 for its number of music venues and arts and entertainment options, the report said. It came in at No. 8 in active life options.

Birmingham's 18-34 crowd makes up 28 percent of its population as well.

Florence came in at No. 2, and Montgomery, Mobile and Fairhope all tied for No. 3.
Bridge's height at issue

BUILDING UP: STRUCTURE TO ACCOMMODATE CRUISE SHIPS, BUT WHAT IF THEY NEVER COME?

John Sharp • jsharp@al.com

The new interstate 10 bridge proposed in Mobile is going to be really tall, so much so that it has been compared as the Southeast’s answer to the Golden Gate Bridge in California.

But the height considerations for the bridge are based on an industry not operating in Mobile and, according to cruise industry experts, might never re-emerge in the Port City.

At 215 feet of “air draft” height, the proposed I-10 bridge would be built tall enough to accommodate the largest vessels to traverse beneath it. Air draft is the distance from the surface of the water to the highest point on a vessel. According to most officials, the tallest vessels are cruise ships, which have not sailed through the Port of Mobile on a regular basis since October 2011.

“The 215-foot height was to protect for future cruise business,” Jimmy Lyons, CEO of the Alabama State Port Authority said. “The cruise ships are the ones that get up there as far as the ships are concerned.”

CRUISE. 10

See next page
CRUISE

From Page 1

Too tall or too short?

The bridge’s height has been questioned in recent weeks, with one attorney saying its large size could hinder the visual appeal of some of downtown Mobile’s churches and neighborhoods.

There are also questions, raised in the bridge’s economic impact study released by the Federal Highway Administration last month, that the proposed 215-foot height is not big enough to accommodate future ships.

But the same federal study indicates a much smaller bridge was initially considered at a “minimum 190-foot vertical clearance.”

The 215-foot height emerged once the cruise industry task force recommended a clearance of approximately 208 feet, prompting the FHWA to re-evaluate the height.

Based upon the potential to preclude future navigation options for the taller cruise ships and other marine vessels, safety considerations, a relatively small investment cost and a high benefit cost, an air draft clearance of 215 feet is justified for the I-10 Mobile River Bridge. An air draft clearance of 215 feet would allow the Port of Mobile to remain competitive in the cruise industry and container cargo shipping with other ports that are not obstructed, such as Gulfport and Houston, as well as those that are currently obstructed, such as New Orleans, Savannah, Charleston, Jacksonville and Tampa.

Lyons and other officials say the 215-foot clearance is to prevent “shutting any doors” on potential cruise ships from coming to Mobile. With regard to cargo ships, Lyons said the trend is for them to be wider and deeper, but not taller.

Cruise ships, he said, are the determining factor in the bridge’s height.

“They are not getting smaller,” Lyons said. “If anything, the ships are getting bigger.”

Costly situation

Lowering the bridge, and reducing its $850 million price tag, could potentially lead to higher costs if the Alabama Cruise Terminal, someday, attracts a new cruise ship.

Tampa is a warning sign. A study recently looked at what to do with cruise ships that are too large to sail beneath the Sunshine Skyway Bridge, which is 180 feet above the water.

Cost estimates are significant: $2 billion to build a new Skyway bridge to accommodate the "mega" ships or up to $1.5 billion to raise the structure.

“You don’t want to be like Tampa and be constrained,” said Stewart Chirion, CEO of cruiseguy.com and a longtime industry insider.

The “mega” ships, according to the study completed by the Florida Department of Transportation, would be 225 feet tall. At that height, they would not be able to sail beneath the I-10 Bridge.

Two of the more popular additions to the Royal Caribbean line — Oasis and Allure of the Seas — are ships with a height of 236 feet.

The FHWA I-10 study indicates the 215-foot height could restrict taller cruise vessels, with 20 of the 57 vessels analyzed within the Carnival, Norwegian and Royal Caribbean fleets unable to sail beneath the proposed Mobile structure.

Larger vessels are something that Mobile isn’t equipped to attract because the Alabama Cruise Terminal’s turning basin is unable to regularly handle ships that are more than 1,000 feet.

“We have turned a large ship on occasion,” Sheila Gurganus, general manager of the cruise terminal said, referring to the emergency handling of the Carnival Conquest last year. The Conquest is slightly under 1,000 feet.

“For container ships, it’s one thing,” Gurganus said. “But to turn a ship with 3,000 people on it in a constant basis with bad weather, you’re taking a different stance there.”

Cruise ship potential

While the bridge’s height is determined mostly on the cruise industry, questions continue to circulate on whether Mobile is even a contender for a cruise ship.

So far, the prognosis is bleak.

“It’s just not on the horizon,” Chirion said. “Mobile is falling further and further down.”

Chirion said the industry is eyeing emerging markets in Asia and Australia on where to add newer vessels, such as Royal Caribbe-

See next page

an’s Quantum of the Seas. The 4,180-passenger Quantum will debut in New York in November, with robots, bumper cars, a skydiving experience and 18 restaurants, according to news reports.

Chirion said the vessel will then be moved to China. Meanwhile, other U.S. ports are “getting squeezed out” as the industry tightens.

“There are a few adjustments because ships are being deployed to Austria, New Zealand and Southeast Asia,” Chirion said.

“Royal Caribbean is pulling out of New Orleans and they don’t have a ship with their current deployment (structure) to put back into New Orleans this fall. Carnival is the only one that has ships there.”

New Orleans problem

The relationship between Carnival Cruise Lines and the Port of New Orleans is also hurting Mobile’s chances of revitalizing its terminal with a cruise ship.

A five-year agreement between the two entities, approved last month, commits Carnival to operating two ships, year-round, from the Big Easy. The pact also includes the possibility of three one-year extensions, which would keep Carnival ships in the city through 2022.

Carnival Elation, the last ship that cruised out of the Alabama Cruise Terminal, is now in New Orleans.

The cozy Carnival-New Orleans relationship has garnered the attention of Mobile Mayor Sandy Stimpson, who said he has not had contact with the industry for a couple of months.

“(Carnival) signed a three-to-five year agreement with New Orleans,” Stimpson said. “That should be of concern to us. It’s a concern to me. We don’t know
what it means, but it's of concern."

**Economic Incentives in Houston**

Further pressuring Mobile is that Houston, in 2012, offered $6.7 million in economic incentives to have Princess and Norwegian Cruise Lines sail from its then-vacant Bayport Cruise Terminal. Princess has a contract to stay in the Houston area through 2016.

Mobile might have difficulty providing millions of dollars in economic incentives to attract a cruise line because it's already paying $1.86 million on the annual costs to pay down the debt to build the Water Street terminal.

The city owes about $20 million on the construction of the terminal and has little means to generate revenue to pay off the bond, aside from revenues generated by leasing the facility's gathering spaces for weddings and other events. One of the two public hearings next month into the I-10 Bridge's study will be held at the terminal.

Last year's emergency docking of the Carnival Triumph brought in $300,000, but there is no regular revenue source from the cruise industry that can help reduce the terminal's costs.

It's one of the reasons why Stimpson said earlier this year that he is looking for ways to potentially repurpose the cruise terminal aside from its original intent.

"The cruise industry ... they still know us." Gurganus said. "We're still a contender. We're a market to them. I still feel we have a chance with cruise lines."

**Costs to lower the bridge**

Alabama Department of Transportation does not have an estimate on what it would cost to drop the bridge from 215 to its original 190 feet if the cruise industry doesn't materialize in Mobile. A cost estimate, while likely to emerge during the design phase of the project, is not expected soon.

"Raising it 30 feet will add in some costs, but I don't know what those overall costs will be," said Don Powell, ALDOT's Southwest Region's pre-construction engineer.

"In the grand scheme of the project, I don't know if it's that significant."

Mike Lee, co-chairman of the Build the Bridge Coalition with the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce, credited the Port Authority with configuring the height of the bridge, which he said was structured to be as high as it can to accommodate cruise ships.

"I'm sure there is a little bit of a factor there (on costs)," Lee said.

"That particular area ... is not some of the most expensive items when you look at the span, itself."

But without the cruise industry, Lee said bridge supporters have a harder time justifying a 215-foot, and not a 190-foot-tall bridge.

"We probably wouldn't have difficulty to consider the 215 if we didn't show (the FHWA) the cruise terminal," Lee said.

**Be prepared**

Supporters of the bridge project, and of the higher elevation, say the reasoning behind a 215-foot bridge is so they are prepared to deal with the potential of a large cruise ship sailing into the Port of Mobile.

Without the 215-foot elevation, the cruise industry would not be feasible to return, at all, to Mobile, they claim.

"You'd be eliminating them forever," Lee said.

Chiron said Mobile is being proactive with its bridge height proposal, even if no cruise ship seems to be imminent.

"I think they are smart to think about that now so they don't have to worry about it 15 years from now," Chiron said. "It's certainly forward thinking on their part (before) it could be a $5 billion problem later. You certainly don't want a dark cloud over you."

Lyons said the bridge height accommodating cruise ships will someday pay off.

"I'm one of the optimists who thinks we'll land another cruise ship in here," Lyons said. "It's a matter of time."
Co-host of MSNBC show 'Morning Joe' to speak at University of Alabama

Joe Scarborough, a University of Alabama alumnus and co-host of MSNBC's "Morning Joe," will speak Aug. 22 at UA as part of the Blackburn Institute's 20th anniversary symposium.

