AUGUST 21, 2014

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Trustees OK new deal for Duckworth
Eight other UA coaches receive new extensions

By Ed Enoch
Staff Writer

The compensation committee of the University of Alabama board of trustees on Friday approved a five-year contract for the new gymnastics coach and contract extensions for eight other head coaches.

The trustees approved a contract with a base salary of $160,000 and a talent fee of $10,000 for head gymnastics coach Dana Duckworth. The contract is set to expire June 30, 2019. The 42-year-old former assistant coach was tapped to replace legendary coach Sarah Patterson, who retired in July.

Her contract also includes performance bonuses based on student academics and team performance.

Duckworth will receive $10,000 for an 85 percent graduation success rate and academic progress rate.

She would get a bonus of one month's salary for a SEC championship win, a month's salary for being named SEC coach of the year, 50 percent of a month's salary for participation in the NCAA championship, two month's salary for an NCAA championship win, one month's salary for a Super Six appearance, a month's salary for being named national coach of the year and 75 percent of a month's salary for a top 12 finish.

Head rowing coach Larry Davis' contract was extended by one year to June 30, 2016, with no changes to his $75,000 salary.

Head baseball coach Mitch Gaspard's contract was extended by one year to June 30, 2016, with no changes to his $220,000 base salary or $100,000 talent fee.

Head men's tennis coach George Husack's contract was extended to June 30, 2017, along with a salary increase of $10,000 to $120,000.

The trustees approved an extension for head women's tennis coach Jenny Mainz to June 30, 2017. Mainz will also get a salary increase, which will be brought back to the committee by UA Director of Athletics Bill Battle for final approval.

The trustees amended the original proposal after questioning whether an increase of $12,000 to $132,000 adequately reflected her value to the university.

"Her tenure and dedication to

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the university need to be taken into consideration,"
trustee James W. Wilson III said.
Head softball coach Pat Murphy's contract was
extended by one year until June 30, 2018, with a
salary increase of $12,000 to $212,000 and no
changes to his $10,000 talent fee.
Trustees added a year to head women's golf
coach Mic Potter's contract, extending it until June
30, 2018, with a salary increase of $12,000 to
$177,000 and no changes to a $5,000 talent fee.
Head men's golf coach Jay Seawell's contract
was lengthened by two years to June 30, 2019, and
includes a salary increase of $15,000 to $185,000
with no changes to his talent fee of $18,000.
Head track and field coach Dan Waters received
a two-year extension to June 30, 2017, and a salary
increase of $25,000 to $165,000.

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When students, faculty, staff arm themselves.

By: Stephen Dethrage

Safety issue: Should those with permits be allowed to carry concealed weapons at the University of Alabama and Auburn University?

A. The University of Alabama, school policy prohibits students, visitors, faculty and staff from carrying firearms on campus. Now some students, both locally and nationwide, are trying to see that changed.

Cathy Andreen, the director of media relations at the University, said the policy serves to keep campus safe.

“Our policies are designed to help make sure our campus is a safe place for our students, employees and visitors to live, learn, work and visit,” Andreen said. “UA believes that its policies and procedures comply with the state law.

“As a result, UA will not allow the possession of guns or dangerous weapons on our campus, except under the limited circumstances set out in its policy.”

At Auburn University, the weapons policy bans all students, staff, faculty and visitors from carrying weapons on campus, and it’s been enforced more than once this year, the director of their security department said.

Melvin Owens, the executive director of Auburn’s Department of Public Safety and Security said the policy was in place to make campus safer for everyone. His word echoed a statement given about the same issue by Andreen.

“Auburn policy does not allow firearms on campus, including athletics events, except in limited circumstances as spelled out in state law,” Owens said. “The policies enacted by Auburn University are designed to assist in making the campus a safe place for our students, employees and visitors to live, learn, work and visit.”

One senior at UA, though, says because the school doesn’t control who comes onto university property, banning firearms on campus doesn’t make it a safer place.

Kenny Caldwell, the state director for the Alabama chapter of Students for Concealed Carry, said qualified students should be allowed to carry weapons to defend themselves as needed.

“If (the university) were able to guarantee 100 percent that nobody else on campus would have any weapons, then (banning students from carrying concealed weapons) would be a viable option,” Caldwell said.
“But our campus is basically a flowing part of the city and is easily accessible from almost every angle, given the public roads and sidewalks that run into it,” he said. “Anyone can walk or drive onto campus, and because of that, there’s no way that UA can guarantee your safety.”

The SCC self-identifies on its website as a student-run, national, nonpartisan organization that advocates for legal concealed carry on college campuses as an effective means of self-defense.

Caldwell said he and the SCC are not advocating for every student on campus to pack a pistol at all times. Rather, they want to see holders of concealed carry permits, who have already undergone background checks and gotten approval from their county sheriffs to carry a firearm, allowed to do so on the grounds of public universities in Alabama.

But the University of Alabama’s Dangerous Weapons and Firearms Policy says: “Except as otherwise stated in this policy or as otherwise allowed by law, the University prohibits the possession, transportation, and use of firearms and other dangerous weapons on campus. This policy applies to all persons on campus, including faculty, staff, students, contractors, patients, and visitors.

“University students may not possess firearms at any time on campus except as expressly authorized by the University of Alabama Police Department. UAPD provides temporary storage for firearms lawfully possessed by students at its headquarters.”

“If you have your permit to carry and are allowed to possess a weapon,” said Caldwell, “your rights to self-defense should not disappear because you cross an imaginary line separating one part of state property from another.”

Caldwell is not alone. The issue has come up in other states this summer.

In Idaho, Colorado and Utah, students at public universities are allowed to carry concealed weapons into their classrooms.

Last month, Students for Concealed Carry Foundation, Inc. filed a lawsuit against Ohio State University, challenging their authority to expressly prohibit firearms on their campuses.

Another debate facing the University of Alabama and its weapons policy is the lack of clarity on what part of state law allows a blanket ban of firearms on campus. Caldwell specified he doesn’t endorse carrying on campus and breaking UA’s weapons policy but said when it comes to state law, there’s nothing prohibiting it.

“As legally speaking, you are allowed to carry on campus,” Caldwell said. “It’s state property, and there’s no law on the books that says you can’t carry on state property. What they have is rules — when you agree to come to the University, you agree to their terms and conditions, and one of those terms, in the student handbook, is that you can’t carry a gun.
“That’s where they get you,” he said. “If they catch you, they’ll expel you. They won’t arrest you, because, legally speaking, they can’t charge you with a crime for that.”
SUPERINTENDENT'S RAISE

The Board of Education has awarded State Superintendent Tommy Bice a substantial pay raise.

Voting 6-2, the board approved a new two-year contract for the Bice, who took the reins as superintendent in January 2012.

The contract increases Bice’s pay to $250,000, a pay rate even with that of two-year college Chancellor Mark Heinrich.

Bice said after the vote that he did not ask for the raise and has not yet decided whether he will sign the new contract.

His existing contract, which pays him about $200,000 annually, does not expire until 2015, he said.

Vice President Ella Bell said the pay increase came at the recommendation of a three-member committee she appointed to reconsider Bice’s compensation.

She appointed that committee at the request of Gov. Robert Bentley, she said.

Members of the ad hoc committee were Mary Scott Hunter of Huntsville, Jeffery Newman of Millport and Yvette Richardson of Birmingham, all school board members.

Evan Belanger
State bucks unemployment trend

Alabama is only state with jobless rate higher than a year ago; Gov. Bentley says more jobs are coming

By Phillip Rawls
The Associated Press

MONTGOMERY | For the second month, Alabama is the only state with an unemployment rate higher than a year ago.

The bad economic news comes as Gov. Robert Bentley seeks a second term after being elected in 2010 on a job creation platform.

Bentley said nearly 60,000 new jobs have been announced since he became governor and that Alabama is poised for better days when plants come on line like Airbus in Mobile, Golden Dragon Copper Tubing in Wilcox County and Remington in Huntsville. He plans to be in Opelika today for the announcement of a company expansion. He said it takes about three years from the time a company announces a project in Alabama and it begins hiring workers.

"We are putting in place the things that will help us in the future," he said in an interview Monday evening.

His Democratic opponent, former U.S. Rep. Parker Griffith of Huntsville, said Tuesday, "We've got a chief executive who doesn't realize the state is going backward and not forward."

On Friday, the governor announced that

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JOBS
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1A

Alabama's unemployment rate had risen in July to 7 percent. That was up from 6.5 percent a year earlier. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics announced Monday that Alabama was the only state with a July unemployment rate higher than a year ago.

The same thing happened in June, when Alabama's rate of 6.8 percent was higher than the 6.5 percent measured a year earlier. The national unemployment rate has declined over the past year from 7.3 percent to 6.2 percent.

Bentley said his administration is busy recruiting industry, including taking university engineering deans and the state's two-year college administrator to the Farnborough Air Show near London to show aviation companies that Alabama's higher education system is ready to help them.

Griffith said Alabama is fighting an image problem that includes low ranking in many health and education measurements.

Griffith, a physician like Bentley, said creating a state lottery that funds college scholarships would create a better-trained workforce and that expanding the Medicaid program would provide a healthier pool of potential workers. He said at least 10 rural hospitals are at risk of closing if Alabama maintains its position on not expanding Medicaid under the federal health care law.

"You cannot do economic development in your county without a health care facility," he said.

Bentley said too much emphasis is put on unemployment numbers that are based on random surveys, although he acknowledged he has done it at times, including his 2010 campaign when he promised not to take a salary as governor until the unemployment rate declined to 5.2 percent.

"Obviously, when it drops down to 6.1, we brag about it, and if it is at 7, we don't brag about it. But we do look at a lot of other numbers than the unemployment rate," he said.

He said that as Alabama's economy has improved, more people have started looking for work, which is a good sign.

"When more people look for work, the unemployment rate goes up," he said.

The next governor will be elected Nov. 4.
State, county jobless rates up

By Patrick Rupinski
Business Editor

Tuscaloosa County’s unemployment rate moved up 0.1 percent to 6.9 percent in July.
Alabama’s seasonally adjusted unemployment rate also rose to 7 percent.
Gov. Robert Bentley, in releasing the state’s numbers on Friday, said the state added 19,400 jobs since July 2013, when Alabama’s unemployment rate was 6.5 percent.

"An increase of nearly 20,000 jobs since last July is something that we are proud of," he said in a statement sent to the media.
"A large number of those jobs are in the manufacturing sector (and) tend to be higher-paying jobs. Additionally, we continue to see tens of thousands of jobs being advertised throughout the state,

See Jobless | 3B
which means employers are hiring. Our efforts will continue until every Alabamian who wants a job has the opportunity to have a job.”

Ahmad Ijaz, an economist at the University of Alabama’s Center for Economic and Business Research, said the latest unemployment numbers “look both encouraging and disappointing at the same time.”

He noted that the while the state added jobs over the 12-month period ending in July, it lost 7,400 jobs last month too.

He said that some of those latest job losses might be seasonal and that, for the long term, the state’s employment trend still looks good.

The same holds true for Tuscaloosa, Ijaz said. Most of the job losses in the three-county Tuscaloosa metro area, which includes Tuscaloosa, Hale and Greene counties, were in the government sector last month, which lost about 1,000 jobs. Over the past year, the Tuscaloosa metro area gained 4,100 jobs, more than any other metro area in the state except the much larger Birmingham-Hoover area, which posted a 7,600-job increase, he said.

State Labor Commissioner Fitzgerald Washington said in a statement: “It is not uncommon in the summer months to see the unemployment rate rise because school employees aren’t working during these months. This is proven out in our wage and salary data this month, which shows the largest decrease in jobs came from the local education sector.”

Tuscaloosa County had the 13th lowest unemployment rate among the state’s 67 counties.

The news wasn’t as good in other central West Alabama counties. Three of the 10 counties in the region were among the state’s 10 counties with the highest unemployment rates. Perry County had the third highest rate at 15.7 percent, followed by Greene County at 13.7 percent. Sumter County had the ninth highest rate at 12.6 percent.

County unemployment rates are not seasonally adjusted like the official state and national unemployment rates.

Seasonal adjustment refers to the Bureau of Labor Statistics practice of anticipating certain trends in the labor force, such as extra hiring by retailers during the Christmas holidays or the surge in the labor force when students graduate in the spring.
Forecastsers see rising
Alabama economy

UA center says automotive sector, metals industries will be leaders

Staff report

Alabama’s economy appeared relatively weak at midyear, but there are indications it will gradually improve during the rest of the year, according to the latest quarterly update of the state’s 2014 economic forecast.

The forecast by the University of Alabama’s Center of Business and Economic Research said slow economic growth dampened the state economy since CBER’s 2014 economic forecast was released in January. But it also noted that heading into the last half of the year, business executives it surveyed are more optimistic.

CBER economists are now forecasting GDP growth of 1.5 percent for 2014 — better than the 0.8 percent increase seen in 2013. Output gains could be higher for the state’s automotive and automotive parts manufacturers and for the primary and fabricated metals industries. Professional and business services firms and the health care and social assistance sector are also expected to expand at a faster pace.

CBER said the state gained 5,200 nonfarm jobs from June 2013 to June 2014, an increase of just 0.3 percent. Over the same period, seasonally adjusted unemployment fell from 6.5 to 6.8 percent as total employment fell faster than the slight decline in the labor force. State tax revenues for the first nine months of the state’s fiscal year, which ends Sept. 30, were up by 0.4 percent compared to a 4.6 percent increase during the previous fiscal year.

