SEPTEMBER 19, 2014

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SPORTS 57
University of Alabama Trustees select first female president pro tem

By: Ed Enoch

Karen Brooks, the University of Alabama board of trustees' new president pro tempore, is the first woman to serve in the role in the institution's 183-year history.

Brooks, of Tuscaloosa, was selected during the board's meeting Friday to replace outgoing President Pro Tem Paul Bryant Jr. Bryant served three term as pro tem, the maximum allowed by the board's bylaws.

"I really want to thank all of you for your vote of confidence. I am extremely humbled by the responsibility," Brooks said.

Brooks, the chairwoman of the physical properties committee, praised Bryant's leadership. The son of the legendary football coach received a standing ovation at the meeting.

"I know I have huge shoes to fill, and I am going to do everything I can to get my feet to grow fast," Brooks said.

Friday's meeting was the last for trustee Andria Scott Hurst, who is leaving the board because of a mandatory retirement age of 70. Trustees are required to retire following the annual meeting after their 70th birthday, according to board rules. Scott represented the state's 7th congressional district since 2001.

The board nominated Barbara Humphrey, a UAB alumna, to replace Hurst. Humphrey's appointment must still be confirmed by the Alabama Senate.

During Friday's meeting, the board also approved fiscal year 2015 budgets for its three campuses and the system office as well as a series of construction-related resolutions including increasing budgets for the renovation of Thomas-Sewell Stadium and demolitions on the Bryce Hospital campus.

The UA operating budget of $785 million for FY 2015 would be an increase of about 6.4 percent over 2014. Revenues are expected to increase by $63 million and expenses by $47 million.

The University of Alabama at Birmingham's operating budget for 2015 would be about $1 billion, and the University of Alabama in Huntsville's operating budget for the year beginning Oct. 1 would be about $215.3 million. The proposed budget for UA System office would be about $18.5 million.

The board approved a resolution to increase the budget for the renovations and additions of Sewell-Thomas Stadium from $35 million to $42.6 million and award a construction contract to Rabren General Contractors Inc. of Auburn as the low bidder for the construction. The increase

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was the result of a variety of factors, including higher than expected bids for the construction, according to the firm managing the project.

The trustees approved increasing the budget for the planned demolition on the Bryce Hospital campus from $3.8 million to $4.4 million based on an expansion of the scope of the work. The demolition work includes sections of the outermost wings of the former Bryce Hospital main building and 12 other building on the historic campus. The resolution would also grant authority to award contracts to the lowest responsible bidders for the work.

The board also approved the architectural design for a new classroom building planned for the west side of the historic Bryce campus off Hackberry Lane and changes that would increase the size to 83,798 square feet and the budget by roughly $576,000 to $32 million. The change would add two corridors in the building to improve access and circulation, increasing its size.

The board also gave preliminary approval of plans to demolish the existing Zeta Tau Alpha sorority house and the nearby Gama Phi Beta chapter house and construct a new 40,000-square-foot, $13.8 million ZTA house at the location. The construction would be funded by a loan from UA, which would be repaid by the sorority.

The trustees also authorized negotiations for an architectural agreement for the planned retail center on Bryant Drive, which will be at the former site of the Corner store and current location of Bryant Dance Studio. The $5.2-million center would house the Supe Store now in Tutwiler Hall next door and a Starbucks. The top ranked firms are Herrington Architects, CMH Architects Inc., and Hendon Huckestein Architects, all of Birmingham.
UA plans budget of $785M for 2015

Trustees make changes to cover Bryce demolitions

By Ed Enoch
Staff Writer

Committees of the University of Alabama System board of trustees approved a $785 million operating budget for the Capstone in the upcoming fiscal year and budget revisions for demolition projects on the Bryce Hospital campus.

The resolutions will be considered by the full board on Friday.

The UA operating budget for fiscal year 2015 would be an increase of about 6.4 percent over 2014. Revenues from all funds for UA are expected to be $875 million.

"A lot of it on this campus is just growth," said Ray Hayes.

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UA'S FISCAL STANDING

Operating budget: $875 million, a 6.4 percent increase over 2014.
State appropriations: about $2.9 million, a 3.7 percent increase.
Revenue: increased by about $12 million, or 8 percent.
Income: projected to increase by $89 million.
Expenses: expected to increase by about $47 million.

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BUDGET

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the system's executive vice chancellor of finance and operations.

The university announced earlier this week its fall enrollment of 36,155 yet again set a new record. The enrollment for the fall represents a 3.7 percent increase over 2013, which also posted record numbers.

In the proposed UA budget, state appropriations increased 2.9 percent, or about $2.9 million.

The system also saw roughly an 8 percent increase, about $12 million, in revenues from auxiliary services such as housing, book store sales and parking services.

Hayes reiterated the system's budgets continued to shift toward generated funds such as tuition and services as the primary revenue source in place of state appropriations, which have generally declined since 2008 despite the gain this year.

At UA, income from tuition and fees, which were increased this fall, are projected to increase by $89 million. System officials said in June the tuition hike of 4 percent was necessary to offset growth in expenses.

"We put our students first; we are very focused on affordability," Hayes said.

Expenses are expected to increase by about $47 million, according to Lynda Gilbert, UA's vice president of financial affairs.

Among the increases budgeted for the upcoming fiscal year were $11.7 million for faculty and staff merit-based raises; about $1.3 million related benefits and health insurance for retirees and the Affordable Care Act; net scholarship increases of $7.8 million; and an increase of approximately $12.4 million for supplies and other expenses.

"Just like anyone else, our utility bill has gone up, our supplies have gone up..." Gilbert said.

The University of Alabama at Birmingham's operating budget for 2015 would be about $1 billion, an increase of about 2.9 percent. The University of Alabama in Huntsville's operating budget for the year beginning Oct. 1 would be about $215.3 million, an increase of about 15 percent.

The proposed budget for UA System office would be about $18.5 million, an increase of 2 percent over fiscal year 2014.

The board's Physical Properties Committee approved a resolution to change the scope and increase the budget for the planned demolition of the outermost wings of the former Bryce Hospital main building and outbuildings on the historic campus.

The budget would increase from $3.8 million to roughly $4.4 million based on changes to the estimated cost of the work to remove the wings from the main building.

Mike Lanier, president of Hoar Program Management, said the demolition would include sections of the historic building that were in poor condition. The proposed budget increase would cover demolition of sections of the building, which were not originally included in the work.

The resolution would also grant authority to award contracts to the lowest responsible bidders for the work.

Demolition of sections of the north, east and west wings of the main Bryce Building would be in phase one of the demolition. The demolition would not include the amusement hall rotunda north on the north side of the main building.

Phase two would include demolition of 12 structures, including the dairy barn, green house, engineer's office, morgue and piggery.

The properties committee also approved the architectural design for a planned classroom building on the west side of the historic Bryce

Robert Witt, chancellor of the University of Alabama system, speaks during a ribbon-cutting ceremony at the dedication of Sid McDonald Hall on Thursday.

STAFF PHOTO \ MICHELLE LEPIANKA CARTER

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The proposed budget for UA System office would be about $18.5 million, an increase of 2 percent over fiscal year 2014.

campus that would increase the size of the new building by 11,298 square feet and the budget by roughly $576,000 to $32 million. The change would add two corridors in the building to improve access and circulation, increasing its size to 83,798 square feet.

The committee also gave preliminary approval of plans to demolish the existing Zeta Tau Alpha sorority house and the nearby Gamma Phi Beta chapter house, which is relocating to a new building on Bryant Drive, and construct a new 40,000-square-foot ZTA house at the location. The estimated budget for the project is $13.8 million, which will be covered by a loan from UA to the sorority.

Before its meeting Thursday afternoon, the board gathered for the dedication of Sid McDonald Hall, the new system administrative building named for the Arab businessman and former trustee. The building was completed and occupied by the system earlier this year.

The 38,243-square-foot building on the east side of campus consolidates offices formerly housed in buildings on Queen City Avenue, Pinelhurst Street and Bryce Lawn Drive in Tuscaloosa.

Chancellor Robert Witt, along with trustees Paul Bryant Jr. and Finis St. John, praised McDonald’s service and leadership during his time on the board as well as his philanthropy, including a gift to help fund construction of the $13.2 million building.

“I don’t know what I will do next for the university, but I shall find something,” McDonald said. “I don’t think by contributing to this fine building, I have paid my debt to the university.”
Stadium expansion project could see budget increase

By Ed Enoch
Staff writer

The University of Alabama board of trustees is considering a proposal to increase the budget of the renovation and expansion of Sewell-Thomas stadium by more than $7.5 million.

The Physical Properties Committee on Thursday approved the proposal to increase the budget from $35 million to $42.6 million and award a construction contract to Rabren General Contractors Inc., of Auburn, as the low bidder for the construction. The resolution will be considered by the full board today.

The low bid for the work was $37.1 million, which was higher than the budget estimate of about $29.8 million. The increases were the result of a variety of factors, according to Mike Lanier of HOAR Program Management.

"There is not a smoking gun," Lanier said.

The bulk of in the increases have been in construction costs. Among the factors, Lanier said the university received only three bids for the project and elements of the budget estimate did not accurately reflect the market value for the work.

The trustees approved Davis Architects of Birmingham as the design firm and a preliminary budget of $30 million for the renovation and expansion in September 2013. At the time, the estimate of the construction package was $25 million.

The board voted to increase the budget to $35 million in April based on current market conditions for the construction package.

Crew began demolishing the old stadium earlier this year. The project is scheduled to be completed by November 2015.

The expansion will increase the size of the facility — currently 32,801 square feet — to 129,000 square feet. The renovations and additions at the stadium will include food service areas, restrooms, locker rooms and other areas for players, the press box, seating and the concourse.

The increase in costs will be covered by funds from the Crimson Tide Foundation. The project will be funded by $15 million in revenue bonds and $27.6 million from the Crimson Tide Foundation and gifts.
Agreement is a ‘win-win’

UA trustees approve deal to buy 118 acres of Partlow grounds

By Ed Enoch
Staff Writer

The executive committee of the University of Alabama board of trustees approved a deal Friday to buy about 118 acres of the former Partlow Developmental Center property in Tuscaloosa from the state Department of Mental Health for $32 million.

"I think it is a win-win for the whole state," said David Jackson, the Mental Health Department's chief operating officer.

The agreement will give the university access to new buildings and property on the east side of McFarland Boulevard and help defray some of the department's maintenance costs while maintaining the new Bryce Hospital, which opened this spring with a staff of about 500 and an operating budget of about $32 million.

The trustees met Friday via conference call.

Under the deal, which is still being finalized, the university will pay $3.2 million annually for 10 years. The first $3.2 million is due at closing, UA President Judy Bonner said. No closing date has been set, according to Jackson and university officials.

"I am personally really excited about this. I think it is a good move for Mental Health and a way to support their programs, but from a long-term standpoint for the University of Alabama, I think it is an outstanding move," board President Pro Tem Paul Bryant Jr. said.

The agreement would allow UA to devote the "immediate core of our campus" for student-centered activity, Bonner said.

The university may initially relocate auxiliary services such as grounds, fleet services, fuel services and garage services to the property, according to the agreement summary released by UA after the vote.

"This additional land so close to our campus will give us additional flexibility with how we provide support services and means we can devote more of our core campus to academic and student life activities," Bonner said in a statement released after the vote.

SEE BRYCE | 7A

Part of the former Partlow Development Center property and location of the new Bryce Hospital is shown. The university will maintain the hospital facility under the agreement with the state.

The university will lease 42 acres and the new Bryce Hospital, opened earlier this year, back to the state for $1 a year as part of a 99-year lease.

To see more photos of the new Bryce Hospital, visit www.tuscaloosanews.com.
BRYCE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1A

"We look forward to continuing the very positive relationship we have developed with the Department of Mental Health during the construction of their new hospital."