The former Florida congressman and conservative author will speak at 6 p.m. Aug. 22 in the Moody Music Building Concert Hall during a free event open to the public. Doors open at 5:30 p.m.

The two-day symposium also includes a segment on Alabama literature led by Rick Bragg, professor of writing at UA, at 11:45 a.m. Aug. 23 at the Hotel Capstone and other panels about Alabama culture and the media.

The Blackburn Institute was founded in 1994 with the aim of developing a network of leaders who understand the challenges that face the state of Alabama.

Each year, around 25 students are chosen to join the institute during a selection process focused on identifying those most interested in community improvement. The students earn the title of Blackburn Fellow upon graduation.
Lincoln letters on display at University of Alabama's Gorgas Library

Letters penned or signed by President Abraham Lincoln will be on display in the A.S. Williams III Americana Collection in the Amelia Gayle Gorgas Library at the University of Alabama through Friday.

The letters were hailed by the Papers of Abraham Lincoln — a project collecting the 16th president’s documents — as previously unknown, historically rich artifacts.

The letters date from 1862 and 1863 as the president oversaw a country embroiled in the Civil War.

The hand-written documents will be on display through Friday and possibly longer depending on interest, according to Donna B. Adcock, director of public relations for the UA Libraries.

The Williams collection, which is on the third floor of Gorgas in Room 301, is open from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday. The library’s summer hours are from 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. Gorgas, which is on the north side of the Quad on UA’s campus, is closed Saturdays and Sundays during the summer period, which ends Saturday.
A year after University of Alabama sorority racial discrimination controversy, media access to rush limited

By: Melissa Brown

A year after student reporters unveiled systemic racial discrimination in the University of Alabama's Panhellenic sorority system, administrators are limiting media access to rush organizers and providing little information on changes made.

The Panhellenic system made national headlines last year when student newspaper The Crimson White uncovered systemic racial discrimination in many houses.

A handful of sorority women revealed some current members and sorority alumnae, including one UA employee, blocked the bid of a highly qualified rushee who happened to be black, against the wishes of many current members.

Spurred by a student call to action, University officials admitted they were aware the school's Greek system was segregated, and had been for years. President Judy Bonner implemented an unorthodox late-stage bidding process, leading to more than 21 minority women accepting bids.

Several sororities' national headquarters conducted internal investigations into their individual rush practices, with a handful replacing alumnae advisers.

"I'd say we're being a lot more proactive this year to make sure the pool is diverse and we are including everybody," Panhellenic Hannah McBrayer said in a UA-recorded video message. "Definitely being more proactive is something that has been different and can only bring positive change."

A representative from every sorority's national organization will be present during rush this year, perhaps the biggest change in the recruitment process.

"The integrity of the membership pledgeship process is definitely very important here at the University of Alabama," McBrayer said. "Each organization will have a nation representative just to ensure we keep the integrity. On the chapter side as well, making sure that the mutual selection process is kept pure and chapters are recruiting based on their national membership standards [is important]."

UA spokesperson Cathy Andreen emailed AL.com and other media outlets last week with Rush Week guidelines, stating no representatives from the Office of Greek Affairs, Panhellenic Executive Council or any sorority would be available for interviews during rush, a departure from previous protocol.

Though Greek Relations rarely handles inquiries into its own organizations' activities, preferring to route questions through UA's Media Relations office, the Panhellenic executive president normally provides a rush primer for press before hundreds of women descend on Magnolia Drive.

See Next Page
This year, however, President Hannah McBrayer answered Panhellenic-approved questions in the UA-recorded video.

"I think that is so important to be around people that might have a different viewpoint than you or come from a different area," McBrayer said in the video. "That's what I think is so great about becoming Greek here at the University Alabama -- you do have those chances to meet all those different people and really expand as a person."

McBrayer, who said "inclusion has always been important," stressed that education for members and alumni was important to "address questions about diversity in sororities.

When asked what specific changes to the recruitment process were made this year, Andreen wrote in an email that every female student who applied to the University received a fact brochure from the Office of Fraternity and Sorority Life. Sororities also reached out to "prospective new members" via actives, alumni and "others."

When asked what specific education and/or diversity training Panhellenic members received, as referenced by McBrayer, Andreen provided few details.

"The chapters worked with campus programs like Sustained Dialog and the Crossroads Community Center, as well as participating in programming from the national organizations," she said.

When asked if University administration requested that Panhellenic make any specific changes to this year's process, Andreen did not answer directly.

"The national organizations coordinate the recruitment process," Andreen said. "UA has worked closely with them and the local chapters to identify and eliminate real and perceived barriers, and to increase awareness of our Greek community among all prospective students apply to UA."

Formal rush will continue through Friday afternoon, with women receiving their bids in Bryant-Denny stadium Saturday.
Settlement reached in wrongful death of University of Alabama student Natalie Baine

By: Erin Edgemon

A settlement was reached in the wrongful death of University of Alabama student Natalie Baine who died from injuries sustained in a traffic crash on her way back to campus from the National Championship game last year.

The settlement reached between Baine's family and defendants Hudson Riedel and Thomas Matheney is confidential, Montgomery-based Beasley Allen law firm stated today.

Baine, 20, of Roswell, Ga. was fatally injured in a three-vehicle crash in Montgomery involving a charter bus containing UA cheerleaders, a passenger car and the truck she was riding in.

The crash occurred at around 10:22 p.m. on Jan. 8, 2013 as the students were on their way back to Tuscaloosa from spending the week in Miami.

Baine died three days later at Baptist Medical Center South from brain injuries.

Beasley Allen Attorney Chris Glover said the driver and the owner of the vehicle Baine was riding in were negligent and wrongly caused the woman's death.

"We continue to mourn with our clients over the loss of their precious daughter," Glover said in a statement today. "Natalie's parents wanted this lawsuit to help prevent this sort of thing from ever happening to anyone again by getting the word out about the dangers of fatigued driving, which is every bit as dangerous as drunk driving. The problem is made worse when what little sleep you do have is impaired by alcohol. The world needs to know how important it is to get quality rest prior to driving any motor vehicle. I promised this family that I would help them through the hardest time in their lives. I hope that is what I did."

Based on interviews conducted with Riedel and other students on the trip, Riedel hadn't slept a wink before making the trip back to Tuscaloosa and didn't even take a nap before taking over the wheel from Matheney in Dothan, Glover said in a previous interview with AL.com.

"What we have learned is that (Riedel) was extremely fatigued," he said, adding that Matheney is also negligent for handing his keys over to Riedel.

"What they did was no different than someone getting behind the wheel drinking and driving," Glover said.

According to a Montgomery Police Department traffic crash report, Baine was sitting in the right rear side of the 2009 Chevy Silverado truck that took the direct impact when a charter bus crashed into it.
The truck was traveling eastbound on West Boulevard when Riedel made an illegal left hand turn causing a Capitol Motor Lines charter bus, which was traveling westbound, to collide into it, according to the report.

The truck then rotated clockwise, which caused the driver of a third vehicle, traveling westbound on West Boulevard, to collide head on with the truck.

Neither Riedel nor Matheney were charged by Montgomery police.
UA graduate school will honor Georgia-Pacific

Staff report

Georgia-Pacific Corp. will receive the Corporate Partner of the Year award from the University of Alabama’s Manderson Graduate School of Business on Friday. The award will be presented at the school’s annual Speakers Edge luncheon, which marks the conclusion of orientation activities for incoming master of business administration students.

“We are fortunate to have the support of several corporate partners here at Culverhouse and Manderson,” said a statement from J. Michael Hardin, dean of the Culverhouse College of Commerce. “This award is a way for us to recognize the commitments and opportunities these companies provide to our students and for their efforts to help our students and faculty achieve greater success. We are proud to honor Georgia Pacific as our Corporate Partner of the Year.”

Scott Harper, director of procurement for Atlanta-based Georgia-Pacific, said the company’s relationship with Manderson graduate students includes advancement, growth and development opportunities in the company’s plants across the country.

“Through participation in on-campus events, student benchmarking projects, internships and full-time hiring initiatives, we have truly created a partnership in developing our future leaders,” he said in a prepared statement.

Manderson considers support of its key initiatives, length of the company’s engagement with the college and extraordinary activities that advance the graduate program experience for students and faculty in selecting the award recipient.

The award was started in 2009. Previous recipients include Procter & Gamble, BBVA Compass, Cigna-HealthSpring and Regions Financial.
VP APPOINTEE

UAB has named a graduate and former employee as its new vice president for financial affairs and administration.

G. Allen Bolton Jr. — a two-time graduate of UAB with master’s degrees in public health and business administration — will assume the job Oct. 1.

He will be responsible for overseeing such areas as facilities, financial affairs, human resources, risk management, and business and auxiliary services.

While working at UAB for 19 years, Bolton held a variety of jobs, including executive administrator of the Comprehensive Cancer Center.

He left UAB in 2011 to serve as senior vice president for finance and administration and chief operating officer at the Medical College of Wisconsin.

PricewaterhouseCoopers and at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center have been among Bolton’s other career stops.