Looking forward to the third quarter, Alabama business executives remain optimistic about their prospects, with hiring improving in the last half of the year. Sales and profits should moderately improve, while capital investment is expected to post modest increases.

The state could add about 11,500 payroll jobs in 2014, an increase of 0.6 percent over 2013. Manufacturers could create about 3,000 jobs this year, it said. However, most new jobs will be in services, where broad-based gains could total around 8,000 positions.

During the 12-month period from June 2013 to June 2014, Alabama manufacturers of durable goods added 3,200 workers, primarily in motor vehicle parts and primary and fabricated metals production. Firms producing nondurable goods gained 700 jobs, although textiles and apparel employment continued to decline. Services businesses created 4,900 jobs, with most at food services and drinking places and in administrative support and social assistance.

The 0.4 percent decline in Alabama’s tax revenues for the first nine months of fiscal year 2014 is largely due to a 0.7 percent decline in individual income tax receipts, while corporate income taxes declined 5.0 percent, CBER reported. Sales tax collections, however, rose 2 percent, despite the slowdown in the overall economy. Appropria-
tions to the Alabama Education Trust Fund increased 0.7 percent compared to the same period in the previous fiscal year, but appropriations to the General Fund were down 1.4 percent through June.

Alabama exports totaled $4.6 billion during the first three months of 2014, slightly below the same period of 2013, it said. Canada retained its status as the state's top export market, with China ranking second, followed by Mexico and Germany. Transportation equipment manufacturers continue to be the largest exporters, with first quarter exports totaling $1.86 billion.
Birmingham will get a domed stadium in the next few years — whether the public wants one or not.

That was the message shared by Gene Hallman, CEO of the Bruno Event Team and Executive Director of the Alabama Sports Foundation, at a Birmingham CREW luncheon on Tuesday.

"We don't need public support," Hallman said. "I don't mean to be arrogant, but we aren't running a campaign like we did in 1998 where we need a vote — we are looking to fund the stadium using existing funds from the city, county or state. The best thing we can do is just get it done and then tell people why it's a good thing we're doing it."

Birmingham needs to stop seeing "dome" as a four-letter word, Hallman said.

"What could Birmingham do to take our efforts to the next level in terms of hosting events? It's a four letter word that we've been talking about it since 1995. It's the dome."

Many residents think of a stadium as being fit only for sporting events, but they're forgetting about the revenue that would be gained from conventions and trade shows, he said.

"Right now we are turning down a number of conventions and trade shows because we have nowhere for them to go," Hallman said. "It's shocking the number of associations that exist out there that need a place for their convention or trade show. They need to be able to make Birmingham their destination."

The BJCC does currently have to turn away potential business due to commitments to other meetings and events, confirmed Tad Snider, executive director and CEO of the BJCC, in an email to AL.com.

"That is the case for many convention and meeting facilities," Snider said.

Conventions and trade shows would generate incremental sales tax revenue for the city, Hallman said.

"It's an investment that we will get a return on."

Hallman said that if Birmingham were to get a domed stadium, it would be located right beside the BJCC, where the parking lot is now across from the Uptown district. He said that the BJCC already owns several acres of land in that area and that location would be ideal.

"The board of directors of the BJCC has for a number of years evaluated and studied the concept of a multi-purpose facility as a potential expansion opportunity," Snider said. "Consistent with the master plan of the Authority, property has been strategically acquired in the past with that objective in mind."

As for funding, Hallman said the city only needs to come up with approximately 60 percent of the cost for the stadium — the other 40 percent is covered since the BJCC already owns the land. Also, a portion of every concession sold at the BJCC goes into an account that will be used to fund the domed stadium.

"Every time you go to BJCC and you buy a soft drink, you don't pay tax. You pay a fee in lieu of tax for the purpose of funding a dome."
GENE HALLMAN SAYS:
ALABAMA SPORTS FOUNDATION EXEC TELLS LUNCHEON, JUST GIVE IT A FEW YEARS.

Bell's push

The commitment of Birmingham Mayor William Bell to build the dome is also a driving force in bringing the project to fruition, he said.

"William Bell is committed to finding that money and making a domed stadium a reality. He believes that this stadium is his legacy."

Birmingham has already established itself as a city that knows how to play host to sporting events, Hallman said, but there’s still a long way to go.

"If you look around the Southeast, many of our sister cities have opted to be a host to a national sports franchise," he said, referencing Charlotte, Nashville, Atlanta and New Orleans. "Birmingham, for whatever reason, was close every year, but never got a professional sports franchise."

If Birmingham did seek out a professional franchise, the city would be wise to go after an NFL team, he said, because the NFL splits its profits evenly among teams across the nation, no matter the size of the city.

"The NFL shares its revenue equally among all 31 teams. That means if you sell a Dallas Cowboy’s T-shirt, every team gets $1/31 of those profits. Because of this, the teams in smaller cities have the ability to buy the players they need to go compete. Since we would be a smaller market, our greatest chance to compete with a professional sports team would be with the NFL," he said.

When and if Birmingham builds its dome, Hallman said he would advise building something that will “stand the test of time.” He referenced the Memphis pyramid and the Georgia Dome as structures that turned obsolete too quickly.

"A lot of mistakes some cities have made is not thinking long-term. If you only use a facility like this for 15 years, the payoff just isn’t there," he said.

As for details on the stadium, Hallman said it’s just too early to talk about specifics like seating capacity, but that floor space — not number of seats — is what’s most important as the project moves forward.

"In my mind, we can debate all day about the number of seats. What we really need is the football field floor space," he said. "The foundation of the facility is the real expense. When you look at total budget, there’s not that much difference in the cost of a facility with 40,000 to 50,000 seats and one with 50,000 to 60,000 seats." 

No matter what the dome looks like, Birmingham will always have something that sets it apart from other cities, Hallman said.

"We are good at Southern hospitality. Our guests are treated differently when they come here," he said. "There are 20 million people who live within a three-and-a-half hour drive of Birmingham, and they’re all going to find that warm welcome."
Proposed expansion may add jobs

Kelli Dugan \kdugan@al.com

Employment at Evonik Corp. in Theodore could eclipse 800 by 2017, if the Essen, Germany-based specialty chemical company proceeds with plans to invest nearly $114 million in its Mobile County facility.

The Industrial Development Authority of Mobile County voted unanimously Monday to approve about $7 million in non-educational property and sales tax abatements for Evonik’s expansion project over the next 10 years.

Specifically, the expansion includes the construction of a specialty chemical plant to produce a form of an essential amino acid for use as a dairy cattle feed additive. The product is currently being produced by a Croatian contractor, but an expansion of the Mobile facility would allow the company to bring its production in house.

The project would also include production of an intermediate material used in the production of an herbicide. Raw material utilized in the manufacture of this product is already being produced at the Mobile site.

The expansion, expected to be complete by mid-2017, would add 72 jobs with an average annual salary of $53,000 and bring total employment at the Mobile facility to 832. Existing Evonik sites in Indiana, North Carolina and Virginia are also being considered for the project.

The project is only one component of Evonik’s investment strategy for its Mobile operations, however. The company also envisions transforming its property within the Theodore Industrial Park into a chemical park.

Mike Harwell, a lab technician in the Bio Assay Lab at Evonik Industries in Theodore, prepares a growth and survival test sample. The facility employs 756 people and plans to add another 72 employees within three years. (File)

infrastructure benefits co-location provides, such as reduced transportation costs.

“Evonik is investing for growth at its Mobile facility in infrastructure and other investments that could attract the co-

Evonik’s plans in Mobile would be contained to its existing 1,800-acre footprint within the Theodore Industrial Park.

Randy Rogers, a corporate spokesman for Evonik, confirmed the company’s production and business areas currently occupy 560 acres and another 20 acres have already been designated for co-location projects.

“Our total free area is 1,200 acres for future development,” Rogers said.

Tully said the most important aspect of the proposed expansion is the long-term investment it represents for Evonik in Mobile.

“The efficiency of logistics by having the supply chain all on one site brings cost savings as well as better safety performance, but mainly, I feel like going with this structure really sets the site up to capitalize on its growth potential for the next 20 to 40 years, and not just our own, but that of other third parties,” she said.

Meanwhile, Kenneth Bittner, vice president of taxes for Evonik, said the Mobile facility is already the company’s largest North American production site for “a lot of reasons,” including “good transportation and a history of being business friendly.”

Troy Wayman, the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce’s vice president of economic development, said negotiations toward this expansion project and chemical plant creation have been ongoing for “well over two years,” and it stands to generate more than $13 million in ad valorem taxes for education over the course of 20 years.

“(Tully) has a vision … and she has been tenacious in her

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TIMELINE

1974: Two commercial plants were built in the initial construction phase for the production of AEROSIL silica and the manufacture of methionine, a feed additives product; a separate production facility was constructed for silicon tetrachloride, used in the manufacture of silicic acid.

1977: Marketing company Degussa Inc. New York and Degussa Alabama Inc. merged to form the Degussa Corp., considered a critical step in the company's bundling of North American activities. Today, these activities operate as part of Evonik Industries and include locations in the United States, Canada and Mexico, as well as numerous joint ventures with global partners.

1978: Following the completion of the second expansion phase, production began in Theodore of cyanuric chloride, essential for intermediate products in plastic synthesis, among other applications.

1980s: The hydrogen peroxide plant was commissioned. The chemical compound is used for a variety of purposes including — but not limited to — as a bleaching agent for paper; water and wood processing; and waste water and exhaust air treatment.

1986: The number of employees active at the Mobile facility eclipsed 1,000 for the first time and sales surpassed the $1 billion mark.

1989: The company began a five-year, $500 million investment into the targeted expansion of Degussa Corp. in nearly all production divisions.

1995: Degussa Corp. was the first company in the world to transport hydrogen peroxide by ship. Since that time, the liquid material has been shipped out from the new loading station in Alabama via the Mississippi and other rivers to Lemont, Ill., near Chicago.

1999: The former Degussa AG merged with Hüls AG, and the plants of both companies were also combined at the Mobile location, Hüls AG, which had acquired the chemicals division of Dynamit Nobel AG in 1988, had gained Dynamit Nobel's production workshop for silane that had been in operation in Mobile since the early 1980s. Expansions and new products were added steadily through 1992.

2001: Degussa-Hüls AG and SKW Trostberg AG merge to form the new Degussa AG, creating the third-largest German chemical company.

Jan. 2, 2007: Degussa AG reorganizes and begins doing business as a GmbH within RAG Beteiligungs-AG.

Sept. 12, 2007: RAG-Beteiligungs-AG becomes Evonik Industries AG, with headquarters in Essen, Germany. Degussa constituted the new industrial group's chemicals business area.

April 2009: Evonik Industries opened a new facility for the production of sodium methylate in Mobile. This product is a ready-to-use catalyst for the production of biodiesel from native oils such as rapeseed and soy oil.
New sushi restaurant approved

Historic district residents question design of new project in downtown Tuscaloosa

By Jason Morton
Staff Writer

Barring an appeal to the City Council, a new sushi restaurant should be arriving in downtown Tuscaloosa early next year.

The city Planning and Zoning Commission gave unanimous approval Monday for the design of Jinsei, a sushi and Japanese restaurant planned for University Boulevard.

The commission vote came over the objection of some residents to the look of the proposed building and concerns about the amount of parking on-site.

Officials with Planning and Development Services said the plans meet all current guidelines and none of the commission members voiced any objections.

"We were very excited to get approved by the commission," said Jennifer Mims, president of Jinsei.

Mims, who also presides over the company that is opening the Asian-themed Maki Fresh restaurant in Tuscaloosa next month, said that if all goes according to plan, Jinsei should be open by January.

On Monday, the Planning and Zoning Commission discussed the restaurant's plans for about an hour.

Because its location across University Boulevard from the University Club places it within the Historic Buffer Zone, the commission has final say on the look and appearance of the building.

It cannot, however, regulate the site's use. Ashley Crites, special districts planner for the Department of Planning and Development Services, said the current zoning would SEE JINSEI | 3B
allow for a number of businesses, including appliance repair shops, filling stations, bars or taverns, bake shops, doctor's offices, financial services, a hotel, laundry or dry cleaning services and package stores, among others, in addition to restaurants with or without attached lounges and drive-through lanes.

Commission Chairman Robert Reynolds said the location had previously been approved for a number of projects, including a multistory building featuring apartments, which raised far more concerns than the proposed restaurant.

"I'm not thrilled with the way it particularly looks," he said, "but I'm also concerned about the impact it could potentially have on this location."

Neighbors adjacent to the property sent letters to the commission supporting the restaurant, but others showed up to protest the look or possible impact the establishment would have on the historic areas.

Some did not like that the 20 proposed parking spaces fit the city's current parking demands because it factored in only the 2,000 square feet of the building's interior and not an additional 800 to 900 square feet of patio space that would also be used for seating.

With the additional space, there should be at least 28 or 29 parking spaces, but Mims told the commission that a valet service would be used Thursday through Saturday nights to accommodate more vehicles than the parking lot would normally hold.

Others took issue with the building's unconventional look.

"It does not blend with our neighborhood," said 17th Avenue resident Robert Deason, who also voiced concern about the hours its patrons would be walking or driving through his neighborhood.