UA purchased the historic Bryce property in 2010, paying nearly $77 million for the 168-acre property and another $10 million for environmental cleanup and historic preservation. The Capstone also agreed to manage construction of the new $81 million hospital.

The agreement approved Friday includes the old Partlow buildings and the new 268,000-square-foot, 268-bed hospital.

As part of the deal, the university will lease back 42 acres of property along University Boulevard to the state at the rate of $1 a year for the operation of Bryce Hospital. Under the 99-year lease, the university will maintain the hospital with the Department of Mental Health reimbursing UA for the expense, Bonner said. The Department of Mental Health will be responsible for the daily housekeeping and information technology functions of the hospital, Jackson said.

UA will maintain the rest of the facility and the grounds. "They are extremely familiar with all the major systems and everything," Jackson said, noting UA's management of the construction.

The arrangement will allow the state to keep the hospital in a "high state of function," he said. "The whole point is to try to keep the new hospital as pristine and new as it was the day we moved in," Jackson said. "Over the years, if you run into a budget crunch, maintenance goes first because you have to care for the patients."

The state will also get continued use of a warehouse located on the north side of the property for five years, according to the agreement. The agreement does not include the cemetery on the Partlow grounds, which will remain the property of the state.

Discussion of the possibility of an agreement to purchase Partlow began as early as 2010 with the purchase of the old Bryce property but did not begin in earnest until after the state closed the facility in 2011, Jackson said.

As part of the 2010 Bryce agreement, the university was required to preserve the historic main building. No similar provision exists for the buildings on the north side of Ruby Tyler Parkway, said Jackson, who added that the historic Partlow admissions building was incorporated into the new hospital.

"We don't have the same historical significance," Jackson said of the remaining Partlow buildings.

Reach Ed Enoch at ed.enoch@tuscaloosanews.com or 205-722-0209.
Jo Bonner to speak at American Legion event


Bonner, who resigned from Congress last year, is the vice chancellor for government relations and economic development for the University of Alabama System.

The seminar, sponsored by the American Legion McCravy-Moody Post 34, will provide information about programs offered by the veterans service organization. The programs include scholarships, Boys and Girls State, baseball leagues and oratory contests.

The seminar begins at 6:30 p.m. at the Northport Civic Center, 3500 McFarland Blvd. The event is free and open to the public, but reservations are required.

RSVP by emailing americanlegional@gmail.com by noon Sept. 26.
TOP COLLEGES

UAB, UAH ALSO RANKED; SAMFORD, TUSKEGEE, SPRING HILL ON SOUTH REGION LIST.

Paul Gattis | pgattis@al.com

The University of Alabama received the highest ranking among Alabama colleges in one of the nation’s premiere comparisons.

U.S. News & World Report unveiled its 2015 Best Colleges rankings and ranked Alabama in a tie as the nation’s 88th best college in national universities — the top listing of institutions of higher learning.

Auburn University was close behind, tied for 103rd nationally.

The University of Alabama at Birmingham (tied for 149th) and the University of Alabama in Huntsville (tied for 181st) were the only other state colleges listed among national universities.

The magazine defined national universities as offering “a full range of undergraduate majors, plus master’s and doctoral programs. These colleges also are committed to producing ground-breaking research.”

Princeton, Harvard and Yale were listed as the nation’s top three colleges, followed by Columbia, Stanford and the University of Chicago in a tie for fourth.

Samford University, at No. 3 in the South region, received the top ranking in Alabama for regional universities — defined as offering “a full range of undergrad programs and some master’s programs but few doctoral programs.” The University of Montevallo was 37th.

Spring Hill College was tied for 18th in the South region for regional universities rankings. Auburn University-Montgomery and Troy University (tied for 76th) and the University of North Alabama at 81st are the only other Alabama schools in the regional universities rankings.

Tuskegee University is tied for ninth in the South Region for Regional Colleges and the University of Mobile is tied for 25th.
Board stands behind Mabry, will complete financial audit

Mike Cason \ mcason@al.com

After meeting behind closed doors for more than 4 ½ hours on Friday, the Alabama Education Association board of directors said it would stand behind Executive Secretary Henry Mabry.

Board President Anita Gibson read a statement after the meeting, saying the board discussed extensively issues raised in a letter written to board members by former Executive Secretary Paul Hubbert earlier this week.

Hubbert, who led the AEA for more than 40 years, wrote that the organization was in a crisis.

"The board feels that the meeting was productive and has expressed a continued need to remain unified and has pledged to do so," Gibson said. "The board has also expressed continued support for the AEA leadership team.

"A financial audit will be conducted shortly to maintain the confidence of the AEA membership."

Mabry spoke to reporters briefly and deferred to Gibson's statement. He said he was appreciative of the board's support and that the AEA is making budget cuts to live within its means.

Hubbert, in a blistering letter, said the AEA was in a crisis because of declining membership and revenues, shrinking reserves, risky investments and strained relationships with the Legislature.

A three-page attachment to his letter was critical of Mabry's leadership style. Mabry replaced Hubbert when Hubbert retired at the end of 2011.

The board passed some routine matters and then unanimously passed the 2014-2015 budget after Mabry outlined a number of cuts he said were necessary because of reduced revenues.

Mabry said there would be no layoffs, although one temporary position would be eliminated.

One of the concerns raised in Hubbert's letter was a need for better control of spending. The total amount of the budget cut was not immediately available.
AEA supports Mabry despite fiscal warning

By Kim Chandler
The Associated Press

MONTGOMERY - The Alabama Education Association board of directors issued a statement of support for its current secretary Henry Mabry despite a letter from the group's longtime leader saying the organization was in crisis.

But the statement came only after board members met behind closed doors for more than four hours Friday night to discuss concerns raised by former AEA executive secretary Paul Hubbert about AEA's finances and management.

"The board feels the meeting was productive and expressed continued need to remain unified and has pledged to do so. The board has also expressed continued support for the AEA leadership team," AEA President Anita Gibson said in a statement she read shortly after midnight.

The board went into executive session for more than four hours during Friday's
AEA

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regularly scheduled meeting. Gibson said the conversations were extensive, but she did not elaborate.

The board took no action against Mabry. Gibson said the board will have a financial audit conducted of AEA finances. Hubbert had suggested an audit. Gibson said the audit was being done in order to maintain the confidence of AEA members.

Hubbert, in a Tuesday letter to board members, said he was concerned that AEA was being mismanaged. Hubbert, in an interview, said he was especially worried about the organization's dwindling reserve funds and, "to some extent," Mabry's management style.

Hubbert led AEA for more than 40 years and built the association into a political powerhouse.

In an attachment to his letter, Hubbert noted that AEA's savings are down to $6.2 million, about half what they were when he retired in 2011.

He noted that spending the reserve funds occurred before AEA had to stop collecting dues by payroll deduction. The ending of dues checkoff is a financial blow for AEA, and the financial impact of that loss is just beginning this year, Hubbert said.

Alabama Education Association Executive Director Henry Mabry addresses members of the Alabama Education Retirees Association in April 2013.

Hubbert said the goal of his letter was to get AEA to live within its means, something he said the organization hasn't done in three years.

Mabry had no comment after the meeting.

Asked if he was appreciative of the statement of support from the board, Mabry paused and said he was.

Board members also approved AEA's budget for the next fiscal year. Mabry said it was bare-bones budget. He said the organization had higher spending this year because of expenses associated with the 2014 elections.
Birmingham set to court World Games officials

EYEING 2017 NATIONAL SENIOR GAMES

The Birmingham-Hoover metro area is in a "good position" to land the 2017 National Senior Games, Alabama Sports Foundation Executive Director Gene Hallman told the Hoover Area Chamber of Commerce this week.

The National Senior Games Association, which every two years puts on the largest multisport event in the world for people over age 50, made a site visit to the Birmingham area in June, and the Alabama Sports Foundation made a presentation to the association's board of directors in Denver in July, Hallman said after his speech to the Hoover chamber.

"I think we've got a really solid chance of landing it," Hallman said. "We had a very successful site visit, and we're further analyzing our ability to host these very prestigious games. I am cautiously optimistic that this is going to be a good fit for our community."

The Alabama Sports Foundation now must talk with the Birmingham mayor and council, Jefferson County Commission and private partners about their ability to provide financial support to help bring the Senior Games here, Hallman said.

The National Senior Games had 10,881 athletes compete in Cleveland in 2013 and is headed to Minnesota in 2015.

Sports in the 2015 games include archery, badminton, basketball, bowling, cycling, golf, horseshoes, pickleball, race walking, racquetball, road racing, shuffleboard, softball, swimming, table tennis, track and field, a triathlon and volleyball.

Promoters for the 2015 National Senior Games said the event will draw 35,000 people to Minneapolis, Bloomington and St. Paul, and generate $40 million for the economy there.

"We think our opportunity is great, and we're excited to showcase our city to the International World Games Association," said Myers, who is part of the committee in charge of the World Games bid.

Although the agenda for the World Games officials isn't finalized, one potential stop is Tuscaloosa for Alabama's Oct. 18 game against Texas A&M.

"We want to expose them to sports fans in the state of Alabama," he said.

Birmingham is currently one of three cities in the running to host the World Games in 2021, along with Lima, Peru, and Ufa, Russia. The list of cities has dwindled from the time Birmingham first began looking into throwing its hat into the ring in February. Santiago, Chile, and Barcelona, Spain, are no longer being considered.

Kathryn Jacoby • kjacoby@al.com

In just a few weeks, Birmingham will roll out the red carpet for World Games Association officials as they make their site selection visit to the Magic City.

Three World Games officials will be in town Oct. 16-19, during which time they'll be shown sites where games and athletes could be hosted, as well as "all that Birmingham has to offer," said Scott Myers, executive director of the Alabama Sports Hall of Fame.

"We think our opportunity is great, and we're excited to showcase our city to the International World Games Association," said Myers, who is part of the committee in charge of the World Games bid.

Although the agenda for the World Games officials isn't finalized, one potential stop is Tuscaloosa for Alabama's Oct. 18 game against Texas A&M.

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Birmingham is currently one of three cities in the running to host the World Games in 2021, along with Lima, Peru, and Ufa, Russia. The list of cities has dwindled from the time Birmingham first began looking into throwing its hat into the ring in February. Santiago, Chile, and Barcelona, Spain, are no longer being considered.
Birmingham is the only U.S. city authorized to make a bid for the 2021 games, and organizers are hopeful the Magic City will be the first U.S. city to play host to the games since Santa Clara, Calif., hosted the inaugural games in 1981.

The World Games executives will also be headed to Samford University, UAB, Birmingham-Southern, the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa, and various other sites around town where games might be held, including Boutwell Auditorium, Oak Mountain and Barber Motorsports.

"We're wanting to showcase the venues we have in Birmingham, while also showing them some of the Southern hospitality the athletes and tourists will experience when they come compete here," Myers said. Oak Mountain, for example, could be a great place to host the archery and orienteering competitions, Myers said.

**Economic Impact**

The World Games, an 11-day event that would include more than 100 countries participating in games including softball, lacrosse, field archery, gymnastics, racquetball, karate, sumo, canoeing and bowling, would have an expected economic impact of $256.5 million in out-of-town dollars, according to the Greater Birmingham Convention and Visitors Bureau.

The operating budget for the event would weigh in at around $75 million, organizers have said, and no new construction would be needed. The metro area already has the venues in place needed to host the games.

"Birmingham has a small footprint for the games, and that's a positive for our city," Myers said. "Athletes and spectators will have a short commute from venue to venue."

One of the most important considerations for the World Games officials will be athlete housing and ease of transport of the athletes to their competitions, Myers explained.