Jesse Chambers
LARGE COMPANIES

#1 UAB

How long has your company had a wellness program? Since 2011.

Why did you start a wellness program?
To provide integrated health education, lifestyle behavior, chronic care and medical resources to promote and facilitate healthier living in the areas of diabetes, obesity, nutrition, exercise, stress management and tobacco cessation to our employees.

What was the hardest part about starting your wellness program?
Starting from ground zero. Obtaining senior-level support, creating a wellness committee to be the arms and legs for wellness and ongoing communications to target both campus and medicine, which encompasses 90 square blocks.

How would you describe your company’s philosophy on wellness in 10 words or less? To focus on healthier lifestyles and preventive measures.

How did you overcome it? Cooperative effort from all departments and ongoing strategic communications campus-wide.

How have your employees responded to the program? Very positively. They have been enthusiastic and receptive to all programs offered campus-wide.

What are some of the basic features of your company’s program? Our program has four areas of interest: physical activity, nutrition, stress management and tobacco cessation. This includes diabetes management education, the employee assistance and counseling center, breast cancer support and weight loss counseling.

What is a feature that has worked particularly well for your business?
The Farm Stand has been highly successful. This allows fresh fruits and vegetables to be easily accessed for employees, students, patients and visitors on a weekly basis.

What has been the most popular feature among employees? The Green Screens preventive screenings program is a favorite amongst all employees. This program allows employees to track blood pressure, weight, waist circumference and body mass index with free weekly screenings.

Are there any future features you would like to add to your plan?
Wellness programs with behavior-based incentives.

- Meg Baker, director of wellness
UAH creates fenced-in fly zone for air robots

By: Shevaun Bryan

Federal Aviation Association rules say researchers cannot fly their airborne robotics in open air. Taking matters into their own hands, the University of Alabama in Huntsville has created an enclosure to keep their research rolling. A playground custom-made for aerial robots allows UAH researchers to keep testing without breaking FAA rules about open-air testing.

“We knew that if you fly inside, in an enclosed area then it’s okay,” said Norven Goddard, a UAH research scientist.

So that’s what they built: a 1,500 square foot enclosure. Perfect for unmanned aerial vehicles, or UAVs, used in the aerospace field. The fenced-in area is surrounded by netting similar to what is found at a baseball batting cage. With remote controlled UAVs, it’s a gamer’s paradise with much aerospace technology tied in.

“It allows us to get an open environment so GPS and other components, we can test,” said Goddard.

The FAA is developing the regulations for research flight. The university is currently in the process of getting FAA certification to fly in open-air, in the meantime, this playground keeps them airborne.

“It’s great to get the hands on experience,” said Clif Egger, a UAH undergraduate student studying aerospace engineering, “you can get in the classroom and learn everything but when you get out and actually do it is when you really learn.”

Practice at the outdoor playground is expected to equip students with real-world flying and problem-solving experience with the growing sense of technology. UAH hopes the hands-on training will give their students an edge once they break into the aerospace field.

“Once a position opens up that we can fill with one of our students, they will have the background so they can start contributing immediately,” said Goddard.
NASA doctor who cares for astronauts to speak at UAH nursing conference

By: Paul Gattis

The lead physician for the NASA astronaut care program will be the keynote speaker at a nursing conference Aug. 29 at the University of Alabama in Huntsville.

Dr. William Tarver, president of the Space Medicine Association and lead physician of the Astronaut Occupational Health Program at NASA's Johnson Space Flight Center, will address the UAH College of Nursing Space Life Sciences conference.

Tarver has been working with astronauts for nearly 10 years. According to UAH, he manages an annual budget of $16 million which includes six physicians, nurses, medical technicians, industrial hygienists, and a corporate wellness program.

He previously served as medical lead for the NASA Astronaut Occupational Health Program, and medical director of the Clinical Services Branch. Before joining NASA, Tarver was owner of the South Texas Occupational Medicine and Prevention Clinic.

UAH said in the announcement that north Alabama scientists, educators, registered nurses, nurse practitioners, practical nurses, and students interested in space life science and physiology of the human body are encouraged to attend the conference.

The conference is free but UAH is encouraging registration by Friday to secure a seat at the conference.

For registration and more information about the UAH College of Nursing Space Life Sciences conference, please email Christy Bacon (RN) at: clb0018@uah.edu, or Dr. Azita Amiri at: aa0033@uah.edu.
UAH professor’s ‘Smart Bottle’ awarded second patent

By: Shevaun Bryan

An invention out of the University of Alabama in Huntsville takes aim at giving peace-of-mind to those who take meds. A smart solution to help you take medicine properly could be on the shelves soon.

A locally-invented pill bottle recently received a second patent that helps take the guessing out of taking meds.

“That patent is an important milestone to the further commercialization of our product because it further elaborates ways of effective monitoring the amount of drugs in the bottle,” explained Emil Jovanov, a professor at UAH who invented the ‘Smart Bottle.’

Jovanov says 40% of medicine is not taken correctly, his invention addresses that need “to create a solution that would inexpensively monitor and track how many pills you have in a bottle.”

‘Smart Bottle’ uses volume measurements to track use. The bottle is designed to remind users to take their meds by syncing them wirelessly to a network.

“They would be able to send you messages and warn you that it is time, that you missed a dose, or that it is time to take your drugs,” said Jovanov. The network can allow loved ones or doctors to keep an eye on the patient.

Adheretech, a New York-based start-up company, has begun clinical trials, allowing pharmaceutical firms to try-out the latest smart bottle prototype. Adheretech has been conducting clinical tests of the newest, sleekest ‘Smart Bottle’ prototype. The hope is that they will be on store shelves in two years.
UAH pathways now on Google Street View

By: Shevaun Bryan

Chances are, you’ve wandered the world on Google Maps. This week, the tool left the streets and launched a panoramic access to the walking paths of the University of Alabama in Huntsville.

A camera-loaded backpacker took a slow walk across the 400-acre campus.

“Google sent a trekker out to take panoramic images of the interior pathways of the campus, where the Google streetcar doesn’t go,” said Diana LaChance with UAH’s Office of Marketing and Communications.

The internet giant took their trek around campus in May and launched the Street View version Thursday, and the university hopes future students use it to ‘visit’ the campus before they visit the campus.

“It’s a great tool for the campus to have for prospective students, it’s brilliant that they can take a tour from the comfort of their own home,” said Michael Winstone, an international student in his third year at UAH. He says the new virtual tour is a great selling point for students, both domestic and abroad.

“For somebody like me who’s from England, it’s very, very expensive to fly from England to the States, so being able to get a virtual tour is incredibly helpful.”

Each pathway that was photographed was approved by campus police to protect student privacy. Google also used face-blurring technology on everyone to protect the privacy of all students, faculty, and visitors who may be caught on camera.

UAH invites you to check out their pathways on Google Maps, you may even catch their mascot Charger Blue photobombing the panoramic photoshoot.
UWA search narrows to six candidates

The search committee tasked with finding the next president of the University of West Alabama met Monday in Hoover to discuss potential candidates.

The committee discussed a pool of 18 applicants to replace former President Richard Holland, narrowing the field to six, according to trustee and search committee chairman Jerry Smith.

The 10-person search committee includes trustees, faculty, staff, students and alumni.

Smith estimated the process to narrow the field further would take months, noting the next step would be setting up off-campus interviews with the candidates. Smith hopes to eventually bring the finalists to the campus for interviews.

The university retained Wheless Partners Executive Search of Birmingham to help the committee with a nationwide search. The finalists recommended by the search committee would be brought before the full board of trustees for approval.

While there is no set timeline for the search, the trustees said previously that they would like to find a replacement within a year. Right now, the university is being led by John Blackwell, who was appointed interim president in May.
THE RICH GET RICHER

HISTORIC VOTE: NCAA BOARD APPROVES AUTONOMY FOR POWER 5 CONFERENCES

The five biggest conferences in college football — SEC, Big Ten, Big 12, Pac-12 and ACC — have just grown even more powerful, as the Division I Board of Directors gave those conferences the autonomous right to craft their own rules on several key student-athlete issues in college sports. The final vote on Thursday was 16-2 in favor of the new changes. Let's break down this historic vote:

See Next Page
The Birmingham News
Friday, August 8, 2014

AUTONOMY embraces a tilted playing field

Orrin Hatch is concerned. How do we know? The senior U.S. senator from Utah released a statement. The statement contains these words: "I am concerned." Straight talk from a veteran politician is nothing to ignore. What major issue has raised Hatch's eyebrows this time? Global warming? Campaign funding? The situation in the Middle East? No. It's the redesign of NCAA governance. Really heavy stuff.

Hatch sees a potential problem in Thursday's historic vote by the NCAA Division I Board of Directors to grant some degree of autonomy to the SEC and the other Power 5 conferences. The move is really an act of self-preservation for big and small schools alike, but he seems to believe this decision "could create an uneven playing field that may prevent some institutions from being able to compete fairly with other schools that have superior resources to pay for student-athletes." Could create?