He was joined by others who questioned the potential use of the building, with its Asian-themed architecture and design, should the restaurant fail and it become empty.

One of those was Bill Lloyd, owner of Wihagan's Grille & Tap Room and the outgoing chairman of the Alabama Restaurant and Hospitality Association, who said he supported the business but not its appearance.

"It's a very nice design for an Asian restaurant ... and it would be a great building if it were being constructed on an outparcel at a retail location near a shopping center," Lloyd said, adding that in its current location "it just absolutely does not fit."

But Easty Lambert-Brown, a member of the Planning and Zoning Commission, said that she believed the look of the building was a pleasant departure from the standard look of downtown structures.

And Steven Rumsey, vice-chairman of the Planning and Zoning Commission, said he agreed with Lambert-Brown on the architecture.

"It's hard to vote on something with the idea that it may be falling," Rumsey said. "I suppose the University Club could fail."

"I suppose anything could fail and leave a building empty."
Study: bridge could have billion-dollar impact

John Sharp • jscharp@al.com

The state of Alabama would get $41 million in new tax revenues from the construction of an Interstate 10 bridge over the Mobile River, while the city of Mobile could anticipate $1.5 billion in overall impact from a construction project that could last up to six years, a study by an University of South Alabama instructor will show when it’s released next week.

The figures include an estimated 18,274 in direct and indirect jobs for the state during the multiyear construction period, and 10,301 for the Mobile area. Mobile, itself, will get $22.4 million in new revenues from the project.

"This is what would be going on during the construction period," Mike Lee, co-chairman of the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce’s "Build the Bridge" Coalition said during a breakfast meeting Friday with local mayors and county commissioners at the 5 Rivers Delta Resource Center in Spanish Fort.

Wide-ranging impact

Wiley Blankenship, executive director with the Coastal Alabama Partnership, said more economic impact figures could be coming soon. He said the analysis, completed by Donald Epley with the Center for Real Estate and Economic Development at USA, will take a look at the potential impact for an eight-county area outside the Mobile area.

Blankenship said the analysis is not an in-depth economic impact study, but it does take a look at how many businesses would be created, as well as the tax revenues generated during a four to six year period in which the bridge would be under construction.

It is expected to be released on a new website that will be online on Monday, www.buildthe10bridge.com. The site is aimed at promoting the benefits of the bridge while encouraging citizens to support it and to provide a centralized website for the latest information related to the I-10 bridge project.

"Part of what I wanted to share ... I wanted to paint a picture that we can’t make this a Mobile/ Baldwin counties issue," Blankenship said. "We have to be able to sell our friends in the central and northern part of the state that by building the bridge, this is how much it will bring in."

Previous impact studies

The Federal Highway Administration’s recently released environmental impact study indicated that Mobile would experience a total of $363.3 million in "construction benefits" from building the I-10 Bridge utilizing the preferred B-Prime route — which starts just past the Virginia Street exit, removes the Texas Street interchange and traverses over the Mobile River above the Austal USA facility before connecting with an expanded, eight-lane Bayway.

The $363.3 million figure was derived from a 2006 study by Semoosh Chang, founder of the Gulf Coast Center for Impact Studies.

In it, Chang estimates that a $650 million project — the project has since been estimated to cost $850 million — would generate 2,490 jobs during each of the five years it’s under construction.

The construction activity would also generate $3.4 million in new revenue to the city of Mobile, $2.7 million to Mobile County, $2.2 million for the Mobile County Public School System and $17.7 million to the state.

I-10 MOBILE RIVER BRIDGE: CONSTRUCTION COULD GENERATE $1.5 BILLION FOR MOBILE AREA.

"We have to be able to sell our friends in the central and northern part of the state that by building the bridge, this is how much it will bring in."

Wiley Blankenship
Executive director with the Coastal Alabama Partnership

See next page
The FHWA's study also includes other economic impacts overall the bridge will have on the area for the B-Prime route:

- A $6.1 million loss to the local maritime industry
- $9.3 million added in travel benefits through the reduction of traveling distances
- $2.4 million in "marginal" benefits through costs savings in fewer road pavement and repair projects and a reduction in automobile crashes
- $1.4 million in savings for trucks hauling hazardous materials to no longer have to detour from the Wallace Tunnel
- A range of $173 million to $690 million in "congestion" benefits resulting from time savings and fuel efficiencies

Cost considerations

The impact studies will utilized by local officials as a push begins to secure funding for the I-10 Bridge.

Sixteen mayors and county commissioners in Mobile and Baldwin counties will depart to Washington, D.C., on Sept. 15 for a two-day trip to meet with federal highway transportation officials, local congressmen and key congressional leaders. The trip is solely aimed at lobbying for the I-10 bridge project.

U.S. Rep. Bradley Byrne, R-Fairhope, speaking before the Coastal Alabama Partnership Friday, said it's important for the local elected leaders to work together.

"I'm confident we'll have a united front going forward," Byrne said.

He said he doesn't think it's too soon for the trip. No definitive cost estimate has been developed for the project and a selection of the B-Prime hasn't become official by the Alabama Department of Transportation.

ALDOT will kick off the public comment portion of the project on Sept. 23 with a public meeting from 4 to 8 p.m. at the Alabama Cruise Terminal in Mobile. A final environmental impact study, which could list the final route for the project, isn't anticipated until next year.

"It communicates to the leadership of the Federal Highway Administration and to the leadership of Congress that this is a priority for the community," Byrne said about the trip. "Other communities have done this in the past. We are going to move ourselves up on the list of priorities."

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**ECONOMIC IMPACT**

NEW NUMBERS ON THE I-10 MOBILE RIVER BRIDGE CONSTRUCTION:

<table>
<thead>
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Baldwin Beach Express will help tourism, governor says

Thyrion Bland • t bland@al.com

The opening of a new north-south corridor in Baldwin County should have a big impact on the county's biggest cash cow — tourism, Gov. Robert Bentley said Friday.

Bentley said the reason for that is because the Baldwin Beach Express will make it easier for tourists to get to and from the beaches in south Baldwin County.

"Economically this is very important for this county," he said.

The 12.8-mile Baldwin Beach Express stretches from Interstate 10 southward to the Foley Beach Express. The four-lane highway was built to relieve traffic on Alabama 59, be a quick way to and from the beaches and serve as a hurricane evacuation route.

The governor took part on Friday afternoon in a ribbon cutting that marked the opening of access to the highway from I-10.

Motorists have been allowed to travel on the highway as phases of the construction have been finished. The interchange is the final piece of the $86.7 million project to be completed.

Bentley was joined by a host of elected local and state officials for the opening of the interchange. The opening of the entire highway comes roughly two weeks before Labor Day — the unofficial end of the busy beach season.

Baldwin County accounts for 29 percent of the tourism dollars spent in Alabama. Of the $11 billion spent in Alabama in 2013, $3.2 billion was spent in Baldwin County, according to Alabama Tourism Department statistics.

The Baldwin Beach Express "makes us more efficient in getting people in here to spend their money," Baldwin County Commissioner Chris Elliott said. "It's just that simple. These type of projects, these type of investments in our revenue generating parts of this state means a bigger pie for the whole state."

Gulf Shores Mayor Robert Craft said people in south Baldwin County are excited about the highway because it will give them the option of avoiding Ala. 59.

Alabama 59 is one of the county's most traveled roads. During the summer and spring weekends, it's filled with motorists who are in town to visit the beaches.

Craft said he thinks the highway will make travel to the beaches less of a pain.

"It's going to mean that our visitors are going to get there without being so frustrated, and our locals are not going to be frustrated with visitors," he said. "It gives us an opportunity to have two ways in and out, which will help out local traffic and our visitors to get to the beach."

Mary Lee Swindle, 73, of Foley, said she remembers how frustrating it was when she lived in Tuscaloosa, and drove to Baldwin County to vacation.

"I think this is great because I remember I loved the beach, but I hated to try to get to it," she said. "From I-65 down there would take you two hours, if you were lucky."

Baldwin County's goal is to extend the highway from I-10 to Interstate 65. The county does not have the money to build the northern extension.

Baldwin County Commission Chairman Skip Gruber said he is optimistic that the county eventually will get the funding to build the extension.

"I will tell you that the other part from here to I-65 will happen, too," he said. "I can't tell you the exact date, but it will happen."
Tech startup has way to counter hot-car deaths

Ian Hoppe  For AL.com

An Alabama tech startup, Studio Whale, says it has a solution to the horrific accident of hot car deaths among infants and toddlers that we’ve been hearing about this summer.

A University of Alabama Birmingham enterprise software developer and new father, Matthew Brian Sheets, has developed an application in the interest of his infant son. Meet Starfish.

Starfish is a small weight-sensor that fits into a child’s car seat. The sensor links via Bluetooth to an application on your iPhone or Android device. Once you place your child into the car, Starfish sends you a notification that the child is in his or her car seat.

Once activated, Starfish sets up a “geo-fence” around itself with a 20-foot radius. If you leave (or your phone leaves) that geo-fence while your child is still in the car seat, you’ll receive a notification alarming you of your deadly mistake.

If you haven’t responded to the notification within five minutes, Starfish will notify your list of emergency contacts.

On their Kickstarter page, Studio Whale says that 85 percent of its design and engineering process is completed, with a working prototype and a manufacturing partner ready to go.

They are looking for $15,000 in funding for their first production run. At the time of this publication, Starfish had just passed the $1,000 mark with 25 days left to go.

About 20 children have died since the beginning of 2014 due to hyperthermia, or heat stroke.

A sensor in the Starfish prototype links via Bluetooth to an application on your iPhone or Android. (Courtesy)
Hospital chain with 11 Alabama hospitals is cyber attacked

By: Mike Miller

Community Health Systems, which operates Trinity Medical Center in Birmingham and 10 other facilities statewide, said Monday its computer system had been cyber attacked.

The attack occurred in April and June and affected data tied to 4.5 million people, according to a filing by the company with the Securities and Exchange Commission.

"Trinity Medical Center and its affiliated clinics were not affected by the data breach reported this morning by Community Health Systems," according to a statement from Trinity spokeswoman Leisha Harris.

Lori Light, director of marketing and public relations for Crestwood Medical Center in Huntsville said the breach did not include any medical information or credit card information, but it did include names, addresses, birth dates, telephone numbers and social security numbers.

"Limited personal identification data belonging to some patients who were seen at some Crestwood employed physician practices and clinics affiliated with Crestwood over the past five years was transferred out of the CHS system in a criminal cyber attack by a foreign-based intruder," Light said in a statement.

Besides Trinity and Crestwood, the Franklin, Tenn.-based company's Alabama presence includes: Gadsden Regional Medical Center; Home Care in Attalla; Flower's Hospital in Dothan; Cherokee Home Health in Centre; Stringfellow Memorial Hospital in Anniston; South Baldwin Regional Medical Center in Foley; DeKalb Regional Medical Center in Fort Payne; LV Stabler Memorial Hospital in Greenville; and Riverview Regional Medical Center in Gadsden.

CNN reports the breach includes 206 hospitals in 29 states

According to the SEC filing, the cybersecurity firm Mandiant believes the attacker was an "Advanced Persistent Threat" group from China.

"The attacker was able to bypass the company's security measures and successfully copy and transfer certain data outside the company," the filing stated. "The company has been informed by federal authorities and Mandiant that this intruder has typically sought valuable intellectual property, such as medical device and equipment development data. However, in this instance the data transferred was non-medical patient identification data related to the Company's physician practice operations."

According to the SEC filing, Community Health Systems "is providing appropriate notification to affected patients and regulatory agencies...The company will also be offering identity theft protection services to individuals affected by this attack."
UA students offer advice to help freshmen thrive

More than 6,000 newcomers to move in this weekend

By Angel Coker  
Staff Writer

More than 6,000 freshmen will move into their dorm rooms and residence halls at the University of Alabama beginning today and continuing through Sunday. Classes at UA begin Wednesday, and more seasoned students have some tips on how freshmen can thrive in their first year on campus.

Jazymine Latham, a senior, said that freshmen need to get acquainted with their teachers as well as fellow students.

“Get to know your teachers. If you need that one more point to get a B or an A, they can definitely help you. Also, get to know your classmates. They are good for when you need help with an assignment or a study buddy. Go to class,” said Latham, a human development and family studies major.

TIPS  
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1B

Whitney Watson, a junior accounting major, stressed the need to become an expert in time management.

“You have to manage your time with studying and classes and your friends. Make a schedule and get into a routine,” Watson said.

Sha’Quetta Brown, a sophomore majoring in general health studies, advised that freshmen find a good place to study, like one of UA’s libraries.

“The best library is (Amelia Gayle) Gorgas. They have different noise levels for different floors. The second floor is great. It’s not too loud, but it’s not too quiet either,” Brown said.

Brelan Dunn, a sophomore chemical engineering major, said that freshmen need to take time to familiarize themselves with the campus and transportation options.

“Walk or take the bus to get around campus. There is a (smartphone) app for the bus. (The TransLoc app tells you where each Crimson Ride bus is located on campus.) Be aware of the time and know the best route to your building,” Dunn said.

Alex Constantine, a senior majoring in elementary and special education, said freshmen need to always be aware of the weather.

“Have rain boots, and definitely get yourself a rain jacket. If you’re coming from out of state, be prepared for tornadoes,” Constantine said.