"We've partnered with UAB, Samford University, the University of Alabama and Birmingham-Southern to set up games villages similar to Olympic villages where athletes can stay, have meals, practice and compete," Myers said.

Once the World Games officials are gone, the competition is still far from over. Birmingham's World Games committee will head to Switzerland in January 2015 to make their final pitch to land the event, and World Games executives will make their decision.

"We'll go and make our pitch and we'll be informed the very next day whether or not we won, and where the 2021 World Games will be held," Myers said.

"This is a great opportunity for our city and our state, and we are confident in our bid and what we have to offer," Myers said. "We think Birmingham would be the perfect place to showcase the World Games, and the World Games would be the perfect way to showcase Birmingham."
Mercedes to hire 200 more workers

Company planning to add employees during next year

By Patrick Rupinski
Business Editor

Mercedes-Benz U.S. International in Vance plans to hire another 200 full-time production employees starting next year, the company said Thursday.

Mercedes said in a statement that it has asked Alabama Industrial Development Training to post ads to recruit the workers who will be brought on as needed to build its four current models and a new model that will be added to the auto assembly plant's production next year.

That fifth model has been described as a sportier SUV.

Mercedes said the state will start running the employee recruitment ads this fall and winter and that about 200 jobs are expected to be filled during 2015.

"With the continued success of our SUVs and the favorable customer response for the all-new C-Class, demand for the cars we build here in Vance is greater than ever," said a statement from Jason Hoff, president and CEO of MBUSA, who announced the new jobs to plant employees this week.

See Mercedes | 7A
MERCEDES

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"We are expanding our physical plant to meet that demand, and we need to build out our team with more good people," he said.

"Working through AIDT, we are confident that we'll be able to attract many qualified candidates from across the state, and they will be an invaluable partner for MBUSI through this next phase of hiring.

All job applications will be screened by the state agency, with the most qualified candidates being contacted for interviews, written and practical evaluation and pre-employment training.

The jobs will be advertised in state newspapers and on the AIDT website.

The Mercedes plant in Vance was founded in 1995 and started production in 1997, making the German-based automaker's first sport utility vehicle, the M-Class. The plant later added the GL-Class SUV and the R-Class crossover vehicle to the plant's lineup and this year began production of Mercedes' top-selling model, the C-Class sedan.

In 2013, the plant produced more than 185,000 vehicles. Company officials said they expect to see record production this year and earlier this month, Dieter Zetsche, chairman of Daimler A.G., Mercedes' parent company, said the Vance plant has the capacity to build 300,000 vehicles annually.

MBUSI currently employs about 3,400 employees.
‘A win-win for business’

Chamber of Commerce launches drive to increase sponsorships

By Patrick Rupinski
Business Editor

The Chamber of Commerce of West Alabama kicked off a campaign Wednesday to increase sponsorships of chamber-backed events and programs. Its goal is to raise $275,000 by mid-November to help sponsor chamber initiatives ranging from long-established programs like Adopt-A-School to new ones that will be started in 2015.

Donny Jones, the chamber’s chief operating officer, said more than 100 volunteers will call on members and potential new members to let them know about the programs and events and the different levels of support.

“There are things for all to get involved at all levels,” he said.

Sponsorship levels range from $95 on up and are designed so businesses from the small operations to large corporations can be part of the expanding programs, he said. “We think this is a win-win for the businesses, the chamber and the community.”

The chamber already has received $62,000 in sponsorship pledges with 15 to 20 businesses that have never done

SEE DRIVE | 3B

Judy Bonner, president of the University of Alabama, speaks at Wednesday’s Chamber of Commerce luncheon.

DRIVE
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chamber sponsorships already signing up, Jones said.

Projections indicate that 80 percent of sponsors will be new to the effort, he said, adding that the chamber has a 95 to 98 percent retention rate on existing sponsors coming back each year.

This is the first time the chamber has done a sponsorship drive, called “4th Quarter Drive.” Previously it sought sponsors for individual events and programs. The new approach will allow the chamber to add more programs and events that will benefit the businesses and community, he said.

Among the many existing chamber programs and events are the Minority Business Council, the Women’s Business Council, Leadership Tuscaloosa, the Chamber in Session breakfasts and luncheons with local and state leaders, Young Professionals, Northport Citizen of the Year and numerous networking events.

Jones said new programs that will be added next year include World of Opportunity (a workforce development program); Small Business Roundtable, Entrepreneur of the Year and a 30th anniversary celebration for Adopt-A-School, a program in which local businesses adopt individual public schools helping them with donations and volunteers.

The “4th Quarter Drive” is being co-chaired by Judy Bonner, president of the University of Alabama; and Shane Spiller, president of Spiller Furniture Co.

Chris Williams and Robert Lanoux talk Wednesday at The Zone in Bryant-Denny Stadium during the Chamber of Commerce of West Alabama luncheon for its “4th Quarter Drive” program. The eight-week campaign is designed to boost sponsorship of chamber-backed initiatives.
Bentley creates panel for small businesses

By Phillip Rawls
The Associated Press

MONTGOMERY | Four years after candidate Robert Bentley promised to create a Cabinet-level small business position, Gov. Robert Bentley followed up Monday by appointing a commission to recommend ways the state can help small businesses get started and expand.

Bentley signed an executive order forming the Alabama Small Business Commission. He said it is in place of his 2010 campaign promise to have a Cabinet-level position in his administration to focus on small business.

"This actually does take the place of that. The commission is really better because the commission will be made up of all small businesses," he told reporters after signing the executive order at the Capitol.

Bentley said the commission will be headed by Rosemary Elibash, Alabama director for the National...
PANEL
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1B

Federation of Independent Business and a longtime advocate for small businesses.
Elebash said the commission will do more than write a report. "My commitment is it is not going to be another notebook on the shelf," she said.

Bentley said the commission's recommendations will be presented to the Legislature in 2015 and 2016.

In addition to Bentley, three other Republican officeholders, Lt. Gov. Kay Ivey, House Speaker Mike Hubbard and Senate President Pro Tem Del Marsh, are making appointments to the 21-member commission. All four are standing for election Nov. 4.

Bentley's Democratic opponent, Parker Griffith, responded to the announcement by noting that in July, Alabama was the only state with an unemployment rate higher than a year ago.

"Alabama is the only state in America where unemployment is going up and, after four years in office, the best idea Robert Bentley has is to create a commission. We are in the midst of the Bentley Recession in Alabama," Griffith said in a written statement.

At the signing ceremony in Montgomery, Hubbard said the commission is a continuation of what the Republican-led Legislature has done the last four years to cut bureaucracy and eliminate red tape. "Our focus is to make Alabama the most business-friendly state in America," he said.

Marsh said he ran for the Legislature in 1998 because he was a small business owner frustrated with government bureaucracy.

Some other states have appointed panels or high-ranking officials to help small businesses. For instance, Maryland's governor created the Governor's Commission on Small Business in 2010. It has a mix of public officials and private citizens like Bentley's. North Carolina's governor appointed a small business commissioner in 2010.

Bentley said he and legislative leaders plan to complete their appointments to Alabama's commission soon and schedule the first meeting in October.
Birmingham-Hoover economy in nation’s top 50

Alex Walsh  awalsh@al.com

The Birmingham-Hoover metro area economy was one of the 50 largest in the nation in 2013, new data shows.

Each metro area’s productivity can be estimated by calculating its gross domestic product, which captures the value of all goods and services produced by that area’s residents. On Tuesday, the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis published new estimates for each metro area’s GDP in 2013.

All the goods and services produced in the Birmingham-Hoover area in 2013 were worth about $62 billion, according to the BEA, making it the 50th-largest metro by output. Birmingham-Hoover ranked just behind Jacksonville, Fla., which generated about $62 billion of output.

The Birmingham-Hoover economy is as productive as Huntsville, Mobile and Montgomery combined. Together those three metros generated about $58 billion worth of output last year, according to estimates.

Statewide, Alabama’s output in 2013 was worth about $193 billion. That means Birmingham-Hoover is responsible for about 30 percent of the state’s total annual economic production.

The Birmingham-Hoover economy has recovered substantially from the Great Recession. In 2009, output was about 10 percent smaller than it was last year.

According to the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, the Birmingham-Hoover metro area economy was one of the 50 largest in the nation in 2013. (File)

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Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis
Proposed city budget swells to $246M

Steve Doyle  sdoyle@al.com

Mayor Tommy Battle’s recommended 2015 city budget calls for hiring seven new Huntsville police officers and granting all municipal employees a 1 percent cost-of-living raise.

The $245.9 million spending blueprint is up $4.7 million, or about 2 percent, from the current budget.

Finance Director Randy Taylor projects sales tax collections — by far the city’s biggest revenue source — will grow by 3 percent next year.

Several large new retail stores are expected to open in the coming months, including a $20 million Belk department store at Bridge Street Town Centre, a Walmart Supercenter on South Memorial Parkway, Whole Foods Market and Alabama’s first Cabela’s outdoor superstore.

However, Taylor said much of the new revenue — about $2.3 million — will be gobbled up by mandated employee step raises. Another $1.2 million would go toward the proposed 1 percent cost of living pay increase. On the plus side, Huntsville expects to save about $400,000 on employee health care costs next year.

The average salary of a full-time city worker is now $50,600, said Taylor.

Battle said most city departments and outside agencies would receive no new money under the “very vanilla” budget plan.

“There’s not much left in the cupboard, but we are able to do the services that we need to do,” he said. “If you don’t have to really bear down at budget time then you’re not doing your job.”

Because expenses are rising faster than revenues, said Taylor, the city will have to shift some money from the capital fund in order to balance the operating budget. The capital fund is used to pay for new roads, bridges, sidewalks and other public improvements.

City Council members are expected to discuss the budget proposal at a Sept. 24 work session. The new budget year begins Oct. 1.
‘9 in 9’ initiative seeks to revive city districts

NEIGHBORHOOD BUSINESS DISTRICTS: PROJECT AIMS TO BRING AT LEAST ONE SMALL BUSINESS TO EACH OF NINE AREAS.

Joseph D. Bryant  jdbryant@al.com

From Ensley and Pratt City to Woodlawn and north Birmingham, several of Birmingham’s oldest neighborhoods once had their own thriving business districts that provided commerce in every corner of the city.

Birmingham Mayor William Bell said he sees an opportunity to relight some of the former commercial activity and help stabilize neighborhoods with commitments to fund a new economic development initiative.

Bell was flanked by city and finance officials as he announced the launch of “Project 9 in 9,” an initiative designed to bring at least one new small business to each of the city’s nine districts.

The goal is to establish businesses that would serve as incubators for spin-off development. It’s a one-block-at-a-time approach to redevelopment.

“We’re underway now,” Bell said. “We may not have enough to hit all the business locations, but those areas that once were the center of commerce in those neighborhoods would be eligible.”

Bell said the city is looking for entrepreneurs with the desire and capacity to do business in the city’s neighborhoods. He urged them to contact his office of economic development to begin the evaluation process.

The program will be executed in several phases: acquisition, financing and marketing of commercial sites for potential development. Regions Bank has committed up to $16 million in loans for Birmingham small businesses, Bell said.

Regions’ participation is separate from its Alabama Economic Development Loan Pool, but similar. The pool was established in 2013 with $1 billion set aside, then bolstered in 2014 with a $1.5 billion commitment.

“Regions Bank is supportive of efforts to revitalize and strengthen Birmingham neighborhoods. We look forward to building upon our work with the city in any way we can to help support more economic opportunities in our hometown,” said Jeremy D. King, Regions vice president of corporate communications.

Technical assistance and coaching will be offered by the Birmingham Business Resource Center. The Small Business Administration will supply additional planning and start-up assistance.