Is Hatch under the impression that BYU and USC or Utah State and Florida State currently compete on a level

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

The restructuring could pave the way for several proposed reforms, some of which were too costly to win approval by the larger Division I membership. Several of those measures, like cost-of-attendance scholarships, could provide new recruiting tools for some major-conference programs. The restructuring still must survive a 60-day override period, and would create a structure that lowers the voting threshold from a two-thirds super-majority to one of two alternatives: 60 percent approval from the 65 power-conference schools plus 15 student-athlete representatives and a majority in three of the Power 5 conferences, or a simple majority with the support of four of the Power 5 conferences.

REFORMS CLOSE TO POWER 5'S HEART

The Power 5 could propose measures as early as January, including:

- Cost-of-attendance scholarships
- Extended medical and insurance benefits for student-athletes
- Guaranteed multi-year scholarships
- Tougher Academic Progress Rate guidelines
- Loosened regulations on contact between student-athletes and agents
- Decreased time demands on student-athletes
- Streamlining of other overly restrictive, nit-picky rules governing what may be considered benefits
- The bottom line: Big-budget schools in major conferences won't need the blessing of their small-budget brethren to pass a cost-of-attendance measure, which now could equate to up to $5,000 above the current value of a scholarship.

WHAT DOES THE SEC SAY?

Commissioner Mike Slive: "This is an opportunity for historic change in college athletics. Now we can go to work to begin to better address the needs of our student-athletes." Example: Stipends of $2,000 per full-scholarship athlete, which would have cost the average Division I school around $300,000, were proposed and pushed through in 2011, but the measure was ultimately dropped when nearly half the Division I membership voted to override it.

WHAT ALABAMA AND AUBURN SAY?

Crimson Tide coach Nick Saban: "I don't really know about the Power 5 thing."

Tigers Athletics Director Jay Jacobs: "Now we don't have to debate about whether bagels have peanut butter or not. The No. 1 thing is that it gives us the flexibility to be able to not just react, but be proactive to ensure we're doing what's best for our student athletes." Compiled by AL.com reporter Mike Herndon

KEVIN SCARBINSKY

I provide analysis, insight and perspective on Alabama, Auburn and the SEC. Contact kscarbinsky@al.com

SCARBINSKY 24

See Next Page
SCARBINSKY

From Page 19

playing field?
Do they have satellite or cable in
Hatch's offices in Salt Lake City, Provo,
St. George, Ogden, Cedar City or Wash-
ington, D.C.? Does his package include
ESPN? The senator is laboring under a
serious misapprehension if he's wor-
rried that autonomy will be a real game-
changer from a competitive standpoint.
Autonomy isn't going to create an uneven
playing field. It's going to acknowledge it
and embrace it.

No doubt no one has to remind Hatch
of BYU's magical 1984 season, but some-
one should inform him of something.
That remains the last time a school not
now affiliated with one of the Power 5
conferences won a national title.

Oh, wait. He's aware. His press release
Thursday includes this note: "In 2009,
Hatch wrote to President Obama asking
the Department of Justice's Antitrust Divi-
sion to investigate the Bowl Champions-
ship Series (BCS) after several undefeated
college football teams (read: Utah 2004
and 2008) were denied the opportunity
to compete for a national championship.
The BCS commissioners later adopted a
four-team playoff competition for the col-
lege football postseason, which will debut
in January."

So it was written, and so it will be done.
Who knew we had Hatch to thank for the
College Football Playoff?
The senator certainly must have fond
memories of Jan. 2, 2009, when Utah beat
Alabama 31-17 in the Sugar Bowl, but
someone should bring him up to speed.
Since that glitch, Alabama is 60-7 and has
won three national championships. Utah
is 38-25 and, since joining the Pac-12,
9-18 in league play, and the Utes haven't
exactly challenged the Tide for a recruit-
ing title.

Before autonomy came to pass Thurs-
day, the SEC won as many consecutive
national titles as Hatch has Senatorial
elections. Alabama and Oregon turned
their football buildings into exclusive
spas, complete with waterfalls. The Big
Ten launched its own television network,
inspiring the Pac-12 and the SEC to do the
same.

Since Utah is now in the Pac-12 foot-
print, perhaps Hatch can investigate
DirectTV's refusal to carry Larry Scott's
channel. What the senator can't do is leg-
islative parity.
The rich programs keep getting richer.
All autonomy will do is let the players at
those schools eat a little more cake — with
icing, too.
Key Takeaways from NCAA Allowing Power-5 Conferences Legislative Autonomy

By: Ben Kercheval

Saying that major college athletics is about to change forever is no longer a hyperbolic statement. Rather, such change is far closer to reality than it's ever been.

On Thursday, the NCAA Division I Board of Directors voted 16-2 in favor of a new governance model that would give the so-called power-five conferences—the ACC, Big Ten, Big 12, Pac-12 and SEC—an unprecedented level of legislative autonomy.

NCAA President Mark Emmert expressed his satisfaction with the vote in a statement:

"I am immensely proud of the work done by the membership. The new governance model represents a compromise on all sides that will better serve our members and, most importantly, our student-athletes. These changes will help all our schools better support the young people who come to college to play sports while earning a degree."

Should it pass a veto period, new legislation could be put into place in time for the 2015-16 academic year.

What does it all mean? Here are some initial takeaways from Thursday's monumental news.

1. This Is Only the First Step

As mentioned above, the vote is subject to a 60-day veto period before the new governance model can become official. Per John Infante of AthleticScholarships.net, "75 override requests would trigger the override process while 125 would table the proposal and keep it from becoming effective while that process goes on."

According to Dan Wolken of USA Today, "It is not expected enough schools will submit an override to put the legislation in jeopardy."

Still, the road to autonomy is not completely paved. Among the items on the agenda (via Dennis Dodd of CBSSports.com) are full cost of attendance, expenses and benefits, insurance and eligibility.

Figuring out cost of attendance, widely considered to be the front-burner issue of autonomy, is still in its early stages, according to Wolken. Furthermore, it's guaranteed that there will be disagreement among power-five members about how to calculate it.

A key addition—"Any amendment is subject to approval by a five-conference presidential group before consideration by the full voting group"—could make passing legislation complicated.
In an interview with Jon Solomon of CBSSports.com, Nathan Hatch, Division I board chairman and president at Wake Forest, said the process for introducing legislation could take months:

"Now comes the heavy lifting. The next step is the five major conferences creating a process for them to introduce and vet their own legislation. The Power 5 will submit their own legislation for consideration by Oct. 1 that could be adopted at the January NCAA convention for 2015-16.

There will be two ways to pass new rules: Get 60 percent of all the votes from 65 school representatives and 15 athletes plus a simple majority from three of the Power 5 conferences; or get 51 percent of the votes and a simple majority from four of the five Power 5 conferences."

So while autonomy essentially splits Division I in half, the steps that tend to slow the NCAA legislation process are still very much at play. That could lead to apprehension even within power-five conferences to go forward with it.

2. Yes, There's a Recruiting Benefit; Yes, That Already Existed

A common point about autonomy is that it will widen the gap between the so-called "haves" and "have-nots" of college athletics. If power-five schools can provide their players with additional money every month, you can bet that's going to be a recruiting boost.

This is all true, but that gap already existed.

According to the 247Sports.com composite rankings, only three teams not currently in a power-five conference finished with a top-50 recruiting class over the past five years: BYU (2010), Cincinnati (2011) and South Florida (2014).

A glance through USA Today's annual list of college athletic finances show plenty of familiar, blue-blood names at the top: Texas, Alabama, Michigan, Oregon and so on. With roughly $64.5 million in revenue in 2013, UNLV is the highest rated "Group of Five" program at No. 46.

Many power programs have resources other programs don't. It's just the way the setup is. If autonomy passes, power-five programs will vote on legislation that they feel more directly applies to them. The recruits who go there will benefit.

3. Athletes Will Have a Slightly Bigger Voice

A driving factor behind Northwestern players pushing for unionization this spring was that they didn't feel their voices were being heard. A union would be compartmentalized—Northwestern's union applied to scholarship players at a private university—and tough to get trending nationally because of right-to-work states, but it also pushed the conversation of player rights forward.

Before that, players didn't have much of a voice.
That will change under the new NCAA governance structure, albeit ever so slightly. The new board will include the chair of the Division I Student-Athlete Advisory Committee. That at least means student-athletes will have a voice at the table.

How influential that voice is remains to be seen. In the long term, this may not change much as far as athletes driving the conversation about topics like compensation and player safety. The new governance structure would feature a 24-member board, only one member of which would represent student-athletes.

Is it an improvement? Absolutely. Will the lawsuits over concussions and money end? It depends on whether the NCAA makes players feel like their voices are heard as loudly as they should be.

4. This is Not a Precursor to Splitting From the NCAA

Despite the popular narrative, autonomy doesn't mean that the NCAA is limping into the woods to die.

SEC Commissioner Mike Slive pushed that narrative when threatening to abandon the NCAA in favor of a "Division 4" model if autonomy didn't pass. Obviously, that would be a moot point if autonomy survives the veto period, but as Wolken tweets, it's also impractical:

As much as college football's power brokers lament the current system publicly, they've shown before they couldn't stand to live without it. In January 2013, the NCAA adopted numerous proposals designed to deregulate recruiting rules—with Emmert's backing—that were generally viewed as unenforceable. Less than a month later, Big Ten coaches and athletic directors issued a statement asking that a few of the proposals be re-examined.