Derserae Colby, a junior operations management and finance major, said freshmen can get a wealth of information about UA on their smartphones.

“Download the UA app for everything whether that be football games, directions, GPA and emails. All things UA-related are on the app,” Colby said.

Holly Jackson, a senior telecommunication and film major, stressed the importance of getting involved as a freshman.

“Talk to people in the classes related to your major. They’ll most likely wind up being your friends for life,” Jackson said.

“College is what you make it. If you sit at home all day, you’re not going to enjoy it. If you put yourself out there, you’ll have the time of your life.”

Steven Hood, interim vice president of student affairs, offers a few pointers for incoming freshmen on move-in day and the upcoming semester:

■ Dress comfortably for move-in and wear closed-toed shoes.

■ If you failed to register for a move-in time, call UA housing at 205-348-6676 to make sure you have a time slot. Don’t arrive too early, or you will be directed to a holding area until your scheduled time.

■ Browse the housing website at housing.ua.edu/movein for directions to your dorm, move-in schedules, packing tips and information on Week of Welcome.

■ Correspond with your roommate before move-in to discuss expectations of cleanliness, visitors, noise, etc.

■ Introduce yourself to other residents in your hall including your resident adviser, who will be the go-to source for campus information.

■ Explore campus and find your classes before the first day of class.

■ Rent a mailbox at the Ferguson Student Center.

■ Attend Week of Welcome to learn about more than 500 student organizations including intramural sports teams, academic, religious and social organizations and more.
Construction delays prevent move-ins at new complex

Riverfront Village is not ready for residents, city officials say

By Jason Morton
Staff Writer

College students planning to start the new semester in the new Riverfront Village retail and residential development will have to wait longer than expected.

Although originally signed leases indicated a move-in date of today, some residents were informed within the past week that this would no longer be the case.

City officials have said no certificate of occupancy has been issued for the $42 million, 452-bed development that's still taking shape on a 7.8-acre site at the end of Greensboro Avenue on the banks of the Black Warrior River.

This means that the structures cannot be used by the public because they are not yet safe.

"Buildings still under construction can apply for a temporary certificate of occupancy while work is still going on," said City Hall spokeswoman Deidre Stalnaker, "(but) it has to be at a certain stage with all life safety codes being addressed and in place."

This includes an egress and ingress plan to keep tenants and construction workers separated, for example. As of now, that is not possible at Riverfront Village.

"Until we reach that point and feel safe about the situation, no certificate of occupancy will be issued," Stalnaker said. "Safety is our first and foremost priority."

John McConnell, director of the city's Department of

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DELAY
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1A

Planning and Development Services, said City Hall has prepared a statement for parents or other concerned residents who call to ask about the future of Riverfront Village. It is the mission of the chief building official and fire marshal to make sure we provide resilient and safe buildings in our community and to protect life, health and property through the adopted building and fire codes," the statement said. "The Riverfront Village Development is currently not at a point during construction in which a certificate of occupancy (CO) can be issued.

"A CO is where a building structure can be occupied safely with all life safety codes and systems in place and functioning properly. No CO will be issued by the city of Tuscaloosa until these requirements are met."

Because this site — and every other site Chance Partners has developed in Tuscaloosa — falls within the Downtown Riverfront Overlay District, the Tuscaloosa City Council must grant final approval to each proposed development. Atlanta-based Chance Partners gained approval from the council to develop the site where Tuscaloosa Chevrolet once operated in April 2013. It was billed as a multiuse project that will feature about 40,000-square-feet of retail space in addition to the 201 living units with July 2014 as the original proposed completion date.

It remains unknown how many college students are being affected by the delay. The missed deadline marks the third Chance Partners project in Tuscaloosa to be completed late.

It remains unknown how many college students are being affected by the delay. Judd Bobrin, president of Chance Partners, did not respond to several messages left by The Tuscaloosa News on Thursday. However, the missed construction deadline marks the third Chance Partners project in Tuscaloosa — all within the downtown area — to be completed late.

The $8.25 million Boulevard Lofts, an 18-unit, 46-bed development built on the former parking lot across University Boulevard from City Hall, missed its 2012 completion date and prevented tenants with signed leases from moving in on time.

This was followed by last year’s delay of Green Beach Lofts, an $11.5 million, four-story development consisting of townhouse-style apartments, single-story apartments and retail space on a 1.4-acre site at the intersection of Greensboro Avenue and Paul W. Bryant Drive.

The delay was extended by the City Council in September when it took issue with changes to the building’s exterior that were adopted without council approval.

On Saturday, potential tenants of the Riverfront Development took to social media outlets to complain about the latest delay.

One posted the letter sent out by Riverfront Development management that informed tenants of the construction delays and offered temporary living space at nearby hotels or other apartment complexes until the development was complete.

Management also offered tenants temporary storage spaces and moving company services once it came time to relocate the residents to their Riverfront Village homes.

For those who would rather live with friends or family until construction is completed, Riverfront Village is offering a $1,000 gift card.

However, the letter said that half of August’s rent must be paid before any accommodations by Riverfront Village would be made.

“We are committed to providing an extraordinary living experience to you and all future residents,” the letter said. “Please accept our sincere apologies for being unable to deliver this extraordinary living experience for the original move-in date. Also please rest assured that our on-site team is ready to help through this temporary situation.”

Reach Jason Morton at jason.morton@tuscaloosanews.com or 205-722-0200.
Welcoming freshmen

UA offers Week of Welcome kickoff party for students

By Lydia Seabol Avant
Staff Writer

An estimated 6,000 University of Alabama freshmen packed Coleman Coliseum Sunday night for the Week of Welcome kickoff party, featuring free food from local restaurants, rock wall climbing, zip lines and booths from campus organizations.

The "extreme sports" themed event also featured BMX performers and a pogo stunt team, along with an Alabama pep rally. There were 190 tables and booths lining the coliseum, from local churches to student organizations to area agencies. As part of the event, Moe's Barbecue, McAllister's, TCBY, Jim N' Nicks, Edgar's Bakery and other area restaurants handed out free food and desserts.

The event was meant to help introduce freshmen and transfer students to the University of Alabama and let them know what Tuscaloosa has to offer, said Latoya Scott, director of University Programs. The Week of Welcome continues.

Although the event was targeted toward freshmen and transfer students, it was open to all students. The party was the first of 55 events that will be held during the next 10 days as a way to get students involved in campus early. Other events this week include everything from open houses on campus to student night at Target and student volunteer service activities in the community.

"We want students to make lifelong friends, to collaborate and create," Scott said, adding that the idea of WOW is for students to get out of the dorms and get involved. "Everything is set up in a way where students can meet someone they wouldn't have otherwise met."

Kyleah-Mae McCloud, a freshman from Arizona, said she heard about the event on Instagram.

"It's neat how you can meet new people," McCloud said.

"I just like the atmosphere, everyone coming together," added Alexis Crawley of Tennessee.

The Week of Welcome makes it easy for new students, said James Parks of Mobile.

"It's a great way for students to get involved," Parks said. The WOW event is a nice way for out-of-state students to feel connected, said Nick Hoss, a freshman from Wisconsin.

"It's interesting how many people are from out of state, and a great way for us to meet people," Hoss said.

The Week of Welcome will end on Aug. 28. The first day of classes at the University of Alabama is Wednesday.

Reach Lydia Seabol Avant at 205-722-0222 or lydia.seabol.avant@tuscaloosanews.com.

ABOVE: Edgar's Bakery was one of several vendors handing out samplings of their food.

LEFT: Alex Vickinson, a freshman from Melbourne, Fla., waves a crimson and white shaker during the event.
Ready for a new semester

Staff report

University of Alabama students began the early move-in period Thursday and Friday at the Tuscaloosa campus.

The early group included band members, sorority recruits, athletes, honors college students and some first-year students.

On Friday, groups of students could be seen carrying their boxes of belongings into the residences at Julia Tutwiler Hall and Presidential Village.

Volunteers from Calvary Baptist Church helped students tote boxes of their belongings into their new homes.

The rest of the student population will move in on Aug. 15. Classes at UA are scheduled to start Aug. 20.

Last year, UA had 34,852 students.

Meanwhile, classes are set to begin at area universities and colleges during the next two weeks.

Raven Ball, a resident assistant at Burke Hall West, pushes a cart of belongings into Tutwiler Hall to be delivered to a resident’s dorm.

Stillman College will be the first to begin classes, with students starting Aug. 14. Stillman students will begin checking into residence halls today.

The University of West Alabama in Livingston begins fall classes Aug. 18.

Shelton State Community College begins classes Aug. 23.
‘Inclusion’
the word
ahead of
UA rush

Panhellenic leader:
Sororities proactive
in achieving diversity

By Ed Enoch
Staff Writer

A group of traditionally white sororities at the University of Alabama will have representatives from their national organizations present during fall recruitment to ensure standards against discrimination are met, according to the Alabama Panhellenic Association president.

"Inclusion has always been important with Panhellenic sororities at the University of Alabama. ... What’s different this year is we have been much more intentional about our education and educating members and reaching out to alumni and current members. ... I would say we’re just being a lot more proactive this year and making sure that the pool is diverse, and we are including everybody," Panhellenic President Hannah McBrayer said in a video message.

The formal fall recruitment period for the Alabama Panhellenic Association’s sororities began Friday. The week of events, including open houses at the chapters, culminates with bid day on Aug. 16, when participants who have been invited to join a chapter traditionally dash from Bryant-Denny Stadium to meet their new sorority sisters.

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RUSH

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Last fall's formal recruitment became a flash point for an ongoing debate over the inclusiveness of UA's traditionally white Greek-letter organizations — which receive financing from the university to construct chapter houses on campus — after the student newspaper, the Crimson White, reported allegations by a group of sorority members that some alumnae interfered with efforts to recruit black students because of their race.

The alleged discrimination drew criticism from state and national leaders and prompted demonstrations on campus in support of more diversity in the Greek organizations.

Following the outcry, President Judy Bonner acknowledged the Greek community remained largely segregated by race and mandated an open bid process for the group's sororities. The move led to the sororities adding about 23 minority members during the extended bidding last year. The group of 18 sororities had approximately 5,110 members as of spring.

On Friday, the university released the 7-minute message from McBrayer, who discussed the benefits of participating in the Greek system on campus before shifting briefly to what has been done in response to the controversy of last year's rush.

To ensure the integrity of the selection process, each chapter will have a national representative on campus to make sure recruitment standards are met, McBrayer said. Part of the response by the chapter's national organizations last year was a restatement that recruiting policies forbid discrimination.

Deborah M. Lane, associate vice president for university relations, reiterated the message from Bonner last fall that UA has worked with the chapters and their national organizations to remove real and perceived barriers to inclusiveness in the Greek system.

"UA is taking the steps necessary to make systemic and lasting change. The UA family has embraced and is working together to achieve this goal.

In fact, we have reached this point because of the efforts of so many of our administrators, students, faculty, staff and alumni who have and continue to work diligently to uphold our values and our expectations of access and opportunity," Lane said.

McBrayer cast the Greek system at UA as a community where individuals would be able to interact with people from diverse backgrounds.

"You grow so much in college, and I think that is so important to be around people that might have a different viewpoint than you or come from a different area, and so that is why I think it is so great about becoming Greek here at the University of Alabama is you do have those chance to meet all sort of different people and really expand as a person," she said.

McBrayer estimated there would be about 2,300 women participating in fall recruitment.

"We are excited this year; we think that we are going to have the best recruitment yet," she said.

Reach Ed Enoch at ed.enoch@tuscaloosasnews.com or 205-722-0209.
Fall recruitment in full swing

Sororities take steps to avoid repeating 2013 racial controversy

Staff report

Groups of young women walked from house to house along Colonial and Magnolia drives at the University of Alabama Saturday during the first day of sorority open house events for the Alabama Panhellenic Association's formal fall recruitment.

The weeklong recruitment process began Friday with a convocation at Coleman Coliseum.

On Saturday, groups of potential new members toured sorority houses to a cacophonous serenade of chants and songs by sorority members who greeted each group. The open houses will continue today.

Recruitment events will continue all week, culminating with bid day on Aug. 16 when participants who have been invited to join a chapter traditionally dash from Bryant-Denny Stadium to meet their assigned sorority.

See next page
potential new members walk between houses on Magnolia Drive to their next parties during the annual fall formal sorority recruitment at the University of Alabama on Saturday. Recruitment officially began Friday with Convocation and ends on Aug. 16 with Bid Day.

FALL
Continued from page 1B
their new sorority sisters.
About 2,300 women are expected to participate in fall recruitment for the group of 18 sororities, which had roughly 5,110 members in the spring.
The Alabama Panhellenic Association announced it would have representatives from its members' national organizations on hand this fall to ensure standards prohibiting discrimination during recruitment were met.
The additional oversight and assurances by the association that the process would be inclusive followed a controversy last year ignited by reports some recruits were rejected based on their race.
After the outcry last fall, UA president Judy Bonner mandated an extended period of bidding for the sororities to add members. The sororities added about 23 minority members during the fall.
Letters of acceptance

21 black women among 2,054 to get bids to UA sororities
By Angel Coker
Staff Writer

Thousands of excited screams echoed through Bryant-Denny Stadium as a nearby man speculated that the women inside were ripping open envelopes to discover their sorority bids.