“We are excited to launch the 9 in 9 initiative and really focus on investing in our communities,” Bell said. “Companies are moving into the city and we are experiencing job growth, which is needed to allow for sustainable economic growth throughout the city.”
Job fair attracts huge crowd

2,000 people turn out for chance to apply for automotive jobs

By Angel Coker
Staff Writer

A half-mile line of people stretched around the Tuscaloosa Career and Technology Academy Saturday as over 2,000 job seekers from Alabama, Mississippi and Georgia waited to be interviewed for an opportunity to work in Alabama's auto industry.

West Alabama Works hosted its second job fair Saturday, offering 300-400 entry-level jobs in production, service and material handling at 10 participating companies that act as suppliers for Mercedes-Benz, which needs more employees because production recently increased with the addition of the C-Class sedan in June.

"We have processed and we will have interviewed over 1,600 people today. All of the individuals who were not (qualified) to get a job, which were probably another 500-700 that showed up, we actually have them lining up and working with the career center and helping them find a job," said Donny Jones, chief operating officer for the Chamber of Commerce of West Alabama, which partnered with the Region 3 Workforce Development Council to create West Alabama Works.

West Alabama Works is a workforce development group,

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Meredith Mitchell of Phenix City interviews with Anthony Thomas, a recruiter with Lyons Human Resources. More than 2,000 job seekers attended the fair.
JOBS

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sponsored by Mercedes-Benz, that works with other groups in the community to bring basic skills and literacy training to job candidates in an effort to get them hired.

The group serves Tuscaloosa, Lamar, Greene, Bibb, Fayette, Hale and Pickens counties, sending buses to each of those counties Saturday to provide transportation to the fair for job candidates.

The first job fair the group hosted for Bama Dining in June resulted in the hiring of 250 people on the spot.

Job candidates went through several phases Saturday before sitting down for an interview. People began lining up at 4 a.m. and began working through the process beginning at 9 a.m.

Fair organizers filtered through the applicants based on qualifications in the first phase. To be qualified, candidates needed at least a high school diploma or a GED.

Those who were qualified continued the application process, and those who were not were provided with information about resources available to them, such as GED classes and additional training through the Ready to Work Program at Shelton and Bevill state community colleges, to help them become qualified.

Qualified applicants were processed through to interviews, where they left with either a blue ticket or a gold ticket.

Jones pointed out a man who held a gold ticket.

“When he leaves, it’s kind of like ‘American Idol.’ He has a gold ticket,” and that gold ticket means he has a job paying up to $14 per hour, Jones said. Those with blue tickets were given additional information on how to become more qualified for their next job opportunity.

“We don’t say the word ‘no.’ We say ‘not now,'” Jones said. “This whole thing is about hope. They’re given additional opportunities for training and retooling so that they’re prepared for the next opportunity they might have.”

Those who wish to apply for a job at one of the 10 companies can go to tuscaloosa chamber.com/jobs and complete the post-fair application.
Bryant-Denny gets water stations

By Ken Roberts
City Editor

The University of Alabama's director of athletics said that nine watering stations have been installed this week at Bryant-Denny Stadium and fans at Saturday's game will be allowed to bring clear, empty bottles to fill with water.

The changes come after 99 medical calls, most heat-related, were made during UA's home opener Sept. 6 against Florida Atlantic University, according to the school's student newspaper, the Crimson White.

"Our 11 a.m. game with FAU saw almost unbearable heat and humidity conditions that needed to be addressed," Bill Battle said in "The Battle Plan," an email newsletter the athletics director sent to UA fans Wednesday night.

"While we don't anticipate those extreme conditions this week, we hope our fans will take advantage of those stations to stay hydrated," Battle said.

Saturday's forecast for the 2:30 p.m. kickoff against the Florida Gators calls for clear skies, plenty of sunshine and a high around 88 degrees.

Battle said that five watering stations have been installed on the mezzanine level and four in the upper decks of the stadium.

"These watering stations are 150-gallon tanks of cold-filtered water that fans can use for relief if they need some hydration," Battle said. "Fans can bring in clear, empty water bottles to fill up at the various water stations and small cups will be provided next to the canister."

The watering stations will be on the second level mezzanine in sections D, K, AA (the student section), FF and NN. For fans in the upper deck, watering stations will be at the northeast, northwest, southwest and southeast ramps.

In addition to the watering stations, "Express Lane" gates will open Saturday at gates 10, 18, 36, 38. Fans with tickets in the lower bowl of the stadium on the east and west sides who do not have any items that have to be checked by stadium security (bags, purses, blankets, etc.) can gain access into the stadium through these special gates without having to wait for bag searches. Fans in those areas are still required to enter via the gate designated on their tickets but, within their gate assignment, now there is an "Express Lane" gate.

Battle also said that fans who experience problems inside the stadium can call UA's hotline at 205-348-5620 or text the key word BAMA along with a question to 71855 and a dispatcher will be sent to assist them.

"Your feedback is of the utmost importance to us," Battle said in the email. "We took fan surveys last year and will take more this year. It is our goal to provide the best fan experience in the country."
University of Alabama posts record enrollment

Out-of-state students make up 64% of freshmen

By Ed Enoch
Staff Writer

The University of Alabama again posted a record enrollment for the fall semester, increasing 3.7 percent over 2013's record class.

Enrollment for the fall was 36,155, according to figures released by UA on Tuesday. Enrollment increased by 1,303 over fall 2013. The 2014 enrollment includes 30,754 undergraduates and 5,401 graduate and first professional students.

The increase in fall enrollment continues trends of rapid overall growth and a continuing demographic shift to a majority of students coming from outside Alabama.

The growth was part of a strategic plan in 2003 instituted by UA System Chancellor Robert Witt, then president of UA. The Capstone's enrollment has surpassed Witt's benchmark for growth in 2013 by more than 8,000.

The 2014 freshman class of 6,856 students represented an increase of 5.8 percent, or 378 students, compared to fall 2013, which had a class of 6,478.

The class continued the trend since 2012 of more non-residents than Alabama residents in the incoming freshman class. Alabama students were roughly 36 percent of the incoming class, while non-residents, including international students, were about 64 percent.

Though non-residents — who typically pay tuition rates twice that of residents — were the majority of the incoming freshman class since 2012, they remained the minority in the total enrollment until this year, according to enrollment data compiled by the UA Office of Institutional Research and Assessment.

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This fall there were 18,325 non-residents and 17,830 Alabamians in the student body, according to the figures released Tuesday.

"As the state's flagship institution, providing an excellent education to students from Alabama is a top priority. We welcome out-of-state and international students, but those students do not take spaces away from qualified Alabamians," UA President Judy Bonner said in a released statement.

The university also highlighted the academic profile of the incoming students, who had an average ACT score of 26.1 and an average high school GPA of 3.65.

The freshman class includes 135 National Merit Scholars and 20 National Achievement Scholars, according to UA.

"We are so pleased that these outstanding students have chosen UA to pursue their goals," Bonner said. "We look forward to working with them as they reach their potential both inside and outside the classroom."

Reach Ed Enoch at ed.enoch@tuscaloosanews.com or 205-722-0209.
Out-of-state students outnumber Alabama residents at the University of Alabama

By: Melissa Brown

Alabama resident are now a minority at the University of Alabama, 2014 enrollment data shows.

This fall, there are 18,325 out-of-state, military and international students on campus, and 17,830 Alabama residents.

In the 2014 freshman class, the largest in UA's history, there are 2,474 Alabama residents and 4,382 out-of-state students (including military and international.) The class's average ACT score is 26.1, the highest in UA history.

Out-of-state students tipped the numbers in their favor this year after a six year trend of decreasing resident enrollment. In-state enrollment peaked in 2008 at 3,207 students and gradually began dropping while out-of-state enrollment continued to grow.

The 2011 freshman class saw the first majority out-of-state class, with 2,924 out-of-state students and 2,848 in-state students.

"As the state's flagship institution, providing an excellent education to students from Alabama is a top priority," UA President Judy Bonner said in an emailed statement. "We welcome out-of-state and international students, but those students do not take spaces away from qualified Alabamians."

The overall enrollment increase is a result of an aggressive enrollment campaign spearheaded in 2003 by then-president Robert Witt, now chancellor of the entire system. Witt set a goal for 28,000 students by 2013, a goal he met and surpassed.

More out-of-state students means more tuition revenue for the school, which has raised tuition significantly for at least a decade. The total two-semester cost for resident students is $9,826 and $24,950 for non-resident students.

Since 2008, the same year in-state student enrollment peaked, the state has slashed nearly $556 million from higher education funding, some 28 percent.

As UA looked elsewhere to make up for lost state appropriations, their net tuition revenue doubled from 2008 to the 2012-13 fiscal year, from $193.5 million to $386.9 million, even as the school maintained generous scholarship giving that nearly triple over the same time period.

Data indicates UA has one of the lowest in-state student populations among its SEC peer institutions.
Entrepreneurs sought for contest

'54-hour frenzy'
set Sept. 26-28
on UA campus

By Patrick Rupinski
Business Editor

Entrepreneurs with business ideas and people with skills to help make those ideas a reality will meet in Tuscaloosa later this month for West Alabama’s first Startup Weekend.

The Sept. 26-28 event at the University of Alabama’s South Engineering Research Center, 255 Seventh Ave., will see participants form teams to work on an entrepreneurial idea over a three-day period.

Startup Weekend, a non-profit global grass-roots entrepreneurial movement based in Seattle, is described as “a 54-hour frenzy of business model creation, coding, designing and market validation.”

“It gives an opportunity to entrepreneurs, (technical) developers and (web) designers to come in with ideas and then work with others as a team on the idea,” said Robert Morgan, a marketing professor and executive director of innovation initiatives at UA’s Culverhouse College of Commerce.

Morgan, one of the organizers behind Tuscaloosa’s Startup Weekend, said it is designed for both college students and people in the community.

“We are trying to recruit participants with about half being students and half being people from the community,” he said.

STARTUP WEEKEND

■ What: Participants form teams to work on an entrepreneurial idea over a three-day period.
■ When: Sept. 26-28. Registration at 6:30 p.m. Sept. 26. Winners will be announced at 9 p.m. Sept. 28.
■ Where: UA’s South Engineering Research Center, 255 Seventh Ave.
■ Cost: $25 for students, $60 for non-students. The cost includes seven meals over three days. To register, go to tuscaloosa.startupweekend.org.

The event is most likely to appeal to entrepreneurs and would-be entrepreneurs, engineers and people with technical and creative skills, he said.

The Startup Weekend will start at 6:30 p.m. Sept. 26 with registration and will end at 9 p.m. Sept. 28 after judges announce the results and award winners.

On Friday evening after dinner and networking, those with ideas will make their pitch and participants will vote on the top ideas.

Participants will form teams to work on an idea. On Saturday, the teams will continue working on developing the idea with different team members bringing different skills to the table.

Coaches will check in with teams during the afternoon. After dinner, there will be status reports and an opportunity for teams to seek help if they have a problem.

On Sunday, teams will finish their work and prepare presentations, which will be

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delivered to a panel of judges after dinner.

"Whether entrepreneurs found companies, find a co-founder, meet someone new or learn a skill far outside their usual 9-to-5, everyone is guaranteed to leave the event better prepared to navigate the chaotic, but fun, world of startup," according to Startup Weekend.

Cost, which will include seven meals over the three days, is $25 for students and $60 for non-students.

Registration can be made online at tuscaloosa.startup weekend.org.
New director appointed to Cyber Institute

By Collin Burwinkel | Contributing Writer

Reginald Hyde, former deputy under-secretary of defense for intelligence and security in the U.S. Department of Defense is becoming the new executive director of the Cyber Institute.

"The University wanted to move forward with cyber research," Hyde said. "We are trying to look at these as human being projects. This is a multidisciplinary effort focused on enhancing undergraduate research heavily concentrated on solutions."