Sure enough, the pushback put the proposals under further consideration, much to Emmert's dismay.

The point being, no matter how much the NCAA membership attempts to change the rules, or the process for developing the rules, the fact of the matter is that they need the rules.

Could autonomy lead to another split down the road, either by power conferences or non-power conferences? According to Infante, an NCAA expert, that's absolutely possible. When and how that would happen is unpredictable.

But breaking away from the NCAA simply isn't an option.
What the nation is saying about the NCAA's vote to give Power 5 conference more autonomy

By: Michael Sedor

Yesterday's NCAA Board of Directors vote to give the so-called Power 5 conferences greater autonomy has been labeled by the AP as "historic," the New York Times as "significant," "inevitable" by Oregon State head coach Mike Riley and "important" by NCAA president Mark Emmert.

But what does it mean for college sports? Is it a welcome shift for the sports fan, the athletes and the schools? What will it mean for the future?

The below links will get from from "confused but interested" to "understand all sides of the discussion" in no time. Let's start with the basics.

THE BASICS: NCAA gives more autonomy to the power five conferences.

You have questions about the new NCAA rules and various media outlets have taken a stab at answers. The New York Times and CBSSports.com offer good entry-level primers on the topic.

SB Nation's details how the voting will work while Campus Insiders bullet points the facts. For a more in-depth look at the issue, PennLive's David Jones explains why it's happening now, what it means for hoops and more.

THE OPINIONS: NCAA gives more autonomy to the power five conferences.

Now you know, or at least have a basic idea, what's going on. But what do college football scribes think about the decision?

Kevin Scarbinski at al.com is worried that Sen. Orrin Hatch is worried and Ron Higgins from nola.com sees a world where South Carolina, who recently reported sanctions for a decked-out cookie cake, will never have to worry about, "trying to sway recruits with extra icing."

Bloomberg and the New York Times cut that ostensible violations cake with even more precision concluding that the NCAA needs to be blown up and that the new system is egregiously unfair.

ESPN's Ivan Maisel admits that the rich are getting richer but maintains faith in the goodness of the NCAA and believes that the decision will benefit student-athletes

THE FUTURE: NCAA gives more autonomy to the power five conferences.

What does this decision mean for the future of the world of college sports? The Clarion-Ledger does a terrific job through the Mississippi sports lens of explaining how the dominoes could fall for the haves and the have nots.

See next page
The Chronicle of Higher Education isn't quite sure that the Power 5 will enjoy the apparent success they have achieved while BTN.com disagrees, steadfast in the belief of Power 5 inevitability.

The News Observer wraps up the collective sentiment well when concluding, "The great monolith of the NCAA has held back change for too long. The dam is breaking. Not today, not tomorrow, but the cracking and crumbling has begun."
Early Offer: Autonomy can fix recruiting

By: Jeremy Crabtree

Even the least astute coach with his nose buried deep in his playbook knew the Ed O'Bannon antitrust lawsuit and the vote for autonomy was going forever change college football.

One of the first changes expected to pass, and would first impact prospects in the Class of 2016, will be the addition of full cost-of-attendance stipends. Four-year scholarship guarantees are expected to be on the early agenda, as well.

Those moves are good. But there is potentially a lot to fix and the concerns aren't going away.

"I'm afraid we've opened Pandora's box," a Big 12 recruiting coordinator said. "We kept hearing over and over autonomy was going to be positive for student-athletes and address their welfare. But there's a growing concern by a lot of coaches I visit with, that this is simply an end run by the biggest schools in the country to stack the deck for them even more, especially in recruiting."

Yes, there are bigger subjects the Power Five has to fix first, such as cost of attendance and the stipend issue, but not far behind those should be adjustments on the recruiting trail. Focus them on the recruits and do it with all 65 teams in mind, not just the biggest few.

Heck, the biggest reason autonomy passed originally was the idea that change could reduce the infringement on recruits' academic preparation. What would improve their academic well-being more than fixing the out of control recruiting process?

Recruits are facing more pressure than ever before. If it's not dealing with a coach direct messaging them at all hours in the day, it's the pressure to commit while on an unofficial visit in March of their junior year without mom and dad sitting at their side because they couldn't afford to make the visit.

Outside of the ability to add an early signing period, the vote for autonomy gives the Power Five an opportunity to re-write many of recruiting's key rules, and if a majority of schools and conferences agreed, it could make the process less of a burden for the student-athletes and parents involved.

Let's allow recruits to take official paid visits earlier. Recruits are already committing earlier and earlier, so why not let them get on campus with mom and dad at their side so they aren't pressured into making a decision they might not want to make?

Let's fix the communication situation. Both coaches and recruits are craving more actual communication on the phone or even face-to-face, instead of only 140 characters at a time. Having actual conversations surely would lead to fewer decommittments or confusion.
And let's also ensure that everybody is playing with the same cards and introduce limits on the size of recruiting support staffs a school can have.

There's a litany of other rules the Power Five could adjust that would make recruiting better. And if this move to autonomy was truly done with in the interest in supporting the student-athletes -- and not a power grab by schools with the deepest pockets -- then there's no reason why it shouldn't step up and make much-needed changes.

Social Studies

Aug. 1 was the first day schools could officially offer Class of 2015 prospects in writing, and it's been fascinating to see recruits posting pictures of their official offer letters. Before it was often a mystery as to whether or not a recruit truly had all the scholarship offers he claimed or what promises were made by schools. In today's social media world, though, it's all out there for everybody to see.

What's also out there for everybody to see is the language schools use in their letters.

For example, Florida State coach Jimbo Fisher expects the Seminoles to have a football graduation rate of more than 90 percent by the end of this season.

Also, Colorado received a lot of positive attention when it sent an offer letter to both Buffalo offensive line commitment Tim Lynott and his family.

And Les Miles led off his pitch to ESPN 300 cornerback and LSU commitment Xavier Lewis by talking about how LSU will always be competing for a championship.
EXCLUSIVE: AAC commissioner supports autonomy, wary of 'Power 5' perceptions

By: Bill Bender

In a sense, American Athletic Conference commissioner Mike Aresco is stuck in the middle. He supports the improvements to the "student-athlete experience and student-athlete welfare experience" that will come with the NCAA Division I board of directors' decision to grant the "Power 5" conferences more autonomy Thursday.

Yet he's wary of the competitive perceptions that come with it and the effects that will have on the AAC and other so-called "Group of 5" conferences.

"The biggest concern is we would like to be in the room," Aresco told Sporting News on Wednesday. "We would not like to see a great degree of separation between (Power 5 conferences) and others. We think we have proved that competitively within our conference in football and basketball.

"We don't like the term 'Power 5' particularly. That's not written anywhere in this model."

The 65 schools in the "Power 5" (ACC, Big Ten, Big 12, Pac-12, SEC) now have nearly twice as much voting power as the "Group of 5." Left out is the AAC, formerly the Big East, which had an automatic bid in the BCS from 1998-2013. Now, the conference is considered a part of the "Group of 5 along" with the Mid-American, Mountain West, Sun Belt and Conference USA.

The AAC is fighting with those conferences for one playoff bowl spot as part of the new College Football Playoff.

"It's a question now of how we react it," Aresco said. "It's not a, 'Woe is me' type deal. We're gonna fight, and we're going to try to win our share. If we do win our share, we're going to let you know about it."

This is where the perception battle begins. Schools such as Central Florida, Cincinnati and Connecticut all gained exposure by playing in BCS bowls the last five seasons. In 2013, Central Florida finished 12-1 and beat Baylor 52-42 in the Fiesta Bowl. Aresco said that success is going to be harder to sell in the four-team playoff era, especially with the growing emphasis on strength of schedule. That said, the AAC is financially tied to the playoff for the next 12 seasons.

"We know what the situation is," Aresco said. "We're realistic, but we also know we have good football teams. What we don't like to see is this business of not playing teams outside of Power 5 conferences. That's not good for business."
Aresco said it's a different situation in basketball. The last two NCAA basketball champions -- Louisville (now in the ACC) and Connecticut -- played in the AAC. The new changes shouldn't affect that sport.

"Basketball is different because you're going to get your shot against the other guys regardless," he said.

"What's interesting is the sentiment that playing Louisville is OK now but wasn't last year. Playing Rutgers is OK now but wasn't last year. ... That's the kind of thing we're fighting against."

That concern is greater in football. East Carolina, Tulane and Tulsa all joined the AAC this season, and Navy is joining the conference in 2015. Long term, Aresco said the conference's goal is to join the Power 5 and be a major conference and, "Get in that room."

In the meantime, Aresco said it's about monitoring the competitive balance of the FBS between all 10 conferences.

"Why deprive half the student athletes in FBS of an opportunity to play at the highest levels?" Aresco asked. "It makes no sense."
Are you ready for some SEC Network football?

It's here, launching on Thursday at 5 p.m., and the audience is going to be big.

With DirecTV now on board, ESPN's SEC Network will put this media monster in an estimated 90 million homes on Day 1. That number dwarfs what the Big Ten and Pac-12 Networks had when they launched in recent years, and the Pac-12 still does not have an agreement with DirecTV two years later.