Outside, family, friends and fraternity brothers swarmed the sidewalks flapping their hand fans emblazoned with Greek letters, snapping pictures and holding bouquets of wilting flowers and gift bags overstuffed with puffy pink tissue paper.

Then, the women ran.

2014 UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA BID DAY

Of the 2,054 women who accepted bids to join sororities Saturday, 190 were minorities, including 21 women who self-identified as African-American, according to UA.

Some ran in shorts, tank tops and flip-flops, and some ran in sun dresses and high heels, gripping their invitations like they were a lifeline and screaming all the way to their new sorority houses.

A total of 2,054 of the 2,276 women participating in fall recruitment this year accepted bids to join sororities at the University of Alabama bid day Saturday. Of that number, 190 were minorities, including the 21 women who self-identified as African-American, according to a statement from Deborah Lane, associate vice president of university relations.

“All 16 of the Panhellenic sororities participating in recruitment offered bids to African-American women,”

INSIDE
PHOTOS:
More Greek glee | 9A
BID DAY

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3A

Lane said. “Through the mutual selection process, the 21 women accepted bids to 10 sororities.”

The university’s predominately white Greek system came under scrutiny last year after the student newspaper, The Crimson White, reported that alumnae had interfered with votes for black recruits last year because of their race.

In response, UA President Judy Bonner mandated an open bid process. Bidding was extended, and 23 minority members were added to the sororities last year.

Megan Wingbermuehle, a new member of Alpha Chi Omega, said she thought everyone was included and treated equally at this year’s formal recruitment, which began Aug. 8 and ended Saturday with bid day.

“I feel like there is a really good mix of girls in my sorority. There’s a fair amount of minorities,” Wingbermuehle said. “I really like that about us. We’re going to have such a great time together. It’s my new home away from home.”

Lane said the sororities are making progress in diversifying their selection of members but acknowledged that growth in minority numbers has not reached its full potential.

“We have not reached our destination, but we will continue to move forward with resolve, energy and enthusiasm,” she said. “The University of Alabama will continue to focus on creating and sustaining a welcoming and inclusive campus for all students.”
Sorority ousts student after message

UA investigating racially offensive Snapchat message sent on bid day, Judy Bonner says

By Ed Enoch
Staff Writer

The University of Alabama is investigating a racially offensive social media message allegedly sent by a student on Saturday that prompted the Chi Omega sorority's national organization to expel the young woman from its UA chapter.

"We are all extremely disappointed when any student uses language that is disrespectful or offensive to any segment of the UA community," UA President Judy Bonner said in a prepared statement released Monday. "We are especially sad that this incident occurred on a day (Saturday's bid day) that was an exciting and happy one for the young women who participated in fall recruitment."

A sorority member allegedly sent a Snapchat message containing a racial slur and celebrating that the sorority had no new black members. The Chi Omega national organization said Monday that the woman is no longer a member of the sorority.

The UA chapter had two new members join during the recent recruitment who self-identified as African-American, said Chi Omega Director of Marketing and Public Relations Whitney Plumpoot. The Snapchat message was sent after recruitment had ended and bids had been distributed, she said.

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MESSAGE

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Snapchat is a messaging application that allows users to send photos and brief videos with messages.

The response to the Snapchat message comes days after a cautious but positive assessment by the university of progress to increase diversity in its traditionally white sororities, which became the source of criticism last year following reports by the student newspaper that some black women were passed over for bids because of their race.

The Alabama Panhellenic Association sororities celebrated bid day Saturday. UA reported that 2,278 young women registered for formal recruitment with the group of 16 sororities and that 2,054 accepted bids, including 190 minorities.

UA reported 21 of the new sorority members self-identified as African-American.

The university became aware of the photo shared on Snapchat on Saturday, according to UA Director for Media Relations Cathy Andreen.

The Snapchat image shows three smiling young white women with a racially offensive caption. The university confirmed Monday that it was that image that prompted the university's response. The university and Chi Omega's national organization issued statements Monday condemning the message.

"Behavior, actions and choices that disparage other students are particularly reprehensible and do not represent the values or meet the expectations of our university community," Bonner said.

The university's Office of Student Conduct is investigating the incident, University of Alabama President Judy Bonner said.

according to Andreen.

"There will be appropriate university consequences once our investigation is completed," Bonner said. "These consequences will be in addition to any sanctions Chi Omega's national officers decide to impose."

The sorority's national office called the message "absolutely reprehensible" and inconsistent with its values and policies.

"Chi Omega took swift disciplinary action in accordance with the organization's policies and procedures," the national organization said in its released statement.

The recruiting period for the Alabama Panhellenic Association was under additional scrutiny following the controversy last year. As a result, representatives from the sororities' national organizations were present last week to ensure recruitment policies and best practices were followed. This year's recruitment period was also accompanied by messages from the Panhellenic association president and university officials meant to stress inclusiveness during recruitment.

"I want to assure you that the University of Alabama will not allow this incident to interrupt our progress. We will continue to work diligently and with a renewed commitment to make sure that UA is a welcoming and inclusive campus every day of the week," Bonner said Monday.

Reach Ed Enoch at ed.enoch@tuscaloosanews.com or 205-722-0209.
Bid Day luster dimmed by racist Snapchat post

Staff and wire reports

A year after its student newspaper reported that some sororities were racially discriminatory during recruitment processes, the University of Alabama was blindsided by another incident, this time a social media post with racially offensive language.

A photo sent via social media app Snapchat shows three white women with a caption using a racial slur seemingly celebrating that Chi Omega pledged no black women Saturday — despite the fact the sorority actually pledged two.

Chi Omega national sorority leaders say they’ve already kicked the responsible member out of the chapter.

The incident overshadowed an otherwise positive — and historic — Bid Day in Tuscaloosa on Saturday.

Every one of the 21 black women who registered for recruitment accepted bids.

Deborah Lane, UA’s associate vice president for university relations, said of the 2,276 women who registered for recruitment, 90 percent of them accepted bids. And of those 2,054 new sorority women, the largest pledge class in school history, 190 were minorities.

Lane said every black woman who registered for recruitment accepted a bid and none withdrew or were released from the process.

She said the results show progress from the past, but still don’t mean the goals of racial integration in the Greek system have been met.

“We have not reached our destination, but we will continue to move forward with resolve, energy and enthusiasm,” Lane said. “And, while numbers are not the only measure of success, they do indicate that we are making progress.

The University of Alabama will continue to focus on creating and sustaining a welcoming and inclusive campus for all students.”

Lane also said the drive for inclusivity wasn’t limited to a few houses — all 16 of the sororities participating in Panhellenic recruitment offered bids to black women, and the 21 accepted bids to 10 of them.

The investigation

Snapchat is a popular app that allows users to send pictures, often accompanied by captions, to other users. The pictures disappear after a set number of seconds, but other users can take screenshots, thereby saving the picture.

A UA spokeswoman said officials were made aware of the offensive post Saturday afternoon. The
Office of Student Conduct is conducting a full investigation, which will decide appropriate consequences in addition to Chi Omega's sanctions.

"Behavior, actions and choices that disparage other students are particularly reprehensible and do not represent the values or meet the expectations of our University community," UA President Judy Bonner wrote in an emailed statement to students. "The results of bid day and the dedication of hundreds of students, employees and alumni who worked extremely hard this past year to achieve the important and significant milestones UA reached on Bid Day cannot and should not be dismissed or minimized."

In a statement from Whitney Plumptre, national public relations director for Chi Omega, the sorority confirmed the woman responsible for the photo is no longer a chapter member.

"What was expressed is absolutely reprehensible and completely inconsistent with Chi Omega's values and policies," the statement reads. "Chi Omega embraces women from all walks of life, who come together to form a network of friends with high standards and similar values."

In a statement Tuesday, Chi Omega national said an image circulating on the Internet was not the original image: "While the offensive word that was used is the same as in the original Snapchat image, the image used on these sites (Jezebel and Buzzfeed) has been tampered with."

**In Auburn**

Thousands of squealing women filled the lawns outside Auburn Arena on Saturday as 1,278 women received bids during Auburn University's 2014 Bid Day.

Parents, family members, friends and boyfriends gathered nearby to take in the excitement as pledges received their bids and made their way from the arena to the sororities' chapter rooms. During the event, sorority sisters waited outside their housing to greet new members with cheers, signs, hugs and a lot of screaming.

"I'm so excited to meet all of the new members," said Alpha Chi Omega member Rachel Lyman. "We're going to have a wonderful pledge class this year."

Overall, more than 1,400 women registered for recruitment week in hopes of receiving a place in the college's Greek system. During the week, which kicked off Aug. 10, potential new members attended a variety of mandatory gatherings, meetings and events.

Auburn University has 17 National Panhellenic Conference sororities with more than 200 members each and 53 Greek organizations total.

*Stephen Dethrage, Melissa Brown, Amber Sutton and the Associated Press contributed to this story.*
Despite rumors, original University of Alabama sorority Snapchat not altered

By: Melissa Brown

Tuscaloosa, Alabama -- Rumors are running rampant that an image using a racial slur in a Snapchat photo sent by an University of Alabama student and Chi O member was altered.

But Chi Omega spokesperson Whitney Plumpton said the original photo, with the slur, is in fact real.

"There is an image circulating, primarily from Jezebel and Buzzfeed, that is not the original Snapchat image," Plumpton said via email Tuesday. "Chi Omega has confirmed the authenticity of the original Snapchat, as well as that the offensive word was also used in the original Snapchat."

The altered image contained the same language as the original Snapchat, Plumpton said.

The rumors the image was altered was encouraged by sites like Total Frat Move and Buzzfeed.

The University of Alabama and Chi Omega national sorority on Monday released statements condemning the image.

UA President Judy Bonner called the behavior "reprehensible" and said the Office of Student Conduct was conducting a full investigation. Chi Omega officials said the woman was no longer a member of the Nu Beta chapter.
UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA

Students will have a new campus amenity to take advantage of this school year: the $32 million, 85,000-square-foot Student Activity Center.

Located on the north end of campus overlooking the Black Warrior River, the SAC offers more than 10,000 square feet of weight/fitness space, hardwood courts, personal training studios and group class areas, and more.

George Brown, executive director of University Recreation, said the idea came about four years ago as UA was experiencing significant population growth.

"Our data suggested we were not going to do anything but get more and more crowded and squeeze our patrons if we continued to see enrollment growth and increases of usage," Brown said.

Melissa Brown
NEW DIGS.

UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA: SHINY 85,000-SQUARE-FOOT REC CENTER GIVES STUDENTS A NEW ACTIVITY.

By Melissa Brown

University of Alabama students will have a new campus amenity to take advantage of this school year: the $32 million, 85,000-square-foot Student Activity Center.

Located on the north end of campus overlooking the Black Warrior River, the SAC offers more than 10,000 square feet of weight/fitness space, hardwood courts, personal training studios and group class areas, and more.

George Brown, executive director of University Recreation, said the idea for a new recreation center came about four years ago as UA was experiencing significant population growth.

“Our data suggested we were not going to do anything but get more and more crowded and squeeze our patrons if we continued to see enrollment growth and increases of usage,” Brown said.

The north end of campus is now responsible for bearing a large load of UA’s population, as massive residence halls have popped up there over the past several years. With the freshman on-campus residency requirement, the SAC’s location makes on-campus recreation an even more convenient option than before.

While population growth at UA has been staggering over the past several years, Brown said University Recreation is actually seeing more usage by percentage than that of university enrollment.

“It’s not a moment too soon,” Brown said of the new center’s opening.

Expecting to hire.

University Recreation currently operates two other fitness facilities on campus — the Aquatics Center, which houses a small weight/fitness room, and the Recreation Center.

Both facilities are located a little off the beaten path, in terms of students’ daily migration patterns from dorm to class to car. The Recreation Center in particular is reached largely by personal transportation.

Brown says the SAC will certainly be different, given there are fewer parking opportunities in the residential area. But he is careful to note that the SAC is open to everyone, not just the Honors students or freshmen who live in nearby dorms.
The SAC is offering more than just growth in rec space. University Recreation, already the largest stu-dent employer on campus at around 450 each year, expects to hire between 85 and 100 students as a result of the new facility.

"We believe overwhelmingly that students on the north side of campus will gravitate to this building," he said. "We don't know how students on other parts of campus, off campus and faculty/staff will do. We'll take a really strong look at what the building did for us between now and Christmas." .

The new $32 million, 85,000-square-foot University of Alabama Student Activity Center at Presidential Village on campus is now open to members.
The new Student Activity Center offers more than 10,000 square feet of weight/fitness space, hardwood courts and personal training studios.
UAB football fans braved a brief downpour at the Shops of Grand River Sunday Aug. 17 to get players autographs, hear the band and see the cheerleaders at Fan Day in Leeds.

Photos: Frank Couch/fcouch@al.com
Brianna Rogers and Justin Rogers have a picture made with UAB Head Coach Bill Clark.
(Frank Couch/fcouch@al.com)
So where in Alabama did it finally hit 100 degrees this summer?

By Paul Gattis.

It appears Alabama won't be making weather history this summer.

The state has never had back-to-back years without at least one day when the temperature reaches at least 100 degrees. But that barrier has been broken.

John Christy, the state climatologist and director of the Earth System Science Center at the University of Alabama in Huntsville, said at least six temperature reporting stations have hit at least 100 degrees in the last week.