With experience in strategy, counterintelligence, technical operations and security among others, Hyde has almost 30 years of experience in government. He served in instrumental roles in the U.S. Department of Defense and the CIA for a majority of his career.

"The Cyber Institute was new, effective April of this year when the Board of Trustees officially approved it," said Carl Pinkert, UA vice president for research. "The exciting thing is that we have opportunities to develop novel technologies and intellectual property that students as well as faculty members are involved in."

Hyde earned his bachelor's degree and a juris doctor degree from The University of Alabama, and would later earn a master's degree in public policy from Princeton University.

Reginald Hyde is the new executive director of the Cyber Institute at The University of Alabama. UA News

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Hyde is fluent in many foreign languages including Farsi and Bulgarian.

During his time in the Department of Defense, Hyde was the equivalent of a three-star general.

After retiring from the government, Hyde said he is excited to be a part of The University of Alabama again.

"I was born in Tuscaloosa. This is like my second home," Hyde said. "I even remember my first Alabama football game. It was in 1964, and I was only five years old."

Hyde was awarded the Distinguished Career Intelligence Medal from CIA Director John Brennan in December 2013 and the Secretary of Defense Medal for Meritorious Civilian Service in March 2013 by Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta.

"This is an umbrella organization that fosters collaboration," he said. "Hopefully I can bring positive and useful tools to the community."
UA announces dates for on-campus flu shots

Vaccinations are free to students, employees with campus IDs

Staff report

The University of Alabama on Monday will begin a campaign offering flu shots to faculty, staff and students. "Getting a flu vaccine is the first and most important step in protecting against this serious disease," said Dr. Richard Streiffer, dean of the College of Community Health Sciences.

Nurses from the College's University Medical Center, the University's Student Health Center and Capstone College of Nursing will travel to sites across campus, including the Quad, UA buildings and student dormitories, during September, October and November to provide the flu shots.

The shots are provided at no charge, and insurance is not required. Students and employees are asked to bring their Campus Wide Identification with them to the campus flu shot stations.

Spouses of employees can get the free flu vaccines at the flu shot stations or at the Faculty-Staff Clinic in University Medical Center; insurance is not required.

Children of employees can also receive flu vaccinations. Children of employees with UA health insurance can receive the vaccinations at University Medical Center. Children of employees with non-UA health insurance can receive flu shots at the Faculty-Staff Clinic if their insurance has previously approved nurse practitioner coverage.

Here is a schedule of flu shot dates and locations to date (additional dates and sites will be added):

- **Monday**: Capstone College of Nursing Building, 1-4 p.m.
- **Tuesday**: Reese Phifer Rotunda, 7:30-11 a.m.
- **Wednesday**: Law Center, Room 12, 7:30-11 a.m.
- **Sept. 23**: Alston Hall, fourth floor parlor, 7:30-11 a.m.
- **Sept. 23**: Quad (Southwest Corner), 9 a.m.-4 p.m.
- **Sept. 24**: Quad (Northwest Corner), 9 a.m.-4 p.m.
- **Sept. 30**: Quad (Southeast Corner)

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SHOTS

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Corner), 9 a.m.-4 p.m.
- Oct. 1: Quad (North-east Corner), 9 a.m.-4 p.m.
- Oct. 8: UA Employee Health Fair at Coleman Coliseum, 7:30 a.m.-1 p.m.
- Oct. 15: UA Student Health Fair at Ferguson Center, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.
- Oct. 22: Russell Hall, Front Lobby, 7:30-11 a.m.
- Nov. 4: Amelia Gayle Gorgas Library, 7:30-11 a.m.
New York fashion designer Smith Sinrod celebrates her University of Alabama roots

By: Molly Olmstead
Special to the Tuscaloosa News

She, her mother and her sister were chasing a lead to find producers of Thai silk. They were ushered by a Thai-speaking woman through a small door with bars on the window and into a small room to match, where they waited to meet the factory owners.

“We sat in a room full of silk jackets,” she said. “Questioning life.”

An hour later when the owners arrived, she discovered the language barrier. She persevered, and a few hours later she hammered out a deal with the factory.

Soon she was producing her own line and shipping it home to the United States. She would continue to follow this hands-on approach to her fashion business, designing 10 seasonal lines and appearing in several regional and national fashion shows and publications.

Sinrod, a 2009 University of Alabama graduate from Pensacola, Fla., designs her own clothing line, “by Smith,” based in New York. She makes what she calls timeless pieces for professional working women from their mid-20s to late 50s. Her largest market is in the Southeast.

Sinrod will visit Tuscaloosa as part of her second Airstream tour, a route around the Southeast in a luxury trailer to display her line and receive feedback. On Thursday, she will showcase her clothing line outside Doster Hall on the UA campus from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. and will host a shopping event with two local artists outside Grace Aberdean Habitat Alchemy, 2124 Ninth St., Tuscaloosa, starting at 6 p.m.

“We’re celebrating our roots,” she said.

Sinrod defined her style in UA’s apparel design program, influenced by her friends and the fashion of Tuscaloosa.

“I think I came into my own while I was in school,” she said. “I didn’t even know how to sew before Alabama.”

Most of her business success came from trial and error. So when she decided to start her own brand, she set out on her trip to Thailand without a concrete direction.

She had seen Thai silk when she visited her sister there previously and decided to base her line on the fabric. She followed a trail of contacts and recommendations to the small back-alley factory where she signed a deal and launched her brand in the spring of 2010, less than a year after she graduated.

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Her brand grew from there. She began by visiting boutiques around the Southeast and eventually participated in trade shows to find more buyers. She started out using almost exclusively Thai silk pieces but soon branched out to less dressy fabrics.

She moved her office from Atlanta to the heart of the garment district in New York and, as her business grew, she began a new deal with a factory in China. She eventually brought the brand home and began to produce in New York, where she keeps a closer eye on production.

Her line, she said, matured with her and with her career, focusing on an older demographic. Today, the emphasis on Thai silk has been reduced to one or two pieces per line, and she makes mainly separate pieces, not the dresses with which she started.

She said she plans to stay consistent with her style in the future, offering classic pieces that translate across age and context. On the business side, she doesn't know where she'll go.

"Maybe it's going to go somewhere in the Airstream," she said. "Only the road will tell."

Fashion tour

UA graduate Smith Sinrod's latest "by Smith" clothing line will be shown in Tuscaloosa on Thursday.
Where and when: Outside the University of Alabama's Doster Hall from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. and outside Grace Aberdeen Habitat Alchemy, 2124 Ninth St., Tuscaloosa.
Target customer: Professional working women from their mid-20s to late 50s.
Attorney: My client is innocent

UA student Nick Mitrow, 3 others accused of beating fellow student

By Stephanie Taylor
Staff Writer

The attorney for one of the four University of Alabama fraternity members charged in a serious assault this week says that his client denies the allegations.

"Media reports in the past few days suggest that Nick Mitrow was involved in an assault on a University of Alabama student last weekend," attorney Peter R. Ginsberg of Peter R. Ginsberg Law LLC in New York, N.Y., wrote in an email sent Friday afternoon. "In fact, Nick was the victim of a vicious attack last weekend and suffered bruising on his face and cigarette burns on his neck left by SAE (Sigma Alpha Epsilon) fraternity members and pledges in retaliation for Nick spending time with an SAE pledge's female friend. Nick did not in any way engage in retaliation for that vicious attack and Nick adamantly denies any suggestion to the contrary. We implore the media to act responsibly and to gather the true facts before issuing any additional reports. This unfortunate reporting is compromising Nick's safety," the email stated.

Zachary Stewart, Kevin Brady and Joseph Baroni, all 18, are accused of beating the victim, also 18, in the courtyard of the Presidential Village II dorm. The victim was treated in the intensive care unit of DCH Regional Medical Center with bleeding to his brain.

Investigator reports state that Mitrow had been involved in a physical altercation with the victim's friend the previous night and called his friends to the dorm, where they engaged in a confrontation.

Reach Stephanie Taylor at stephanie.taylor@tuscaloosanews.com or 205-722-0210.

Nick Mitrow, 18, is charged with felony second-degree assault and is out on bond.
Student’s alleged beating by frat brothers was caught on video

Neither police nor university identify suspects’ fraternity

By Stephanie Taylor
Staff Writer

Four fraternity brothers beat and kicked a victim until he was unconscious early Sunday, and it was all captured on video, investigators said Thursday.

Neither police nor a university spokeswoman would identify the fraternity.

University of Alabama students Nicholas Mitrow, Zachary Stewart, Kevin Brady and Joseph Baroni, all 18, are accused of beating the victim, also 18, in the courtyard of the Presidential Village II dorm.

Mitrow had been involved in a physical altercation with the victim’s friend the previous night, said Sgt. Dale Phillips, Tuscaloosa County Metro Homicide Unit commander. The fight was about a woman, Phillips said.

Mitrow called his fraternity brothers to join him in the courtyard before they confronted the men, Phillips said.

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BEATING

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The confrontation turned violent and ended with the victim in the intensive care unit of DCH Regional Medical Center. He has since been released.

"There was a lot of aggression from these four young men toward this victim," he said. "He still has visible injuries and seems to be recovering."

The victim was not involved in the prior incident, Phillips said.

"He was trying to defend his friend," Phillips said.

Investigators reviewed surveillance video of the attack, he said.

According to court records filed in the case, Stewart punched the victim and knocked him to the ground. Baroni jumped on the victim and punched him, the investigator wrote, before Brady pulled him to the ground, punched and kicked him.

"The victim was kicked at least twice in the head while he was on the ground," Phillips said.

The victim, who is from Texas, is 6-foot-4 and weighs 270 pounds. Witnesses say they saw the victim having a seizure as they called 911. Doctors diagnosed him with bleeding in his brain.

Mitrow, from New Jersey, was arrested Tuesday, while Stewart, from Colorado, and Brady, from New York, were arrested Wednesday. All are charged with felony second-degree assault and have been released from the Tuscaloosa County Jail on $10,000 bond.

Baroni turned himself in to authorities Thursday.

UA spokeswoman Cathy Andreen confirmed Wednesday that the victim and four suspects are all students. She said federal privacy laws limit what information can be released by the university and that fraternity affiliation was not one of those details.

Reach Stephanie Taylor at stephanie.taylor@tuscaloosa news.com or 205-722-0210.
UAB named one of America's innovative, 'Up-and-Coming' large universities by U.S. News magazine

By Jesse Chambers

BIRMINGHAM, Alabama – The University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) has been named one of America's "Up-and-Coming Schools" for 2015 in a new national ranking released last week by U.S. News and World Report.

UAB is ranked No. 14 in the category of up-and-coming "national universities," according to the U.S. News web site.

The magazine defines a "national university" as a school offering a full range of undergraduate majors, master's and doctoral programs and a commitment to research.

The ranking is part of the magazine's 2015 U.S. News Best Colleges ranking. UAB's inclusion on the list of up-and-coming schools means that it was among the most cited by college presidents, provosts and admissions deans who were asked to identify up to 10 schools in their 2015 U.S. News Best Colleges ranking category that are making the most promising and innovative changes in the areas of academics, faculty and student life, according to the web site.

2014 is the seventh year in a row that U.S. News has produced this ranking. UAB finished tied for No. 149 overall in the 2015 Best Colleges rankings, which were announced last week.

The University of Alabama had the best ranking for a national university in the state, finishing in a tie for 88th place in the list. Auburn was tied for 103rd place, and the University of Alabama in Huntsville was tied for 181st.
Marijuana taboos delay relief to kids

GENA DALTON: ALABAMA CHEMIST LOBBIES TO LOOSEN U.S. REINS ON DRUG DERIVATIVE IN NAME OF DAUGHTER WITH SEIZURES.

Paul Gattis • pgattis@al.com

Gena Dalton celebrated at the Alabama State House in Montgomery in March, when the Legislature passed Carly’s Law.