Let's break down what this new kid on the block means for you:
WHAT IS IT?
The SEC Network is a channel dedicated to SEC sports 24/7, including live coverage of all of the SEC's 21 annual sports, studio shows and other original content. It is based in Charlotte and owned and operated by ESPN, with content licensed by the SEC. Its first program Thursday will be "SEC Now," a studio show similar to ESPN's SportsCenter, but focused on the SEC.

WHERE CAN I FIND IT?
The list of providers who have reached agreements to carry the network now includes Comcast, Time Warner and Bright House Networks, Dish Network, DirecTV, Charter, Cox Communications, AT&T U-Verse, Google Fibers and other smaller providers, making it available in about 90 million homes around the country. Contact your local provider to find out if it is included in your specific package and where it is on your remote.

WHAT CHANNEL WILL IT BE ON?
DirecTV – 611; DISH Network – 408; AT&T U-Verse – 607 / 1607 (HD); Comcast, Charter, Time Warner/BrightHouse, Cable One, other cable companies—varies by location; Verizon FIOS — no agreement yet

WILL I BE ABLE TO ACCESS SEC NETWORK CONTENT DIGITALLY OR THROUGH MOBILE DEVICES?
Yes. Along with televised events, the network plans to air more than 550 events digitally this year. Digital content can be viewed through SECNetwork.com and on iOS and Android devices via participating providers through WatchESPN.

DOES THIS MEAN NO MORE PAY-PER-VIEW?
Yes, there are no longer any pay-per-view games for SEC football. All games will air on either the SEC Network, CBS, ESPN or the conference's other broadcast partners.

WHAT ABOUT THE WEEKLY SYNDICATED GAME?
The syndicated SEC Network (formerly Jefferson-Pilot, Raycom, etc.) games that aired each Saturday (typically at 11:30 a.m.) will now air on the SEC Network.

WILL THERE BE A "COLLEGE GAMEDAY" SHOW?
Yes. "SEC Nation" will originate from an SEC game location each week. Joe Tessitore will anchor the weekly traveling show, with appearances from many of the above-mentioned names.

Compiled by AL.com SEC football writer Mike Herndon. AL.com reporter Greg Stephenson contributed to this report.

See next page
HOW MANY GAMES IN OTHER SPORTS WILL BE COVERED?
In addition to football, the network this year will broadcast 100 men's basketball games, 60 women's basketball games, 75 baseball games, 50 softball games and additional events from other sports.

WHAT OTHER TYPES OF PROGRAMMING WILL BE FEATURED ON THE NETWORK?
Aside from game coverage and SEC Now, planned shows include an "SEC in 60" recap show, a film room segment featuring analysis from an SEC coach, "SEC Rewind" features on past games, and the "SEC Storied" documentary series, including a piece on former Auburn greats Bo Jackson, Charles Barkley and Frank Thomas.

WHO WILL BE THE ON-AIR PERSONALITIES?
A mix of existing ESPN analysts will be featured on the network, including Brent Musberger, Joe Tessitore, Jesse Palmer, Greg McElroy, Tim Tebow, Marcus Spears, Paul Finebaum, Maria Taylor, Booger McFarland, Matt Stinchcomb, Tony Barnhart and Dari Nowkhah.
A University’s Partnership Reshapes Bowling Green, Ky.

By: Keith Schneider

When Gary A. Ransdell, the president of Western Kentucky University, invites alumni to view this city’s redeveloping downtown from his university’s hilltop campus, the response is almost always exclamations of surprise.

Just below Cherry Hall, one of the 108-year-old university’s grandest buildings, sits nearly 200,000 square feet of new student housing, built at a cost of $24 million. There is also a 30,000-square-foot, $10 million alumni center, and a 72,500-square-foot, $14.5 million Hyatt Place hotel scheduled to open in 2015.

Next door to the Hyatt site, a $28 million mixed-use development is under construction. One building will house 240 more students on one side of College Street, and another will have small businesses, restaurants and a rooftop pool.

There are also four new fraternity houses built at a cost of $3 million, and a 450-space parking deck flanked by 30,000 square feet of retail businesses and restaurants that are expected to open next year.

Mr. Ransdell, Western Kentucky’s president since 1997, described the projects as the latest additions to $262 million in downtown construction since 2008 that is rehabilitating Bowling Green’s central business district. All of the new structures replace deteriorated homes and ragged retail businesses that for decades formed a barrier between the university and city center.

Much of the student housing has been on the south side of campus, away from downtown. With the new construction, “there’s been a shift in student density at the north end of our campus,” Mr. Ransdell said. “With each new project that density increases.”

“We’re all a bunch of bulldogs in this community,” he added. “We haven’t seen a deal that we didn’t like. We want to close them all.”

Judging from the scope of the projects and the progress made over the last six years, it appears that deal-making has become a choice skill in this city of 61,000 residents, Kentucky’s third largest, after Louisville and Lexington. Arguably the most important pact was the one that the city and Warren County reached with the state to establish a 383-acre, 52-block special development and tax district in 2007.

The district pays local governments 80 percent of the increases in payroll, property, sales and other tax revenue generated by new development within the district. Revenue is devoted to retiring construction bonds, building infrastructure and assisting developers, including the university.

This year the development district, formally called the WKU Gateway to Downtown Bowling Green, will return to the city and county over $2 million in revenue. Over its 30-year life, ending
in 2037, the tax district is expected to deliver $200 million to the two governments, said Doug Gorman, a downtown business owner and chairman of the Warren County Downtown Economic Development Authority, which oversees the Gateway project.

"The whole point of what we’re trying to do is to get more people to enjoy our downtown, to live here and work here," he said. "If you look around now, it’s pretty clear that people get the point." Continue reading the main story

Until the Gateway project began to unfold, Bowling Green was largely known for its university, the third largest in Kentucky, after the University of Kentucky and the University of Louisville. Its other claim to fame is the General Motors assembly plant not far away, where Corvettes have been built since 1981. This year a sinkhole opened in a wing of the privately managed National Corvette Museum near the plant, swallowing eight sports cars that were on display and prompting significant increases in attendance.

Some of the museum’s visitors wander into Bowling Green’s evolving downtown. During a tour, Mr. Gorman identifies the steadily expanding galaxy of arts, entertainment, office and housing projects, big and small, that have quickly risen from blocks that just a few years ago were underused or blighted.

Development is focused in three distinct hubs. The university, and its 21,000-student market, is heavily influencing construction at the bottom of the Cherry Hall hill, in the southern section of downtown.

One effect of the Gateway development is to increase land values there, said Michael L. Simpson, the owner and president of Chandler Property Management, a real estate development firm based here. "Things are certainly more costly than they were seven or eight years ago," Mr. Simpson said. "Before the Gateway project, a typical lot sold for $60,000. Today they bring $90,000 to $100,000."

Near the center of the Gateway project are four square blocks along East Seventh Avenue and State and College Streets that form a new entertainment and office district. In 2009, the city completed the 4,559-seat Bowling Green Ballpark, home of the Hot Rods, a Class A minor-league baseball affiliate of the Tampa Bay Rays. The stadium was constructed at a total cost of $30 million, according to city records, and is joined to Hitcents Park Plaza, a $25 million, 106,000-square-foot mixed-use office building with restaurants and shops along a street-level piazza.

The Hitcents building, which opened last year, is named for a growing local digital mobile games and applications company. Its headquarters are on the top floor, where 60 of the 15-year-old company’s 80 employees work. The building wraps around the north and west sides of an 800-space parking deck. Mr. Gorman and city leaders await the start of a 48-unit housing development that is planned for the deck’s east side.

Across Seventh Avenue and along College Street, the county completed the $28.5 million, 1,800-seat Southern Kentucky Performing Arts Center, known here as SKyPAC. A $2 million
park between College and State Streets serves as the center’s grand entrance. And on the corner of Seventh and College, the Bowling Green Area Chamber of Commerce is housed in a $4 million, 17,000-square-foot office building it completed in 2007.

The north end of the development district is dominated by the Medical Center, a regional hospital and health care provider. Western Kentucky University constructed a 73,000-square-foot, $20 million Health Sciences Complex to house its nursing and physical therapy school. The city’s special development district has also assisted in the planning and construction of a $10 million medical office building, a $3.1 million clinic, the $2.5 million Hospitality House for ill children and their families, and $22 million in Medical Center expansion and modernization projects.

Continue reading the main story

The city built a $2.5 million fire station and encouraged the $3.5 million restoration and renovation of an old school for housing. In all, 28 projects have been completed or are under construction in the Gateway district.

The big investment in the Gateway project, which continued through the recession, and its results have impressed residents and the elected leaders who negotiated the contracts and shaped the development strategy.

“You know, Western graduates 4,000 students every year,” said Mike Buchanon, a Republican who has served as the Warren County judge-executive, the equivalent of a county commission chairman, since 1994. “We’re trying to retain our young people. You can’t grow a community with only retirees. That eventually catches up with you.”

He added: “For those of us who’ve been in the trenches, this project seems like it’s taken a lifetime. None of it has been easy. But now we are all so proud of the excitement, activity, investments, commerce and new life it is bringing to downtown Bowling Green.”
Calif. debates ‘yes means yes’ consent law

College campuses nationwide work to address sexual assault, rape

By Julie Watson
The Associated Press

SAN DIEGO | College students have heard a similar refrain for years in campaigns to stop sexual assault: No means no.