- August 7: Talladega hit 102 degrees.
- August 8: Gainesville in Sumter County, Clayton in Barbour County and Talladega each hit 100 degrees.
- August 9: Clayton again hit 100 degrees.

The National Weather Service forecast office in Birmingham confirmed the 100-degree readings in Clayton and Gainesville but said all data is considered preliminary at this point.

Last year, Alabama went through its sixth summer since 1884 without hitting 100 degrees, according to Christy. It's never happened in back-to-back years.
Volunteers help students move into college dorms

By Kristen Conner

HUNTSVILLE, Ala. (WHNT)– College move-in day can be hectic, busy, and stressful.

But Home Depot volunteers working at the University of Alabama- Huntsville for move-in day say they want to change that. A group of more than 15 people from 3 Huntsville Home Depot stores assisted students Friday as they got settled in.

Lynda Ares, Store Manager, said, “This is the first. The first time we’ve decided to do it... [We] can get everything together, one trip up.”

Students like Tevon Walker were breathing a sigh of relief.

“I just pulled my car up and they said come on in, we’ll help you unload,” he said.

Volunteers used flat carts, shopping carts, even school-provided laundry carts to move students’ stuff up to their assigned dorm rooms. They hoped for an easier transition back to school, so students can focus on the year ahead.”
Position was meant to be

New Shelton State president says she wanted job as soon as she visited campus

See next page
By Ed Enoch
Staff Writer

Andrea Scott Mayfield knew she wanted to lead Shelton State Community College as soon as she visited the campus.

“It was one of those intangible things,” the new Shelton State president said. “When I was here, I knew this was where I was supposed to be.”

The career educator, who served as a biology instructor and in various administrative roles during an 18-year career at the East Mississippi Community College, was looking for a chance to be a college president but wanted to lead an institution in her home state.

“I would rather not be a president if I couldn’t be a president where I wanted to be,” she said.

Early this year, Mayfield, then a vice president for the Scooba, Miss., campus of the East Mississippi Community College, visited the Tuscaloosa community college to look at the basketball gym, part of a research trip for renovations planned for the facilities at the Mississippi two-year college.

Mayfield said she was impressed by what she saw on the tour.

Soon after the visit, her brother sent Mayfield a text about the job’s posting, which a Shelton state employee had mentioned during a visit to his dental practice. The two-year system posted the job description in late February. Mayfield was one of four finalists for the position. She was named the new president in June.

“It’s almost as if the stars lined up,” she said.

Two months into her presidency and just ahead of the start of fall classes, Mayfield discussed her thoughts on the role of two-year institutions and the future for Shelton.

The system is working on renovations to the college’s C.A. Fredd campus and considering expanding facilities at both its Tuscaloosa campuses. The college, which had an enrollment of about 5,800 in the spring, needs additional space for classroom and lab facilities, she said. The two-year school will also continue to roll out online programs to expand the e-learning opportunities, she said.

See next page
The college is also working with area school superintendents to promote a dual enrollment program expanded earlier this year.

Lawmakers approved an income tax credit beginning in 2015 for individuals and businesses that make contributions to cover tuition, fees, books and other costs associated with participation of high school students in the two-year system’s Career Technical Dual enrollment program.

“Essentially, it is possible for high school students to have a full year of college education behind them when they graduate,” she said.

The two-year system will work with business and industry partners, the state’s workforce training council and the Regional Workforce Development Councils to tailor the program to regional workforce needs.

Mayfield believes technical training as provided by the two-year schools is critical for communities as they court new employers and industries. Currently, the school offers courses in construction and transportation, industrial and manufacturing technologies, cosmetology, culinary arts, office administration, and industrial electricity and electronics.

“Economic development depends on the community college’s ability to train and prepare workforces,” she said.

Programs for skilled workers are growing in appeal as career possibilities for students, she said.

“At a time, what you heard over and over is transfer,” she said, referring to the track for students preparing to attend four-year universities.

The perception was a four-year degree was the path to a career and associate degrees were for those who didn’t want to go to college, Mayfield said.

“What we have to do as a college is inform people you can get a really good job in a career and technical field,” she said. “There are high paying jobs out there waiting for people.”

For Mayfield, the technical program is just part of a diverse array of education options at community colleges.

Mayfield notes programs for adult students retooling skill sets for career changes, those working toward a transfer to a four-year program or an associate degree, and students seeking GEDs or resuming educations put on hold.

“Community college is special because people can come to us no matter where they are in their education process,” Mayfield said. “Everybody gets a shot.”

It’s part of the appeal of community colleges for the West Alabama native.

“I saw that community college is where I wanted to be because community college is very unique in that it touches lives in many different ways,” she said.

Reach Ed Enoch at ed.enoch@tuscaloosanews.com or 205-722-0209.
Students arrive more efficiently than ever

Cassie Fambró • cfambró@al.com

To move in to campus at USA, it used to be sort of a free-for-all. A fight for parking spaces, curbside drop-off, and people giving up and driving onto the grass.

No so anymore. Officials prepared all week to ensure a seamless process by setting up airport-style lanes near residence halls and having police guide people to their locations at every turn.

“lt’s been going phenomenally today,” said Krista Harrell, associate dean of students. "We’re expecting 1,300 people moving in."

Approximately 700 volunteers also showed up to help students and their parents, including new President Dr. Tony Waldrop, who continued the late President Gordon Moulton’s tradition of helping students lug their belongings into their new homes.

Pepsi products and water were offered at every turn, as well.

One big change was noticed immediately: Former residence hall Delta 2 has been razed, and a well-tended grass lawn remains where the two-story facility was.

In recent years, two four-story complexes have been erected to accommodate increases in student housing.

Meg Davidson, a freshman from Madison, took advantage of the newest hall, nicknamed “New Hall.”

“I’m excited to meet new people,” said Davidson, who is majoring in radiology.

Her friend, Cole Clayton, chose mechanical engineering. “Expenses and scholarships” were the reasons he came to USA.

“I really like the campus, and I just love the community here,” Katie Murphy of Tuscaloosa said. She wanted a big-college feel at a smaller place, she added.

Enrollment numbers are expected to exceed 15,000 and will be released before the end of the month. Classes begin next week.
MLK aide’s papers donated to ASU

By Brian Lyman
Montgomery Advertiser

MONTGOMERY | Working as the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.’s secretary, Maude Ballou would put in long hours despite the threats to her safety.

As her son Howard recalls, members of the Ku Klux Klan would be sitting outside the offices as Ballou worked late into the night on everything from the civil rights leader’s correspondence to his travel itineraries, even his meals. Another time, her car was tailed on her way home.

But she kept up the work for King and the Montgomery Improvement Association as they fought against discriminatory laws in the city. King and Maude’s husband, Leonard, had been fraternity brothers, and the families often shared dinner together. When King moved to Atlanta in 1960, Ballou went with him, helping the family get settled.

“My mother has really good organizing skills,” said Howard Ballou, a television anchor at WLBT-TV in Jackson, Miss. “She could get people to do things in a sweet, Southern way.”

The family donated portions of their collection of correspondence from those early days to Alabama State University’s National Center for the Study of Civil Rights and African-American Culture. They were honored by the center at a reception for patrons and donors Sunday afternoon.

The collection, said Howard Robinson, the center’s archivist, serves as an important window into the early years of the civil rights movement, and “a reflection of her work with the MIA and Dr. King.”

The reception, an annual ceremony honoring patrons and donors of the center, also highlighted other recent acquisitions by the center, including home movies taken by John Winston of life in Montgomery in the 1960s and 1970s, including ground-eye views of the 1965 Selma-to-Montgomery march; music recordings; photos and personal items reflecting the wide range of African-American life in Alabama.

“The patrons and donors are crucial to the center’s existence, and the success of its purpose,” Robinson told the dozens of people gathered for the ceremony.

The center also honored local artist Bill Ford for his contributions to the center and the community as a whole. Ford asked those in attendance to continue working to support ASU.

“This school is like home for me, so this is like coming home and doing chores around the house,” he said.

“We couldn’t do what we do without the patrons.”

The center also honored Robert and Jean Graetz for their work with the center. The Graetz family worked closely with King and other black leaders on the Montgomery Bus Boycott in 1955, and subsequent civil rights causes. The center works with the U.S. State Department to accommodate foreign visitors looking to learn about the civil rights movement. Robert, a Lutheran minister, and Jean Graetz frequently give presentations at the center; Jean Graetz said Sunday they expect to have visitors from Iraq soon.

“Sometimes it feels like yesterday, and other times, it feels like a century ago,” the Rev. Graetz said Sunday.

For Howard Ballou, having the King correspondence at ASU represented a full circle. His father worked as a music instructor at ASU; his mother worked at WRMA, the African-American radio station that broadcast from the campus.

“It’s where it started,” he said.
Newly appointed Alabama State trustees seated

Marvin Wiggins fighting his removal

The Associated Press

MONTGOMERY | Gov. Robert Bentley put his stamp on the Alabama State University board of trustees on Friday as his new appointees were sworn in, replacing members he asked to resign or removed.

However, ousted trustee Marvin Wiggins said he will fight his removal.

Bentley last month asked board chairman Elton Dean and vice chairman Wiggins to resign over conflicts of interests. Dean resigned voluntarily. Wiggins refused. Bentley then wrote to Wiggins, saying he was using his power as governor to remove him from the board. Bentley accused Wiggins of benefiting from $30,000 paid to his wife as director of Camp Eagle, a two-week summer program. He also accused Wiggins of violating his duty as trustee by not informing the board that his sister-in-law, who was hired by the university as a faculty member, had been disbarred in North Carolina.

Bentley said after Friday’s meeting that “time will tell” but that he hopes this is a turning point for the university.

Bentley’s new appointees, Pam Ware and Ralph Ruggs, were sworn in Friday. Their appointments must be confirmed by the Alabama Senate.

The revamped board elected trustee Larry Thornton as the new chairman.

Wiggins did not attempt to take his seat at Friday’s board meeting, but he told the Montgomery Advertiser that he plans to fight his ouster, possibly through the courts or by complaints to the university’s accrediting agency.

Wiggins contends Bentley removed him from the board improperly.

Meanwhile, a former federal judge is resigning as an attorney for ASU. The school released a resignation letter Wednesday from former U.S. District Judge U.W. Clemon of Birmingham.

Clemon wrote that his firm is dropping Alabama State as a client because officials failed to heed advice about switching auditing firms.

Clemon wrote that the university has the right to reject legal advice but that the decision resulted in a downgrading of the university’s bonds and other problems.

The Montgomery Advertiser reported that Alabama State has paid Clemon’s firm more than $400,000 in the past 20 months.
QB race still up in the air at UAB

Solomon Crenshaw Jr.
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Less than two weeks before facing Troy in its Aug. 30 season-opener, neither junior college transfer Cody Clements, nor redshirt freshman Jeremiah Briscoe has pulled away in the race to start at quarterba by for the UAB football team.

"We talked to them about it this weekend," Bill Clark said following practice Tuesday at Legion Field. "We said we really haven't made any decisions yet. We're still letting this thing go out through the end of this week before we make a decision."

Clark said he's starting to get a read on a likely playing rotation at the position with one of the two opening the game and the other coming on in relief. He acknowledged that's not the preferred pattern of play.

"Sometimes you wish you had a clear-cut winner, too," Clark said. "I wish I had a guy that was that much better. Maybe the next guy could still be good and that guy was unbelievable."

The first-year Blazer coach said position battles aren't limited to the guys who are taking snaps from center.

"I think we've got some solid guys, whether you're talking about quarterback, safety or wherever," he said. "I think we've got some guys who will run out with the first group and then some guys who are right on their heels."

600 to 700 turn out for Fan Day.

The Outlet Shores of Grand River were virtually invisible from U.S. 78 when the UAB Football Fan Day was set to begin at 1 p.m. last Sunday.

At the outlet mall, some fans scurried for cover as heavy showers rolled through. But a half-hour of rain did little to dampen the enthusiasm as the Blazers greeted fans, signed autographs and posed for pictures in the pavilion outside the food court.

A crowd estimated at 600 to 700 turned out for the event, many sticking it out through the rain.

Athletics director Brian Mackin said he had seen a blip on weather radar that appeared to be drifting north of the Sunday event.

"I certainly didn't think it was going to come this way," he said. "But we're fine. It feels kind of good to be honest with you."

Gardendale's Crystal Merkel arrived before the rain came, but was clearly left drenched by the downpour. But she never considered leaving.

"I'm a huge UAB fan," the 2006 alumnus said. "I'm here to support them."

So, too, was Joe Blankenship, whose son Cameron is a junior offensive lineman.

"The weather put a damper on things but overall it's a very good event," he said. "There's a lot of very good attitude here."

When the rain subsided, inflatable Blaze dragons went up at the main entrance to the outlet mall. The band and cheerleaders performed to create a spirited atmosphere.
Making the plays

In order to beat Tide, WVU offensive coordinator says Mountaineers must come up with big plays

By Tommy Deas
Executive Sports Editor

MORGANTOWN, W.Va. | Shannon Dawson, offensive coordinator at West Virginia University, isn’t one to believe that running a hurry-up, no-huddle style offense is the key to solving the defense of the second-ranked Alabama Crimson Tide.

Even though that’s exactly the kind of attack the Mountaineers run, Dawson said there is a lot more to it than that.