Now Dalton wants to celebrate in Washington, D.C.

Dalton, a chemist who lives in Madison, helped lobby for the passage of Carly’s Law — the legislation that allows the University of Alabama at Birmingham to research and dispense a marijuana-derivative oil known as CBD oil as a medicine to help treat epilepsy.

She’s also part of a national movement to loosen restrictions on cannabisidiol — the formal name for CBD oil — like the Alabama Legislature did without dissent earlier this year.

"Just like the Carly's Law parents were lobbying state legislators, we're going to try to do the same thing federally," Dalton said. "Right now, our biggest push is the Charlotte's Web Medical Hemp Act.

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TABOOS

From Page 1

"It's much, much harder to do something like that on the federal level than it is on the state level."

Dalton's motivation is her 2-year-old daughter Charlotte, who has Dravet Syndrome and endures so many seizures a day, "I can't really count," her mom said.

According to the Dravet Syndrome Foundation, the condition "is a rare and catastrophic form of intractable epilepsy that begins in infancy. Initial seizures are most often prolonged events and in the second year of life other seizure types begin to emerge."

A progressive decline in development can begin in the second year of a Dravet Syndrome victim, Dalton said Charlotte "is a typical 2-year-old little girl" when the seizures have subsided.

The expectation is the CBD oil will have a dramatic positive effect on Charlotte. For her mom, getting access to that medicine is the motivating factor.

Dalton is a board member for the Epilepsy Foundation of Alabama and coordinator for North Alabama Epilepsy Awareness. She helped found the Parents Coalition for Rescheduling Medical Cannabis and the grassroots organization is planning a march on Washington in April 2015, Dalton said.

The group lists members of its leadership team from 11 states on its website and states its mission as advocating the removal of cannabis (marijuana) as a Schedule I drug — the same distinction, in the eyes of federal law, as heroin and LSD. Schedule I drugs, by definition, have no accepted medical use and a high potential for abuse.

Drugs such as cocaine, methamphetamine and OxyContin are listed as Schedule II drugs — defined as "drugs with a high potential for abuse, less abuse potential than Schedule I drugs."

See next page
"We just want to be in the same city as them and not just a bunch of stereotypical people who want to use marijuana," Dalton said. "We're working with special-needs children. We're trying to alleviate their suffering and they are suffering every day."

Dalton said she has met with U.S. Rep. Mo Brooks, R-Huntsville, and had correspondence with other members of the state's congressional delegation.

Alabama's federal representatives, however, have been less inclined to embrace the potential medical benefit in a marijuana derivative.

The majority of the delegation opposed a measure included in a drug enforcement funding bill to leave undisturbed 22 states, including Alabama, who have made their own laws regarding "distribution, possession or cultivation of medical marijuana."

The amendment passed the House in a 219-189 vote. But the Alabama delegation voted 4-3 against it. Spencer Bachus, Huntsville's Mo Brooks and Mike Rogers supported the amendment while Robert Adenholt, Bradley Byrne, Martha Roby and Terri Sewell opposed it.

The appropriations bill, including the amendment, is expected to die in the Senate after being passed by the House. And if the bill, including the amendment, isn't passed by the Senate, the amendment vote means nothing.

To Dalton, though, it means a lot. Comparing the vote by Alabama's representatives in Congress with the no-dissent approval of the Alabama Legislature on Carly's Law made no sense to Dalton.

"Which is it?" she asked. "Do you really disagree or do you really know what you're voting on?"

If the bill passes the Senate and is signed into law by President Barack Obama, it will make a difference in Alabama, according to Dustin Chandler, whose daughter Carly is the namesake for the state law.

Chandler pointed to the interest expressed by neurologists Dr. David Standaert at the University of Alabama at Birmingham and Dr. Orrin Devinsky at New York University to study the benefits of CBD oil. Standaert is directing the UAB Cannabidiol Program.
"If those neurologists want to research the benefits of the cannabis plant, why are we so hung up on not letting them do that and making them go through federal regulations?" Chandler said. A law that might provide a pathway for that research is U.S. House bill 5226, known as Charlotte's Web Medical Hemp Act of 2014. The bill, introduced in the House in July, would amend the Controlled Substances Act to exclude therapeutic hemp and cannabidiol from the definition of marijuana.

The bill would allow the plant to maintain a concentration of THC — the characteristic of marijuana that provides a euphoric high — of not more than 0.3 percent, which means it has no hallucinogenic effects of traditional marijuana.

The bill is named for Charlotte Figi, a Colorado girl whose parents have lobbied nationwide to ease access to medical marijuana after having success reducing their daughter's seizures through the use of CBD oil.

Dalton's grassroots parents organization endorsed the bill last month.

"This bill will allow low THC cannabis oil to be shipped across state lines, without fear of federal prosecution," Dalton said. "This bill will bring home several families who are currently refugees in Colorado."
UAB employees, students, alumni invited to sign up for UAB Fun Run on Saturday

By: Jesse Chambers

Birmingham, Alabama – The members of the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) community will have a great chance to enjoy the last Saturday of the summer and get a little bit healthier at the Blazer Fun Run scheduled for Sept. 20 at 9 a.m.

The fourth annual event – hosted by UAB Employee Wellness – is open to employees and their families, as well as students and alumni, according to a recent UAB news release.

Participants can walk, jog or run the 2-mile course that begins at Dowdy Field and weaves through the campus and Railroad Park.

They will be cheered in route by the UAB Cheerleaders, the UAB Golden Girls and the school's mascot, Blaze the Dragon.

The Post-Walk Party at Dowdy Field will feature a live band, food trucks, inflatables and giveaways.

Students from the UAB Department of Human Studies kinesiology program will offer weight, blood pressure and body fat screenings.

Registration is $20 for employees, family and alumni; $10 for current students; and free for children 12 and under.
Animal welfare group files complaint against UAB after pig, monkey research deaths

By: Melissa Brown

An animal welfare group is calling for the USDA to take severe action against the University of Alabama at Birmingham after the death of two animals used for laboratory testing.

UAB voluntarily reported the deaths to the Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare in 2013, but the group Stop Animal Exploitation Now filed an official complaint Sept. 7 with the USDA Animal and Health Inspection Service calling for an "immediate" investigation and levying of maximum fines.

SAEN research Associate Stacey Ellison wrote that the USDA should take "the most severe action allowable" under the Animal Welfare Act and levy a $10,000 fine per infraction on UAB.

"The chief concern and responsibility among our highly trained researchers who have the privilege of working with animals to advance science and medicine is respectful and humane treatment; we give concerns raised by animal activists close attention, as we trust they share that interest," UAB Assistant Vice President for Animal Research Services Sam Cartner said in an emailed statement Monday. "UAB has a rich history of medical advancements made possible by research with animals, and we respect the great contributions made by animals to science for the benefit of both humans and animals alike - not only at UAB, but around the world."

In 2012, a rhesus monkey died after researchers gave it an intramuscular injection instead of the approved oral route. In 2013, a pig died after being transported 70 miles in a poorly-cooled cargo area, as the result of broken cooling fans.

According to letters between UAB’s vice president of research and the national Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare, UAB officials reported both deaths when they occurred and outlined procedures implemented to prevent similar incidents. In addition, investigators concluded the errant injection was not the cause of death in the rhesus monkey.

"Faculty and staff work closely with UAB’s roughly 40-member Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee – which consists of veterinarians, representatives of the general public, researchers, experts in occupational health and safety and administrative personnel – to meet and exceed policies of regulatory and accrediting agencies," Cartner said. "In a rare instance when corrective action is required, we take the necessary steps to prevent future incidents, and we self-report to the appropriate agency or agencies."

But the SAEN group believes both incidents are violations of the Animal Welfare Act.

"I must insist that you take the most severe action allowable under the Animal Welfare Act and immediately begin the process of issuing the maximum fine allowable against the University of Alabama-Birmingham at the completion of your investigation," SAEN wrote.
UAH preparing to break ground on $24 million student services building

By: Paul Gattis

The University of Alabama in Huntsville intends to break ground on a $24 million student services center in November that will provide a new focal point to the urban campus.

The new facility will replace outdated Madison Hall, UAH President Robert Altenkirch said, which sits just south of Shelby Center in a high-profile spot at the center of campus at the entrance from Sparkman Drive.

The school released architectural renderings of the new facility, which is planned for 70,000 square feet.

Altenkirch said the facility will be paid entirely through savings the school has accumulated.

In addressing the UAH Committee of the UA System Board of Trustees, Altenkirch said Madison Hall is a "1970s building" and has "outlived its usefulness and outlived its architectural presence."

The new facility will back up to the new campus greenway that provides a north-south pedestrian corridor through the middle of campus.

Altenkirch described the new building as a "one-stop shop" for students and include admissions, registrar, bursar and other student service offices. It will also be a short walk from Charger Union – the new student center that opened earlier this year.

The student services building will also include a new home for school administrators, many of which are currently housed at Shelbie King Hall.

"It was always the plan when the administration was at Madison Hall to move over to Shelbie King Hall, renovate Madison Hall and move back over," Altenkirch said. "It didn't happen. When you look at the cost of renovating Madison Hall and you take into account its architectural presence on campus, it doesn't make sense."

Altenkirch said the facility would include a conference room that would be larger than any already on campus as well as a small theater that could be used to give visitors a video introduction to the campus.

The new facility will be built on the parking lot behind Madison Hall but that ultimately net an increase of 57 parking spaces would be added in the area.
Bryant Bank pledges $3 million to UAH

Paul Gattis • pGattis@al.com

The University of Alabama in Huntsville has made a series of dramatic announcements in what could be described as a landmark occasion for the school.

Dramatic, in that a commitment announced by Bryant Bank of $3 million for nursing scholarships over 30 years had competition for attention.

In meetings Monday with the presidential advisory committee and members of the UA System Board of Trustees, UA President Robert Altenkirch:

- Unveiled architectural drawings for a $24 million student services center that is expected to begin construction in November.
- Announced that UAH would become the first NCAA school in the state to add lacrosse as a sport, which will be for both men’s and women’s teams.
- Announced that the School of Education would be upgraded to the College of Education.

And following the meeting, Altenkirch accompanied the trustees and other school officials on a sneak peek tour of the Severe Weather Institute & Radar Lightning Laboratory that will formally open on Oct. 2.

"My wife asked me, "What are you going to do tomorrow?"" Altenkirch joked during a break in the festivities.

Jokes aside, Monday’s announcements perhaps placed Altenkirch’s stamp on UAH as he approaches his three-year anniversary at the school next month.

"We’re making progress," he said. "It’s all part of the plan to grow the enrollment, grow the campus culture, grow student life. All the pieces sort of fit together. These things are just all happening at once."

The $3 million pledge for nursing scholarships was announced by Bryant Bank President Ken Watson. Paul Bryant Jr., president pro temp of the UA System Trustees, is the founder and chairman of the bank and was in attendance at Monday’s meetings.

The bank committed $100,000 per year to UAH for 30 years.

Ellie Adams, associate professor in the College of Nursing, said the gift will allow UAH to expand the program and attract more elite students.

"We’re making progress," he said. "It’s all part of the plan to grow the enrollment, grow the campus culture, grow student life. All the pieces sort of fit together. These things are just all happening at once."

The new student services center will replace Madison Hall, which is scheduled for demolition. It will be built in the parking lot behind Madison Hall — backing up to the campus greenway — and will be connected by a patio to adjacent Shelby Hall.

Madison County Commission Chair Dale Strong, a member of the external presidential advisory committee, also announced a $50,000 donation from the chairman’s budget as seed money for a planned business incubator at UAH.

NURSING: BANK WILL DONATE $100,000 PER YEAR FOR 30 YEARS.
UAH preparing to break ground on $24 million student services building

By Paul Gattis

HUNTSVILLE, Alabama – The University of Alabama in Huntsville intends to break ground on a $24 million student services center in November that will provide a new focal point to the urban campus.