Now, as universities around the country that are facing pressure over the handling of rape allegations adopt policies to define consensual sex, California is poised to take it a step further. Lawmakers are considering what would be the first-in-the-nation measure requiring all colleges that receive public funds to set a standard for when “yes means yes.”

Defining consensual sex is a growing trend by universities in an effort to do more to protect victims. From the University of California system to Yale, schools have been adopting standards to distinguish consensual from non-consensual sex.

See Law | 7A

New students at San Diego State University watch a video on sexual consent during an orientation meeting on Aug. 1 in San Diego.
when consent was given for a sexual activity and when it was not.

Legislation passed by California's state Senate in May and coming before the Assembly this month would require all schools that receive public funds for student financial assistance to set a so-called "affirmative consent standard" that could be used in investigating and adjudicating sexual assault allegations. That would be defined as "an affirmative, unambiguous and conscious decision" by each party to engage in sexual activity.

Silence or lack of resistance does not constitute consent. The legislation says it's also not consent if the person is drunk, drugged, unconscious or asleep.

Lawmakers say consent can be nonverbal, and universities with similar policies have outlined examples as maybe a nod of the head or moving in closer to the person.

Several state legislatures, including Maryland, Texas and Connecticut, introduced bills in the past year to push colleges to do more after a White House task force reported that 1 in 5 female college students is a victim of sexual assault. The U.S. Education Department also took the unprecedented step of releasing the names of schools facing federal investigation for the way they handle sexual abuse allegations.

But no state legislation has gone as far as California's bill in requiring a consent standard.

Critics say the state is overstepping its bounds. The Los Angeles Times in an editorial after the bill passed the state Senate 27-4 wrote that it raises questions as to whether it is "reasonable" or "enforceable." The legislation is based on the White House task force's recommendations.

"It seems extremely difficult and extraordinarily intrusive to micromanage sex so closely as to tell young people what steps they must take in the privacy of their own dorm rooms," the newspaper said.

Some fear navigating the murky waters of consent spells trouble for universities.

"Frequently these cases involve two individuals, both of whom maybe were under the influence of alcohol or drugs, and it can be very tricky to ascertain whether consent was obtained," said Ada Meloy, general counsel of the American Council on Education, which represents college presidents.

She said schools need to guarantee a safe environment for students, while law enforcement is best suited for handling more serious sexual assault cases.

John F. Banzhaf III, a George Washington University's Law School professor, said he believes having university disciplinary panels interpret vague cues and body language will open the door for more lawsuits.

The legal definition of rape in most states means the perpetrator used force or the threat of force against the victim, but the California legislation could set the stage in which both parties could accuse each other of sexual assault, he said.

"This bill would very, very radically change the definition of rape," he said.

University of California at Berkeley student Meghan Warner, 20, said that's a good thing. She said she was sexually assaulted during her freshman year by two men at a fraternity but didn't report it because she believed "that unless it was a stranger at night with a weapon who attacked..."
you when you were walking home, that it wasn't rape. It's just a crappy thing that happened." She now runs campus workshops to teach students what constitutes consent.

"Most students don't know what consent is," she said. "I've asked at the workshops how many people think if a girl is blacked out drunk that it's OK to have sex with her. The amount of people who raised their hands was just startling."

Defining consent may be easy to do on paper, said Laura Nguyen, a 21-year-old San Diego State University senior, but "we're talking about college students out at night and the reality is there's not just 'yes' or 'no.' There is a lot of in between. I really think it depends on the situation."

The legislation initially stated that "if there is confusion as to whether a person has consented or continues to consent to sexual activity, it is essential that the participants stop the activity until the confusion can be clearly resolved."

After some interpreted that as asking people to stop after each kiss to get a verbal agreement before going to the next level, the bill was amended to say consent must be "ongoing" and "can be revoked at any time."

"California needs to provide our students with education, resources, consistent policies and justice so that the system is not stacked against survivors," state Sen. Kevin de Leon, a Los Angeles Democrat, said in promoting the bill.

Supporters say investigators would have to determine whether consent had been given by both parties instead of focusing on whether the complainant resisted or said no.

Denice Labertew of the California Coalition Against Sexual Assault said the bill fosters a cultural change: "There's a lot of criticism around affirmative consent because it requires us to change the way we normally think about this."
Judge Rules Against NCAA in Key Antitrust Case

By: Nick DeSantis

A federal judge in California ruled on Friday that NCAA rules barring college athletes from sharing in the revenues produced by the use of their names and likenesses violate antitrust law, handing the plaintiffs a key win in a case that has threatened to upend the association’s principles of amateurism, CBS Sports reported.

In a 99-page ruling, Judge Claudia Wilken, of the U.S. District Court in Oakland, issued an injunction that will “enjoin the NCAA from enforcing any rules or bylaws that would prohibit its member schools and conferences from offering their FBS football or Division I basketball recruits a limited share of the revenues generated from the use of their names, images, and likenesses in addition to a full grant-in-aid.”

Judge Wilken said the injunction will not bar the NCAA from capping the amount of compensation that athletes can receive while they are enrolled, but said the NCAA will not be allowed to set that cap below the cost of attendance.

Some legal observers have said, however, that the NCAA’s chances to prevail may improve in an expected appeal of the case, which was brought by Ed O’Bannon, a former star basketball player at UCLA, and other plaintiffs.

“We disagree with the court’s decision that NCAA rules violate antitrust laws,” said Donald Remy, the association’s chief legal officer, in a written statement. “We note that the court’s decision sets limits on compensation, but are reviewing the full decision and will provide further comment later. As evidenced by yesterday’s Board of Directors action, the NCAA is committed to fully supporting student-athletes.”

The judge’s ruling comes one day after the NCAA approved governance changes that will give its five most-powerful conferences more autonomy to set their own rules. Those conferences have said that the move will allow them to better help college athletes, although critics have said that the changes will widen the divide between the wealthiest programs and others.
Judge Rules N.C.A.A. Players Must Be Paid for Their Images

By BEN STRAUSS and MARC TRACY

In a decision that could drastically reshape the world of college sports, a federal judge ruled Friday that the N.C.A.A.'s decades-old rules barring payments to college athletes were in violation of antitrust laws.

In a 99-page ruling, Judge Claudia Wilken of United States District Court delivered a resounding rebuke to the foundation of the N.C.A.A., issuing an injunction against current rules that prohibit athletes from earning money from the use of their names and images in video games and television broadcasts.

The decision would allow universities to offer Division I football and men's basketball players trust funds that can be accessed after graduation, giving players a chance to share in the billions of dollars in television revenue they help generate for their colleges and the N.C.A.A.

Judge Wilken said that she expected the schools to shoulder the additional costs.

"The high coaches' salaries and rapidly increasing spending on training facilities at many schools suggest that these schools would, in fact, be able to afford to offer their student-athletes a limited share of the licensing revenue generated from their use of the student-athletes' own names, images, and likenesses," Judge Wilken wrote.

Advocates for student athletes hailed the ruling as a major victory.

"The decision goes behind the curtain of amateurism and says there's nothing there," William Isaacson, a plaintiffs' attorney, said. "It's a remarkable step forward for decency for college athletes."

Ed O'Bannon, the former U.C.L.A. basketball star, filed the lawsuit in 2009 after seeing himself in a video game years after

Continued on Page B9
Federal Judge Rules College Athletes Can Sell Rights to Their Names

Ruling as perhaps the N.C.A.A.'s biggest threat of all, the ruling could change the fabric of big-time college sports by allowing schools to recruit players by offering them more than scholarships beginning in 2015. Schools could provide athletes trust funds, as well as annual payments that reflect the full cost of attending school.

The N.C.A.A. has long argued that its amateur rules, while potentially restrictive in the marketplace, were vital for its business model.

At trial, over three weeks in federal court in Oakland in June, a parade of N.C.A.A. officials, including President Mark Emmert, echoed those arguments.

In his testimony, Dr. Emmert called college sports “a social glue that holds a campus together” and said universities should not pay student athletes. “To convert college sports to professional sports would be tantamount to converting it to minor league sports,” Dr. Emmert said.

Willen rejected that out of hand.

“It’s a huge day and it’s a huge loss for the N.C.A.A. because they have relied on amateurism for so long,” said Michael Carver, a Rutgers law professor who specializes in antitrust law. “It opens the door for future challenges to all of the N.C.A.A.’s policies.”

The amounts in the trust funds would be up to the discretion of institutions, at least initially. College athletes would almost certainly not be receiving million-dollar paydays anytime soon. The injunction allows the N.C.A.A. to cap the payments, though if it does, the minimum payment would be $5,000 a year per football and basketball player.

The O’Bannon case was the most prominent of several recent challenges to the N.C.A.A. principle of amateurism. Earlier this year, Jeffrey Kessler, the prominent antitrust attorney whose previous cases included the one that secured free agency in the N.F.L., filed a case that essentially demands that the N.C.A.A. and the Big 5 conferences allow athletes to be paid at market rates. Judge Willen is also scheduled to hear that case.

Also this year, a regional director of the National Labor Relations Board endorsed a unionization drive among the 46 N.C.A.A. football players, ruling that they were employees under federal labor law; the national board will hear an appeal.