“From what I saw watching them play in the past, the teams that have really scored on them really made plays,” Dawson said. “It’s not like they were uncovered.

“Like (Texas) A&M, (Mike) Evans, the receiver, he didn’t do that just against them. He did it all year. The nature of defenses like Alabama, you’re going to be covered. You’re going to have to make plays while you’re covered.”

Dawson’s point is Evans, who was an first-round selection by the Tampa Bay Buccaneers in the National Football League draft, didn’t just blow Alabama’s pass defense off the field while hauling in 279 receiving yards against the Crimson Tide last season. He had to catch balls with defenders in position. Dawson expects Alabama defenders to be in the right places in the Aug. 30 opener at the Georgia Dome.

What characterizes a Nick Saban defense, in Dawson’s eyes?

“Aggressive,” he said. “Typically they’re extremely solid against the run. From the past, studying them, he’ll bring a lot of back-end blitzes, people who aren’t typically in your protection, safeties and stuff like that.

“It’s a unique way of bringing pressure, but their main focus is not letting you run the football.”

Dawson enters his third year as West Virginia’s offensive coordinator. Last season the Mountaineers had several new starters and used three quarterbacks before settling on Clint Trickett, who returns, and also had three new offensive assistants.

This year there is more continuity, and West Virginia is working to be better at going up-tempo.

“Not that we’re always trying to play fast,” Dawson said, “but when you do want to play fast you want to get those guys lined up as quickly as possible. Those guys up front are getting lined up extremely quick right now, but we’re going to keep pushing the limits of that.

“If those guys aren’t getting lined up the way we want to, I blame it on the quarterback. His job is to keep pushing those guys and we’re going to keep pushing that. I don’t think it’s exactly where you want it (right now), but you always strive to get better because you’re trying to push the limits.”

Reach Tommy Deas at tommy@tidesports.com or at 205-722-0224.
Tide releases SEC schedule

By Cecil Hurt
Sports Editor

The University of Alabama men's basketball team will open its 2014-15 SEC home schedule on Jan. 6, according to the league schedule released on Friday by the SEC office.

The Crimson Tide, looking to bounce back from a 13-19 season that was its worst, in terms of overall record, since 1970, will also host league favorites Kentucky and Florida in January. Alabama will play a total of nine SEC home games as part of the 18-game league schedule.

The Florida game will be televised nationally by ESPN as part of its "Super Tuesday" package.

UA will host Kentucky on Jan. 17 and travel to Lexington two weeks later. The Wildcats are one of the five teams Alabama will play on a home-and-home rotation, along with Auburn, Texas A&M, Vanderbilt and South Carolina. Auburn will visit Coleman Coliseum on Jan. 24 while the Crimson Tide will make the trip to Auburn on Feb. 17.

Alabama announced the non-conference portion of its schedule last week, highlighted by UCLA's visit to Tuscaloosa on Dec. 28. UA will also travel to Xavier and will face Iowa State, an NCAA participant last season, in the semifinal of the CBE Classic in Kansas City, Mo., in December.

Alabama must replace leading scorer Trevor Releford this season, but returns four of its top six scorers from a year ago. The Crimson Tide will also welcome seven new players, including four freshmen (Riley Norris, Jeff Garrett, Justin Coleman and Devin Mitchell) and three transfers (Michael Kessens, Ricky Tarrant and Christophe Varidel.)

UA will open its season Nov. 14, hosting Towson.
Student-athletes excelling off the field for Alabama

Staff report

The University of Alabama athletic department enters the 2014-15 school year — classes began Wednesday — coming off of a year where the school's 550-plus student-athletes averaged better than a 3.2 grade-point average, including 46 that maintained a career GPA of 4.0. Overall, seven teams posted cumulative GPAs above 3.5 for the year, marking the fourth year in a row that at least five teams have met that standard, while 15 of 17 programs earned GPAs over 3.0 for the academic year.

More than 100 student-athletes earned degrees during the 2013-14 academic year. Alabama graduates 69 percent of its student-athletes, while the general student population graduates at a rate of 67 percent.

There were a nation's-best 28 graduates on Alabama football's roster when it took the field for the Sugar Bowl. All together, the Crimson Tide's last three national football championship teams (2009, 2011 and 2012) featured 60 players who had earned their degrees before the BCS Championship Game even got underway. The Alabama men's track and field squad was named the 2014 Indoor Scholar Team of the Year by the U.S. Track and Field and Cross Country Coaches Association, while the women's swimming and diving team was honored by the College Swimming Coaches Association for posting the nation's highest team GPA for the fall semester.

Gymnastics All-American and NCAA Champion Kim Jacob led the way for the Crimson Tide in 2013-14, both athletically and academically. In the gym, the Raleigh, N.C., native earned the 2014 Honda Cup, which goes to the nation's top female collegiate athlete. In the classroom, she was named the Capital One Academic All-America of the Year, an honor that spans all sports and genders. Alabama is now the only school in the history of the Academic All-America of the Year to win the honor three years in a row (Brooke Pancake, 2012; Barrett Jones, 2013; and Jacob 2014).

Jacob was also one of a school-record seven student-athletes to win an NCAA Postgraduate Scholarship in 2014, joining Sarah DeMeo (gymnastics), Diandra Milliner (gymnastics), Daniil Proskura (men's tennis), Mary Anne Daines (women's tennis), Cory Whitsett (men's golf) and Stephanie Meadow (women's golf). The Tide's 2014 tally led the nation and gives UA a four-year total of 20 NCAA Postgraduates Scholarships, which leads the SEC and is just one behind Stanford's total for the NCAA Division I lead.

Alabama also led the nation in Capital One Academic All-American honors in 2013-14, tallying a school-record 13 honors overall. With its record number of Academic All-Americans in 2013-14, Alabama made a jump in the national rankings. The Tide moved from 13th all-time in NCAA Division I to tied for seventh with 127. Alabama also moved up a place when it comes to honors since 2000 with 91, one behind third-place Penn State.

Jones, who closed out his tenure at the Capstone by leading Alabama to the 2012 BCS National Football

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ACADEMICS

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Championship, won the NCAA Top X award, given annually to the top 10 senior student-athletes among all NCAA sports, in January.

On a conference level, Whitsett led the way for the Crimson Tide and the SEC after being named the male 2013-14 Southeastern Conference H. Boyd McWhorter Scholar-Athlete of the Year, earning a $15,000 postgraduate scholarship in the process. Whitsett was also one of five Alabama student-athletes named SEC Scholar-Athlete of the Year for their respective sports, giving Alabama the most honors of any school in the league.
FROZEN TIDE

Crimson Tide takes Ice Bucket Challenge to fight ALS

By Aaron Sutters
Sports Writer

Chances are you’ve seen the Ice Bucket Challenge making its way across all forms of social media.

The campaign, designed to raise awareness and money for research to find a cure for the disease myotrophic lateral sclerosis, made its way to the University of Alabama on Tuesday when Nick Saban and the UA football team accepted the challenge to have ice water poured over their collective heads.

Following Tuesday’s practice, the team gathered underneath a balcony of the Mal Moore Athletic Building and a series of 18 Gatorade water buckets filled with ice water were poured onto their heads.

After completing the challenge, Saban immediately challenged West Virginia senator Joe Manchin, former Alabama running back Mark Ingram, media personality Paul Finebaum and Florida head coach Will Muschamp.

“[Joe] was really good that our team had enough interest to want to do that, to create awareness for ALS,” Saban said, “...I’m really excited that so many people have taken an interest in this, and it’s raised quite a bit of money and awareness to maybe affect this disease that affects a lot of people, including our Kevin Turner, who was a great player here and a great player in the NFL.

“We’ll certainly do our share in making a contribution to help that cause.”

The players said it was a chance to bond as a team and do something good.

“That means more than a lot of things we’ve ever done as a team,” junior center Ryan Kelly said. “As a team, we can get off the field and help a great cause. It’s something bigger than what we are.”

“I think it was awesome, especially anytime you can dump water on coach Saban,” senior defensive back Jarrick Williams said.

Getting in shape

Senior middle linebacker Trey DePriest hasn’t been himself lately. He sprained his knee during the second practice of camp and has spent the rest of the time alternately not stressing the knee while also trying to lead the defense.

DePriest missed more than a week of practice with the sprained knee, but he played in the scrimmage Saturday.

“He’s pretty much full-speed now,” Saban said. “He was pretty much full-speed on Saturday. We’ve been working with him on the conditioning aspect.

“When you reach this point of the season, he’s going to have to play himself in shape. I told him (Tuesday), I said, ‘You’re going to have to push yourself in practice like you never have before, because that’s the only way you’re going to get in shape, because you’re not going have to have camp to go back to.’

“I think he’ll do that. And when we play these speed-ball teams, we might have to play more guys until we get him to that point.”

Sophomore Reuben Foster and freshman Shaun Dion Hamilton have practiced extensively at middle linebacker this season, especially during DePriest’s limited availability early during camp.

With Alabama’s relative inexperience at inside linebacker, DePriest is one of the more important members of the defense.

“Yeah, when he’s out there, he’s a guy that can fill the hole and you’ll know he’s out there, because he’s out there making calls left and right, motions and all that,” Williams said. “So he’s really a loud guy.”

Injury update

Sophomore defensive lineman A’Shawn Robinson, junior offensive lineman Dominick Jackson and tight end Kurt Freitag remained out of Tuesday’s practice.

Saban said he hopes to ease Robinson (sprained knee) and Jackson (sprained ankle) back into practice at some point this week.

Reach Aaron Sutters at aaron@tidesports.com or at 205-722-0229.
April 27 tornado 'softened' Nick Saban, ensured 'he would never leave,' author Lars Anderson says

By: Bob Carlton

Birmingham, Alabama -- The April 27, 2011, tornado that devastated Tuscaloosa had an immediate and lasting impact on Alabama coach Nick Saban, creating a bond with the community that ensured he would finish his coaching career with the Crimson Tide, the author of the new book "The Storm and The Tide" says.

"I thought that he would never leave Tuscaloosa because of the storm and because of how it knitted him and (his wife) Terry into the community," Lars Anderson, whose book comes out Tuesday, said in an interview with AL.com. "If not for the storm, he may have left already. But he's going to retire there. . . .

"For the first time in his career, it made him feel like he's a member of a community," Anderson added. "He's been sort of a mercenary coach throughout his career, jumping around from job to job, always in search of something better. And he finally realized everything he wants is right here."

Anderson, who lives in Cahaba Heights and is a journalism professor at UA, will sign copies of "The Storm and the Tide" at 7 p.m. Tuesday at the Books-A-Million in Brookwood Village in Homewood.

In the weeks following the storm, Anderson wrote an eight-page cover story for Sports Illustrated, "Terror, Tragedy and Hope in Tuscaloosa," that became the genesis for his book, which chronicles what it was like for those who were in the tornado's path, how they grieved the loss of loved ones, and how they began to rebuild the city.

The first time Saban was able to gather his players together after the storm, Anderson writes in the book, he told them they had to support the community that had always supported them.

"In many ways," Anderson writes, "the effort was much like Saban's coaching philosophy: Tackle one task at a time -- remove a tree, console a broken survivor, bring food to a victim -- and then take one step forward and confront the next job. And the next. And the next."

The tornado, Anderson said in his interview with AL.com, brought out a compassionate side in Saban that few people get to see.

"I think it softened his harder edges," Anderson said. "Immediately after the storm, he started talking with increasing eloquence about the importance of relationships, of being of service to others, and in a 48-hour period after the storm, I would venture to guess that he hugged more people than anyone ever has in the history of this state.

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"He is a guy who is usually achingly ill-at-ease in small groups, really bad. So this forced him out of his comfort zone. And Terry Saban has said several times that in the wake of the storm was the first time he quit thinking about football since he started playing when he was 11 years old. . . .

"Also, it expanded his circle of friends from five to 10," Anderson added. "It doesn't sound like a lot, but he let more people into his life. And it made him realize the power that he wields in this state and really just how he can comfort people in a way that no one else can, as the head coach at Alabama."
How will college football panel pick top teams?

By Ralph D. Russo
The Associated Press

Might as well call it Mission: Impossible. Starting in mid-October, a panel of 13 football experts will begin meeting once a week to determine the four teams who will compete for the national championship in the first College Football Playoff. Their goal is to choose the four best teams in the nation at the end of the regular season.

But how does someone answer a question for which there will almost always be more than one correct answer?

“We need both faith and reason,” said committee member and West Virginia athletic director Oliver Luck. “We have to use our logical skills and the deductive skills that the people in that room have. But the college football world needs a little bit of faith that we all check our pasts at the door and we go about this in a very straightforward and honest manner.”

Where the College Football Playoff has the Bowl Championship Series beat is simply the number four. Twice as many teams will now enter the postseason with a chance to win the national championship. Most fans agree this is progress over an old system were deserving teams were left out.

How will the new panel decide on top teams? Will so-called great teams still be left out? As its first season unfolds, the group could create an all-new set of questions about whether the process works.

The human element

The biggest change in the process is that people—not computer rankings—are solely in charge of teams’ fates. So the panel will have to learn how to effectively debate, compromise and even account for bias.

“This small number of human beings sitting across the table from each other can evaluate nuances to a much greater degree than the old system could,” said Bill Hancock, the executive director of the College Football Playoff. “There can be give and take. There can be questions and answers. That element just wasn't a part of the old system.”