The new facility will replace outdated Madison Hall, UAH President Robert Altenkirch said, which sits just south of Shelby Center in a high-profile spot at the center of campus at the entrance from Sparkman Drive. The school released architectural renderings of the new facility, which is planned for 70,000 square feet.

Altenkirch said the facility will be paid entirely through savings the school has accumulated. In addressing the UAH Committee of the UA System Board of Trustees, Altenkirch said Madison Hall is a "1970s building" and has "outlived its usefulness and outlived its architectural presence."
The new facility will back up to the new campus greenway that provides a north-south pedestrian corridor through the middle of campus.

Altenkirch described the new building as a "one-stop shop" for students and include admissions, registrar, bursar and other student service offices. It will also be a short walk from Charger Union – the new student center that opened earlier this year.

The student services building will also include a new home for school administrators, many of which are currently housed at Shelbie King Hall. "It was always the plan when the administration was at Madison Hall to move over to Shelbie King Hall, renovate Madison Hall and move back over," Altenkirch said. "It didn't happen. When you look at the cost of renovating Madison Hall and you take into account its architectural presence on campus, it doesn't make sense." Altenkirch said the facility would include a conference room that would be larger than any already on campus as well as a small theater that could be used to give visitors a video introduction to the campus.

The new facility will be built on the parking lot behind Madison Hall but that ultimately net an increase of 57 parking spaces would be added in the area.
Featuring 'iconic' tornado-like spiral staircase, SWIRLL at UAH ready for storms
By Paul Gattis

HUNTSVILLE, Alabama – A few finishing touches still remain to be completed but SWIRLL is essentially ready for action. Bring on the storms.

SWIRLL, the Severe Weather Institute & Radar Lightning Laboratory at the University of Alabama in Huntsville, was toured by university officials on Monday as well as members of the UA System Board of Trustees. A formal ribbon cutting is scheduled for Oct. 2.

The 17,000 square foot facility on the west side of campus along Bradford Drive was built for $7 million. SWIRLL features a spiral staircase visible from the exterior that stirs mental images of a funnel cloud. Kevin Knupp, director of SWIRLL, described it as the building's desired "iconic look." The two-story facility also includes a third-story access to the roof designed to house various instruments for experiments.

Knupp, in leading the tour along with Larry Carey, interim dean of the department of atmospheric science, stressed that SWIRLL would be used for community outreach and K-12 educational purposes.

Highlights of the building include a giant sphere of science -- located within the spiral staircase -- that is a giant globe which can display weather events such as hurricanes as well as a five-door bay for housing the school's mobile weather research vehicles and a second-story 24-by-30 war room that will be the command center during severe weather events with, appropriately enough, giant windows facing the south and west. The facility also includes classrooms and administrative offices along with a storm shelter.

Construction is almost complete on a new $7 million SWIRLL facility on the UAH campus that will bring new advances to severe weather research. SWIRLL, stands for the Severe Weather Institute and Radar & Lightning Laboratories. The $7 million grant was made possible through the efforts of Alabama Governor Robert Bentley. SWIRLL will build on the excellent and collaborative severe weather and radar expertise already in place on campus, in the UAH Department of Atmospheric Science, UAH Earth System Science Center, National Weather Service forecasting office, NASA Earth Science research team, and the Office of the Alabama State Climatologist.
Tornado research facility nearing completion

Paul Gattis  pgattis@al.com

No formal grand opening has been announced, but the University of Alabama in Huntsville is preparing to unveil a much-anticipated new building on campus.

UAH will provide a sneak peak of the SWIRLL building on Monday to members of the UA System Board of Trustees. The trustees will be on campus for the quarterly UAH Committee meeting.

SWIRLL, approved by the trustees and constructed in wake of the devastating April 27, 2011 tornadoes, is short for Severe Weather Institute, Radar & Lightning Laboratory. The building faces Bradford Drive and is located behind the National Space Science Technology Center on Sparkman Drive.

On Friday afternoon, construction crews were laying sod around the $7 million building while the facility itself — unique with its spiraling front staircase designed to resemble a tornado — appeared from the outside to be completed.

The new facility is expected to raise UAH's already formidable national standing in weather research. Researchers at UAH have been at the forefront of tornado research, and Kevin Knupp, director of SWIRLL, said he expects that to continue.

"I envision being able to lead an effort for a much larger-scale field campaign in northern Alabama to look at storms like this," Knupp said last month. "Bring in other investigators, other facilities, make it a multi-institutional field campaign to really study these storms in detail.

"That's consistent with the motivation for putting the SWIRLL building together in the first place. The SWIRLL will be a nice facility to facilitate the research."
USA inaugurates Tony Waldrop

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Nearly 1,400 members of the University of South Alabama community marked a milestone on Friday with the 51-year-old university's first presidential inauguration ceremony.

New President Tony G. Waldrop took the stage at USA Mitchell Center with a full slate of campus and community officials, including Mobile Mayor Sandy Stimpson; Mobile County Commission President Connie Hudson; U.S. Rep. Bradley Byrne, R-Fairhope; and members of the USA Board of Trustees.

Waldrop came to USA from the University of Central Florida, where he served as provost and executive vice president. His first day was April 2.

Dr. Steve Perry, chair pro tempore of the board, noted the historical significance of the moment and didn’t forget to include the other events of USA’s big weekend. “Tomorrow, we will make history with our first sellout of a home football game,” he said. The inauguration “is a sign and marker of where we have been as a university,” he added.

The ceremony included a proclamation from Gov. Robert Bentley, read by Ken Simon, vice president of the Board of Trustees.

In his speech, Stimpson emphasized the importance of city-university collaboration.

“We come together as president of the university and the mayor of the city at a time in the history of both when there’s never been more opportunity to work collaboratively to change our city and society for the better,” Stimpson said.

“In years to come, President Waldrop, like those who preceded him, will be measured by what he did with the gifts and the resources and the responsibilities that were entrusted to him. I am 100 percent confident that men and women on this stage will work with him to make sure that by every measure, that he will be deemed a tremendous success.”

Perry reminded the audience of Waldrop’s many achievements as an athlete at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, including setting the world record for the indoor mile in 1974, a record that stood until 2009; running 11 consecutive sub-4-minute miles in competitive races; and winning the Patterson Medal, UNC’s highest athletic award.

“By every standard, the university is stronger than ever,” Perry said. “In our new president, we’ve found a person perfectly suited to lead our university to even greater heights.”

Waldrop began his address by thanking his wife, Julee Briscoe Waldrop — “my strongest supporter and my harshest critic” — and then outlined five priorities for the next few years:

To provide access to all qualified students and to promote success for all students;

To enhance graduate education as well as research and scholarly activity;

To enhance students’ understanding of other cultures and foster increased exposure to individuals from other countries;

To provide excellence in health care;

To enhance community engagement for faculty, staff and students.

Waldrop repeatedly emphasized the importance of USA’s place in the community and its need to connect its students with business and industry.

“It is my strong belief that a uni-
BOARD OF TRUSTEES

At its Sept. 12 meeting, the University of South Alabama Board of Trustees will vote on a proposed $786.7 million spending plan, which includes a 2 percent pay raise for nearly all employees at a cost of $7.2 million.

In meetings Thursday, the trustee’s budget and finance committee recommended the raise, which would be an increase to the base salaries of all eligible faculty, physicians, administrative and staff employees at all USA campuses, hospitals and clinics.

If the 2014-15 spending plan is approved Friday, the pay raise would be effective in January 2015.

The raise would not apply to temporary faculty, medical residents, pre-nursing classifications with set pay rates, post-doctoral fellows, interns, graduate assistants, student assistants and work study students.

The new budget is a 4.7 percent increase from the 2013-14 spending plan of $750.9 million.

The raise is needed to help the university retain good faculty and staff, USA President Tony G. Waldrop said after the meeting.

Sally Pearsall Ericson
Stillman to launch new fund effort

Million by Million Campaign to earn second half of $2M gift

By Ed Enoch  
Staff Writer

Stillman College on Tuesday announced plans to launch the Million by Million Campaign, a fundraising effort aimed at earning the second half of a $2 million gift pledged by an anonymous donor late last month.

“This $2 million has the chance to be a transformative gift for the college, so it is really important that we take ownership of the direction of the college,” said Anthony Holloman, vice president of institutional advancement.

Stillman anticipates receiving the first $1 million on Friday, Holloman said. The Million by Million Campaign will kick off soon after, he said.

The ambitious campaign will conclude Nov. 14.

“We are very excited about the initiative, and we feel like we will surpass the million points in short order,” Holloman said.

On Aug. 26, Stillman announced an anonymous donor had committed to give the college $2 million, the largest single gift in the private school’s history. The funds, which are to be delivered during the fall semester, would be used for the long-term stability of the college, including meeting financial obligations.

See STILLMAN 5A
The campaign to earn the points will focus on core areas including the campus health initiatives, student engagement, community partnerships and alumni involvement. For every dollar donated or solicited by alumni for the campaign, the college will earn 10 points toward the college’s match.
ONE ON ONE

Gators' top cornerback lines up against Tide's best receiver

By Aaron Sutlles
Sports Writer

Not much impresses Amari Cooper.
Not the statistics he's put up to start the season. He expected that.
Not the ease to which the game comes to him. It's always been that way.
Not the extra work he puts in to achieve his goals. It's what's necessary.
But in Florida's touted sophomore cornerback Vernon Hargreaves, Cooper is complimentary.

Florida at No. 3 Alabama
- **When:** 2:30 p.m., Saturday
- **Where:** Bryant-Denny Stadium
- **Records:** Alabama 3-0, 0-0 SEC
  Florida 3-0, 1-0 SEC
- **TV:** CBS
- **Radio:** 95.3 FM, 99.1 FM

"He's fast, quick. He plays smart," Cooper said.
Although only six words, in Cooper-speak it's high praise.
Hargreaves is figured to be on Cooper, the nation's leader in receptions (33), for the majority of Satur-
day's game. It's the kind of high profile individual matchup, a star wide receiver on a star cornerback, Alabama hasn't seen since Julio Jones went up against LSU's Patrick Peterson in 2009 and 2010.

Both of those players now play in the NFL, and if Cooper and Hargreaves stay healthy, they will, too.
It's good on good. Florida's best defensive player on Alabama's best offensive player.
"He's very instinctive, he's fast, quick. But I think probably his greatest asset besides having great ability

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is he's a very instinctive player," UA coach Nick Saban said. "A very good cover guy. He's tough, physical. (He has all) of the things that qualify you to be a really good DB—
he has good ball skills, he can play man to man and he's a
good tackler. He does all those things extremely well."
Hargreaves, 5-foot-11, 192 pounds, leads the SEC in passes defended with five in two games. Cooper is among the national leaders in receptions, yards and targets.
Cooper said he's spent plenty of time in the film room studying Hargreaves, hoping to glean any bit of information that could possibly give him an advantage.
"I think I just use my tech-
nique, being quick off the line, using my hands and using what my coach teaches me," Cooper said. "The quicker guys, they fall for moves easier so it's kind of like, it can be hard, but it can be easy also."
"When you go against one of the top guys in the country, you feel good about catching passes on them because that's basically what you work for in practice."
Florida is sure to have studied Cooper's fast start. Florida coach Will Muschamp and defensive coordinator D.J. Durkin could elect to take Cooper's space away and play him press man-to-man. They could opt to bracket him.
One thing is almost a certainty. Hargreaves will get his fair share of man-to-man action with Cooper.
"We have several different plans going into the game, so that's not going to be the entire
game like that, no, we have a
couple different ways, obviously he's a guy they like getting the ball to," Durkin said. "He's very explosive, dangerous, so we have a couple different ways we're going to handle that and some of it will be Vernon on him and some of it won't."