There have also been two Congressional hearings this year. Last month, Dr. Emmert testified before largely skeptical members of the Senate Commerce Committee.

Judge Willen acknowledged in her ruling that hers may not be the ideal venue to untangle the knot of athletics and higher education. “It is likely that the challenged restraints, as well as other perceived inequities in college athletics and higher education generally, could be better addressed as a policy matter by reforms other than those available as a remedy for the antitrust violation found here,” she wrote.

“Such reforms and remedies could be undertaken by the N.C.A.A., its member schools and conferences, or Congress.”

Ed O’Bannon sued the N.C.A.A. after his image as a player was used in a video game.
NCAA seeks clarification on ruling

The Associated Press

The NCAA wants clarification on two points in a California judge’s ruling in the landmark Ed O’Bannon case.

The governing body wrote in a brief to the U.S. District Court on Monday that schools want to know that recruits are covered under the ruling which opened the door to athletes receiving a small percentage of the millions of dollars they help generate.

Judge Claudia Wilken wrote it would affect only athletes who enroll after July 1, 2016, at the beginning of the next recruiting cycles.

The NCAA calls the language about the “next recruiting cycle” ambiguous. It wants the court to establish another date, Aug. 1, 2015, when scholarships can first be offered in the 2015-16 recruiting cycle.

“Under existing NCAA rules, student-athletes in the next recruiting cycle (i.e., student-athletes who would first enroll in college in Fall 2016) may receive offer letters from colleges starting on August 1, 2015. Bylaw 13.9.2.2. NCAA seeks to confirm that the existing NCAA rules can remain in force until August 1, 2015, although we understand the injunction would not permit the NCAA to adopt or enforce rules inconsistent with the injunction on or after that date,” attorneys wrote in the filing, pointing out that is the first day schools can offer scholarships to players in the 2016-17 recruiting class.

A second point, the NCAA contends, is Wilken’s language regarding the “licensing or use of prospective, current, or former student-athletes” could be interpreted to apply to current players.

“This has prompted concerns among colleges and universities that the injunction might, contrary to the Court’s opinion, apply immediately to current student-athletes,” the attorneys wrote. “Based on the Court’s opinion, the NCAA believes the language of Paragraph 1 refers to compensation only for student-athletes first enrolling after July 1, 2016. Otherwise the injunction would permit colleges and conferences to compensate current student-athletes before the NCAA’s member colleges have an opportunity to consider new rules consistent with the injunction.”

Attorneys wrote that they want the clarifications to ensure that there are no violations of the permanent injunction Wilken imposed, which allows players at big schools to have money generated by television contracts put into a trust fund to pay them when they leave.

Wilken said the body that governs college athletics could set a cap on the money paid to athletes, as long as it allows at least $5,000 per athlete per year of competition. Individual schools could offer less money, she said, but only if they don’t unlawfully conspire among themselves to set those amounts.

NCAA President Mark Emmert said Sunday that the governing body would appeal “at least in part” the ruling.

“We look forward to presenting our arguments on appeal, and in the meantime we will continue to champion student-athlete success on the field and in the classroom,” NCAA chief legal officer Donald Remy said in a statement released after Emmert’s announcement.

Winning on appeal could be a major challenge given the venue in Oakland, Calif.

Though the NCAA has a stronger historical record in appeals courts, where a recent University of Illinois study found that it wins 71 percent of the time in both the second and third rounds of cases, this would go to the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals. Legal experts say that court has generally been a “labor-friendly” court, which could hurt the NCAA’s chances of victory.
The O’Bannon Ruling: ‘Student-Athlete’ Is History

The myth of the pure “student-athlete” that Judge Claudia Wilken has now demolished has been around for a long time. The term itself is so widely used in conversation (by fans, the news media and the National Collegiate Athletic Association) that it sounds like a neutral description. In fact, it’s a deceptive term with a peculiar history.

“Student-athlete” dates to the early 1950s. At the time, the N.C.A.A. worried that state industrial commissions and the courts could classify certain players, particularly football players, as employees, exposing universities to workers’ compensation claims and hefty settlements. This was a well-founded worry. The Colorado Supreme Court ruled in 1953 that Ernest Nemeth, a football player at the University of Denver who was injured during practice, was eligible to receive workers’ compensation.

As Walter Byers, the executive director of the N.C.A.A. from 1951 to 1987, explained in his 1995 memoir, the N.C.A.A. perceived the player-employee paradigm as a “serious, external threat” to collegiate sports. Its answer was to invent a new phrase and add it to its lexicon.

“We crafted the term student-athlete,” he wrote, “and soon it was embedded in all N.C.A.A. rules and interpretations as a mandated substitute for such words as players and athletes. We told college publicists to speak of ‘college teams,’ not football or basketball ‘clubs,’ a word common to the pros.” The intent was to persuade the public and courts that college players were not professionals entitled to benefits. In a 2006 Washington Law Review Association article, the law professors Robert McCormick and Amy McCormick went so far as to call it “classic propaganda.”

After the Nemeth decision, the N.C.A.A. had better luck in the legal sphere, with a majority of courts accepting the idea that college players are no different from other students, even if they are paid in the form of scholarships. Yet there was and is a difference between a quarterback at a Division I program and a pre-med student at the same university — the difference being that the former risks his physical well-being for that university.

There is also a difference between a Division I quarterback and a Division III swimmer. The swimmer probably considers himself a student first, an athlete second; for the quarterback those priorities are reversed. Applied to the swimmer, the term “student-athlete” actually makes sense. To the quarterback, it’s doublespeak..
Judge tells the NCAA to get real

Amateurism, shamateurism. Get real, and pay the young men. A little something, at least.


Not in so few words. But that’s what she meant.

The good judge made history Friday when she ruled that Football Bowl Subdivision schools can pay their football players and Division I basketball schools can pay their men’s basketball players.

They don’t have to, but they can. They can’t pay them everything they might deserve, but they can pay them something.

It was a victory for common sense and common decency.

Wilken said those athletes can be paid both while they’re in school, with a stipend to bridge the gap between a full scholarship and the full cost of attendance, and after they leave, from a trust of no less than $5,000 per player per year for the use of his name, image and likeness.

That’s revolutionary enough, but Wilken’s reasoning likely insured that, beyond the certain appeals in this case and the other lawsuits waiting to take the ball and run even farther with it, the NCAA will never be the same.

Good.

Amateurism has been the hollow rock on which institutions of higher learning that play big-time football and basketball have built their ever-expanding, tax-exempt, extracurricular church. Why can Alabama pay Nick Saban $6.9 million a year but cap Amani Cooper’s compensation at tuition, room, books and board?

Because they say Cooper, despite his year-round obligations and the willingness of fans, television networks and advertisers to pay top dollar to watch him work, is an amateur. Or so the NCAA wanted you, me and Judge Wilken to believe.

It’s long been a fantasy, and Wilken didn’t buy what Mark Emmert and his lawyers were selling. Instead the judge drilled right down to the core of the NCAA’s alleged guiding principle—amateurism—and found it full of holes.

“The historical record that the NCAA cites as evidence of its longstanding commitment to amateurism is unpersuasive,” Wilken wrote. “This record reveals that the NCAA has revised its rules governing student-athlete compensation numerous times over the years, sometimes in significant and contradictory ways. Rather than evincing the association’s adherence to a set of core principles, this history documents

PROTHRO ON RULING

Former Alabama receiver Tyrone Prothro was one of 20 former student-athletes who joined the class-action suit spearheaded by former UCLA basketball player Ed O’Bannon. “I think it’s a step in the right direction that the players will be able to benefit from their image and their likeness,” Prothro said. “I know it doesn’t benefit me, but at least in the future the players have some kind of say—so over their image.... I really do think that for all the hard work that we put in, I do think we should have some kind of say—so for our image and our likeness.”

But Wilken didn’t stop there.

“The association’s current rules demonstrate that, even today, the NCAA does not consistently adhere to a single definition of amateurism,” she wrote. “A Division I tennis recruit can preserve his amateur status even if he accepts $10,000 in prize money the year before he enrolls in college. A Division I track and field recruit, however, would forfeit his athletic eligibility if he did the same.

“Similarly, an FBS football player may maintain his amateur status if he accepts a Pell grant that brings his total financial aid package above the cost of attendance. But the same football player would no longer be an amateur if he were to decline the Pell grant and, instead, receive an equivalent sum of money from his school for the use of his name, image, and likeness during live game telecasts. Such inconsistencies are not indicative of core principles.”

Ouch. Wilken couldn’t have kneecapped the NCAA with more force if she’d taken a billy club to Emmert’s patella tendon.

The ruling wasn’t total loss for the NCAA because this case was narrow in scope from the start. Wilken did cap the amount of money that recruits starting with the class of 2016 can receive for the use of their name, image and likeness. She said all players must be paid the same amount, ignoring the reality that quarterbacks are more marketable than punters. She also failed to OK endorsement deals for college athletes, which means they’ll continue to be uncompensated spokesmodels for Nike and Under Armour.

But make no mistake. History happened Friday. A federal judge ruled that college football and basketball players can be paid for their services.

No one knows exactly where the road leads from here, but the game just changed. A higher power finally told the NCAA to get real.

About time.