The down side of that is with so few people, if there is bias in the room it can have a greater impact on the final decision. If someone consistently overrates the importance of offense over defense, for example, that can affect the process more so than when the teams were chosen by more than 100 voters in Harris and coaches' polls.

“With 13 people, if somebody really has it in their head that no matter what South Carolina is not that good, if one person votes them No. 15 even if everybody else has them around the top four, they’re probably not going to get in,” said Bill Connelly, a writer for SB Nation whose statistical rating system called F+ can be found at www.footballoutsiders.com.

On Oct. 21, the committee will release its first weekly rankings, a top 25 that will allow fans to see what the panel is collectively thinking down the stretch of the season.

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PLAYOFF
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Hancock has said the weekly rankings were a nod to college football tradition, and transparency. The ranking give fans a way to assess to some degree where teams stand in the championship race and they shine light on the process.

Maybe a little too much light?
"The obsession with transparency drives me crazy," Connelly said. "I get the idea that it's good to know how somebody came up with what they came up with, but they have gone overboard. It's going to make it a far more painful process for them."

Dave Bartoo, a data analyst, consultant and founder of www.cfbmatrix.com, said he anticipates the selection committee will rank teams similarly to other poll panels. Traditionally, college football poll voters tend to create tiers based on the number of losses and wins and adjust the teams within those tiers, making some alterations to account for perceived schedule strength.

"I feel that's what should happen because the committee don't have enough information to do any better than the people who have been doing it," Bartoo said.

Strength of schedule
The committee has been instructed to place an emphasis on strength of schedule, head-to-head matchups and conference championships.

Strength of schedule has become a particular buzz phrase this season, with coaches and conferences already touting the virtues of their lineup.

Bartoo said it's misguided to emphasize strength of schedule because calculating it accurately is not possible, no matter how it's done.

"A lot of people want to believe that strength of schedule is a valid stat for separating teams," he said. "It's not the best one or the worst one. They are all about a coin flip."

"There are not enough data points in college football to make a good sample size to study strength of schedule because teams play so few games and the best teams rarely play each other," Bartoo said.

Analyzing the data
The committee will have a virtual bank vault full of data at their fingertips, provided by a company called SportsSource Analytics, to help them judge teams.

Bartoo is concerned about information overload and the committee using numbers that have not been properly vetted.

"Who is helping with oversight on that?" he said. "Can the playoff committee call me? We think this metric is valuable, can you back it up for that?"

The BCSToght college football fans there is no perfect way of picking the best teams. That won't change with the College Football Playoff.

"They will do the best they can and I'm confident they'll pick the best four teams," Hancock said. "Some other group of 13 people might come up with different teams, but our group will spend a season evaluating teams unlike any other group with fall. More time watching video and analyzing data than any other group."

"But I certainly know that another group of 13 might come up with something different."
Illinois Division I athletics programs heavily subsidized by students’ fees
Students fund Illinois D-I athletics at small schools

By Jared Hopkins

In 2008, Southern Illinois University Edwardsville began its transition from Division II to Division I athletics. Today, its men's basketball games are broadcast to millions and ticket sales are at historic highs. Donations more than tripled in 2013 from five years earlier.

But joining the big boys comes with a cost — one that has placed a growing burden on students at the small school about 20 miles outside of St. Louis.

In 2005, the fee students pay to help fund the athletic department was $113 per year. One of almost a dozen fees students pay, it reached $235 by 2009. This school year it will be $352.80. Student fees account for more than half of the athletic department's revenue.

The powerhouses of college athletics — from the Big Ten to the Pac-12 — have so much money from ticket sales, television contracts and other sources that they don't need student fees. But that's not the case for many schools in Division I, including some in Illinois, where students are beginning to head back to college and families are opening their checkbooks.

SIU Edwardsville, Western Illinois in Macomb and Chicago State are examples of mid-major schools — they all have fewer than 12,000 undergraduates — hoping to stay relevant by turning to students for the cash they need, even if those students don't have a say in how much they contribute or even have an interest in attending games.

"I don't care to subsidize soccer teams and swim teams. That's not doing any benefit to my kids' education," said Jeff Smith, a business professor at South Carolina Upstate who has been critical of the use of student fees. "College presidents and boards feel they've got to be in this arms race."

The Tribune reviewed fees for five years for the nine public institutions in Illinois with Division I programs, plus the most recent financial reports schools must submit separately to the NCAA. At most schools, students are required to pay a flurry of fees in addition to their tuition. They cover everything from health care to textbooks to technology with the biggest usually for athletics.

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The Tribune found that eight schools, all except the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, relied on student fees for at least a quarter of the athletic department revenue over the five-year period ending with the 2013 academic year. That portion ranged from 27 percent at Eastern Illinois and Chicago State to 59 percent at SIU Edwardsville.

At Illinois State, that figure was 49 percent. Illinois-Chicago was 47 percent, SIU Carbondale was 43 percent, Northern Illinois was 36 percent and Western Illinois was 31 percent.

When student fee revenue is combined with direct support from schools — lump sums the university provides, as opposed to "generated revenue" like ticket sales — the athletic budgets show that the two figures account for more than half of income for all schools but U. of I. Those five-year combined totals ranged from 55 percent at NIU to 84 percent at SIU Edwardsville.

School officials said athletic fees — as well as their recent increases — are necessary because of state funding drops and required to compete at top levels. They also said athletics are an integral aspect of experiencing college, similar to extracurricular activities that may receive fees such as the theater and music productions, and should be a shared cost.

"Intercollegiate athletics is really part of the DNA that we have here at NIU and has been for a number of years," NIU spokesman Brad Hoge said. "All of our students get into every single athletic event for free — basketball, football, soccer. That's one of the benefits."

In contrast, the biggest schools rarely charge athletic fees. U. of I. reported that about 5 percent of its total athletic revenue comes from fees and direct support from the school. The $34 fee has gone unchanged since 1997, according to the school.

The next cheapest fee is at Eastern Illinois, which has kept it at $207, unchanged since 2008. The largest is at SIU Carbondale, which charges more than $600 per year, although it increased by less than 10 percent. The largest increase over the five-year period belonged to Chicago State, which rose by 54 percent to $240 from $156.

Besides Chicago State, four other schools — Western Illinois, SIU Edwardsville, Northern Illinois and Illinois State — have seen their fee increases outstrip inflation significantly from 2009 to 2013.
At the same time, records show, paychecks for coaches and administrators running the athletic departments are rising at most of these schools. At Western Illinois, salary costs for coaches increased from $1.9 million to $2.8 million.

Dave Ridpath, a professor at Ohio University who studies how student fees fund college athletics, said it is worrisome when fees increase and constitute such a large portion of athletic departments.

"A school can have a robust, successful program at the level the university mission dictates without imposing a regressive tax on students that is not going down but continually going up — to try to be something they will never be," he said.

Chicago State spokesman Thomas Wogan said school officials inherited an underfunded athletic department and are trying to improve it. He said fees also help provide recreational facilities like the gym and pool used by students not playing sports.

Generally speaking, students provide input to fee increases through student groups, surveys and participation in advisory committees, according to the Illinois Board of Higher Education. They are set by schools' boards of trustees. Many schools provide fee information online, and in 2010 the federal government began requiring schools to report separate figures for tuition and fees.

Still, Ridpath described the level of transparency as "terrible."

"Most students and parents have no idea what goes into fees, and bills are not itemized," he said. "If athletics is so important to overall health and promotion of the institution, why not be transparent about the bill and what students are paying?"

Brad Hewitt, who became SIU Edwardsville athletic director in 2002, said fees are common among peers in the Ohio Valley Conference. He said Division I competition benefits all students, but with a cost.

"The reality is the general public perceives a Division I institution as a higher quality than a Division II," he said.
At SIU Carbondale, officials point out that the athletic-fee burden carried by students has been held in check over the last five years. The fee has risen 9.45 percent, and the overall percentage that student fees contribute to the athletic budget has remained steady. An increase in the athletic fee was done to offset drops in enrollment.

"It has been the result of a consistent, focused effort to reduce costs wherever possible, and every unit on campus has faced similar challenges to continue providing service to the students with smaller budgets," SIU Carbondale athletic director Mario Moccia said.

Illinois distinguishes itself from other schools in the state with the most undergraduates (32,281), the biggest athletic budget ($80 million), 21 varsity sports and the luxury of millions from media rights and Big Ten distribution.

"We have advantages that ... all the other state schools don't have," Illini spokesman Kent Brown said.

Still, Illinois is one of just two members of the Big Ten that charge athletic fees. In 2013, the school reported fee revenue of $3 million. It is used to pay off debt service for sports stadium renovations, Brown said.

SIU Edwardsville began competing in sports during the 1967-68 school year, a decade after the institution was formed. The Cougars would capture a number of championships in Division II in the 1970s and 1980s.

But recruiting and academic scandals forced an overhaul of the program and sent it into decline. It wasn't until Hewitt's tenure that the Cougars returned to consistent success. It began exploring whether moving to Division I was possible and became fully certified in 2012.

Students may not have noticed, but their fees played a role in that success. Student athletic fees increased by 41 percent from the 2009 to 2013 school years, from $235 to $332. The spike in the fee and increased enrollment brought in $4.6 million in 2013 for the athletics department, a 44 percent rise from 2009.
Hewitt said fees — and the increases, however substantial — were needed because competition at a higher level requires additional investment: more travel, for example. He also said the school is hobbled by the tuition freeze that locks tuition for freshmen for five years at all schools in Illinois.

Reaction has been a financial boon. Ticket sales have increased — the $87,000 in 2013 was a 60 percent spike from five years earlier. And Hewitt said the school has benefited from more applications, more students and additional donations. All this, he said, while keeping a high graduation rate among athletes.

"You just look at it from exposure for the institution, brand awareness," he said. "We have live broadcasts on Fox Sports Midwest and reach 5 million households."

UIC spokesman Bill Burton said fees provide a universal benefit to students.

"Schools like ours — with no football program, and without a multimillion-dollar conference television contract — must utilize student fees to sustain their athletic programs," he said.

ISU athletic director Larry Lyons said the school’s leadership believes the cost of all activities, including sports, should be shared by students. But, he said, "it's also incumbent on the athletic department to do its best to raise other revenues."

Matt Bierman, Western Illinois budget director, said the limitations in finding money for the Leathernecks' $12 million budget is a small fan base — the school has about 11,000 students — and that only three of 20 varsity sports charge admission.

Bierman said fees rose for a various reasons, including needing to provide scholarships, offsetting drops in enrollment, and covering a drop in a state appropriation that goes to its athletic department.

"Given where we want our athletic department to be on a competitive level, we decided to invest more money in our program," he said.
Tommy Bell, who became Western Illinois' athletic director a year ago, said he is leading a five-year strategy to revitalize its finances. Plans include creating ticket packages common at other schools, and he's already hired someone in Chicago for fundraising.

He said he wants the school to reduce its dependence on student fees and direct institutional support, but he acknowledged that a small rural school faces limitations.

"We're putting things in place, but you can't click your fingers all at one time," Bell said. "At a lot of these mid-majors, student fees are imperative."

Looking into the future, Ridpath said problems could arise because schools outside of the major conferences will try to keep pace with the richer schools, but doing so will probably mean either dropping sports or raising fees.

"How do you combat this? You be who you are. I don't agree with the claim that being (Division I) football — frankly for many in name only — is some kind of marketing and promotion panacea for an institution, especially for schools that will never have a chance to realistically ever compete in big time Division I football."

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<th>Student fees as percent of total revenue</th>
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<td>For 5 fiscal years, from 2009 through 2013</td>
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<th>University</th>
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Sources: Tribune analysis of data from Illinois Board of Higher Education and the schools.
SIU Carbondale athletic fees
Per student, by school year

Change from 2000-01 269% 2014-15 fee $612

Sources: Tribune analysis of data from Illinois Board of Higher Education and the schools

Illinois State athletic fees
Per student, by school year

Change from 2000-01 125% 2014-15 fee $583

Sources: Tribune analysis of data from Illinois Board of Higher Education and the schools

Northern Illinois athletic fees
Per student, by school year

Change from 2000-01 122% 2014-15 fee $542

Sources: Tribune analysis of data from Illinois Board of Higher Education and the schools

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SIU Edwardsville athletic fees
Per student, by school year

Change from 2000-01 306% 2014-15 fee $353

Sources: Tribune analysis of data from Illinois Board of Higher Education and the schools

Western Illinois athletic fees
Per student, by school year

Change from 2000-01 266% 2014-15 fee $523

Sources: Tribune analysis of data from Illinois Board of Higher Education and the schools

UIC athletic fees
Per student, by school year

Change from 2000-01 55% 2014-15 fee $295

Sources: Tribune analysis of data from Illinois Board of Higher Education and the schools
Chicago State athletic fees
Per student, by school year

Change from 2000-01 195% 2014-15 fee $257

Sources: Tribune analysis of data from Illinois Board of Higher Education and the schools @ChiTribGraphics

Eastern Illinois athletic fees
Per student, by school year

Change from 2000-01 113% 2014-15 fee $207

Sources: Tribune analysis of data from Illinois Board of Higher Education and the schools @ChiTribGraphics

U. of I. athletic fees
Per student, by school year

Change from 2000-01 0% 2014-15 fee $34

Sources: Tribune analysis of data from Illinois Board of Higher Education and the schools @ChiTribGraphics