Just don't expect the moment to be too big for Hargreaves.
"...The guy certainly has a lot of poise with his back to the football and the way we play we end up in those situations a good bit," Muschamp said. "But very good zone instincts, man to man cover skills, ball skills, extremely intelligent but I think probably to me the most pleasing thing about his skill set is his work ethic. He works extremely hard on the field.

Reach Aaron Sutlles at aaron@tidesports.com or at 205-722-0229.
UAH planning to add fast-growing sport of lacrosse: Is it a good idea?

By: Paul Gattis

It's growing among youth leagues across the nation and in the NCAA.

So what do you think about the University of Alabama in Huntsville announcing plans to start a lacrosse program for both men and women?

UAH President Robert Altenkirch discussed the plan Monday with members of the UA System Board of Trustees as well as his external presidential advisory committee.

Among the points Altenkirch made:

It's the fastest growing sport in the NCAA over the past five years.

It's the fastest growing sport for youth participation over the past 10 years.

Youth leagues in Huntsville and Birmingham have more than 1,500 participants in lacrosse.

There are 26 boys and girls high school lacrosse programs in Huntsville and Birmingham as well as others throughout the state, though not sanctioned through the Alabama High School Athletic Association.

Altenkirch also pointed out that no other college in Alabama has an NCAA lacrosse program that offers scholarships. Birmingham-Southern College in Birmingham and Huntingdon College in Montgomery have NCAA programs but do not offer scholarships. And with the growing popularity of the sport and no other NCAA scholarship program in the state, it would be a unique attraction for UAH, he said.

The University of Alabama and Auburn University each have club lacrosse teams.

"From a strategy point of view, we think it will capture a pool (of students) we think we might not now be capturing," Altenkirch said.

Athletic Director E.J. Brophy said the school would begin advertising for coaches for the men's and women's teams on Wednesday. And Altenkirch said sufficient space is available on campus for practice and games.

Altenkirch said several schools in the Gulf South Conference, of which UAH is a member, are also planning to add lacrosse.

There are 38 NCAA Division II schools offering men's lacrosse and 54 offering women's lacrosse, according to the NCAA website.

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NCAA rules provide for 10.8 lacrosse scholarships for men's programs and 9.9 scholarships for women's programs. Altenkirch estimated the programs would require a total of about 60 players.

UAH would begin lacrosse in the spring of 2016.
Blazers could be on the verge of major turnaround

Wesley Sinor • wsinor@al.com

New coach, new uniforms, new attitude, new expectations.
After just two games, UAB’s football team is just one victory away from matching its 2013 win total. The Blazers thumped Troy 48-10 in Week 1 and turned quite a few heads last week by hanging with SEC West foe Mississippi State in a 47-34 loss.

So when did things turn around for the Blazers, who haven’t posted a winning record in a decade?

“I think it turned around from our standpoint from what we saw in the weight room in the spring and the work ethic,” said UAB first-year head coach Bill Clark. “I don’t know what the wins and losses will be, I’ll never predict those. But I see a whole different group of guys. It wasn’t anything resembling what it had been when we got here, but our expectation level is pretty high.”

Clark was hired in January to succeed former head coach Garrick McGee, who went 5-19 in two seasons at UAB, including 2-10 a year ago. Outside of new leadership, plenty of other changes have been instilled.

The Nike uniforms worn by the Blazers have been redesigned from top to bottom. The helmets, which feature dragon scales, created a buzz last month when the school unveiled them and was rated second among USA Today’s ranking of seven freshest uniforms in Week 2.

Attendance at Legion Field also appears to be on the rise. The season-opener versus Troy was witnessed by 27,133 fans — UAB’s average attendance in five home games last season was 10,548. This week’s attendance, which has been producing brisk ticket sales with in-state school Alabama A&M visiting, could produce an even larger attendance this week at Legion Field.

“I don’t know what the wins and losses will be, I’ll never predict those. But I see a whole different group of guys. It wasn’t anything resembling what it had been when we got here, but our expectation level is pretty high.”

Bill Clark
UAB football coach

Clark says Blazer fans and alumni have been “extremely” positive since he took the reins.

“I think they’re proud of these guys and proud of the work they’ve done,” he said. “I tell them every day who they’re representing — they’re representing our fans, their school, parents and their hometowns.”

How far can the team go? UAB’s only bowl appearance came in 2005 — a loss to Hawaii in, you guessed it, The Hawaii Bowl. The Blazers (1-1) will need at least six wins to become bowl eligible and have a good chance at notching their second this weekend against Alabama A&M (1-1) of the SWAC, an FCS program.

Clark says talk of a postseason game is looking too far ahead, but kicker Ty Long and several other seniors have been striving to make a bowl game since they stepped on campus.

“I have a lot of buddies from high school who talk about some of the gifts they get at bowl games and how it’s not that good,” Long said. “I tell them, ‘You guys take it for granted. We’ve worked so hard to get there and it’s something I’ve prayed about for a long time. I’m really ready to get to one.”
It's time for UAB to become what USM used to be

It seems like a long time ago in a galaxy far, far away, but there was a time when the UAB football program wanted to be Southern Miss when it grew up.

No pressure, Bill Clark, but now's the time to make it happen.

One reason: Southern Miss ain't what it used to be.

Another: With Clark in charge, neither is UAB.

The latest evidence is the ability to see the silver lining in a loss at Mississippi State without wearing green-and-gold glasses. The Blazers never really threatened to pull the upset in the fourth quarter in Starkville, but consider the possible meaning of the 47-34 final score.

State is supposed to have one of the better defenses in the SEC. Last season, neither Auburn nor Alabama scored 34 on the Bulldogs. Auburn needed a last-second touchdown pass to beat them 24-20, and Alabama slopped around to prevail 20-7.

Two games in, Clark's raised the bar on the Southside with a dominant home victory over an in-state rival and a quality road loss to a potential SEC West darkhorse. With Alabama A&M visiting Legion Field on Saturday, the Blazers should have a winning record after three games for the first time since 2005.

Baby steps, people. Baby steps.

Meanwhile, Southern Miss travels to Tuscaloosa as no threat to Alabama with no promise that the Golden Eagles will regain their old magic anytime soon. They did beat Alcorn State last weekend, but they were manhandled by Mississippi State 49-0 in their opener.

In the spirit of looking on the bright side, Southern Miss has won two of its last three games dating to last season after losing 23 straight. The Golden Eagles stopped that skid by embarrassing UAB 62-27, snapping a four-game losing streak to the Blazers and demonstrating to Garrick McGee that the grass really would be greener for him elsewhere.

Exit McGee to rejoin his mentor Bobby Petrino at Louisville. Enter Clark.

For that reason alone, UAB should send Southern Miss a thanks-I-needed-that note for that slap in the face last Nov. 30. Southern Miss had already provided UAB and everyone else a blueprint on how to build a non-SEC program in SEC country. It starts with hiring a coach who may not be a big name but knows how to win and just might stick around.

For the Golden Eagles, that man was Jeff Bower. For the Blazers, it could be Clark.

It's too soon to say for sure that the Blazers are going to start beating SEC teams, winning C-USA titles and going to bowl games on a regular basis. It's a long haul from toiling in obscurity to establishing your credentials as one of the hottest mid-majors in the Deep South.

But with Southern Miss in rebuilding mode itself under second-year coach Todd Monken, the opportunity is there for someone. Why not UAB? Why not right now?
UAB’s redesigned uniforms a hit with Bill Clark, Blazers, fans

By: Wesley Sinor

The UAB Blazers are now 2-1 in their new uniforms, which have garnered positive reactions from players and fans.

The Nike Pro Combat uniforms were completely redesigned from helmet to cleat for the 2014 season. The most noticeable difference has been the helmet, which features a larger Blazer logo with dragon scales across the bottom.

So whose idea was it to give the Blazers a new look?

"I've got a son who's a senior who plays ball," said UAB head coach Bill Clark. "One of our first things (after I got hired) was, 'What are we doing with the uniforms?' I've got my own high school senior who talks to me about that. That's always been important to me -- how we dress, how we look. We really thought there were some neat things we could do with it.

"It probably turned out better than we thought."

The uniforms, which were unveiled Aug. 13, have brought plenty of attention to a program that is beginning to turn things around. USA Today put them at No. 2 on its list of the "freshest" college football uniforms for Week 2, when the Blazers donned the white version for the trip to Mississippi State.

"I like everything about it," kicker Ty Long said. "They're pretty cool."
BIDING HIS TIME

Solomon Crenshaw Jr.  scr @al.com

Maudreuc Humphrey continues to be patient. The former Hoover High standout was patient waiting his chance to shine at Arkansas. He was patient when he left the Razorbacks and sat out before becoming eligible at UAB. And he’s been patient waiting for the chance to show what he can do in the Blazers’ fast-paced offense.

“It makes you a lot more excited for that opportunity to present itself,” the senior receiver said. “I’m really just being patient, trusting the coaches and the coaching staff with the plays, just waiting for my chance to make something happen.”

Humphrey and his teammates have to wait through an open date this week before they get back on the field next Saturday to host Florida International at Legion Field. Humphrey was heavily recruited coming out of Hoover High before deciding on the Razorbacks. In two seasons in Fayetteville, the 6-foot-3 Humphrey caught one pass, returned kicks and contributed on kick coverage. His career ended abruptly with what he called “personal issues.”

Humphrey was arrested on May 12, 2012 on suspicion of residential burglary in a university dormitory. He, along with teammates Marquel Wade and Andrew Peterson, faced burglary and theft charges. The three were indefinitely suspended from the team by then-coach John L. Smith. Humphrey did not return to the school.

Humphrey was later assigned to a Washington County (Ark.) drug court that fall, according to media reports.

“All that’s behind me now,” he says. “I’m just trying to make my name here at UAB.”

His last name is very familiar to many in metro Birmingham and throughout the state of Alabama. His father, Bobby Humphrey, starred at Birmingham’s Glenn High School before becoming an All-American running back at the University of Alabama. He went on to play for the Denver Broncos and Miami Dolphins in the NFL.

Maudreuc said it’s not that difficult following his father. Or his mother Barbara, a standout track star at UAB who still holds the Blazer record for the outdoor 400 meters.

“We all know our dad’s success and our mom’s success so we just fall right in line,” he said.

The Humphrey athletic line is long and successful. Besides Maudreuc, there is sister Breona, who runs track at UAB, Marlon, a 5-star player at Hoover who is a cornerback on the Alabama football team, and younger sister Britney, who holds the state record in the 100 and 300 hurdles at Hoover.

Youngest brother Marlon, a freshman at Hoover, just gave up football to focus on basketball and track.

“We all do an OK job of trying to use our talents to the best of our ability,” Maudreuc said. “It’s just us trying to be great.”

So far, Humphrey hasn’t displayed greatness for the Blazers, who have averaged 41 points a game, including 34 points against SEC West foe Mississippi State. Humphrey, who starts at “A” receiver, has caught just one ball in each of the team’s first three games.

“IT MAKES YOU A LOT MORE EXCITED FOR THAT OPPORTUNITY TO PRESENT ITSELF. I’M REALLY JUST BEING PATIENT, TRUSTING THE COACHES AND THE COACHING STAFF WITH THE PLAYS, JUST WAITING FOR MY CHANCE TO MAKE SOMETHING HAPPEN.”

Maudreuc Humphrey
UAB receiver

His first reception of his Blazer career went for 13 yards against Troy, then came a 14-yarder at Mississippi State and an 8-yard reception Saturday against Alabama A&M. He has not scored.

“As long as we’re winning and the team’s playing good, I’m not very selfish so I just keep playing,” Humphrey said. “You just want to make that contribution. You want to make that big play. I’m just waiting for that big play.”